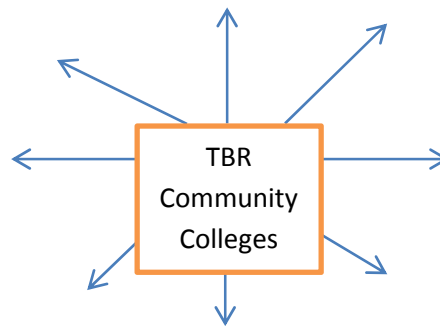


Creating a Consistent TBR Community College Admissions Requirement Plan



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Project Summary

The Tennessee Board of Regents (TBR) is steadily working to find ways to improve the admissions process throughout the system. However, many of the TBR Community Colleges have different policy and procedural interpretations. My goals were to identify what areas were causing the most confusion and look at possible adjustments. Also, I would like to propose an admissions process for students transferring between TBR schools. These goals align with Section 8:3 of the Complete College Tennessee Act of 2010 49-8-101c3:

“(3) As part of its plan, the board shall identify and implement consolidation of services among institutions and standardization of processes between institutions in order to improve efficiency and effectiveness in all functional areas, including, but not limited to, student services, academic support and institutional support.”

Chattanooga State Community College thrives on providing efficient and effective services for incoming students. However, some of the admissions requirements create confusion amongst the staff, which leads to a variety of processes. Often, campus administrators become concerned and question the overall admission requirements established by the Board or at other levels of government. This seems to be consistent with the experiences at other institutions.

Dr. Warren Nichols, Vice Chancellor for Community Colleges, and I discussed possible project possibilities and we decided to focus on the 2010 Tennessee Code 49-8-101c, “Notwithstanding any provision of law to the contrary, the board of regents, in consultation with the Tennessee Higher Education Commission, shall establish a comprehensive statewide community college system of coordinated programs and services to be known as the Tennessee

Community College System (TCCS).” My role in this project was to evaluate and compare the admissions requirements at TBR Community Colleges, the University of Tennessee at Chattanooga (UTC), and the Technical College System of Georgia (TCSG), as well as survey staff from TBR Community Colleges.

The project consisted of the following:

- Comparison of TBR, UTC, and TCSG admissions requirements
- Survey TBR admissions personnel across the state
- Review of existing TBR admission requirements that are identified as barriers
- Suggest modifications to Dr. Nichols

Comparing Immunization, Residency, and Tennessee Eligibility Verification for Entitlements Act with Non-TBR schools

The immunization requirement ranked first as a concern or barrier among those surveyed. Currently, “Tennessee law requires students enrolled full-time in TBR schools to provide proof of two doses of the MMR and Varicella vaccinations prior to the first day of classes of the student’s initial semester at the institution. The MMR vaccine doses must have been administered on or after a student’s first birthday.” (Health) However, for the Technical College System of Georgia, they do not have immunization requirements for general admissions and registration. Some of their health programs require immunizations, but students may register for full-time without any immunization information on file.

A second major concern is determining residency for tuition purposes. TBR Guideline 3:05:01:00 Classifying Students In-State & Out-of-State for Paying College or University Fees & Tuition & for Admission Purposes says:

I. Rules for Determination of Status

- A. Every person having his or her domicile in this State shall be classified "in-state" for fee and tuition purposes and for admission purposes.
- B. Every person not having his or her domicile in this State shall be classified "out-of-state" for said purposes.
- C. The domicile of an un-emancipated person is that of his or her parent, except as provided in section E of this rule.
- D. Un-emancipated students of divorced parents shall be classified "in-state" when one parent, regardless of custodial status, is domiciled in Tennessee, except as provided in section E of this rule.
- E. A student is classified "in-state" for fee and tuition purposes if the student is a citizen of the United States, has resided in Tennessee for at least one (1) year immediately prior to admission and has:
 - 1. Graduated from a Tennessee public secondary school;
 - 2. Graduated from a private secondary school that is located in this state; or
 - 3. Earned a Tennessee high school equivalency diploma.
- F. The spouse of a student classified as "in-state" shall also be classified as "in-state", subject to the requirements of T.C.A. Title 4, Chapter 58.

Many admissions personnel state that the residency classification for tuition purposes policy needs to be revised with more specificity and less room for interpretation. The Technical College System of Georgia simply says, "a student must be a United States Citizen or Eligible Non-Citizen and a resident of the state of Georgia for 12 months before initial enrollment at the college to qualify as an "in-state resident" for admission and tuition purposes. " (Georgia) This is a clear requirement that specifically addresses the in-state concern.

