

Legislative Updates of interest for Higher Education Week of March 30 – April 3, 2009

Budget Update:

The full Senate Finance Committee met on Monday. Because it remained questionable as to whether the Governor would accept the State Fiscal Stabilization Funds under the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act, Senate Finance Chairman Leatherman announced that his Committee would develop two budgets – one with and one without the federal stimulus funds. Without the federal funds, the recommended budget for higher education would be reduced by just over \$44 million. Following the full Finance Committee meeting, Senate Finance Budget Subcommittees met to determine recommendations should the federal funds not be available. To account for the decrease of \$44 million, the Higher Education Budget Subcommittee recommended reductions of 7.4% from the current base of institutional and administrative agency budgets. On Tuesday, the Senate Finance Committee stood adjourned at the call of the Chair. For additional information, see reports from past weeks.

In the House –

During the week, [H.3841](#), the Technical College Administrative Efficiencies Act of 2009, was introduced and referred to House Education and Public Works. [H.3872](#), which would establish the Greenville Technical College Enterprise Campus Authority, and [H.3878](#), which would establish a joint study committee to consider the consolidation of state agencies, were introduced and placed on the calendar without reference. On Tuesday, the House received the Ways and Means Committee report on [H.3365](#), the Higher Education Administrative Policies Act. This bill provides regulatory reform for the state's public research and four-year comprehensive colleges and universities. By the end of the week, the House had approved H.3365 as recommended by Ways and Means without any additional amendments and sent the bill to the Senate for consideration. The House also approved two bills, [H.3395](#) and [H.3396](#), that would increase the state's required General Reserve Fund from three to five percent of the state's general fund revenue of the latest completed fiscal year. These bills now move to the Senate for consideration.

The House is on furlough for the next two weeks and will meet next on Tuesday, April 21.

In the Senate –

On Tuesday, the Senate confirmed Mr. Ken Wingate's appointment as Chair of the S.C. Commission on Higher Education. Bills introduced and referred to Senate Finance during the week included [S.657](#) relating to the establishment of a base student cost for higher education and several concurrent resolutions ([S.663](#), [S.666](#), and [S.667](#)) relating to the state's acceptance of the ARRA funds. By the end of the week, [H.3378](#) relating to flexibility for state agencies in regard to mandatory furlough provisions was approved with amendments and sent back to the House.

Also during the week, the Higher Education Subcommittee of Senate Education met and considered several bills including: [H.3616](#) relating to the creation of the York Technical College Enterprise Campus, [S.377](#) relating to a credit card marketing policy for higher education institutions, [S.49](#) relating to free tuition for certain active duty military, and [S.404](#) relating to free tuition for certain teachers and administrator employed by school districts and pursuing graduate education studies. The Committee carried over S.49 and S.404. The Committee voted to give a favorable report to the full committee on S.377. The Committee also voted to give a favorable report on H.3616 after amending it to include Aiken, Greenville and Orangeburg-Calhoun Technical Colleges in addition to York Technical College.

The Senate is in recess for the week of April 6 and will meet next on Tuesday, April 14.

Other –

On Thursday, the legislatively appointed Higher Education Study Committee which had been tasked with recommending a strategic plan for higher education released its final report at a press conference. The final report and information on the committee are available at <http://www.che.sc.gov/AboutCHE/OurResponsibilities/HigherEducationActionPlan.aspx>

*** 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

<http://www.che.sc.gov/Home/CHELegislativeUpdates/LegislativeSession2009.aspx> . 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.