



South Carolina  
Commission on Higher Education

Commissioners' E-Alert  
November 2008

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Dr. Garrison Walters, Executive Director

**Greetings .....**

As the fall gives way to a very chilly winter, campuses around our state are working hard to adjust to the current economic reality. I have been following with great interest the different strategies as our colleges and universities manage their missions with less money. The newsletters I receive from several higher education sources across our nation inform me that many schools are struggling to cope with the current economic realities. In spite of this, the Higher Education Study Committee is moving forward with our Action Plan. The week that began November 17, saw 9 public hearings across our state. There is a growing realization in South Carolina of the significant economic impact of higher education. The statewide action plan is moving forward and promises to be a roadmap for the future as we strengthen our system.



On a personal note, it has been my pleasure to serve on the Commission on Higher Education for the past four years, most of which I have served as Chair. Considering that term, I have submitted my resignation to Governor Mark Sanford. It is the right time for new leadership for the Commission. The Commission staff has never been stronger. We have a superb executive director and strength throughout the staff. The Commissioners are dedicated people, and I believe are up to the task that lies ahead. Over these past four years, I have come to know our higher education system. We have much of which to be proud. We have strong leadership in the colleges and universities. We have growing evidence of the power of collaboration among the colleges and universities. There are still many opportunities to gain strength and I look forward to watching our system go forward as we serve the citizens of our state.

*Dr. Layton McCurdy has served on the Commission on Higher Education since October 2004. He continues to serve as an appointed member of the Higher Education Study Committee. We appreciate his dedication and commitment to the betterment of higher education in South Carolina. He will be missed on the Commission but will continue to make great contributions to our state in all his future endeavors.*

**Highlights of the Commission on Higher Education (CHE) Meeting  
Thursday, November 6, 2008**

The following information spotlights the discussion and key actions taken by CHE at its most recent meeting. These highlights are not intended to be as inclusive as the monthly meeting minutes. For additional details on any item mentioned, readers are encouraged to contact CHE staff or visit its website. All materials discussed at this meeting are available directly at [www.che.sc.gov](http://www.che.sc.gov) and selecting "Meetings and Events."

## CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

Dr. Layton McCurdy called the meeting to order and introduced the Professors of the Year for 2008. This year's winners are: **Dr. Sharon Howell Thompson**, Professor and Coordinator of Health Promotion at Coastal Carolina University, for the four-year colleges of higher education and **Mr. Charles Wilson** of Greenville Technical College for the two-year colleges. The Professors and finalists were honored at a luncheon made possible by sponsorship of the SC Higher Education Foundation.



**Dr. Sharon Thompson**  
Coastal Carolina University



**Mr. Charles Wilson**  
Greenville Technical College

## EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Dr. Walters acknowledged CHE staff member Dr. Gail Morrison who had received a special honor recently from the Columbia Urban League. **Dr. Morrison, Deputy Director and Director of Academic Affairs of CHE, was awarded the Urban League's Presidential Citation** in recognition of her outstanding leadership and commitment to promoting equal opportunity. Dr. Morrison described to the Commission her efforts to promote and make available programs offered by the Columbia City Ballet and the Columbia Philharmonic Orchestra to a greater cross section of individuals. Dr. Walters remarked on the tremendous role that the arts communities play in quality of life and the economic climate of our state.

The **Higher Education Study Committee** continues to work on its recommendations for an Action Plan for higher education and has scheduled a series of public hearings the week of November 17-21. The hearings are being hosted by public and private colleges and universities across the state. Information on the Study Committee and copies of the recently released Action Plan Framework report and the draft report recommendations for implementation of the Action Plan are available at <http://www.che.sc.gov/InfoCntr/HiEdStudyComm.htm> .

**Dr. David DeCenzo**, President of Coastal Carolina University, was recognized to talk with the Commission about the effect of recent budget cuts on students and their families. Parents have lost jobs, student loans are not certain, and it has been estimated that enrollment in the spring semester may drop as much as 10% related to students unable to return due to financial circumstances. He informed Commissioners that he had spoken with the Governor and requested his assistance in supporting flexibility for the public colleges and universities during the upcoming semester.

The Commission voiced support by **unanimously passing a resolution in favor of Dr. DeCenzo's request of the Governor**. Commissioner Bettie Rose Horne proposed the resolution acknowledging that Commission believes an educated citizenry is part of the solution to the present fiscal crisis and supports actions to provide the state's public colleges and universities with maximum reasonable flexibility during the spring 2009 semester in determining how they might best assist their students.

## UPDATE ON SC HIGHER EDUCATION FOUNDATION

**Dalton Floyd**, Chairman of the South Carolina Higher Education Foundation, updated Commissioners on activities of the Higher Education Foundation and introduced Gail Ginsberg, Director of Development for the Foundation.

## **LEGISLATIVE REPORT**

The legislative report centered on recent budget reductions and concerns regarding the future fiscal outlook for the state. Also noted was the upcoming return of the S.C. House of Representatives in December for purposes of re-organization. The House will hold its organizational session on December 2 and 3, 2008, while the South Carolina Senate will hold its organizational session the first day of the 2009 Legislative Session which is January 13, 2009.

## **COMMITTEE REPORTS**

The report of the **Committee on Access & Equity and Student Services** was given by Commissioner Bettie Rose Horne.

Amended regulations for LIFE and Palmetto Fellows Scholarships and Need-based Grants programs were discussed and passed. Dr. Karen Woodfaulk, CHE's Director of Student Services, also discussed a recommendation to add to the list of CHE approved Visa Classifications for residency purposes, the E2 Visa Classification. This classification is a business incentive and allows for a person outside of the United States to come into the United States and establish a business with at least a \$50,000 investment. Adding the classification to the list of eligible Visa classifications allows these persons and dependents to be eligible for in-state tuition rates. Extensive background checks, with state and federal review are required. The recommendation passed, with Commissioner Jim Sanders asking for a complete list of all Visa classifications with regard to tuition allowances.

The budgets of EIA-funded Teacher Recruitment programs, CERRA and SC-PRRMT, were discussed and passed. CERRA is the Center for Educator Recruitment, Retention, and Advancement at Winthrop University and SC-PRRMT is the South Carolina Program for the Recruitment of Minority Teachers at S.C. State University.

The report of the **Committee on Finance and Facilities** was given by Chairman Jim Sanders. The Commission approved Interim Capital Projects by the College of Charleston to increase the budget and revise scope on 5 College Way Renovation and by Central Carolina Technical College to establish the construction budget, change the source of funds, and revise scope of the project. Additionally, the Commission approved lease renewals for the Medical University of South Carolina at 5900 Core Avenue and for the Fourth Floor at McClennan Banks.

## **UPCOMING COMMISSION MEETING**

The S.C. Commission on Higher Education meets on the first Thursday of each month. The next meeting will be **Thursday, December 4<sup>th</sup>, at 10:30 a.m.** The meeting is being held at Trident Technical College's main campus in North Charleston in the Complex for Economic Development (Building 920). For additional information, please visit our website at <http://www.che.sc.gov/ExecutiveDirector/CommissionMeetings.htm>

**The Commission on Higher Education wishes everyone a  
HAPPY THANKSGIVING HOLIDAY**

*"Support for higher education is the lever by which the government can move the entire economy"*  
~ Stanford/Hoover Institution economist Paul Romer