



TICUA

TENNESSEE INDEPENDENT COLLEGES
AND UNIVERSITIES ASSOCIATION

2025

CASE STATEMENT

TICUA
TENNESSEE INDEPENDENT COLLEGES
AND UNIVERSITIES ASSOCIATION





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A LETTER FROM OUR NEW PRESIDENT



Transforming Lives, Strengthening Communities

Partners,

At Tennessee's 34 private colleges and universities, we believe higher education has the power to transform lives and strengthen the fabric of our communities. Postsecondary education with a foundation in the liberal arts does much more than train students for jobs after graduation. Our institutions prepare students to be lifelong learners, to think critically about the human experience, and to engage in society with the hope of making contributions for the common good.

As LeMoyne-Owen President Dr. Christopher B. Davis puts it:

"...A liberal arts education cultivates the human, cultural, and ethical dimensions of learning, producing graduates who are not only skilled but also thoughtful, adaptable, and socially aware."

TICUA institutions are deeply rooted in the cities and towns they call home, serving as engines of

opportunity and centers for culture and connection. Our TICUA students graduate at higher rates than their peers at public institutions, and our institutions produce more workforce-ready college graduates than any other higher education sector in the state.

Thank you for taking the time to read this publication and learn more about our students—where they come from and where they are going. We believe they are sure to make Tennessee's communities stronger and our state's future brighter.

We appreciate your continued partnership and belief in the value of private higher education. It's through collaboration that we make this transformational work possible. Together, we are shaping the next generation and creating engaged citizens that benefit communities across Tennessee and beyond.

Cameron Conn, PhD
TICUA President



TICUA AT A GLANCE

TENNESSEE INDEPENDENT COLLEGES & UNIVERSITIES

34 77,600+
CAMPUSES STUDENTS

ABOUT TICUA

The Tennessee Independent Colleges and Universities Association (TICUA) works with Tennessee's 34 private colleges and universities to collaborate in three main areas to better serve the state and advocate for educational opportunities for its citizens.



PUBLIC POLICY



COST CONTAINMENT



PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT



TRANSFORMING LIVES

TICUA students come from every county in the state of Tennessee, every state in the nation, and 160+ nations.

160+
NATIONS

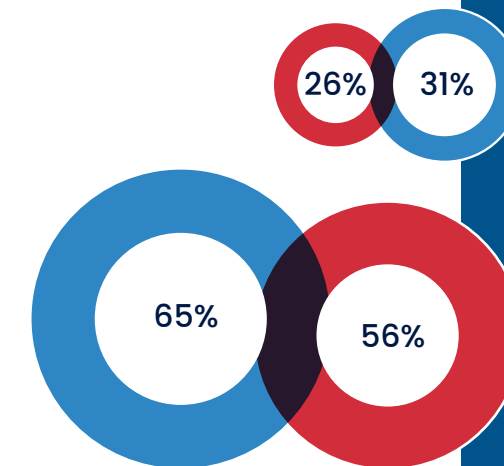
OUR STUDENTS GRADUATE ON TIME AND WORKFORCE-READY



TICUA member campuses awarded more degrees than any other higher education sector in the state.



Enrollment at TICUA member campuses increased 1% from Fall 2023.



TICUA member institutions enrolled 26% of the students in Tennessee but awarded 31% of all degrees in the state.

65% percent of students at Tennessee's independent colleges graduate within 6 years, compared to 56% at the State's public universities.

STRENGTHENING COMMUNITIES

Our Students Fill Critical Job Pipelines

In 2023-24, member colleges and universities graduated nearly 4,500 healthcare professionals, 3,500 STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math) degrees, nearly 3,000 business and management leaders, and 2,100 educators.



4,500
HEALTHCARE



3,500
STEM



3,000
BUSINESS



2,100
EDUCATION

21k
EMPLOYEES

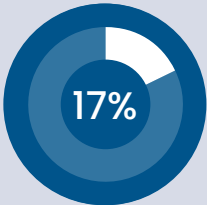
TICUA institutions employ over 21,000 people in Tennessee and are often the largest employers in the communities they serve.



