

# TICUA Policy Update

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January 15, 2009

## Change in General Assembly Leadership

The 106<sup>th</sup> General Assembly got off to an exciting start with a Democratic upset in the House of Representatives. For the first time since the end of the Civil War, the Republican Party holds the majority in both chambers of the Tennessee General Assembly. However, that did not stop the Democrats from electing their own Republican choice for Speaker of the House by a vote of 50 (49 Democrats and one Republican) to 49 (all Republicans). Second term Representative Kent Williams was elected as the House Speaker. Speaker Williams says that he is committed to a bi-partisan approach to governing and will split the leadership of the standing committees between the two parties. Republicans, still smarting from the loss, are not sure how they are going to handle their party relationship with Williams.

The Senate was much quieter. With a 19 to 14 Republican majority, Ron Ramsey was re-elected as Speaker of the Senate and Lt. Governor. Senator Jamie Woodson was elected Speaker Pro-Tempore.

## Constitutional Officers Elected

The Republican controlled General Assembly elected Republicans to the Constitutional Officers positions. Former Representative Tre Hargett was elected Secretary of State replacing Riley Darnell. Former Deputy Governor to Don Sundquist, Justin Wilson, was elected comptroller over John Morgan. Shelby County Commissioner David Lillard was elected Treasurer over Dale Sims.

The Constitutional officers play a key role in higher education by sitting on the Boards of the Tennessee Student Assistance Corporation, Tennessee Higher Education Commission and the BEST Board.

## Senate Education under New Leadership

Newly elected Senator Delores Gresham has been named the Chair of the Senate Education Committee. Gresham was elected to the seat vacated by former Lt. Governor John Wilder. She served on the House Education Committee prior to running for the State Senate seat. Her district includes Freed-Hardeman University. Senator Jamie Woodson, former Education Committee Chair, was elected Speaker Pro-Tem, thus removing her from the Chair position but remains as a key member of the Committee.

It is expected that the House will announce standing committee assignments early next week.

## **General Assembly Recesses for Three Weeks**

In keeping with the beginning of each new General Assembly, the members will take a three week break to organize committee work and move offices. It is expected that the legislators will return for official business on Monday, February 9, 2009.

## **TICUA Annual Meeting**

“Navigating a Challenging Landscape” is the theme for the upcoming TICUA Annual Meeting for member presidents. This year’s meeting will address three important issues confronting the college and university presidency; conflict resolution, successfully navigating the economic downturn, and the implementation of the higher education act. The meeting will be held in Nashville at the Historic Hermitage Hotel on Tuesday and Wednesday, February 24 and 25, 2009. Tuesday evening will be the TICUA Gala Reception for State and Congressional Legislators.

[www.ticua.org/annual\\_meeting](http://www.ticua.org/annual_meeting)