

# TICUA Policy Update

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January 14, 2015

## Haslam Calls for Special Session

Governor Bill Haslam has called for an “extraordinary (special) session” of the 109<sup>th</sup> General Assembly to address the issue of Medicaid expansion dubbed “Insure Tennessee” by passing a supportive joint resolution. The Governor’s approach to expansion is somewhat unique when compared to states by utilizing private providers and not increasing taxes. The special session is slated to begin on February 2<sup>nd</sup> following the traditional organizational session which began this past Tuesday.

Medicaid expansion is a controversial issue in Tennessee. How legislators interact with one another and the administration may serve as a harbinger for how they will deal with legislative matters during the regular session.

These events push back the start date of the first regular session of the 109<sup>th</sup> General Assembly. It is estimated that the Governor’s State of the State address will not occur any earlier than February 9<sup>th</sup> which will serve to kick-off the regular session.

Even with the late start, leadership in both chambers indicate that the first session of the 109<sup>th</sup> Tennessee General Assembly will move quickly. The bill filing deadline for both chambers has been set for February 12<sup>th</sup>. The Senate has set early April as the date when all committees should have their work completed, indicating that they are aiming for adjournment in late April. With such hot topics as firearms, K-12 academic standards, and the budget, it will be interesting to see if the leadership can move legislation through the committee structure in time to hit the adjournment target.

The *TNReport* provides a good summary of the issues surrounding the special session:  
<http://tnreport.com/2015/01/08/haslam-calls-special-session-tn-general-assembly-begin-feb-2/>

## TICUA to Honor House and Senate Education Chairs

The TICUA Board of Directors voted unanimously during their fall 2014 Board meeting to honor Senate Education Chair Dolores Gresham and House Education Chair Harry Brooks. Both Gresham and Brooks were key to mitigating the loss of lottery scholarship aid to students attending four year universities in order to fund the Tennessee Promise. Both Gresham and Brooks have been longstanding supporters of TICUA over the years.

TICUA will confer the 2015 TICUA Harold Bradley Legislative Leadership Award upon Chairman Brooks and the 2015 William Baird Legislative award upon Chairman Gresham during the 59<sup>th</sup> TICUA Annual Meeting to be held on February 17<sup>th</sup>. These are the highest state level awards for state legislators given by the Association.

## **SARA Legislation**

TICUA has been working for over a year with the TN Board of Regents, University of Tennessee, and the Tennessee Higher Education Commission in drafting statutory language to allow Tennessee to participate in the State Authorization Reciprocity Agreement. Legislative language has finally been agreed upon and is being drafted in bill form by legislative legal staff. If passed, TICUA member institutions could submit their online programs to the Tennessee portal for delivery in all states participating in SARA without state-by-state authorization. This measure is expected to save tens of thousands of dollars in fees as well as provide significant regulatory relief for member campuses.

## **TICUA Annual Meeting February 17 and 18**

"Independent Higher Education: Preparing Students for an Ever-Changing World" is the theme for the 59<sup>th</sup> TICUA Annual Meeting to be held on Tuesday and Wednesday, February 17 and 18, 2015. This year's policy focus will include sessions with Education Chairs Senator Dolores Gresham and Representative Harry Brooks, Finance Chairs Senator Randy McNally and Representative Charles Sargent, House Speaker Beth Harwell, and Lt. Governor Ron Ramsey and others. The TICUA Legislative Reception will conclude the events on the 17<sup>th</sup>. The morning of the 18<sup>th</sup> will include the President's Open Forum Breakfast.

Once again, this year's meeting will be held in the conference facilities of Waller, Lansden, Dortch & Davis in the Nashville City Center. The reception, however, will be held across the street from the Nashville City Center in the Ball Room of the Historic Hermitage Hotel.

Register today by going to [http://www.ticua.org/meetings\\_resources/annual\\_meeting](http://www.ticua.org/meetings_resources/annual_meeting)

## **TICUA to Arrange Congressional Visits**

TICUA will once again make arrangements to visit the offices of Tennessee's delegates to Congress during the upcoming NAICU Annual Meeting in Washington, DC. The meeting will be held on Sunday, February 1<sup>st</sup> through Wednesday, February 4<sup>th</sup>. Hill visits are being scheduled for Tuesday, February 2<sup>nd</sup>. If you plan to attend the NAICU Annual Meeting or will be in DC during that period and wish to join the visits please contact Dr. Claude Pressnell ([pressnell@ticua.org](mailto:pressnell@ticua.org)).