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College Transition Need-based Grant Program **2016-17 Academic Year**

Historical Background

The General Assembly included Proviso 11.19 in the FY 2013-14 Appropriations Act to enable funds appropriated to the College Transition Connection be redirected through the need-based grant program to be available as need-based grants for students enrolled in recognized College Transition Programs (CTP) at South Carolina institutions. As of Fall 2016, these institutions include: Clemson University, Coastal Carolina University, College of Charleston, University of South Carolina, and Winthrop University.

The U.S. Department of Education offers financial aid to those students enrolled or accepted for enrollment in a comprehensive transition and postsecondary program for students with intellectual disabilities at post-secondary institution that participates in the *federal student aid programs*. According to the U.S. Department of Education, institutions must participate in a federal approval process in order to provide federal funds to students enrolled in these programs. As of April 30, 2016 there were 40 approved programs with South Carolina being home to five of those programs.

Initial efforts to assist intellectually disabled students were directed by the College Transition Connection (CTC). During the FY 2013-14, CTC worked with select colleges and universities in South Carolina to design, create and fund transition and post-secondary opportunities for young adults with intellectual disabilities. The CTC worked with the South Carolina General Assembly and the South Carolina Commission on Higher Education (CHE) in an effort to redirect funds for the purposes of creating a state based program to provide additional financial assistance to students who enroll in these programs in South Carolina.

In working with CHE, CTC helped to identify the eligible South Carolina CTP's. The CTP serves students with intellectual disabilities who demonstrate financial need. These programs allow for students to attend a four-year institution and engage in academics, independent living environments, employment/career opportunities, and socialization. These programs are non-degree seeking and successful completion of these programs allows for students to receive a non-degree certificate of post-secondary education.

CTP Institutional Data

Proviso 11.12 in the FY 2016-2017 Appropriations Act went into effect July 1, 2016.

11.12. *(CHE: College Transition Need-Based Grants) Of the currently appropriated need-based grants funding, no more than \$350,000 shall be used to provide need-based grants to South Carolina resident students enrolled at a public institution of higher education in an established college transition program that serves students with intellectual disabilities. The Commission on Higher Education shall allocate the available funds to eligible institutions on the basis of student need and enrollment in the established college transition programs. All other grants and gift aid for which these students are eligible must be applied first to the cost of attendance prior to using the need-based grant funding. If the cost of attendance for an eligible student is met with all other grants and gift aid, the need-based grant shall not be used. The participating institutions, in cooperation with the Commission on Higher Education, shall track the number of grant recipients and other information determined necessary to evaluate the effectiveness of these grants in assisting students with intellectual disabilities in college transition programs.*

The Proviso transfers and dedicates recurring funds provided to CTP for the purpose of need-based student grants. The guidelines provide for eligibility consistent with eligibility for the financial assistance programs authorized under Title IV of the Higher Education Act of 1965. Participants of this program are required to complete a Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) and demonstrate financial “need,” as well as meet the established South Carolina residency requirements in order to receive funding. In order to meet the anticipated growth of eligible South Carolina students with financial need, additional funding for FY 2016-17 was approved by General Assembly in the amount of \$350,000. Which reflects an increase of \$170,822 from FY 2015-2016.

Collaboration and development of the CTP programs have resulted in the following outcomes:

1. Guidelines for determining eligibility for a student enrolled in an eligible CTP program.
2. Process for grant award disbursement and requesting funds from CHE.

Because the CTP is directed by a temporary one-year budget proviso, considerations for the program in subsequent and future years will be subject to any statutory or regulatory changes that may occur during the upcoming 2017 Session of the General Assembly or renewal of the budget proviso for FY 2017-18.

Below is a brief overview of the South Carolina CTP programs and disbursements.

TABLE 1

Institution	Length of Program (All programs offer on & off campus housing)	Certification Awarded	Total Participants			
			2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	Fall 2016
Clemson University	2 Years An optional 3rd year is available for select students	Certificate of Postsecondary Education upon completion of 2-year program	1	2	3	6
Coastal Carolina University	4 Years	University Certificate of Completion	8	9	8	9
College of Charleston	4 Years	Certificate of Completion	3	0	0	1
University of South Carolina	Students have the option to enroll in a 2, 3, or 4 Year program	Certificate of Completion	8	7	7	8
Winthrop University*	2 Years	Letter of Completion	N/A	8	11	13
Total Participants in CTP			20	26	29	37

*Effective Spring 2015 Winthrop University's CTP program received final federal approval required for their program implementation. Winthrop University is currently operational with enrollment for this Spring 2015 term and moving forward.

TABLE 2

Institution	Award Disbursement			
	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	Projected Award Disbursement Fall 2016 Only
Clemson University	\$6,300	\$13,340	\$13,952	\$30,000
Coastal Carolina University	\$55,736	\$55,713	\$50,550	\$45,000
College of Charleston	\$21,000	\$0	\$0	\$5,000
University of South Carolina	\$56,000	\$45,500	\$43,755	\$40,000
Winthrop University*	N/A	\$28,000 *Spring Only	\$68,079	\$65,000

Table 1 illustrates a steady growth in CTP students at Clemson and Winthrop University since initiation of the program. There has been minimal growth at Coastal Carolina University and the University of South Carolina, with College of Charleston at a slight decline in program participants. Despite the minimal growth and decline at some S.C. intuitions, the overall number of participants in the College Transition program has grown 46% since inception.

Table 2 illustrates the Award Disbursement at each participating institution. In FY 2013-14 and 2014-15 the maximum award could not exceed \$7000 per student. As the program participants continued to increase, the funding available to each student decreased. With the rise of tuition & program fees at each institution and the anticipated growth of program participants, CTP was funded an additional \$170,833; total of \$350,000 for FY 2016-17. For FY 2016-17, maximum award amount cannot exceed \$10,000 per student.

**Part 1B SECTION 11 - H030 - COMMISSION ON HIGHER
EDUCATION**
2016-2017 Appropriation Act

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