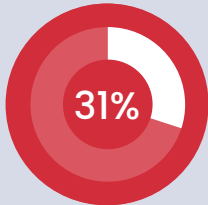
ACCESS

TARGETING THE UNDERSERVED

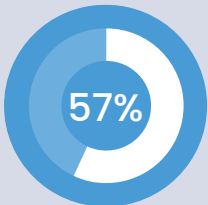
Providing Access to Students of Diverse Backgrounds



of degrees were
awarded to adults 25+



of undergraduates
are students of color



are women



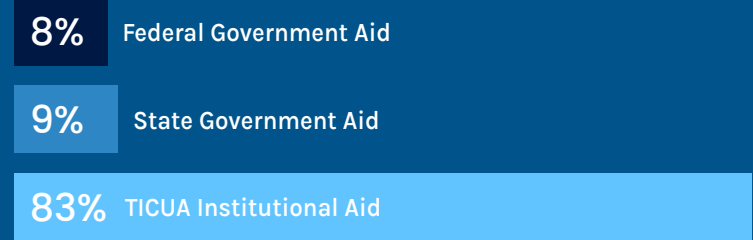
Dr. Jason McConnell
President | Lincoln Memorial University

“At LMU, we are committed to making higher education more accessible for students across Tennessee, ensuring they have both the opportunity to attend and the support to complete their degrees. We offer comprehensive financial aid, scholarships, and flexible payment plans to reduce the barriers to enrollment. Once students are here, we provide a network of resources, including academic advising, tutoring, and success coaching, to help them stay on course toward graduation.”



WE ENSURE STUDENTS OF ALL INCOME LEVELS HAVE ACCESS TO A LIBERAL ARTS EDUCATION

TICUA institutions provide the largest portion of student aid.



93% Nearly ALL first-time freshmen receive some form of aid.

STATE GOVERNMENT STUDENT AID

12,111
7,310
875

students attending TICUA institutions received a Tennessee Education Lottery Scholarship (TELS) award.

students attending TICUA institutions received the Tennessee Student Assistance Award (TSAA).

students attending TICUA institutions received the Tennessee Promise scholarship.



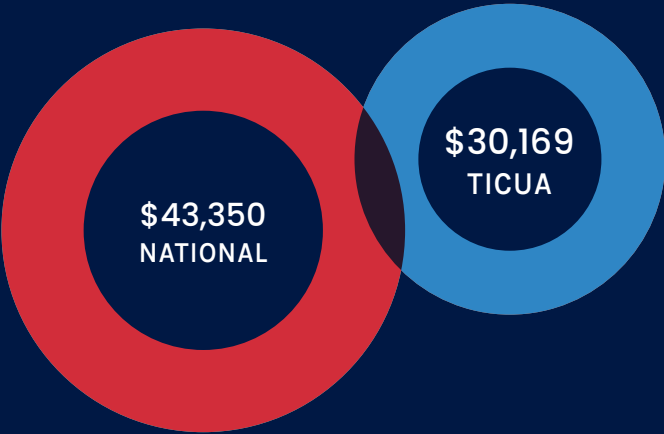
Tandi Mills
Elementary Education Major | Class of 2025

“The support I’ve received here at LeMoyne-Owen College has been invaluable. From scholarships that ease financial burdens to relationships with mentors who genuinely invest in my growth, my campus has provided endless opportunities. These resources have not only empowered me but have also allowed me to build on what I was given, creating a foundation for a successful future. LeMoyne-Owen College has been the true source of unlocking the confidence to embody Black excellence.”

WE ARE MORE AFFORDABLE than the average private college in the U.S.

In 2024-2025, tuition and fees at TICUA four-year member colleges and universities averaged \$13,181 less than the national average (\$30,169 compared to \$43,350).

Average Tuition & Fee Charges 2024 - 2025



FEDERAL PELL GRANTS

PELL-ELIGIBLE STUDENTS FIND OPPORTUNITY AT TICUA INSTITUTIONS

TICUA Member Institutions support low-income students. In fact, seven of our campuses have 50% or more students who are Pell-eligible. Lane College has the highest percentage of Pell-eligible students enrolled in any higher education institution in the state.

On average, doubling the Pell Grant would cover 49% of the tuition at TICUA's 34 institutions and 100% at Tennessee's state universities.

