



# South Carolina Commission on Higher Education

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**Immediate Release**  
**Friday, March 19, 2010**

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ROCK HILL – South Carolina’s gubernatorial candidates of both parties will share a stage at Winthrop University Tuesday night (March 23) for a 90-minute debate on higher education’s future in the Palmetto State.

Sponsored by the S.C. Commission on Higher Education and hosted by the John C. West Forum on Politics and Policy at Winthrop University, the debate will be held from 7-8:30 p.m. in Winthrop’s historic McBryde Hall before an audience of 500 ticketholders, including public and independent colleges and university presidents, state public officials and business leaders, and student leaders from Winthrop and other South Carolina universities. Television audiences will be able to tune in to a broadcast live via Rock Hill’s Comporium Cable CN2 Extra on Channel 3. A live webstream will also be available at <http://www.cn2.com/web/guest/politics>.

The debate will be moderated by the Commission’s Chairman Ken Wingate with questions provided by a media panel composed of Dawndy Mercer Plank, news anchor for WIS-TV in Columbia, Lucas McFadden, news anchor for CN2, and Wayne Washington, higher education reporter for The State newspaper. Brief questions can be submitted for panel consideration at [debate@che.sc.gov](mailto:debate@che.sc.gov) through noon on Monday, March 22.

Participating in the forum will be (alphabetically): Congressman Gresham Barrett-R; Lt. Gov. Andre Bauer-R; State Rep. Nikki Haley-R; Attorney General Henry McMaster-R; State Sen. Robert Ford-D; Superintendent of Education Jim Rex-D, and State Sen. Vincent Sheheen-D.

Wingate commented on higher education’s increasingly important role in the state’s future: “Not only is our state coping with the same economic crisis as the rest of the nation, it is also coping with a transformational shift to a more diversified, knowledge-based economy. South Carolina’s next governor will play a pivotal role in determining how South Carolina will meet this challenge, so it is important that the public have an opportunity to evaluate candidates on this key issue.”

Beginning at 9 a.m. on Monday, March 22, a limited number of public tickets will be available on a first-come, first-serve basis. An individual can receive up to four tickets. For ticket inquiries and additional information, contact the Commission at 803-737-2275 or Winthrop University at 803-323-2225.

**Media advisory:** Media requesting credentialing for this event should e-mail names of individuals, media affiliation, equipment set-up needs and cell phone contact information to Rebecca Masters, Winthrop University, at [mastersr@winthrop.edu](mailto:mastersr@winthrop.edu). Please use “Debate Media Request” in the subject line.