

# TICUA Policy Update

---

April 23, 2009

## Transfer of Credit Debated

The House Higher Education Subcommittee discussed a bill that would codify the requirement for institutions to not use accreditation as the sole criteria for accepting transfer credits. The bill was brought to the General Assembly by nationally accredited proprietary colleges. Whereas the language of the bill mirrors that of the June 2003 SACS Position Statement on Transfer of Credit, it marks the first time in recent memory that a State law has been proposed to guide academic policies at independent colleges and universities.

TICUA testified against the bill noting that Congress examined this issue closely and chose to not dictate transfer of credit policies but rather to ask campuses to make their policies widely known. TICUA also distributed to the Subcommittee a chart outlining the significant differences in faculty credentialing requirements between SACS and national accrediting bodies. It was also pointed out that accreditation is a voluntary process and that many proprietary colleges have chosen to be regionally accredited and that others may do the same.

## Hazing Bill Moving in the House

Representative Mark Maddox moved a bill out of Subcommittee which allows campuses to suspend for one year any student found to be instigating or participating in student hazing. Previously the bill mandated suspension but TICUA asked that the bill be amended to make suspension permissive rather than mandatory. Both, Rep. Maddox and Senate sponsor Roy Herron agreed to the amendment.

The bill will be heard in the Senate Education Committee next week as well in the full House Education Committee. The bill has gained some attention this week in light of a well publicized hazing incident involving a sorority at the University of Tennessee-Chattanooga.

## Senate Education to Consider Parental Notification Bill

This next week the Senate Education Committee will consider a bill that requires TICUA members to notify parents of students under the age of 21 of any violation of institutional policies related to alcohol or drugs. Currently FERPA gives permission to colleges to contact parents but does not require notification. If passed, this law would mandate notification.

TICUA's primary opposition to this bill is to ensure that the rights of private colleges remain independent of State law when it comes to discretionary institutional policies. FERPA clearly allows the colleges to decide for themselves if parental notification is in the best interest of the student based on all the facts of each individual case. It enables the trained student life professional to take into account any mitigating circumstances that may impact the appropriateness of this notification. TICUA works

diligently to preserve the independent rights of campuses. Many TICUA member presidents have expressed to the Senator their desire to allow the campuses to decide for themselves if they wish to make parental notification mandatory or not.