



NEWS

The S.C. Commission on Higher Education
Garrison Walters, Executive Director
1333 Main Street, Suite 200
Columbia, SC 29201

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Contact: Rita Allison
Director of Communications
803-737-8352
rallison@che.sc.gov

Commission on Higher Education Welcomes New Executive Director and Stresses Importance of Higher Education Statewide Planning

Columbia, SC—The South Carolina Commission on Higher Education (CHE) met this morning in Columbia. Chairman Layton McCurdy and members of the Commission welcomed their new Executive Director, Dr. Garrison Walters, who has been on the job for three weeks. Key on the Commission's agenda was a discussion of statewide planning for the future of higher education in South Carolina. Dr. Walters shared ideas with the Commission on creating an "Action Plan" to ensure our higher education system is more effectively connected to the future success of the state. He stated that he is looking forward to working with the state's political leaders, business and community leaders, education partners, and citizens to create a plan that will strengthen higher education's role in moving the state forward and improving the quality of life of South Carolinians.

To reiterate the importance of developing such a plan, the Commission adopted a position statement (attached) to stress the need for a focused statewide higher education plan and to express strong support for the work to be completed by a legislatively mandated "Higher Education Study Committee" to be appointed by the General Assembly and Governor. This newly created committee is to build on the work of the recent Governor's Task Force on Higher Education and is charged with developing a plan for higher education by February 1, 2008. As part of its statement, the Commission expressed its belief that approval of any substantive changes in institutional missions before this planning process is complete would be premature.

Dr. McCurdy commented, "The Commission looks forward to working with Dr. Walters and the study committee to bring about an evolving, multi-year plan for higher education and the citizens of this great state. We believe the creation of such a plan is crucial to our future successes."

Following its meeting this afternoon and on Wednesday, the Commission is scheduled to hear presentations from the presidents of the state's public colleges and universities. The presentations provide an opportunity each year for the Commissioners to learn about exciting initiatives across campuses and upcoming needs. A copy of the schedule is available at [http://www.che.sc.gov/Commission%20Calendar&Materials/Aug2007MtgMaterials/Presidents' Pres. Schedule.pdf](http://www.che.sc.gov/Commission%20Calendar&Materials/Aug2007MtgMaterials/Presidents'Pres.Schedule.pdf)

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Position Statement

Higher education in South Carolina needs a coherent, focused, statewide plan. The presidents have been working on this issue for some time, the Governor's Task Force recommended that a plan be created, and now, through the FY08 Budget Proviso 5A.28, the Governor and the General Assembly have appointed a Higher Education Study Committee to "*...develop and recommend an evolving, multi-year statewide strategic plan for higher education in South Carolina to meet the needs of the state as can be addressed by higher education.*" Given the importance of this legislatively mandated effort in shaping the future direction of higher education in the state, the Commission strongly believes it would be inappropriate to approve substantive changes in institutional missions before the planning process is complete.

***Adopted by the South Carolina Commission on Higher Education
August 1, 2007***