

Tennessee Technological University

Budget Review Task Force Report: Non-Credit Programs

February 17, 2009

Committee Members: Dan Fesler, Chair, Accounting, Committee Chair; Matthew Smith, Chair, Curriculum and Instruction; Ken Hunter, Professor, Engineering; Susan Elkins, Vice President, Extended Programs and Regional Development.

Meetings: The committee met on February 6, 2009 for an initial meeting. After working online and in sub-committees, the committee finalized the two attached documents on February 20, 2009.

Executive Summary: The committee members reviewed past activities and financial data from the Non-Credit Programs including the following:

- Non-Credit Continuing Education/Professional Development Offerings
- Emergency Medical Services Programs

Selected key points from the meetings and discussions include:

- Objective of the unit is to provide needed service to the Upper Cumberland area with less emphasis on profit generation.
- The unit's goals are aligned with the University vision, mission, and goals, with specific emphasis on the University's "special commitment to serve the Upper Cumberland Region."
- Non-Credit programs across the TBR System fail to show profit (including the University of Memphis as verified by the Vice Provost for Extended Programs), often due to the impact on service and public relations.
- If the unit's for-credit programs are combined with the unit's Non-Credit programs, the result would be a profit.
- Fesler, Smith, and Hunter, based on direct working relationships, complimented Non-Credit programs.
- Emergency Medical Services meets a critical regional need by training paramedics and EMT's for the Upper Cumberland Region.
- Non-Credit provides numerous events and activities that promote TTU. In spring 2008, there were 20,481 registrations for the unit's various programs.
- There was agreement that the unit appears to be operating in a highly cost-efficient manner.

Recommendations:

- (1) Changes to be implemented in an attempt to make the Non-Credit Programs more self-sufficient and reduce the budget deficit are provided on the attached summaries of the two programs. These actions should be implemented and monitored in the future.
- (2) The value of the service provided by these programs should be considered, including possible supplemental funding from public service dollars received by the University.
- (3) Since other service units are often not required to generate revenue over expenditures, consideration should be given to that model based upon the service function of the programs.

Respectfully,
R Dan Fesler, Committee Chair

Attachment 1

Non-Credit Continuing Education/Professional Development Offerings Past, Present, and Future

Non-Credit Budget Review

Tennessee Tech University's Non-Credit Programs positively impacts residents throughout the TTU service region by offering life long learning opportunities through courses, certificate programs, and special events.

Non-Credit Programs:

- Delivers offerings and services driven by departmental and university mission and strategic goals, all within the constraints of a limited budget.
- Provide workforce development opportunities through online courses and off campus certificate programs designed for individuals who are entering the workforce or needing to retool.
- Offer several online career certificate programs that have been accepted by the local workforce investment board as meeting WIA eligibility. The certificate programs and other online courses also meet eligibility requirements for military personnel.
- Provide professional development opportunities to several professions including business, education, engineering and healthcare.
- Provides employers customized training opportunities.
- Offer Continuing Education Units for a host of off campus and on campus courses and training programs including Tennessee Valley Authority courses, the Tennessee Center for Performance Excellence training program and others.
- Coordinate and/or host President's Academies and Governor's Schools in Emerging Technologies, along with other youth oriented events and programs such as Merit Badge University and Explorer Scouts.
- Provide a diverse array of affordable personal enrichment courses via on campus and online instruction that enhance the lives of area residents, including students, faculty and alumni.
- Provide a service to area agencies and both on and off campus partners as a vehicle for coordinating special events and meetings, at little or no cost to the partners or participants.
- Provide opportunities for continuing engagement with the University to alumni, faculty and staff.
- All courses and programs are developed and provided to offer exceptional value and quality at an affordable price.
- Provide exposure to and positive engagement with the University through life long learning experiences.

Although the budget reflects a negative income and expenditures result, this is typical for many university based non-credit departments. This phenomenon is the direct result of including personnel salaries and benefits in the equation. Non-credit units are sometimes expected to generate income adequate to cover not only direct and indirect costs, but also the salaries and benefits of their personnel, while some non-credit units are subsidized through funds allocated for public service. Consequently, discussion ensued during the committee review about the implications for considering salary and benefits as fixed costs, which would shift the expectation from the unit having to be self-sufficient to placing the department on a level with other departments. Finally, although it is difficult if not impossible to measure the result of impact on credit enrollment that non-credit programs provide, it is likely that many potential students are inclined to become TTU students as a result of their participation in a non-credit program.

