

Top stories in this newsletter



[CHE Statewide
Town Hall Tour
Update](#)



[Council of Public
Board Chairs
Meeting](#)



[Palmetto Fellows
Scholarship
Early Award](#)



[Academic Program
Productivity Review](#)

CHE's Statewide Town Hall Tour Update

Over the last few months, the CHE has held four town hall meetings throughout the state, in Greenville, Columbia, Charleston, and Rock Hill, with standing-room only at each event. Lively discussion at the town hall events has centered on growing concerns about rising tuition costs, barriers to access and the financial stability of the state's higher education system. To view coverage of the meetings, click on the links below or check out the agency [Twitter](#) page:

[Packed House for S.C. Commission on Higher Education Greenville Town Hall](#)

[Greenville News: "SC higher ed chairman urges universities to "rightsized," cites high tuition statistics"](#)

[Greenville Business Magazine: "Higher Ed Commission Predicts 'Financial Knife Fight'"](#)

[The State: "How expensive is it to go to a public college in SC? Hold on to your wallet"](#)

The next town hall meeting will be in Spartanburg next Thursday, April 5th, at 5:30 p.m. at the Spartanburg Marriott Hotel located at 299 North Church Street. The focus will again be on college access and affordability in South Carolina. In addition, scholarship personnel will be available 20 minutes before and after the event to answer questions students and families may have about state scholarships. All members of the public are welcome to attend. To view a flyer with event details, visit the front page of our website (www.che.sc.gov) and click on "[Spartanburg Town Hall Meeting](#)".

The future town hall meeting schedule is below, and information on specific locations will be distributed as details are finalized:

[Beaufort](#), Thursday, April 19, 2018, 5:30 p.m.

[Florence](#), Thursday, May 3, 2018, 5:30 p.m.

[Aiken](#), Thursday, May 17, 2018, 5:30 p.m.

[Anderson](#), Thursday, June 7, 2018, 5:30 p.m.

[Orangeburg](#), Thursday, June 21, 2018, 5:30 p.m.

For all events, please RSVP to Andrew Roof, administrative coordinator, at arroof@che.sc.gov or (803) 730-5638 if you plan to attend.

Inaugural Meeting: Council of Public Board Chairs

In an effort to work collaboratively with the leaders of our state's institutions of higher education, the CHE recently convened the first meeting of the Council of Public Board Chairs in several years. The chair of each public college or university (both two- and four-year) as well as several legislative leaders were invited to attend to review and comment on new data compiled by the CHE and to interact with CHE leadership and staff.

The research universities, four-year comprehensive institutions, and the technical colleges were represented at the March 15th meeting and participated in a round table discussion with CHE Chairman Tim Hofferth and Interim President and Executive Director Jeff Schilz. Topics discussed included the following:

- CHE's report outlining "Issues in Higher Education in South Carolina"
- Public Agenda for Higher Education in South Carolina
- 10-Year High School Graduate Enrollment Data
- Program Productivity Report and Opportunities for Collaboration
- Deferred Maintenance at the S.C. public institutions of higher education

Many attendees commented that they appreciated the opportunity to review the data and planned to bring the information back to their boards. The CHE looks forward to working with this group of leaders to continue the discussion of how to make each institution as successful as possible in order to best serve the citizens of this state.

Ongoing Priority: Academic Program Productivity Review

As we have discussed in previous newsletters, the Commission continues to prioritize the review of existing academic programs at the state's public colleges and universities. Our initial review identified 153 programs (14 percent) that were noncompliant with the 2017 standards set by the Commission and the institutions. Under this policy, programs must meet both enrollment **and** completion levels to be considered compliant (five-year average of 12.5 students enrolled in the major and 8 degrees awarded for baccalaureate-level programs). Institutions responded to the CHE with improvement plans or with plans for program termination, exemption or probation.

The CHE Academic Affairs staff then reviewed all institutional responses for noncompliant programs and created final recommendations. Of the 153 noncompliant programs, staff recommends 121 for probation, 19 for termination, and 13 for exemption. The Advisory Committee on Academic Programs (ACAP), comprised of chief academic officers of public two- and four-year institutions, a representative of the S.C. Technical College System, and the CHE's Director of Academic Affairs, met on March 29th and considered and tabled the motion to approve the report, in order to further review the exemption requests.

The CHE currently does not have the statutory authority to terminate programs; however, the agency will continue to carefully review the productivity for each academic program and the effect those programs have on university costs and tuition.

To view a copy of the most recent academic program productivity report, click [here](#).

Palmetto Fellows Scholarship Early Award Notification

This week, CHE staff closed out the Palmetto Fellows Scholarship Early Award period and notified students of their eligibility. The Palmetto Fellows Scholarship, South Carolina's most prestigious merit-based lottery scholarship, is designed to recognize the most academically-talented high school seniors and encourage those students to attend college in the state. Currently, qualifying students can receive up to \$6,700 per year in their first academic year and up to \$7,500 per year in their second, third, and fourth academic years.

The 2018 Early Award period for the scholarship opened on October 2, 2017 and closed December 15, 2017. During this time period, school counselors sent applications and required academic information to the CHE to review and process. This year, a total of 3,122 applications were submitted, 186 more than last year. The CHE Student Affairs staff reviewed each application, found that 3,052 students met the requirements, and notified students of their eligibility on March 27th.

The Late Award period for Palmetto Fellows will open on April 16th and close on June 15th so eligible high school seniors still have one more chance to qualify this year!

Articles of Interest

Wall Street Journal: [You Can't Work Your Way Through College Anymore](#)

The Hechinger Report: [OPINION: America's colleges and universities have a serious revenue problem](#)

Inside Higher Ed: [Tuition Hikes Hurt Diversity](#)

Inside Higher Ed: [Pushing for Graduation in Four](#)

The Chronicle of Higher Education: [How Maine Became a Laboratory for the Future of Higher Ed](#)