

The SC Commission on Higher Education is actively working with a number of nationally recognized experts in higher education to make recommendations on our regulatory and oversight capacity and to help design the structure for developing a comprehensive and coordinated statewide public agenda for higher education and a long-range strategic plan.

Dr. Tom Layzell is no stranger to South Carolina. In September of 2015, he appeared before the SC House Higher Education Governance Subcommittee on behalf of the Southern Regional Education Board (SREB). Shortly thereafter, the Commission hired Dr. Layzell as a temporary employee. His reputation as a nationally recognized expert in higher education is well deserved, and his assistance has been invaluable. Dr. Layzell was Chancellor of the Illinois Board of Governors Universities system, Commissioner of Higher Education for the Mississippi Institutions of Higher Learning, and President of the Kentucky Council on Postsecondary Education. He has also served on two separate occasions as an advisor to the Louisiana Board of Regents, Interim President of the University of Louisiana System, and as the chief financial officer of a university, and of a multi-campus university system.

Dr. Layzell has served as president of the State Higher Education Executive Officers (SHEEO), the national association of the chief executives of statewide governing, policy, and coordinating boards of postsecondary education. He also served as president of the National Association of System Heads (NASH), the association of the chief executives of the 44 colleges and university systems of public higher education in the United States and Puerto Rico. He was also a member of the National Commission on Accountability in Higher Education, a member of the Illinois Legislative Study Commission on Higher Education Finance, and a member of the Association of Governing Boards Council of Presidents.

Dr. Layzell received a BA degree in History from Millikin University in Decatur, Illinois, and JD and MAPA degrees from the University of Illinois.

Dr. Richard G. Rhoda is also serving in a consulting capacity as a temporary employee to assist with the development of our updated public agenda for South Carolina. After 17 years of service, he retired in December 2014 as Executive Director of the Tennessee Higher Education Commission. In recognition of his successful tenure, the Commission elected Rhoda as Executive Director Emeritus. Dr. Rhoda dedicated his entire career to higher education in Tennessee, first joining the Tennessee Board of Regents (TBR) as a graduate student in 1973. Over the next 12 years he assumed a progression of staff responsibilities, eventually becoming the executive assistant to the Chancellor. In 1985, Dr. Rhoda joined the administration of Tennessee State University, the state's 1890 land-grant university. He returned to the TBR in 1990 as vice chancellor for administration, where he assumed a series of interim appointments as president of Nashville State Community College, chancellor of the TBR, and president of Austin Peay State University. In 1995, Dr. Rhoda joined the faculty of Vanderbilt University and was the charter assistant director of the Peabody Center for Education Policy which was created that year to be a national policy research center. In 1997, he briefly returned to the TBR as senior vice chancellor for academic affairs and strategic planning before being called upon to head the Tennessee Higher Education Commission (THEC). Over the span of his tenure at THEC, Dr. Rhoda chaired the legislative committee that designed the Lottery Scholarship program, assumed executive responsibility for the Tennessee Student Assistance Corporation, and contributed to the design and implementation of the Complete College Tennessee Act of 2010 and the Drive to 55. THEC is recognized for its leadership in public policy and higher education policy analysis.

Dr. Rhoda earned a BA in History, MA in Education, and PhD in higher education administration, all from Vanderbilt University.