

Legislative Updates of interest for Higher Education Week of Mar. 16-20, 2009

Budget Update:

See update from the week of March 9-13 for a report on budget recommendations adopted by the House.

Senate Finance Budget Subcommittees continued to meet during the week. The Higher Education Budget Subcommittee held meetings on Tuesday and Wednesday and heard from the following: Coastal Carolina, College of Charleston, Citadel, Francis Marion, Lander, SC State, Winthrop, State Technical College System, AHEC, and Tuition Grants. The members also reviewed provisos in the higher education section. There were no changes from the provisos as passed by the House that are in CHE's section or the institutions section; however, several (including 6.25, 6.26, 15.7, and 18.6) were carried forward to receive additional information. Next week, on Wednesday, March 25th at 10:00 a.m., the full Senate Education Committee and Higher Education Finance Subcommittee will hold a joint meeting. Dr. Garrison Walters, CHE Executive Director, will address the Committee as will the presidents of the research institutions. A link to the meeting notice is available at http://www.scstatehouse.gov/sess118_2009-2010/agnsedu.htm. Members of the Senate Finance Higher Education Budget Subcommittee include Senators, Courson (Chair), Elliot, Verdin, and Jackson

The Budget and Control Board (B&CB) met on Wednesday to address recent action of the Board of Economic Advisors (BEA) to decrease further the state's revenue estimates in the current fiscal year. The B&CB approved a 2% across-the-board general fund budget reduction of all agencies totaling \$101.8 million statewide. The reduction approved by the B&CB will go into effect unless the General Assembly takes action to prevent its implementation within five statewide session days which is April 1, 2009. The B&CB is planning to meet again on April 2, 2009 to ratify its action if the General Assembly does not take action.

In the House –

The House was on furlough during the week and did not meet.

In the Senate –

[S.594](#) relating to the Higher Education Revenue Bond Act was introduced and referred to Senate Finance. A companion bill, [H.3664](#), presently resides on the House Calendar.

On Wednesday, the Senate received a favorable report with amendment on [S. 577](#), a concurrent resolution relating to the General Assembly's acceptance of federal stimulus funds under the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 should the Governor decline the funds. The resolution was debated by the full Senate Finance Committee the day before where the Committee voted 18 to 3 to recommend favorably to the Senate S.577. Senate Finance Committee handouts from this meeting are available at

<http://www.scstatehouse.gov/citizensinterestpage/SenateFinanceMeetingHandouts/MeetingHandouts.html>. During the meeting, CHE's Executive Director, Dr. Garrison Walters, and Superintendent of Education, Dr. Jim Rex, and his Deputy for the Division of Innovation and Support, Ms. Elizabeth Carpentier, appeared before the Committee and shared their understanding of the funds available under the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act with particular focus on the State Fiscal Stabilization Funds. For a copy of CHE's presentation, see http://www.che.sc.gov/InfoCntr/Legisl/SFC_ARRA_Outline&Handout_031709_Final.pdf. SDE's presentation is found at http://www.che.sc.gov/InfoCntr/Legisl/SFC_ARRA_Outline&Handout_031709_Final.pdf.

The Senate Finance Committee continued its meeting on Wednesday and voted to report out favorably to the Senate for consideration [H.3378](#) that will provide state agencies flexibility in implementing mandatory furloughs and [S.517](#) (with amendment) relating to the setting of fines and fees by state agencies. Both bills were received by the Senate on Thursday.

*** Bill numbers are linked to the SC General Assembly page. The link should go to the most recent version of the bill.*

Reminder: The above report is not intended to be all inclusive. For additional information on legislation referenced above and other legislation relating to higher education, see CHE's website at [Legislative Session 2009](#). <http://www.che.sc.gov/InfoCntr/LegislativeSession09.htm>. Detailed information on the 2009 Session of the General Assembly may be access at www.scstatehouse.gov or from links included on CHE's website.