

October 6, 2005

MEMORANDUM

To: Dr. Layton R. McCurdy, Chairman, and Members, Commission on Higher Education

From: Dr. Vermelle J. Johnson, Chair, and Members, Committee on Academic Affairs and Licensing

Consideration of Centers of Excellence (Teacher Education) Budget Allocations, FY 2005-06, and Appropriations Request, FY 2006-07

Background

The Educational Improvement Act of 1984 provided for the establishment of a contract program with public or private colleges in South Carolina to foster the development of “Centers of Excellence” in particular areas of need related to teacher training. In FY 2003-04, in an effort to engage higher education more collaboratively with the State’s efforts to improve underperforming schools, the Commission issued revised *Guidelines* that provided a different focus for the program.

The revised program focuses on teacher training specifically linked to the State’s low-performing schools and districts. The program’s revised goals are to improve teacher quality and raise student achievement in the target schools and districts. State funding is provided for up to five years with the goal of establishing statewide resource centers that will have a positive impact on the State’s most needy schools and children. There are currently eighteen Centers of Excellence, although only six are receiving funding during the current fiscal year (FY 2005-06).

The current program *Guidelines* stipulate that each Center must submit budgets for the first five years of funding. The maximum funding award is \$150,000 in year one. In year two, funding is awarded at 90% of the original request, and reduced to 75% of the original request in years three, four, and five.

In the event of budget shortfalls or mid-year reductions, funding awards are adjusted accordingly. In addition, reporting requirements in the *Guidelines* further stipulate that each year, a formal request for funding by each Center must be made.

Budget Allocations for FY 2005-06

For FY 2005-06, full funding for the six newest centers still entitled to either four years (old program) or five years (new program) of State funding requires an appropriation of \$721,101. The actual appropriation for FY 2005-06 is \$721,101, which is exactly the amount needed to meet the funding obligations listed below.

Table 1

Center/Institute	Award FY 2005-06
Education and Equity of African-American Students, Benedict (year 4 of 4)	\$78,521
Engineering and Computing Education, USC-Columbia (year 3 of 5)	\$112,500
Advancement of Rural, Under-Performing Schools, USC-Aiken (year 3 of 5)	\$112,870
Preparing Teachers of Children of Poverty, Francis Marion (year 2 of 5)	\$135,000
Collaborative Learning, USC-Beaufort (year 2 of 5)	\$120,210
Adolescent Literary and Learning, Clemson (year 1 of 5)	\$150,000
CHE Administration	\$12,000
Total	\$721,101

This information is presented to the Commission for information since it is relevant to the Centers of Excellence (Teacher Education) appropriations request for FY 2006-07, which requires Commission approval, and which follows below.

Appropriations Request, FY 2006-07

Annually, the appropriations request for the Centers of Excellence program is made through an *Annual Report* document that is designed by and submitted to the Education Improvement Act Subcommittee of the Education Oversight Committee (EOC).

In FY 2006-07, no Centers will be funded under the old program (four years of funding). All centers will be eligible for up to five years of funding. Two centers will be in their fourth year of funding, two will be in their third year of funding, and one will be in its second year of funding as shown in Table 2 below:

Table 2

Center and Institution	Amount to be Requested in FY 2006-07
Center of Excellence for Engineering and Computing Education (USC-Columbia)	\$112,200 (fourth year of funding)
Center of Excellence for the Advancement of Rural, Under-Performing Schools (USC-Aiken)	\$112,870 (fourth year of funding)
Center of Excellence to Prepare Teachers of Children in Poverty (Francis Marion)	\$112,500 (third year of funding)
Center of Excellence for Collaborative Learning (USC-Beaufort)	\$100,175 (third year of funding)
Center of Excellence in Adolescent and Literacy Learning (Clemson)	\$134,980 (second year of funding)
CHE Administration (brochures, Review Panel, meetings, etc.)	\$12,000
Subtotal	\$584,725
New Center of Excellence	\$150,000
Total Appropriation Required:	\$734,725
FY 05-06 Funds Awarded	\$721,101

**Probable Shortfall for FY 06-07 if
level funding awarded (\$13,624)**

Recommendation

In order to permit the funding of a new Center of Excellence in Teacher Training at the full \$150,000 level during FY 06-07, the Committee on Academic Affairs and Licensing recommends that the Commission authorize the staff to seek an increase of \$13,624, or 1.88%, from the Education Oversight Committee for this program. [In the event that the increase is not approved, and assuming level funding, then a new center could be established with \$136,376.]