



South Carolina
Commission on Higher Education

Commissioners' E-Alert

June 2009

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Mr. Hood Temple
Mr. Neal J. Workman, Jr.
Dr. Mitchell Zais

Dr. Garrison Walters, Executive Director

Commission Highlights - This E-Alert brings highlights from the June 4th meeting.

The Commission meets each month on the first Thursday. **NOTE: The Commission does not meet in July and will hold its next meeting on August 5th and 6th at which time the Commission will hear from presidents of SC's public colleges and universities in addition to holding its regular monthly business meeting.**

An agenda and schedule of presentations will be made available at

<http://www.che.sc.gov/Commission%20Calendar&Materials/Calendar/CommCalendar2009.htm>

MOVING FORWARD WITH THE HIGHER EDUCATION ACTION PLAN

IMPROVING SOUTH CAROLINA'S ECONOMY AND QUALITY OF LIFE THROUGH HIGHER EDUCATION

This month, CHE focused its discussion topic on implementing the recently released Higher Education Action Plan. Mr. Dan Ravenel, who chaired the Higher Education Study Committee that produced the Action Plan, and other members of the Study Committee including Mr. Bobby Marlowe, Mr. Claude Eichelberger and Dr. Layton McCurdy, joined the Commission in discussing implementation progress to date and how to keep focus on realizing the goals. Mr. Ravenel noted the positive progress that has been made in moving the Action Plan forward and again thanked his committee and the CHE staff for their hard work in bringing the Action Plan together. Mr. Ravenel asked the Commission to create a committee to focus on implementation and work with institutions, other constituencies, and legislators in keeping the momentum alive. He noted the importance of the Commission in the efforts to encourage and coordinate these activities and suggested the committee should be led by the Commission but could benefit from participation by others.

Discussion followed on creating the committee and networking opportunities with civic organizations, Chambers of Commerce, public/private groups, and association annual meetings, along with the possibility of short web videos on the importance of higher education and its expected returns to the economy if South Carolina is successful in substantially increasing the numbers of citizens with college degrees. A speaker's bureau that could offer programs on various topics such as College Access, Adult Education, the Higher Education Action Plan, and the Knowledge Economy was also discussed as an initiative for successfully communicating the significance of higher education to the future of our state's economy and quality of life. Commissioners are also looking forward to visiting colleges and universities in their areas and meeting with the Boards of Trustees regarding the Action Plan and higher education's collective efforts.

In concurrence with fellow Commissioners, Mr. Ken Wingate, chairman of the CHE, reiterated the importance of the Action Plan as a priority for CHE and appointed an ad hoc committee whose job will be to focus on the Action Plan and to report each month on implementation activities. The committee will include initially six Commissioners, the four members of the CHE's Executive Committee (which includes CHE's chair and its 3 committee chairs, Mr. Ken Wingate, Dr. Bettie Horne, Ms. Cyndi Mosteller, and Mr. Jim Sanders) and two other Commissioners, Mr. Bill Scarborough and Mr. Hood Temple.

A copy of the Action Plan report, **Leveraging Higher Education for a Stronger South Carolina: The Action Plan Implementation, March 2009**, and other details are available on CHE's website. To access the report and other details, [CLICK HERE](#)

LEGISLATIVE SESSION ENDS WITH STIMULUS MONEY IN THE BUDGET

Ms. Julie Carullo, CHE's Director of Governmental Affairs and Special Projects provided a wrap-up of this year's session as it pertained to higher education. For a copy of the summary as reported on June 4, [CLICK HERE](#).

The state's difficult budget situation in the face of a severe state and national recession and the debate between the Governor and General Assembly over whether federal stimulus dollars for education and other government services from the federal 2009 American Recovery and Reinvestment Act should be accepted in South Carolina consumed a great deal of focus. During the year higher education experienced reductions of over 24% (\$181 million). In the **FY 2009-10 budget that was enacted, the General Assembly voted to accept the federal funds for education that will be available to South Carolina over the next two years, and provided an allocation of just under \$100 million for colleges and universities in the upcoming year while not cutting their state base budgets further in anticipation of meeting assurances required to receive the federal funds.** These assurances include funding K-12 and also higher education at least at levels of 2006 or seeking a waiver of this requirement if unable to fund at the 2006 levels. To be granted a waiver, a state must show that it is continuing to fund K-12 and higher education at least at levels comparable to the prior year in comparison to available state dollars. South Carolina must seek a waiver of the 2006 funding requirement because higher education funding is not at 2006 levels – funding for SC's colleges and universities was at the 2000 levels before the reductions experienced in the current year and, with the reductions experienced this year, is at 1995 levels. The budget enacted by the General Assembly was written in light of these requirements and to ensure South Carolina would be eligible to receive the funds that are available to the state. **Regulatory reform legislation which was sought by the research and comprehensive colleges and universities and also the technical colleges did not pass during the session. Higher education will continue to pursue the passage of the needed reforms in the interim and upcoming legislative session.**

The General Assembly adjourned on May 21 under the provisions of H.4000 and will return on June 16th to wrap up final work of the 2009 session at which time an updated session summary relating to higher education will be provided. To access the latest summary and past legislative updates from the 2009 session, [CLICK HERE](#).

