
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
October 31, 2006

Contact: Ms. Rita Allison
Director of Communications
803-767-8352 (cell)

On November 2, 2006, the Division of Student Services of the S.C. Commission on Higher Education will present the *Summary Report on S.C. Scholarships and Grants 1988-2005* at the monthly Commission meeting. Written in response to questions raised by the former Access & Equity and Student Services Committee Chairman, Mr. Daniel Ravenel, the Report describes the history, administration and efficacy of each of the State's scholarships and grants programs. Mr. Ravenel stated that he "considered it to be the responsibility of the Commission on Higher Education to review the state scholarship and grant programs to ensure that such programs have credibility and are operating in the manner that the legislature intended." In addition, with the creation of the N.C. Lottery and possible losses in S.C. Lottery sales, Mr. Ravenel and the Committee wanted to take a proactive approach in evaluating the programs in case there is an eventual call for modifications.

As a result of the Report, although public attention is usually focused on the merit-based scholarships, the Committee found that their major concern focused on the S.C. Need-based Grant Program. The Report indicates that since 1998, funding for merit-based programs has increased by 349 percent while funding for the S.C. Need-based Grant has increased by only 34 percent. In addition, before 1996, South Carolina was one of only two states in the nation not providing need-based grants to its students attending public institutions.

However, the Report reveals that South Carolina is doing an excellent job of keeping the best and brightest students in the State. According to the data in the Report, over 80 percent of students eligible to receive the Palmetto Fellows Scholarship, which is given to the most academically talented high school seniors in South Carolina, accept the Scholarship and attend college in S.C. (those who do not accept the Scholarship are generally students who choose to attend an out-of-state college or university).

The Report also illustrates that the LIFE Scholarship is helping students to attend college. For instance, after the inception of the LIFE Scholarship in 1998, the number of students attending colleges and universities in South Carolina increased by 19 percent from 1998 to 2004. During this time, the percentage of first-time freshmen being awarded the LIFE Scholarship rose from 28 percent to 40.8 percent.

In addition to the S.C. Need-based Grant, Palmetto Fellows and LIFE Scholarships, the Report provides information on the S.C. HOPE Scholarship and Lottery Tuition Assistance Programs. To read the full Report, please visit the Commission's website at www.che.sc.gov. The Report will be available after the Commission meeting on November 2, 2006.