

**South Carolina Commission on Higher Education
Access & Equity Advisory Committee Quarterly Meeting
CHE Conference Room
November 20, 2008
10:15 a.m.**

Committee Members:

Linda Becote
Antonio Boyle
Keith Britton
Sharon Boderick
Daphne Carter
Warren Carson
Gay Coleman
Curtis Harkness
Sharon Harriott
Lottie Otto
Robert Pickering
Caroline Thornton
Carl Wells
Reginald Wilburn

Staff:

Michael Brown
Lorinda Copeland
Jeff Richards

The meeting was held in accordance with the Freedom of Information Act.

1. Introductions and Welcome

Mr. Michael Brown called the meeting to order at 10:15 a.m. and introductions were made.

Mr. Jeff Richards, Director of Internal Operations, provided a budget update and reported the Access & Equity program began the legislative session with \$711,000 and ended the session with a 2% reduction and carry forward money was taken. The legislature did targeted rescissions and Access & Equity's rescission was approximately 13%. Mr. Richards stated the Board of Economic Advisors voted unanimously to recommend another 2% cut to agencies and because predictions could not be made as to what would happen the safest action was to distribute 50% of the Access & Equity post rescission budget now, 25% in mid February/March, and the remaining 25% in May.

Mr. Brown stated the statewide Access & Equity program had lost \$90,000 and asked advisory committee members whether the late release of funds would impact scholarships. Responses were that scholarships are awarded late in the semester and students receive refunds and use the funds for the next semester which is not ideal, planned programs have to be delayed, students are not rejected and the bill will be paid when the money is received, and matching funds are used for the initial awards.

Mr. Brown asked if programs couldn't be implemented because of the budget. Responses were a smaller number of students are served but assistance is received from the community, and private funding is secured. Mr. Brown asked if any institution had considered collaborating due to budget cuts. One advisory committee member responded collaboration was on their list to discuss prior to budget cuts.

2. **The Role of Access & Equity in Student Success (Graduation Rates – Affect of Access & Equity programs on minority graduation rates)**

Mr. Brown stated one of the objectives of the Higher Education Study Committee is student success and a component of student success is the graduation rate. Mr. Brown asked what Access & Equity could do to insure a higher graduation rate for its students. Mr. Brown also asked what could Access & Equity do to have a statewide initiative to increase minority student success and that a partnership with K-12 should be a component of the Access & Equity plan. An advisory committee member suggested Clemson's SAT Boot Camp as a model for a statewide program. Students would be identified in the state who are interested in attending a state college but do not have the SAT score, document students were able to enroll in the college of their choice, and provide continued assistance to insure academic success. Mr. Brown suggested Clemson's Emerging Scholars Program as a model and asked the committee to email their ideas.

3. **Retention & Tracking (Developing an Access & Equity database)**

Mr. Brown stated the budget report collects data to review what Access & Equity is doing and the number of students affected. Mr. Brown presented a spreadsheet which categorized Access & Equity programs into five categories (recruitment/retention, mentoring/tutoring, scholarships, cultural awareness, and enrichment programs/college awareness). Mr. Brown stated the 2008-2009 fiscal year budget information would be disseminated at the end of the year for feedback. An advisory committee member stated programs listed on the spreadsheet are effective programs but if outcome assessments and tracking are not done the success of programs can't be demonstrated. Mr. Brown asked how detailed should the data collection be and if the GPA should be collected. An advisory committee responded there are varying standards of academic progress and cautioned against reporting GPA's but academically eligible students.

