

Legislative Updates of interest for Higher Education Week of June 4 – June 8, 2007

Hyperlinks to bills in the text below will direct you to the most current version of the legislation as posted at www.scstatehouse.net, the website for the South Carolina General Assembly.

Budget Update: The General Assembly adjourned June 7 without passing a budget, but with an agreement (Concurrent Resolution [S.787](#)) to return June 19 – 21 to consider issues as identified in the agreement and again on June 28 and 29, if needed, to consider gubernatorial vetoes. The Budget Conference Committee did meet during the week and by late Thursday had adopted a report of the Conference Committee for consideration of the House and Senate. The report was not adopted by either the House or Senate. Budget deliberations will continue when the House and Senate return on the 19th. In the event the budget is not approved by June 30, the joint resolution, [S.784](#), passed earlier by both bodies was ratified and will enable the 2006 Appropriations Act to continue to remain in effect until the 2007-08 Appropriations Act is passed and takes effect.

In the House –

The House continued its debate on [H.3964](#) which would enable concealed weapon permit holders to carry concealed weapons on educational facilities. Debate ended when the bill was sent back to the House Judiciary Committee for further consideration.

[H.3379](#) relating to S.C. residents who have attended high schools in another state and eligibility for Palmetto Fellows and LIFE scholarship programs remains in the Senate. During the week, the Senate nonconcurrent and then reconsidered its nonconcurrency with House amendments to H.3379. As was noted last week, the House had amended this bill to include the provisions previously passed by the House in H.3170 to create incentives for state scholarship recipients in math and science majors. As is indicated below, [H.3170](#) also remains in the Senate. Before being given its second reading by the Senate, it was amended to include provisions for the math/science incentive similar to those described in H.3379. Although these bills did not pass as of the end of the week, there remains legislation under consideration this year that would create incentives for state scholarship recipients who are majoring in math and science. On Thursday, [S.656](#) was amended by the Senate to include such provisions before being returned to the House and may be considered when the General Assembly returns on the 19th. If passed, provisions included are similar to those initially passed by the House and would create scholarship enhancements to Palmetto Fellows (up to \$3300) and LIFE (up to \$2500) for math and science majors beginning at the sophomore level; enable Palmetto Fellows recipients who are not math/science majors to receive an enhancement beginning in the sophomore year; and provide an increased book allowance from \$150 to \$300 to the HOPE scholarship recipients.

[S.213](#), “Prevention of Underage Drinking and Access to Alcohol Act of 2007,” was approved and enrolled for ratification. Once it is ratified, it will go to the Governor for consideration. Included in this legislation is a change in current statutory provisions as to when Palmetto Fellows, LIFE, HOPE, Tuition Grants, and Need-based Grants are lost based on convictions of felony and alcohol and drug offenses. The provisions passed result in recipients losing these awards upon any second or subsequent alcohol or drug related offenses rather than first offense as is the case currently.

In the Senate –

As noted above, H.3170, which would provide incentives for state scholarship recipients pursuing math and science remains in the Senate. Legislation, [S.825](#), was introduced in the Senate that would provide for the designation of net proceeds from specific lottery games to either K-12 or higher education in equal amounts. The bill was referred to the Senate Education Committee.

Continued, Week of June 4 to June 8, 2007

Other –

June 7th was the last day of the 2007 Legislative Session. As indicated above, the General Assembly did pass a provision before adjourning on June 7 that brings the General Assembly back June 19-21 to take up matters as specified in the provision that passed. For additional information, see link above for S.787. As a reminder, the 2007 session is the first year in the two year continuing session. As a result, legislation under consideration as of the end of the session will retain its position for consideration during next year's 2008 session.

During the week, several pieces of legislation were signed into law including: [S.322](#) that creates a college tuition assistance program for National Guard members and closes the National Guard Loan Repayment program to new participants; [S.459](#), the Jessica Horton Act; [S.484](#) relating to the Tuition Grant program and eligible institutions; and H.4029 relating to the Horry County Higher Education Commission. The Governor vetoed [S.657](#), the S.C. Critical Needs Nursing Initiative Act, and [S.666](#) relating to Winthrop University's Board of Trustees membership, but both will become law as the House and Senate overrode these vetoes.

Also during the week, a number of pieces of legislation that have been reported on previously were passed by the General Assembly and ratified and now await action of the Governor including: [H.3034](#), S.C. Energy Efficiency Act, [H.3476](#), the Teacher Recruitment and Retention Improvement Act; [H.3481](#) relating to fire sprinkler contractors; and [S.243](#), the Hydrogen Infrastructure Development Fund Act. [S.282](#) relating to alternative construction delivery is in Conference Committee and is still under considered this session.

Reminder: Additional information on legislation referenced above and other legislation relating to higher education is available on CHE's website at http://www.che.sc.gov/CHE_Docs/InfoCntr/Legisl/HigherEd_Legis_List.xls Links to SC's Legislative Website and other relevant information is also available on CHE's website at <http://www.che.sc.gov/Home/CHELegislativeUpdates/LegislativeSession2007.aspx>