The process for a student to appeal for in-state tuition is also unclear. TBR should be specific to say that documents necessary for an in-state residency appeal should be a valid Tennessee driver's license or state identification, and a mortgage, lease, utility bill, bank statement, Tennessee vehicle registration, Tennessee health insurance proof, or letter from employer. If a

student does not have a valid Tennessee driver's license they can provide 2 additional requirements from the list.

Another requirement that was recognized as a barrier is the Tennessee Eligibility Verification for Entitlements Act (EVEA). EVEA requires public institutions of higher education to verify that persons seeking a "state public benefit" are either a US citizen or "lawfully present" in the United States. Students who have attended a TBR school and are transferring to another TBR institution should have met this requirement and should be presumed to maintain their EVEA eligibility when transferring. However, the EVEA policy was mandated by the state and there are factors to evaluate, such as permanent resident card expirations. The international documents would have to be evaluated on a student by student basis before allowing this information to transfer.

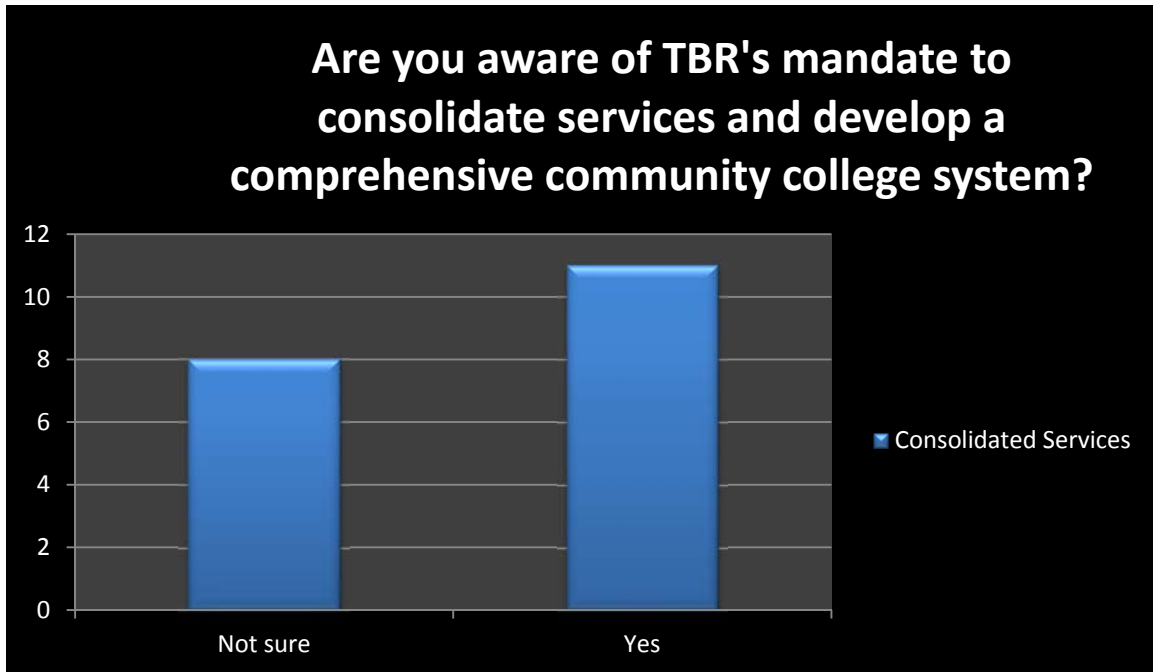
As a recommendation to bring consistency amongst the community colleges, when students transfer from one TBR institution to another, their residency and immunization status should follow them automatically. This would be a visible and effective consolidation of services. If a student has been enrolled full-time at one TBR institution, they should be presumed to have met the immunization requirements when enrolling at another TBR institution. TBR can create a TBR admissions transfer verification policy. The TBR institution can provide that information on the official transcript. For instance, students who transfer from Chattanooga State to UTC can submit their Chattanooga State account summary to avoid the hassles of proving Tennessee residency. If Chattanooga State classifies a student as in-state UTC will honor that decision.

Lastly, one significant way to improve the TBR-to-TBR transfer process would be to develop a shared portal or repository. The portal will consolidate services amongst institutions