Also of note: Following the Commission meeting on June 4th, the Supreme Court ordered the Governor to apply for the federal funds for education and government services that were under debate. The Governor submitted SC's application to the US Department of Education shortly after the ruling on June 8. A resource memo was recently distributed to the colleges and universities pertaining to these funds and providing links to information such as the State's application, allocations, and federal guidance. For a copy of the memorandum, [CLICK HERE](#).

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Report of the Committee on Finance &

Facilities: Commissioner Jim Sanders, chair of the Finance and Facilities Committee, brought forward recommendations that were approved by the Commission to advance requests for interim capital projects at Clemson University and the Medical University of South Carolina. The Comprehensive Permanent Improvement Plans (CPIP) for Year One project approvals were also brought forward and approved by the Commission. As per usual business each month, the Committee provided for information a list of capital projects and leases processed by CHE staff during the month of May 2009.

Report of the Committee on Student

Services and Access and Equity: Commissioner Cyndi Mosteller, chair of the Access and Equity and Student Services Committee, gave a report on the SC Student Loan Corporation and asked for approval of their annual operating budget. Mr. Chuck Sanders, President and CEO of the SC Student Loan Corporation, joined the conversation to respond to questions.

Commissioner Mosteller also commented on activities under the two-year federal College Access Grant which CHE was awarded on behalf of SC. The Grant will provide approximately \$2 million over this year and next year for the purpose of improving counselor training in informing and assisting students in reaching higher education goals. In these continuing efforts to encourage college enrollment, Ms. Mosteller commented on the growing success of the *College Application Week* initiative. There are plans in the works to establish this initiative statewide to provide a week in the fall where focus on college access is widely publicized and students and parents can learn more about the college application process. Plans for this fall include having at least seven pilot schools participate in focused activities on the college enrollment process such as holding workshops for parents and students on college access, providing assistance to students in completing college applications, and helping students understand and obtain financial aid for college.

Committee Reports Continued...

(Access and Equity and Student Services, cont.)

In implementing provisions under the 2008 SC Illegal Immigration Reform Act relating to the state's colleges and universities, Ms. Mosteller reported that CHE staff (Dr. Karen Woodfaulk and the Student Services division and Ms. Camille Brown, CIO) has been working with the South Carolina Department of Motor Vehicles staff on a process to assist colleges in determining student applicant citizenship through the use of verified driver license records. A memorandum of understanding is expected to be signed shortly to enable a process that will help colleges and universities save costs in meeting the new state mandates for verification of citizenship of college applicants.

For details on the items in this section

[CLICK HERE](#)

NEWS AND UPDATES FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Executive Director of the CHE, Dr. Garrison Walters, shared an update on his calendar of activities and ongoing community outreach efforts in regard to the importance of higher education in today's knowledge economy and the Action Plan for Higher Education.....bullets of update are below.

- Dr. Walters shared with the Commission information about the recent **Higher Education Awareness Readiness Transition (HEART) Awards** and called on Dr. Woodfaulk, CHE Director of Student Services, to explain the importance of these awards. Dr. Woodfaulk shared that these awards were provided this year as part of the state's two-year federal College Access Challenge Grant in order **to recognize counselors at elementary, middle and high school levels with proven records of accomplishments in preparing students for college**. This year's awards went to **Dr. Jennie Band of Pomaria-Garmany Elementary School in Pomaria, Dr. Ayanna Shivers of Waccamaw Middle School in Pawley's Island, and Mr. Greg Bearden of Walhalla High School in Seneca**. For additional information on this year's awards and the program, [CLICK HERE](#).
- Dr. Walters pointed out a recent editorial in the *Greenville News* on the Action Plan for Higher Education. A series of op-eds on the Action Plan, authored by members of the Commission and Higher Education Study Committee, are in the works for papers across South Carolina. He also reported on four **recent visits to Rotary Club meetings and upcoming visits scheduled with Rotary Clubs and Chamber of Commerce chapters to spread the word about the importance of higher education to our state's future success**. For more information about scheduling a visit for your organization, please see the information at right.
- Dr. Walters commented on recent news articles relating to higher education institutional rankings and Clemson. **An op-ed from Dr. Walters on this topic was published in *The State* newspaper on June 7. For a copy, see <http://www.thestate.com/editorial-columns/v-print/story/817406.html>.**
- A recently developed **FAQ Sheet on frequently asked questions about higher education continues to be updated with new questions and answers**. Since last month, a question relating to unnecessary duplication was added to three other questions dealing with higher education funding, whether public funds provide subsidies for out-of-state students, and whether online education is less expensive than classroom instruction. For a copy of the FAQ sheet [CLICK HERE](#).

**CALL TO INFORM AND WORK
TOGETHER FOR SUCCESS**

Higher Education for all our citizens has never been as important as it is today in the Knowledge Based Economy. To change our state we must make sure all our citizens have the work skills and education they need to compete with the world. They also must know how to access this education.

We are sharing this message with Chambers of Commerce, civic organizations, business organizations, parent and school organizations and others. If you are interested in a program, please call us today.

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