



South Carolina Commission on Higher Education

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CHE
5/5/16
Agenda Item 9.02.1

May 5, 2016

MEMORANDUM

To: Chairman Tim Hofferth and Members, SC Commission on Higher Education

From: Chair Terrye Seckinger, and Members, Committee on Academic Affairs and Licensing

Consideration of Awards for Centers of Excellence (Teacher Education) Competitive Grants Program, FY 2016-17 (New and Continuing)

Background

The purpose of the Centers of Excellence (Teacher Education) grant program is to enable eligible institutions, or consortia of such institutions, to serve as resource centers for South Carolina in a specific area related to the improvement of teacher education. Teacher education encompasses both in-service and pre-service training. These resource centers develop and model state-of-the-art teaching practices, conduct research, disseminate information, and provide training for K-12 and higher education personnel in the center's specific area of expertise.

In FY 2015-16, the S.C. General Assembly approved the Commission's request for an appropriation of \$537,536 for Centers currently receiving funding and an additional \$250,000 to support a Center for College and Career Readiness located at Francis Marion University. Currently, there is a proviso that requires \$350,000 to be sent directly to Francis Marion University to support the Center of Excellence for Preparing Teachers of Children of Poverty. Three Centers are in the third through fourth years of funding (**Attachment 1**) for a total of \$450,000. The total funding request for the EIA Centers of Excellence, which includes funds for administration and evaluation of the program, is \$1,137,526.00. Funding for all continuing Centers will be contingent upon availability of funds from the General Assembly.

Three Centers have been previously approved for funding from the Commission: Anderson University, Francis Marion University, and The Citadel. Each of these Centers is eligible to receive an additional year of funding for FY 2016-17.

In August 2015, Requests for Proposals for Centers of Excellence for the FY 2016-17 project year were issued to all eligible public and private four-year institutions with teacher education programs. At the direction of the Education Oversight Committee, proposals were requested that focus on teacher effectiveness. Three proposals for a Center of Excellence in effective teaching were received for consideration from Clemson University, the College of Charleston, and the University of South Carolina.

The FY 2016-17 Award

The Review Panel (**Attachment 2**) included one representative from K-12, one representative from the South Carolina Department of Education, one representative from the Education Oversight Committee, four representatives from currently active Centers of Excellence, and one staff member from the Commission on Higher Education.

The Review Panel met on March 7, 2016, for presentations by the representatives from the three institutions and to discuss the merits of each proposed center. The panel members deliberated the merits of each proposal and selected the proposed center from the University of South Carolina. The staff will coordinate with the director of the Center to revise the budget based on funding and develop a detailed evaluation plan to assess student and teacher outcomes.

The purpose for the Center of Excellence for the Advancement of the Workforce and Knowledge Economy (AWAKE) in South Carolina from the University of South Carolina is to serve as a self-sustaining resource center that will help communities and higher education institutions throughout the state build their local workforce infrastructure by implementing the pedagogical and curricular provisions of the Education Economic Development Act (EEDA). Specifically, the program will cultivate the development of professional learning communities of in-service and pre-service teachers in high-needs schools who will work together to create contextual learning opportunities for middle grades students grades (traditionally grades 6-8). Pre-service AWAKE Scholars will complete year-long residencies in partner schools and help middle school students achieve academic content while they engage in problems-based, cooperative, and inquiry-oriented learning activities that involve collaboration, critical thinking, communication, and authentic assessment. There will be an initial concentrated focus with Barnwell School District 45 and Florence School District Four, which will expand to other districts in subsequent years. The Center will also serve as a clearinghouse for integrative, workforce-oriented teaching materials, provide professional development to teachers throughout the state, and conduct ongoing research related to its mission

By the end of year four, three cohorts of AWAKE Scholars and Fellows will have completed the pilot program, and the Center will have developed a replicable, research-based approach to place-based integration of workforce development goals with the academic curriculum in the middle grades. The Center will also have created unit plans and teaching materials that will be available to educators throughout the state, and it will have conducted and disseminated research related to workforce development and curriculum integration in the middle grades.

In year five and beyond, the Center will focus on helping schools and Institutions of Higher Education throughout South Carolina implement the place-based approach. The Center will also serve as a clearinghouse for integrative, workforce-oriented teaching materials, provide professional development to teachers throughout the state, and conduct ongoing research related to its mission.

At its April 7, 2016, meeting, the Committee on Academic Affairs and Licensing accepted the Review Panel's recommendation and approved a new Center of Excellence (Teacher Education) award to the University of South Carolina to establish the Center of Excellence for the Advancement of the Workforce and Knowledge Economy (AWAKE) in South Carolina in the amount of \$150,000. The award is contingent upon allocation of funding from the General Assembly. The Committee also approved the continued funding for the existing centers at Anderson University, Francis Marion University, and The Citadel pending submission of formal budget requests and continuation request for funding for FY 2016-17 and final reports for FY 2015-16.

This report is being submitted to the Commission for information only.

