

TICUA Policy Update
March 2, 2006

Burks Proposes \$20 million Increase for Higher Education

During the March 1st Senate Education Committee hearing, Senator Charlotte Burks proposed an amendment to the higher education budget that would provide for a \$20 million improvement for operations. Voting on her amendment has been deferred to next week. The delay will allow for Dr. Robert Ruble to testify on the TSAC Budget request and a more full discussion on the amendment.

Dr. Claude Pressnell and Heather Jack of the TICUA staff met with each member of the Senate Education Committee to promote an increase for the state's need-based aid program. This morning Dr. Pressnell sent an open letter to the committee asking that they consider the placing the \$20 million in the Tennessee Student Assistance Award (TSAA).

To access the open letter go to http://www.ticua.org/104th_second_session

Students Need MORE Encouragement!

With nearly \$35 million in student aid directed toward 9,000 of our students this year, it is hard to believe that only 45 students want to say thank you! But as of this morning that is the number of students who have taken the time to send a note to their elected officials.

The time to mobilize your students is NOW. Higher education budget hearings are taking place and lawmakers are beginning to consider appropriation requests. This next week Tennessee Student Assistance Corporation officials will testify before the House Finance Ways & Means Committee concerning a possible increase in TSAA. There are bills in both the House and Senate that request an increase in Hope Scholarships. It is unlikely increases will occur unless our students make their voices heard.

TSAA recipients are asked to join their public student counterparts by going to the Tennessee Student Aid Alliance's Action Center to write notes concerning the need-based aid program. Go to www.tnsaa.org and click on Action Center.

TICUA member TELS recipients are urged to go to the TICUA website's Action Center to write notes of thanks for Hope scholarship program. They can reach the Action Center by going to www.ticua.org/action_center

Please encourage your students to take action today!

TICUA Institutions Help Students Retain TELS

Students receiving the Tennessee Education Lottery Scholarships are more likely to retain the scholarship into the next year if they attend a TICUA member campus. According to data released by the Tennessee Higher Education Commission, the retention rates are as follows: TICUA - 61%, University of Tennessee – 56%, TBR Universities – 49%, TBR Community Colleges – 43%.

The report also indicates that 50% of the students receiving the elite General Assembly Merit Scholarship are enrolled at four institutions. These include Vanderbilt University, Rhodes College, University of the South – Sewanee, and University of Tennessee – Knoxville.