Emergency Medical Services Program

Past, Present, and Future

Non-Credit Budget Review

The Emergency Medical Services Program is a non-credit unit housed in the Extended Programs and Regional Development Department of Tennessee Technological University. There are nine paramedic programs and 13 EMT programs in the State of Tennessee. This university offers both programs.

Historically, this program began in response to an assessed need for an increasing number of paramedics and EMTs in the State of Tennessee but especially in the 14 counties of the Upper Cumberland region. The Upper Cumberland EMS Directors' Association has projected a growing need for emergency personnel in this region due to the closing of hospitals in this region resulting in the expansion of ambulance services.

The communities of interest served by this program are the healthcare community of the Upper Cumberland region as well as numerous counties in the Middle Tennessee region. Some students travel 2 hours to participate in our programs. More specifically, the program interacts with local hospitals, ambulance services, fire departments, first responder agencies, industry, Rescue Squads, EMS educators across the State and the State of Tennessee Division of EMS.

The EMS coordinator for the University EMS program is a Governor appointed member of the State of Tennessee EMS Board which oversees all programs. He is on the State of Tennessee Division of EMS education subcommittee. He is a member of the National Association of EMS Educators serving on the Education Subcommittee. He is a member of Tennessee EMS Educators serving on the research subcommittee. He is also a charter member of the Tennessee EMS Providers Association serving on various subcommittees. He holds a Masters Degree in Instructional Leadership from Tennessee Tech University.

The EMT coordinator for the University EMT program serves on the State of Tennessee Division of EMS education subcommittee. He is an elected Board member of the Tennessee EMS Educators Association.

The clinical coordinator for the University EMS program serves on the State of Tennessee Division of EMS education subcommittee. He is a member of the Tennessee EMS educators Association as well as a member of the National EMS Educators Association.

The medical director for the University EMS program serves as the head of the Cookeville Regional Hospital Emergency Department. He is medical director for the local ambulance service. He is also a Governor appointed member of the State of Tennessee EMS Board.

A proposal to start paramedic training was developed and presented to the State of Tennessee Division of EMS and to the Tennessee Board of Regents in 1991. Students were first enrolled in the paramedic program in the fall of 1991 and the first class graduated in the summer of 1992. Previously, EMT training started at this University around 1986-1987. Since the inception of EMT training there have been over 750 students that graduated. At the paramedic level there have been 287 that successfully completed training.

There are a few special considerations that have direct impact on our program. One consideration is the rural area this program serves. Distance travelling to the program is a real hardship on potential

students. This program is sensitive to that need. Investigation into the best solution to bring the training to the students is ongoing. Another consideration is the financial constraints imposed on potential students. More students are coming due to a loss of employment in other fields and are considering an EMS career. However, they are self-pay. Without adequate employment they do not have the money to be able to pay high tuition costs. Ambulance service employers send numerous students to our programs but their budgets are being reduced due to this economic crisis the State is in affecting all areas therefore, they are limited on the amount of funding they can afford to give to students. This program does not receive any type of State funding because it is non-credit. The tuition must be at a level that is high enough to cover instructor salaries and operating expenses yet has to be at an affordable level to attract students. Financial awareness is why this program has remained in the Extended Programs department as a non-credit entity.

In the past this program had an annual offering of 4 EMT courses, 2 First Responder courses, 1 Paramedic course, plus numerous ACLS, PALS, in-services, dispatcher courses and instructor courses. Over the years the number of available instructors has dropped due to an increase in the requirements to be an EMS instructor. The number of people desiring various courses has also dropped due to a lack of desirable pay in the EMS field, ever-increasing tuition and other reasons some of which are not able to be defined. We currently offer 2 EMT courses and 1 paramedic course per year. The result of this drop in courses is a budget deficit that has stayed fairly consistent over the last several years and is a concern for the continuance of this program. In an attempt to make the EMS program more self-sufficient and reduce the budget deficit the following changes will be implemented:

- Provide greater access to EMS course offerings by scheduling classes at convenient times to meet various schedules of non-traditional students.
- Develop an online extended skills course which is not a format currently offered in the State but will make it more convenient for incoming residents to receive their EMT license fulfilling a reciprocity requirement.
- Investigate refining our current marketing plan to make program offerings more visible
- Nurture relationships with EMS related employers to meet the needs of said employers making it desirable for them to send students to this program.
- Investigate the possibility of offering more courses out in the region taking courses to the potential students.
- Maintain National Accreditation enhancing the quality of the instruction of the program.
- Investigate the ability to increase tuition but keep it at an affordable level yet make the program closer to self-sufficient.