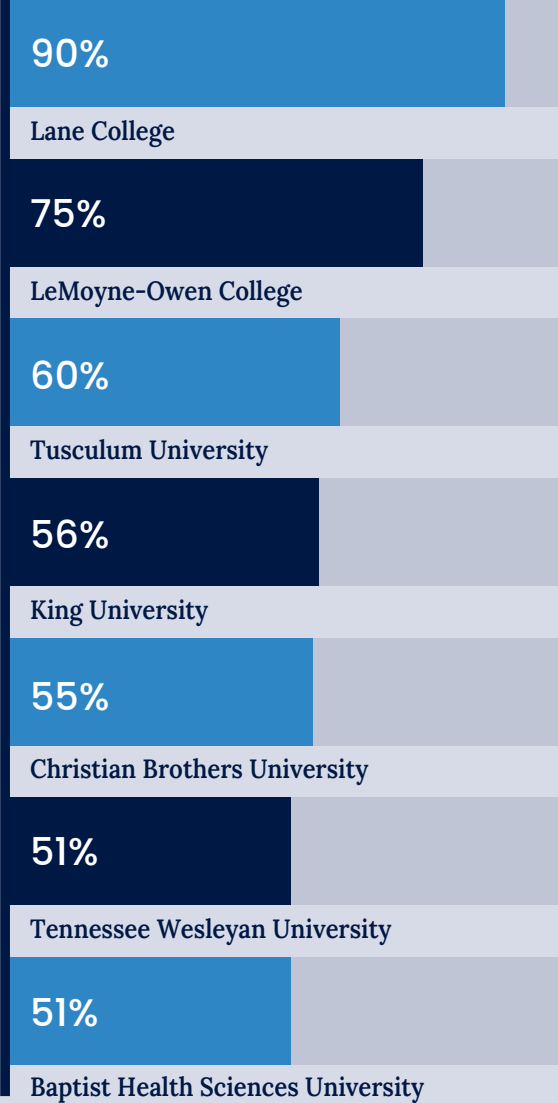
17,101 GRANTS

10,233 of these Pell Grants go to Tennessee students attending a TICUA member campus.

\$6,162 ON AVERAGE

The per-student average yearly award amount for the Federal Pell Grant totaled \$6,162.

PERCENT OF PELL-ELIGIBLE STUDENTS



DOUBLE THE PELL!

TICUA is proud to work with partners to continue the effort in Tennessee to encourage the federal government to DOUBLE THE PELL GRANT. While some progress has been made, there is still work to be done. The Pell Grant is the best way to ensure ALL low-income students receive a college education that best fits their academic and social needs.

A CALL TO ACTION

Encourage your members of Congress to Double the Pell Grant and extend the award for all students from families with a combined family income of \$125k or less. This would:



Increase college access and affordability



Provide students with more options and opportunities to fit their academic and social needs



Be a vehicle for free community college and offer extra living expense support for low-income students



Promote diversity and economic integration throughout our nation's higher education system



