

CollegeforTN.org

Questions and Answers

Overview of CollegeforTN.org

CollegeforTN.org is the online, one-stop college shop where students can plan, prepare, pay and apply for college (also known as a Mentor site). CollegeforTN.org allows students and their parents to create an academic plan, select a postsecondary institution, research financial aid opportunities, apply online and more all in one online location. The primary focus of the site is undergraduate education. However, this system does provide information on graduate education programs.

CollegeForTN.org gives colleges and universities the opportunity to reach out to students on a local, regional, or national level to help them prepare for the collegiate experience by providing them with an interactive medium through which to explore postsecondary education options in Tennessee. CollegeforTN.org offers access to information and admissions applications for public and private colleges and universities within Tennessee. The student is responsible for the standard fee charged by a college or university upon submitting an application for admission, but otherwise, the site is provided free of charge.

Background of CollegeforTN.org

In 2000, the Tennessee Independent Colleges and Universities Association (TICUA) contracted with the XAP Corporation to create a mentor system for the private colleges and universities in Tennessee. This web site was known as Tennessee Mentor (tnmentor.org).

In 2005, the Department of Education contracted with the XAP Corporation to create an online web portal for the purpose of determining the Tennessee Education Lottery Scholarship (TELS) eligibility of Tennessee high school students. The tnmentor.org web site was renewed and expanded to include all public and private colleges and universities in Tennessee and the name of the web site changed to CollegeforTN.org. The new contact required a new agreement with all participating institutions. This contract is good through May 2010.

What role do the high schools play in CollegeforTN.org?

Middle and high school students, in conjunction with their parents, will use CollegeforTN.org to learn more about postsecondary education. The student web portal provides audiences with the ability to take virtual campus tours of public and private Tennessee institutions. Students can create academic plans based on Tennessee high school graduation requirements and their choice colleges' entrance requirements. Online admissions applications and the FAFSA are pre-populated with student profile information to help streamline the process.

High school counselors using supported student information systems upload and verify student information electronically through CollegeforTN.org (rather than through manual entry into Egrands), creating an electronic transcript for each student. This transcript is

then downloaded by TSAC to determine TELS eligibility. Students and counselors also have the ability to send these electronic transcripts to Tennessee institutions for admissions purposes.

The upload process varies based on the different student information systems at the high school level. Upload training on the processes will be ongoing.

What role does the Tennessee Student Assistance Corporation play in CollegeforTN.org?
Once an upload takes place by a high school, TSAC will then download this information and verify TELS eligibility using these transcripts. TSAC outreach specialists are knowledgeable of the site's capabilities and features and encourage its use.

How is TN Gear Up Involved in CollegeforTN.org?

This web site is being used as part of the cohort curriculum process for the GEARUP TN sites (Campbell, Cocke, Grundy, Hardeman, Johnson, Lake, Meigs, Union and Wayne). All students who receive GEAR UP TN services are asked to set-up student accounts on CollegeforTN.org

What roles do the Tennessee postsecondary institutions play in CollegeforTN.org?

First, to be included on CollegeforTN.org, each Tennessee higher education institution is required to sign an institutional agreement. Institutions must also sign a transcript agreement in order to receive electronic transcripts. The benefits of participation on this web site include:

1. Inclusion in the Campus Tour: The campus tour allows students to conduct research about colleges in Tennessee.
 - In the Campus Tour section of the web site, colleges and universities have the ability to update their campus information by adding current photographs, video feeds, etc. to highlight their unique campus characteristics to potential students
 - The data on the colleges and universities is updated by a national data base house (Winter Green Orchard House) once a year (between August and November). However, national databases often don't contain the most up-to-date information. Colleges and universities are able and encouraged to update their information in real time as often as they want or feel needed. Institutions also have the ability to turn off the Winter-Green Orchard House annual update. We recommend that each institution choose this option and take full advantage of the ability to update their own Campus Tour data as often as they are able. "Last updated" dates are viewable by students.
2. Colleges and universities will have the ability to receive and retrieve student transcript information from Tennessee high schools (and in the near future campuses will also have the ability to send and receive to one another) through this web site.

High School Transcript Exchange:

- Currently the system can only accept high school transcripts in the PESC standard TS130 format. The current output formats of high school transcript data are HTML, PDF and Flat File (text file). The Flat File (text

file) is preformatted in the TS130 format so if a higher education institution's system receives information in this format they will be compatible. Institutions have the ability to designate any delimiter they need for the output of the transcript as well as application data.

- In fall 2007, when the updated version of the Control Center goes live, the system will begin accepting PESC XML format to upload and download transcript data on Beta (test environment). In early 2008, the system will go live using the PESC XML format.

College to College Transcript Exchange:

- In the near future, for those Tennessee higher education institutions that participate in the transcript exchange, institutions will have the option to send and receive student transcripts to one another. This feature does not require institutions to send all college to college transcripts electronically, just provides the option.
3. Colleges and universities will have the ability to create exclusive on-line applications at no cost, subject to prior THEC and TICUA approval. Admissions applications are prepopulated with student profile information, simplifying the application process. Applications submitted through CollegeforTN.org are official applications.

What role does the Tennessee Higher Education Commission play in CollegeforTN.org?

The Tennessee Higher Education Commission has been charged with implementing and evaluating the web site (CollegeforTN.org).

How will CollegeforTN.org be promoted?

Beginning in fall 2007, all TSAC and GEAR UP TN publications will list CollegeforTN.org as the primary source of postsecondary education information in Tennessee. TSAC, THEC and TDOE field representatives will be encouraging the use of the site in 8th-12th grade classrooms. Educational supplies imprinted with the URL address will be distributed to students and parents across the state.

THEC representatives will continue to present CollegeforTN.org at various educational conferences. Tagged KnowHow2GO radio and television advertisements (created by the Lumina Foundation for Education, the Ad Council and ACE) will direct students to the site.

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