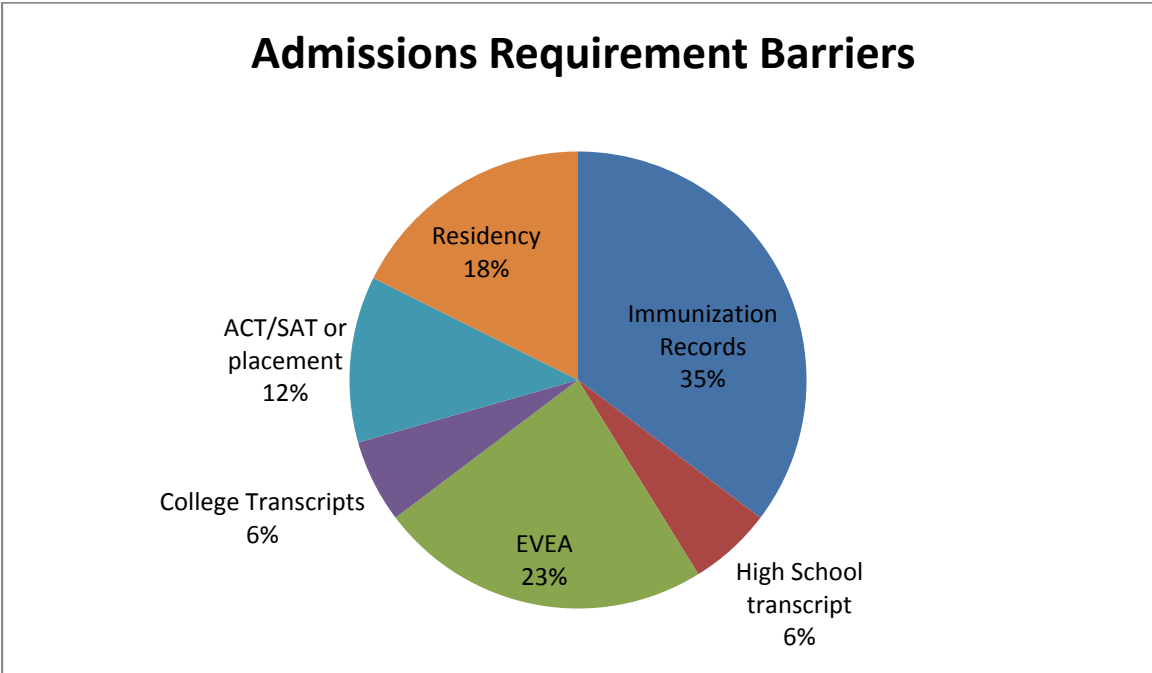
and assist in standardization of processes between institutions. The portal would house the immunization and EVEA information provided on Banner forms such as SZAITRK & SAAADMS on a server provided by TBR. The portal would allow staff to access the information quicker and without the student going through the process of obtaining the documents again.

Survey & Findings: Southwest, Roane, Chattanooga, Volunteer, Jackson, Columbia, Pellissippi, Walters, Nashville, Dyersburg, Northeast, Motlow, Cleveland

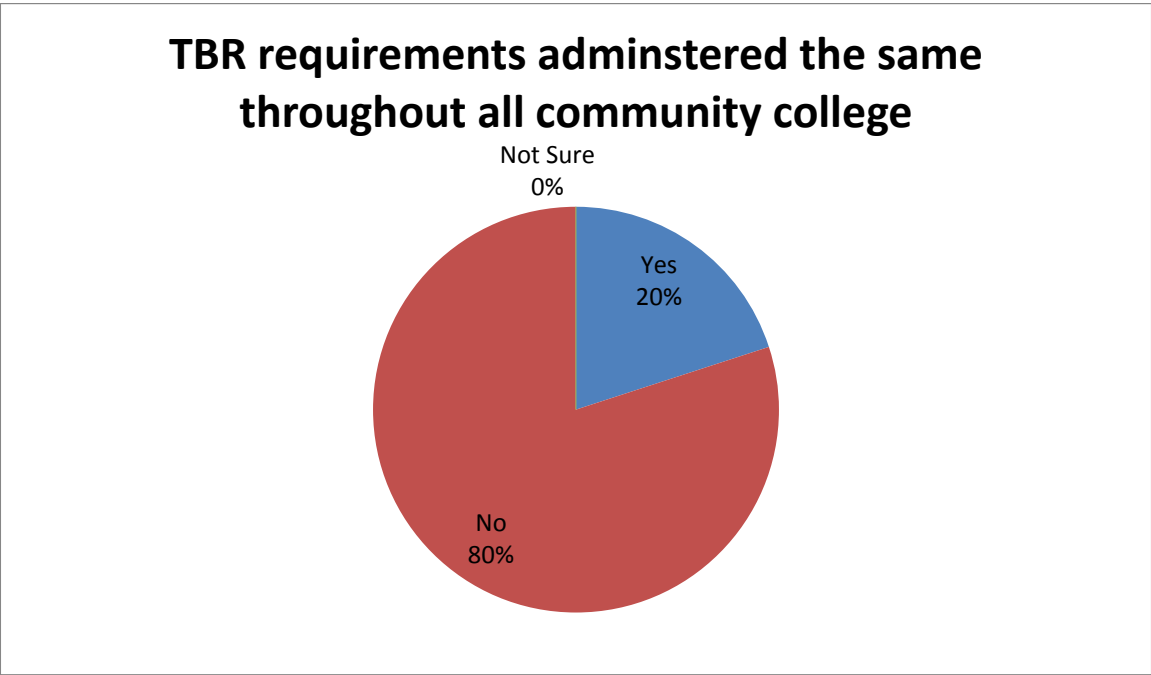
1. Given TBR's mandate to develop a comprehensive statewide community college system with consolidated services, are you aware of this TBR mandate?	Average Response	Percentage of Participants
Not sure of the specifications	8	100%
Yes	12	100%