Make the average public four-year college free



Ensure the inclusion of all American colleges and universities



Simplify access to federal aid for students and families



Leverage bi-partisan support to expand the program over time



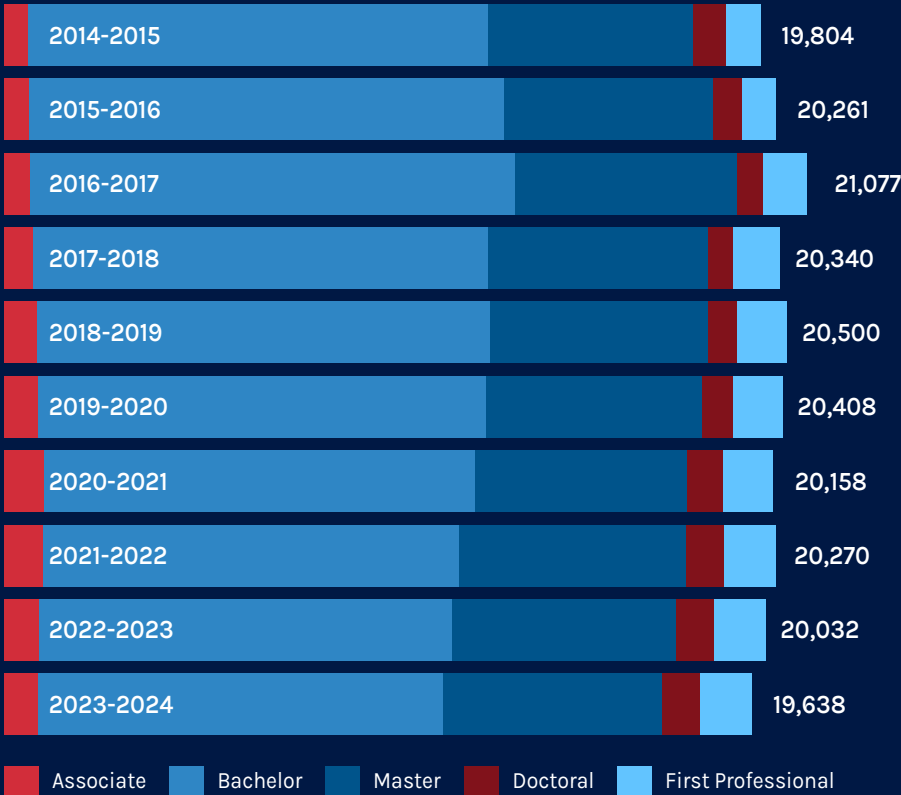
PROVEN SUCCESS

200k
DEGREES

TICUA institutions
have awarded
202,488 degrees
in the last decade.

PROVEN SUCCESS OVER TIME

Degrees awarded By TICUA Member
Institutions, 10-Year Trend (2014-2024)



BUILDING COMMUNITY

“Choosing Bethel University has been one of the most impactful decisions of my life. Bethel offers an environment that encourages both academic achievement and personal, spiritual growth. The dedication of our faculty, staff, and administration is evident in the time and care they invest in each student, reflecting a commitment to our success that goes beyond the classroom. Here, I’m valued as an individual rather than a number. Bethel is truly a place that shapes young minds for meaningful careers and lives of service.”



Kelly Krack
SGA President & Nursing Major
Class of 2025



TICUA INSTITUTIONS ENSURE STUDENT SUCCESS

Students at TICUA institutions are consistently outperforming their peers at state institutions. Our colleges and universities credit this success to an intentional focus on:



COMMUNITY



CAREER
SERVICES



SUPPORT
SERVICES



CAREER SERVICES

“Completing my program at Lee University greatly facilitated my transition from student to professional. The consistent support from faculty and mentors provided me with a clear understanding of the realities of my field. My education equipped me not only for the relevant certifications but also to become a compassionate and relatable professional in my area of expertise.”



Zorrya “Zo” Kelley
Master of Science in Athletic Training
Class of 2023

SUPPORT SERVICES

“I would quite literally not be here without the professors in Belmont University’s Massey College of Business. They believe in me. They’ve put me in positions I never would have thought of. It means a lot when you have people who see something in you that you don’t see, and they nurture that and help you grow into the person you are today.”



Manon Neal
Management, BBA | Class of 2024

COLLABORATION

COLLABORATING TO SAVE TAXPAYER DOLLARS

Independent colleges and universities save taxpayers millions of dollars each year.



There are no direct state appropriations to TICUA Member Institutions.



Tennessee taxpayers saved **\$289 million** in 2023-2024 by educating students at TICUA institutions.



The state of Tennessee invests **less than 5 cents** on the dollar to assist Tennessee students on TICUA member campuses.



Dr. Paul Conn
President, Lee University

“When I graduated from high school in Tennessee – about a hundred years ago – I considered several out-of-state colleges. But I chose to stay in Tennessee for college and I’m so glad I did! Today I see hundreds of Lee freshmen make that same choice. Lee is only one of dozens of terrific Tennessee independent colleges, and I believe when students decide to stay in-state for college, they can find a school that suits their needs perfectly.”



CREATING EARLY OPPORTUNITIES FOR STUDENTS TO COMPLETE THEIR DEGREE

DUAL ENROLLMENT

5,000
STUDENTS

Partnering with more than 150 high schools, nearly 5,000 students received dual enrollment grants at TICUA institutions in 2023-2024.
SOURCE: Tennessee Student Assistance Corporation

TRANSFER PATHWAYS

600+ **29%**

More than 600 students transfer to TICUA member institutions from Tennessee community colleges.

of TICUA undergraduate degrees were awarded to transfer students in 2023-2024.
*Excludes Vanderbilt University and Associate Member Institutions

21

institutions participate in the TN Transfer Pathways program, which enables a student to transfer to a 4-year institution without loss of credit or time.

7

institutions have developed reverse articulation agreements that allow students to complete work toward an Associate’s degree from a community college while enrolled at a four-year campus.

STRENGTHENING COMMUNITIES

TICUA INSTITUTIONS STRENGTHEN THE COMMUNITIES THEY SERVE

80+ locations across the state of Tennessee

Our campuses have a direct impact on Tennessee's economy by providing jobs and supplying a highly qualified workforce.

TOP STATE EMPLOYER

21,074

Many private colleges and universities are the largest employers in their counties and are tied directly to the financial health of their local communities. Together, TICUA member institutions employ 21,074 Tennesseans - forming one of the state's largest employers.

