

# TICUA Policy Update

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February 20, 2009

## No New Revenue Projected for TELS

According to data provided by the Tennessee Higher Education Commission, there will be no new dollars available for enhancements to the Tennessee Education Lottery Scholarship programs. Based on conservative revenue estimations the expenses for existing lottery scholarships could result in an \$8.2 million shortfall. Even liberal revenue estimations project a \$1.4 million shortfall. Even with these estimates there have been a number of bills introduced to expand the reach of the TELS program.

TICUA is not recommending any dollar changes to the program but is proposing the elimination of the TELS GPA in favor of using the institutional GPA. Earlier estimates of this change indicate that it would have a negligible financial impact on the program.

## Strings are Attached to Stimulus

According to Finance and Administration Commissioner Dave Goetz there is approximately \$500 million in the Tennessee portion of the stimulus targeted for public higher education. To receive these funds, however, the State must first restore the \$58 million it cut from higher education this past year and not reduce funding in the upcoming budget cycle. If these terms are not met, the State may not qualify for the higher education component of the stimulus. At this point officials seem to be scratching their heads on where the restorative \$58 million will come from. Goetz estimated that the Tennessee tax revenue is “on a path to losing over \$1 billion” this year.

## Proprietary Schools Want to Dictate Transfer of Credit

Tennessee’s non-regionally accredited proprietary colleges have introduced a bill (SB1301/HB1222) that will mandate that Tennessee’s colleges and universities not discriminate transfer credits based on national or regional accreditation. The bill indicates that accreditation should not play the primary role in determining acceptance as long as the student attended a school recognized by the US Secretary of Education.

TICUA is opposed to this bill for various reasons. The State of Tennessee has no place in determining how credits are evaluated by campuses. As well, there is a stark difference between SACS and national accreditation when it comes to determination of “qualified faculty.” SACS holds a much higher faculty credentialing standard. TICUA staff have already registered their opposition to the bills with both sponsors.

## **Student Life Bills Introduced**

There have been at least three bills introduced that could impact the student life arenas of TICUA member campuses. SB1164/HB1107 requires public and private institutions of higher education to accept proof of immunization from measles, mumps, and rubella derived from an antibody titer test in lieu of proof of vaccination. SB1825 requires private institutions of higher education, as public institutions are required, to notify parents or legal guardians of a student under the age of 21 if the student commits a disciplinary violation with respect to use or possession of alcohol or controlled substances. And SB1782 requires every higher education institution's hazing policy to include a one-year suspension for instigating or participating in hazing.

TICUA has contacted the chief student affairs officers on all campuses for feedback on these bills.