

TICUA Policy Update
February 17, 2006

\$200 million Excess Lottery Funds

It was reported during this week's State Senate Education Committee hearing that there may be as much as \$200 million in excess lottery funds this year. This would be after the scholarships are awarded at the current level and Governor Bredesen's pre-K reading program receives its \$25 million.

During the hearing Senator Cohen formally made a motion to have THEC Executive Director Rich Rhoda to gather Charles Manning (TBR), John Peterson (UT), Claude Pressnell (TICUA), and Bob Ruble (TSAC) to "come up with a proposal on what to do with the \$200 million."

TICUA has already urged lawmakers to consider using the excess funds to increase the Hope Scholarships as well as supplement the state's need based aid program (TSAA). Preliminary figures indicate that it would take about \$100 million to increase the base scholarship by \$2,000 and another \$70 million to fully fund the TSAA.

Senator Cohen Pushes for Larger Scholarships

Senator Steve Cohen has introduced Senate Bill 2683 which would increase the Hope Scholarship amounts. The bill proposes to increase the four year base scholarship from \$3,300 to \$4,000 and the two year scholarship from \$1,650 to \$2,000. The bill has already garnered bipartisan support in the Senate.

Winningham Joins Woodson to Sponsor Foster Care Bill

House Education Chair Les Winningham has agreed to serve as the House sponsor of a bill that will expand the college choices of TELS eligible foster care students. Late last year the TELS statute was amended to increase the amount of the Hope Scholarships for foster care students attending public universities. This amendment allows those same students to use the benefit at eligible independent colleges and universities.

Just yesterday the Senate version of the bill received bipartisan support from five additional Senators.

Time to Mobilize Students!

Students benefiting from either the Tennessee Student Assistance Award (TSAA) and/or the Tennessee Education Lottery Scholarship (TELS) programs are being urged to write their elected officials. Two separate web-based action centers have been set-up for student action.

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, TBR, and UT Join to Fight Amendment to CALEA

TBR Chancellor Charles Manning has drafted a letter of opposition to the FCC amendment to the Communication Assistance Law Enforcement Act of 1994. This amendment would remove the higher education exemption thus requiring campuses to provide easy access to all communication technologies for surveillance. TICUA president Claude Pressnell and UT president John Peterson have agreed to join as signatories to this letter.

TICUA Celebrates 50 Years!

This next Tuesday, February 21, 2006 TICUA member presidents will be joined by over 50 members of the Tennessee General Assembly to celebrate the 50th Anniversary of the Tennessee Independent Colleges and Universities Association. TICUA has spent the past five decades seeking ways to increase the affordability of college through scholarships, government student aid, and collaboration. Tennessee Economic and Community Development Commissioner Matt Kisber will serve as the evening's keynote speaker.