IMPORTING INTELLECTUAL CAPITAL

52%

Students come to Tennessee to study. After graduation, they choose to stay in Tennessee to live, work, and raise a family. 52% of students are from other states and countries.

“

Bryan College has been an invaluable partner in supporting Dayton City Schools. Bryan College students actively participate in school events, literacy programs, and after-school initiatives, fostering a stronger school-community bond. Their students bring enthusiasm, fresh perspectives, and a strong commitment to education. Bryan College graduates often transition from student teachers to full-time educators and support staff, strengthening our long-term workforce. From student teaching to volunteer initiatives, Bryan College students consistently contribute to our students' and community's growth and success.”

Trish Newsom, ED.S
Director of Schools | Dayton City Schools



“

HEALTHCARE

Southern College of Optometry (SCO) plays a vital role in cultivating a pipeline of talented, highly trained professionals who make an immediate impact in practices like mine - Spring Hill Eye Care. The students from SCO bring unparalleled dedication and expertise, seamlessly transitioning from students to valued team members who enhance the level of care we provide. I have hired full-time associate doctors who graduated from SCO in 2015, 2023, and 2024. By hiring fellow SCO graduates, we have witnessed firsthand the essential role private colleges like SCO in Tennessee play in strengthening our workforce and ensuring the health and well-being of our community. Southern College of Optometry is instrumental in preparing future doctors who contribute significantly to local businesses and the lives of Tennessee residents.

Dr. Rob Szeliga
Founder & Owner | Spring Hill Eyecare, PLLC



CAREER-READY GRADUATES

Employers across the state rely on TICUA member institutions to provide career-ready graduates.

13,000+

TICUA Institutions awarded over 13,000 HIGH-DEMAND degrees in 2023-2024 to help meet critical workforce needs in BUSINESS, STEM, HEALTHCARE, and EDUCATION.

“

EDUCATION

Bethel has been a partner for decades, having served nearly 300 Ayers Scholar Alumni and operating as a dual enrollment provider for Perry County, Adamsville, and Halls High Schools. When we think of leadership development in our region, we think of Bethel University. In fact, our COO is a Bethel MBA alumni and employs principles learned from his program daily with our team across Tennessee.”

Burton Williams
Chief Executive Officer | Ayers Foundation Trust



In its fifth year, the TICUA Hall of Fame continues to honor remarkable alumni whose achievements reflect the power of private higher education.

The Class of 2024 showcases a wide array of accomplishments, including a civil rights legal architect, innovators in banking and finance, and influential leaders in the arts and healthcare. These honorees exemplify the lasting impact of Tennessee’s private colleges and universities on individuals, communities, and industries in our state and worldwide.

“My commitment to my alma mater is as deep as the roots of that tree, and I’ll continue to do my part to help preserve her legacy and to ensure her future.”
Dr. Clarence Christian

“Dr. Welty epitomized the value of a Tusculum education, becoming career-ready and then using what he learned to better his community. We are honored that Dr. Welty was part of the Tusculum family and grateful he used his success in business to invest in the next generations of Tusculum students...”
Dr. Scott Hummel

“Behind faith and family, King has done the most to impact my life. I was a first-generation college student, and the classmates and teammates I met at King taught me the value of being in community...”
Warren Payne

“Dr. Carla Sanderson’s career is a shining example of dedication, innovation, and leadership in nursing education and higher learning. Her contributions to Union University and beyond have set a standard of excellence that inspires us all...”
Dr. Samuel W. “Dub” Oliver