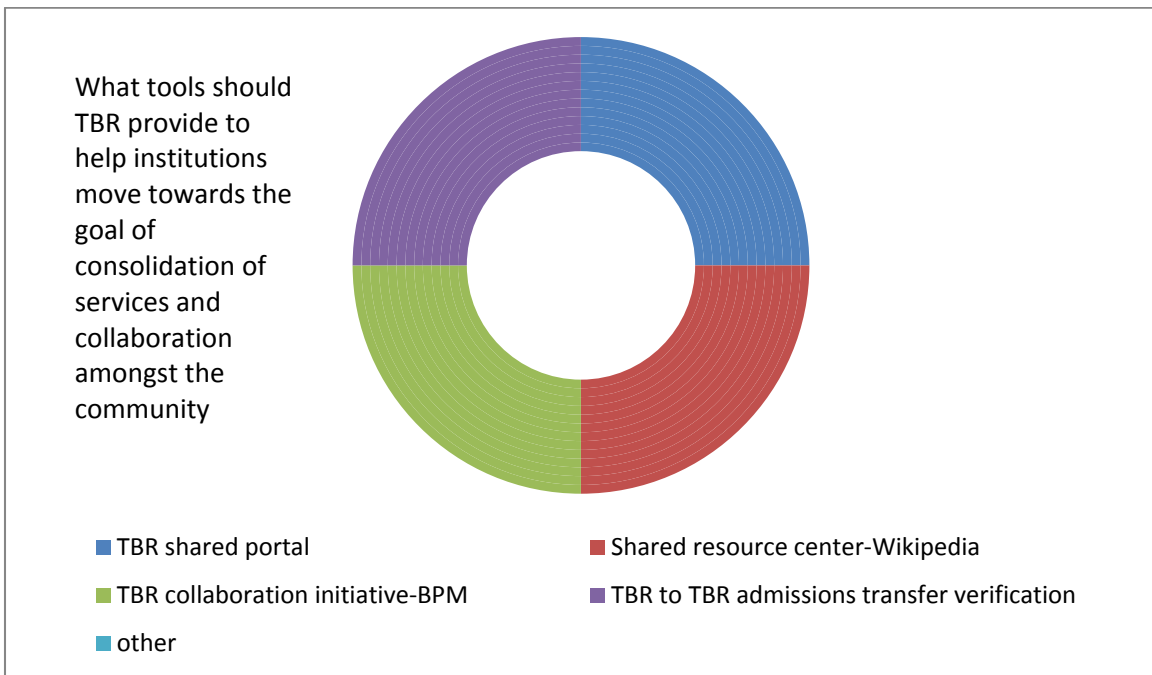
2. What admissions requirements do you feel are interpreted differently across the board that could become barriers? (Rank 1 to 5 with being 5 the highest)	Average Responses	Percentage of Participants
Immunization records	highest barrier	100%
High school transcript	5 th highest barrier	100%
EVEA	2 nd highest barrier	100%
College transcript	5 th highest barrier	100%
ACT/SAT or Placement	4 th highest barrier	100%
Residency	3 rd highest barrier	100%



3. Do you believe the current requirements are all administered consistently across the state?		
Yes	5 stated Yes	100%
No	8 stated NO, but based on interpretation	100%
Not Sure	0	



4. What tools should TBR provide to help institutions move towards the goal of consolidation of services and collaboration amongst the community colleges?		
Shared TBR Portal	7	100%
Shared Resource Center	3	100%
TBR to collaborate with Admissions & Records Directors to streamline requirements (BPM)	10	100%
TBR to TBR transfer form	5	100%
Other:	0	100%



Conclusion:

It is evident that there is a need to streamline the admissions requirements. There are some laws and policies that can be seen as barriers to having an efficient admissions process. Some of the barriers can be addressed with clarification of the requirements, training upon implementation, and developing a shared repository to create consistency and unify the TBR community college system. Mattie Stepanek says, “Unity is strength... when there is teamwork and collaboration, wonderful things can be achieved.” (Stepanek)

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