South Carolina
Commission on Higher Education

Mr. Kenneth B. Wingate, Chair
Dr. Bettie Rose Horne, Vice Chair
Douglas R. Forbes, D.M.D.
Mr. Kenneth W. Jackson
Dr. Raghu Korrapati
Dr. Louis B. Lynn
Ms. Cynthia C. Mosteller
Mr. James R. Sanders
Mr. Y. W. Scarborough, III
Mr. Charles L. Talbert, III, CPA
Mr. Hood Temple
Mr. Neal J. Workman, Jr.
Dr. Mitchell Zais

Dr. Garrison Walters, Executive Director

CAAL
4/2/2009
Agenda Item 7

April 2, 2009

MEMORANDUM

To: Dr. Bettie Rose Horne, Chair, and Members, Committee on Academic Affairs and Licensing

From: Dr. Gail M. Morrison, Director of Academic Affairs and Licensing

Informational Report on Fine Arts Unit in College Course Prerequisites

Background

Since 1988, the Commission on Higher Education has coordinated the establishment among the public four-year colleges and universities of common high school courses that are to be taken as a pre-condition of admission in order to enhance student preparation to succeed in college. These courses are referred to as the "College Course Prerequisites." Over the years, there have been various modifications to these prerequisites, including the addition of additional math and science units. The most recent revision, effective for students entering college in Fall 2011 and approved by the Commission on October 5, 2006, involves a reduction of the 20 required units to 19, a reordering of electives, and the addition of a required unit in fine arts.

Given the financial circumstances in which the state finds itself, the implementation of the new fine arts requirement may be difficult for some districts. Recognizing this possibility, the Advisory Committee on Academic Programs adopted the following statement with respect to the fine arts requirement:

Institutions strongly encourage students to complete the fine arts requirement, which becomes effective with students who will enter college as freshmen in Fall 2011. However, given the financial exigencies currently facing the state, the colleges and universities recognize at this time that implementation of this requirement may be difficult for school districts currently confronting budget cuts that may limit the hiring of new faculty, much less the retention of existing faculty. Thus, we recommend that students make every effort to utilize the S.C. Virtual High School which includes a new set of online courses in music and art history. In the event that students have not completed the fine arts unit, the colleges and universities may invoke the exceptions clause under current policy which allows them to make exceptions in admitting students who do not meet all of the prerequisites if the failure to meet one or more prerequisites is due to circumstances beyond the reasonable control of the student.

(March 5, 2009)

Please note that the requirement remains in effect and students should make every effort to complete it in order to maximize their chances for admission. In fact, there remains strong endorsement of exposure to the fine arts by the colleges and universities as providing the opportunity to engage students in performance opportunities as a different way of learning and exercising the mind; exposing students to cultural ties that bind us as a society together and yet at the same time celebrate diversities among cultures across time and space; exposing students to fields that enrich quality of life; introducing students to potential majors that provide important economic and cultural development as well as employment opportunities; and exposing students to creative endeavors that may transfer to other fields such as business or engineering where creative solutions are at a premium, among others.

This report is provided for information only.