Jerry Adams
University of the South



Yvonne Griggs Allen
Lane College



Sister Christine Born
Aquinas College



Gust Hubert Cachiaras
Johnson University



Clarence Christian
LeMoyne-Owen College



Debby Fleming
Baptist Health Sciences University



John Hope Franklin
Fisk University



Ashley Gorley
Belmont University



Jeremy Harrell
Trevecca Nazarene University



Ben Hooper
Carson-Newman University



Myles Horton
Cumberland University



Jeffrey Kuhlman
Southern Adventist University



Marilyn Laszlo
Bryan College



Robert Mahley
Maryville College



Martha Morrow
Southern College of Optometry



Warren Payne
King University



Claude Pressnell
Vanderbilt University



David Sampson
Lipscomb University



Carla Sanderson
Union University



Milton Sewell
Freed-Hardeman University



Claire Tucker
Tennessee Wesleyan University

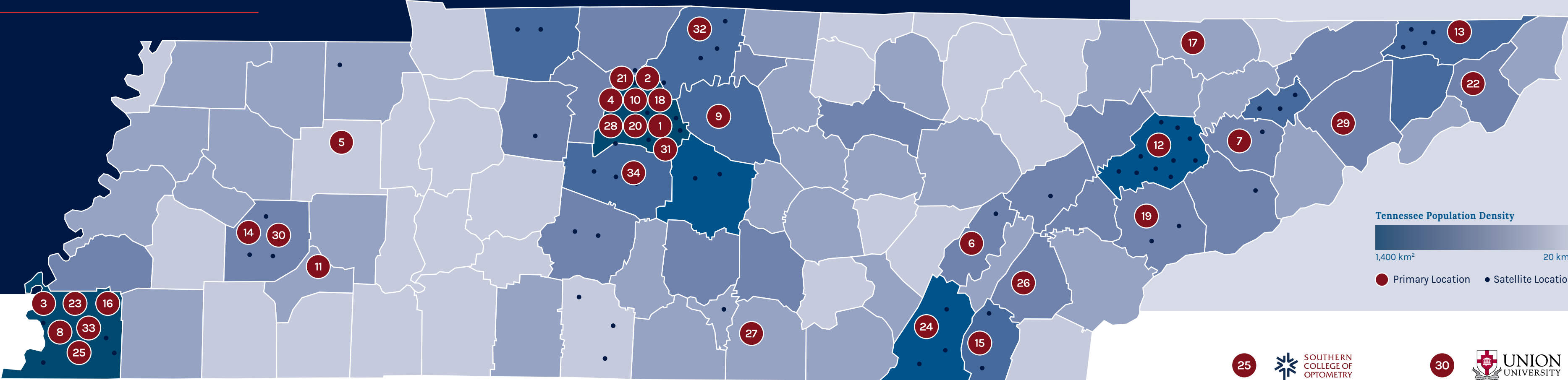


Stanley R. Welty Jr.
Tusculum University



Russell Wigginton
Rhodes College

TICUA CAMPUSES



VITAL STATS

		YEAR FOUNDED	TOTAL ENROLLMENT	DEGREES AWARDED			YEAR FOUNDED	TOTAL ENROLLMENT	DEGREES AWARDED
1	American Baptist College*	1924	45	11	18	Lipscomb University	1891	4,687	1,418
2	Aquinas College	1961	63	10	19	Maryville College	1819	1,136	206
3	Baptist Health Sciences University	1912; 1994	892	169	20	Meharry Medical College	1876	1,226	357
4	Belmont University	1890	8,803	2,155	21	Middle Tennessee School of Anesthesia	1950	235	90
5	Bethel University	1842	3,112	571	22	Milligan University	1866	1,238	308
6	Bryan College	1930	1,704	228	23	Rhodes College	1848	1,859	422
7	Carson-Newman University	1851	2,669	690	24	Southern Adventist University	1892	3,227	632
8	Christian Brothers University	1871	1,565	586	25	Southern College of Optometry	1932	530	135
9	Cumberland University	1842	3,457	636	26	Tennessee Wesleyan University	1857	1,177	315
10	Fisk University	1866	1,058	87	27	The University of the South	1857	1,729	439
11	Freed-Hardeman University	1869	2,301	454	28	Trevecca Nazarene University	1901	3,195	893
12	Johnson University	1893	1004	287	29	Tusculum University	1794	1,109	348
13	King University	1867	1,159	444	30	Union University	1823	2,715	727
14	Lane College	1882	738	100	31	Vanderbilt University	1873	13,575	4,351
15	Lee University	1918	3,714	866	32	Welch College	1942	387	56
16	LeMoyne-Owen College	1862	659	96	33	William R Moore College of Technology*	1939	512	44
17	Lincoln Memorial University	1897	6,090	1,489	34	Williamson College *	1997	60	18

**Associate Members*

ABOUT TICUA

Founded in 1956, the Tennessee Independent Colleges and Universities Association engages Tennessee's private higher education institutions to work collaboratively in the areas of public policy, cost containment, and professional development to serve the state and its citizens. We advocate for educational opportunity and freedom of choice in higher education at the state and federal levels to ensure students are able to attend the college or university that best fits their academic, financial, and career needs.

Thank you to our
TICUA COLLEGIUM MEMBERS.

APOGEE