An advisory committee member asked if matching funds were reported and Mr. Brown responded only the state allocation. The advisory committee member also asked statistically what his state allocation should be used for if the state allocation is reported. Mr. Brown responded if the state allocation is going to scholarships the thought is minorities are getting scholarships through Access & Equity compared to other scholarships and this could help or hurt depending on the audience. Mr. Brown asked if he should report matching funds to show how institutions are using their funds to support Access & Equity. Advisory members responded more numbers could be shown by reporting the institutional match and how these funds are used, it is important to show partnerships with other programs, and the reporting of matching funds could be justification programs can self sustain. An advisory committee member responded that care should be taken to insure Access and Equity doesn't get buried within other programs. Mr. Brown stated the database should include matching funds and the data will be used as necessary. An advisory committee member stated Mr. Brown would be able to statistically advise institutions how to use their funds. An advisory member asked if matching funds are required and Mr. Brown responded he would check the proviso.

4. **F/Y 2008-09 Budget Reports/Measurable Goals**

Mr. Brown stated problems still exist with reporting and that a budget report should be completed for each program. The programs should equal the state allocation and the expenditures on the state side should equal the allocation. However, the institutional match is not going to balance because it could be much higher, lower, or equal the state allocation. Mr. Brown reminded the advisory committee members to report what is actually done because the report is checked and compared against the previous year's report. Mr. Brown stated a request should be

made if additional time is needed to complete the report and estimates can be made when reporting. An advisory committee member stated if anyone had suggestions regarding the format they should review the report and forward comments to Mr. Brown.

5. **Carry Forwards/Approval Process**

Mr. Brown stated he strongly encourages institutions not to carry forward money because the carry forward funds CHE had were taken away. Mr. Brown stated carry forwards from two and three years ago are reported on budget reports and reminded the committee a carry forward of any amount has to be justified and requested. Mr. Brown further stated he has concerns with large amounts of carry forwards institutions have in their budgets.

6. **2009 Access & Equity Conference**

Mr. Brown reported the conference was scheduled for April 1 – 3, 2009 at the Radisson Hotel and Conference Center in Columbia. Ms. Otto also provided an update on the conference. Mr. Brown asked if the conference schedule should be reduced from three to two days because of budget cuts and Ms. Otto responded the concern would be forwarded to the SC Professional Association for Access and Equity (SC PAAE) executive committee. Mr. Brown also asked if there was a better way to market the conference so it could be viewed as a joint partnership between SC PAAE and the SC Commission on Higher Education (CHE) because he receives questions as to whether the conference is private or state sponsored. Advisory committee members responded the value of the conference should not be judged on its connection, conference materials include SC PAAE and CHE logos and clearly states the conference is sponsored by the two organizations, the conference was birthed from CHE and SC PAAE would not have been able to take over without the assistance of CHE, an Access & Equity coordinators meeting is scheduled during the conference, and the letter to the college presidents should emphasize the conference is a state wide Access & Equity conference.

An advisory committee member stated the SC PAAE executive committee has wondered if the release of Access & Equity funds can be tied to conference attendance. Mr. Brown responded conference attendance is not a requirement for the release of funds.

Mr. Brown stated he hoped conference materials would be disseminated soon so the information could be forwarded to CHE's Commissioners. Mr. Brown also stated he realizes there are only one or two full-time Access & Equity coordinators but they should become more active and visible during meetings because issues may not be Access & Equity but Access & Equity students are affected.

Mr. Brown requested Access & Equity coordinators forward a picture and brief bio for a newsletter so all coordinators can become acquainted with one another and that a copy of the newsletter would be provided to CHE's Commissioners. Mr. Harkness suggested the newsletter include an article on the importance of diversity to economic development because the connection has to be made if this state is not increasing the number of people earning degrees this state may be less attractive to business and industry. Mr. Brown and Mr. Harkness will work on this article. Mr. Wells suggested an article that would highlight Access & Equity successes and will forward his idea to Mr. Brown. Mr. Brown stated he probably should meet with college presidents regarding his concern of some Access & Equity programs moving further away from the offices of the president and student services.

Ms. Otto, historian for SC PAAE, asked the committee to let her know if there was information they wanted highlighted during the conference.

7. **Other Business**

There was no other business discussed.

8. **Adjournment**

The meeting was adjourned at 11:35 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Lorinda Copeland
Recording Secretary