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### CHE to Host a Town Hall Discussion in Greenville

In an effort to engage with citizens and hear their concerns, the CHE will hold a public town hall discussion on "Access and Affordability in Higher Education in South Carolina" on Thursday, January 11, 2018, at the Hughes Main Library located at 25 Heritage Green Place in Greenville, S.C. The discussion will begin at 5:30 p.m. Commissioners and agency staff will be present to answer questions and receive feedback regarding some of the challenges and barriers to higher education in the state. All members of the public, especially parents and students, as well as elected officials are encouraged to attend.

To view a flyer with all of the details, click the link above or go to the front page of our website ([www.che.sc.gov](http://www.che.sc.gov)) and click on "[College & Affordability Town Hall: January 11, 2018](#)".

### Comprehensive Permanent Improvement Plan (CPIP): CHE Recommendations Submitted

Recently, South Carolina's institutions of higher learning submitted a plan to the state that outlines each institution's planned capital projects it will pursue over the next five years. The CHE is statutorily charged with reviewing these plans and providing recommendations to the Joint Bond Review Committee and the State Fiscal Accountability Authority.

In mid-October of this year, the CHE received 270 proposed projects from institutions totaling \$2.6 billion. In reviewing the projects and past rates of spending (\$3.25 billion in capital projects at public institutions of higher education over the last decade and \$2.01 billion spent in the last five years), the CHE made a series of recommendations, including:

- Creating a target budget for the five-year higher education CPIP planning process, which is not currently done.
- Utilizing four different methodologies for determining the amount that should be spent over the next five years and, when averaging the four methodologies, recommended spending a total of \$1.231 billion, or about \$245 million per year, for the next five years.
- Placing a priority on maintenance of education and general (E&G) buildings over new projects to begin addressing the estimated \$2 billion plus maintenance needs of the state assets on campuses.

To view the CHE's recommendations on the CPIP, click the link above or go to the front page of our website ([www.che.sc.gov](http://www.che.sc.gov)) and click on "[S.C. CHE Comments and Recommendations on the 2017 CPIP Process](#)".

### What Paths are S.C.'s High School Graduates Taking after Graduation?

The CHE recently worked with the State Department of Education (SDE) and the S.C. Revenue and Fiscal Affairs Office (RFA) to aggregate 10 years of data on the paths chosen each year by South Carolina's high school graduates and completers. The data shows a troubling trend.

While the state has steadily increased high school completion and graduation rates, a larger number (and percentage) annually are not found to be entering any post-secondary institution (either in South Carolina or in another state) or the armed forces. The percentage of graduates not pursuing higher education or entering the armed forces has increased from 8.7 percent (3,029 graduates) in 2006 to 20.9 percent (9,382 graduates) in 2016. Additionally, the percentage of high school graduates entering a South Carolina public institution of higher education has decreased from 81.1 percent in 2006 to 67.1 percent in 2016.

This project highlights the need for the state to continue the development of a Longitudinal Data System (LDS). Once completed, the LDS will allow the state's agencies to readily access trend data that currently takes three agencies working for over a month to aggregate.

To view the data, click the link above or go to the front page of our website ([www.che.sc.gov](http://www.che.sc.gov)) and click on "[Ten-Year S.C. High School Graduate Enrollment Analysis](#)".

### Moody's Downgrades Higher Education's Outlook to "Negative" for 2018

Moody's Investor Service, the bond credit rating arm of Moody's Corporation, recently released a 2018 outlook on higher education in the U.S., in which it downgraded the higher education sector's rating from "stable" to "negative." Several factors were cited including:

- Concerns regarding revenue growth not keeping up with expense growth.
- Rising cost of tuition leading to limited enrollment growth.
- Uncertainty of federal policies and funding.

Moody's expects the pressures to be higher on public colleges and universities. In the context of the expected expense growth of 4%, the outlook states, "Less than 20% of public universities that we rate will have a total revenue growth above 3% while over half of private universities will achieve 3% growth." The report also cites concerns about enrollment, "Affordability remains a primary area of focus, with a market that is increasingly sensitive to higher education's price versus perceived value."

To read the December 5th Moody's report, click here <http://bit.ly/2CkXnSb>.

### Beginning of the 2018 Legislative Session

The South Carolina General Assembly will convene for the start of the 2018 Legislative Session on Tuesday, January 9, 2018. The CHE looks forward to working with policymakers over the next several months to promote access, affordability, and excellence in our state's higher education system.