- Attachment 1:** Centers of Excellence Award Recommendations
- Attachment 2:** Review Panel Members
- Attachment 3:** Abstract for the Center of Excellence for the Advancement of the Workforce and Knowledge Economy (AWAKE)

**EIA Centers of Excellence
New and Continuing Projects
FY 2016-17 Budget**

Center	Institution	Project Director	FY 2016-17 Awards	Award Year
Center of Excellence for STEM Ambassadors	The Citadel	Kathy Richardson Jones	\$112,500.00	Year 4
Center of Excellence for Mobile Learning	Anderson University	Ben Deaton	\$112,500.00	Year 4
Center of Excellence in College and Career Readiness (Proviso)	Francis Marion University	Matt Nelson	\$225,000.00	Year 3
Center of Excellence in Teaching Children of Poverty (Proviso)	Francis Marion University	Tammy Pawloski	\$350,000.00	NA
Center of Excellence for the Advancement of the Workforce and Knowledge Economy in South Carolina	University of South Carolina	David Virtue	\$150,000.00	Year 1
Supplemental Funding for Active Centers to work on collaborative statewide initiatives	TBA	TBA	\$130,000.00	NA
		Award Subtotal	\$1,080,000.00	
		Administration	\$57,526.00	
		TOTAL	\$1,137,526.00	

**Centers of Excellence
FY 2016-17
Review Panel
March 7, 2016**

<p>Dr. Gary Senn</p> <p>Director <i>Ruth Patrick Science Education Center</i> University of South Carolina Aiken 471 University Parkway, Aiken, SC 29801 803-641-3558 garys@usca.edu</p>	<p>Dr. Linda Payne</p> <p>Regional Coordinator <i>S2TEM Centers SC</i> 3250 Saint Matthews Road Orangeburg, SC 29118 803-928-6225 lpayne@scsu.edu</p>	<p>Ms. Bunnie Ward</p> <p>Director Policy Development & Evaluation <i>Education Oversight Committee</i> PO Box 11867 Room 227 Blatt Bldg. Columbia, SC 29211 803-734-2803 bward@eoc.sc.gov</p>
<p>Dr. Tammy Pawloski</p> <p>Director <i>Center of Excellence to Prepare Teachers of Children of Poverty</i> Francis Marion University School of Education Florence, SC 29501 843-661-1475 tpawlosk@fmarion.edu</p>	<p>Ms. Jennifer Morrison</p> <p>Director Office of School Transformation <i>South Carolina Department of Education</i> 1429 Senate Street Columbia SC 29201 803-734-8103 jmorrison@ed.sc.gov</p>	<p>Dr. Katherine Richardson Jones</p> <p>Director The STEM Center of Excellence <i>The Citadel</i> 171 Moultrie Street Charleston, SC 29409 (843) 953-3163 k.richardsonjones@gmail.com</p>
<p>Dr. Lisa Waller</p> <p>Director <i>RETAIN Center of Excellence</i> Newberry College Department of Teacher Education 2100 College Street Newberry, SC 29108 803.321.5207 O Lisa.Waller@newberry.edu</p>	<p>Ms. Trena Houp</p> <p>Academic Affairs <i>Commission on Higher Education</i> 1122 Lady Street, Suite 300 Columbia, SC 803-737-4853 thoup@che.sc.gov</p>	<p><u>Staff Support:</u></p> <p>Dr. Paula Gregg</p> <p>Academic Affairs <i>Commission on Higher Education</i> 1122 Lady Street, Suite 300 Columbia, SC 803-737-2246 pgregg@che.sc.gov</p>

ABSTRACT

**Center of Excellence for the Advancement of the Workforce and Knowledge Economy
(AWAKE) in South Carolina Middle Grades Schools
University of South Carolina
Dr. David Virtue**

AWAKE will be a self-sustaining resource center that will help communities and institutions throughout the state build their local workforce infrastructure by implementing the pedagogical and curricular provisions of the EEDA. At the core of the Center activities during the period of EIA funding will be an AWAKE Scholars and Fellows pilot program that will be implemented in Barnwell 45 and Florence 4.

The program will foster the development of **professional learning communities** of in-service and pre-service teachers in high-needs schools who will work together to create **contextual learning** opportunities for middle grades students. Preservice AWAKE Scholars will complete **year-long residencies** in partner schools and help middle grades students achieve academic content while they engage in problems-based, cooperative, and inquiry-oriented learning activities that involve **collaboration, critical thinking, communication, and authentic assessment**. In-service AWAKE Fellows will serve as coaching teachers for the AWAKE Scholars and complete the course requirements for an endorsement in project-based learning (PBL).

Throughout the pilot program, AWAKE Scholars and Fellows will engage together in place-based professional development that will include service-learning, externships, and job shadowing. By the end of year four, three cohorts of AWAKE Scholars and Fellows will have completed the pilot program. In year five and beyond, the Center will focus on helping schools and IHEs throughout South Carolina implement the place-based approach.

The Center will also serve as a clearinghouse for integrative, workforce-oriented teaching materials, provide professional development to teachers throughout the state, and conduct ongoing research related to its mission.