



## South Carolina Commission on Higher Education

Mr. Tim M. Hofferth, Chair  
Ms. Dianne C. Kuhl, Vice Chair  
Mr. Paul O. Batson, III  
Mr. Devron H. Edwards  
Dr. Bettie Rose Horne  
Mr. Richard A. Jones, Jr.  
Mr. Kenneth W. Kirkland  
Ms. Allison Dean Love  
Dr. Louis B. Lynn  
Vice Admiral Charles Munns, USN (ret.)  
Mr. Kim F. Phillips  
Ms. Terry C. Seckinger

Mr. Jeffrey M. Schilz  
Interim President and  
Executive Director

November 2, 2017

### MEMORANDUM

**To:** Chairman Tim Hofferth and Member, SC Commission on Higher Education

**From:** Chairman Paul Batson, III and Members, Committee on Access & Equity and Student Services

### College Transition Need-based Grant Program 2017-18 Academic Year

#### Historical Background

The General Assembly included Proviso 11.19 in the FY 2013-14 Appropriations Act to enable funds appropriated to the College Transition Connection (CTC)\* be redirected through the need-based grant program to be available as need-based grants for students enrolled in recognized College Transition Programs (CTP) at South Carolina institutions. As of Fall 2017, these institutions include: Clemson University, Coastal Carolina University, College of Charleston, University of South Carolina, and Winthrop University.

The U.S. Department of Education offers financial aid to those students enrolled or accepted for enrollment in a comprehensive transition and postsecondary program for students with intellectual disabilities at post-secondary institution that participates in the federal student aid programs. According to the U.S. Department of Education, *Institutions must participate in a federal approval process in order to provide federal funds to students enrolled in these programs.* As of June 2017, there were 69 approved programs with South Carolina being home to five of those programs.

Initial efforts to assist intellectually disabled students were directed by CTC. During FY 2013-14, CTC worked with select colleges and universities in South Carolina to design, create and fund transition and post-secondary opportunities for young adults with intellectual disabilities. The CTC worked with the South Carolina General Assembly and the South Carolina Commission on Higher Education (CHE) in an effort to redirect funds for the purposes of creating a state based program to provide additional financial assistance to students who enroll in these programs in South Carolina.

The CTP serves students with intellectual disabilities who demonstrate financial need. These programs allow for students to attend a four-year institution and engage in academics, independent living environments, employment/career opportunities, and socialization. These programs are non-degree seeking and successful completion of these programs allows for students to receive a non-degree certificate of post-secondary education.

\*A non-profit organization based in Charleston, SC. The General Assembly directs recurring funds to CTC through CHE's budget starting FY 2007- 2008.

## **CTP Institutional Data**

Proviso 11.12 in the FY 2017-2018 Appropriations Act went into effect July 1, 2017.

*11.12. (CHE: College Transition Need-Based Grants) Of the currently appropriated need-based grants funding, no more than \$350,000 shall be used to provide need-based grants to South Carolina resident students enrolled at a public institution of higher education in an established college transition program that serves students with intellectual disabilities. The Commission on Higher Education shall allocate the available funds to eligible institutions on the basis of student need and enrollment in the established college transition programs. All other grants and gift aid for which these students are eligible must be applied first to the cost of attendance prior to using the need-based grant funding. If the cost of attendance for an eligible student is met with all other grants and gift aid, the need-based grant shall not be used. The participating institutions, in cooperation with the Commission on Higher Education, shall track the number of grant recipients and other information determined necessary to evaluate the effectiveness of these grants in assisting students with intellectual disabilities in college transition programs.*

The Proviso transfers and dedicates recurring funds provided to CTP for the purpose of need-based student grants. The guidelines provide for eligibility consistent with eligibility for the financial assistance programs authorized under Title IV of the Higher Education Act of 1965. Participants of this program are required to complete a Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) and demonstrate financial need, as well as meet the established South Carolina residency requirements in order to receive funding. In order to meet the anticipated growth of eligible South Carolina students with financial need, additional funding for FY 2016-17 was approved by General Assembly in the amount of \$350,000 which reflects an increase of \$170,822 from FY 2015-2016. This award amount continued funding of \$350,000 for FY 2017-2018.

Collaboration and development of the CTP programs have resulted in the following outcomes:

1. Guidelines for determining eligibility for a student enrolled in an eligible CTP program.
2. Process for grant award disbursement and requesting funds from CHE.

Because the CTP is directed by a temporary one-year budget proviso, considerations for the program in subsequent years will be subject to any statutory or regulatory changes that may occur during the upcoming 2018 Session of the General Assembly or renewal of the budget proviso for FY 2018-19.

## **South Carolina CTP Program Descriptions**

### **ClemsonLIFE:**

Cost of program: \$40,534 per year (program costs decrease to \$31,534 for years 3 and 4).

Fall 2017 total participants: 37 with 8 CTP eligible.

The ClemsonLIFE Program offers a 2-year Basic Program that incorporates functional academics, independent living, employment, social/leisure skills, and health/wellness skills in a public university setting with the goal of producing self-sufficient young adults. Additionally, the ClemsonLIFE Program offers a 2-year Advanced Program for students who have demonstrated the ability to safely live independently, sustain employment, and socially integrate during the Basic Program. According to Clemson, the Advanced Program progresses with an emphasis on workplace experience, community integration, and independent living with transitionally reduced supports. Students who successfully

complete the Basic or Advanced program will receive a corresponding certificate of postsecondary education.

### **Coastal Carolina University LIFE Program**

Cost of program: On-campus ranges from \$25,190-\$27,030. Off-campus ranges from \$16,770-\$17,550. Program cost depends on housing and meal plan choice.

Fall 2017 total participants: 22 with 7 CTP eligible.

The Coastal Carolina University LIFE program is a four-year, tuition-based, postsecondary education and transition program for young adults who have mild to moderate intellectual and/or developmental disabilities. According to Coastal Carolina, the program is a cohort-structured program enrolling eight to ten students each academic year. The LIFE program prepares students with the life skills needed to complete their post-secondary education, gain and maintain meaningful employment, and live independent and productive adult lives.

### **College of Charleston REACH Program**

Cost of program: On-campus ranges from \$29,092-\$30,068. Off-campus \$17,600. Out-of-state on-campus ranges from \$37,092-\$38,068. Out-of-state off-campus \$25,600. Program cost depends on housing choice.

Fall 2017 total participants: 34 with 1 CTP eligible.

The REACH Program at the College of Charleston is a four-year, certificate program for students with mild intellectual and/or developmental disabilities. According to the College of Charleston, the REACH Program promotes the advancement of knowledge and skill in the areas of academics, socialization, independent living, and career development, and has been nationally recognized for its commitment to full-inclusion and self-determination. Students in the REACH Program are able to participate in all activities offered by the College of Charleston, with individualized support for success. These include: attending traditional classes (with modifications and support); living in traditional on-campus housing and residence halls; completing internships; participation in campus clubs, activities, and organizations; and peer-mentoring.

### **The University of South Carolina CarolinaLIFE**

Cost of program: On-campus \$36,642. Off-campus \$28,762. Out-of-state \$41,667.

Fall 2017 total participants: 21 with 8 CTP eligible

CarolinaLIFE is an individualized, non-degree program for students with identified, diverse learning needs (e.g. intellectual disability). The program curriculum, according to USC, focuses on five core areas: academic instruction, career education and training, independent living, social and community engagement, personal development. CarolinaLIFE students have access to opportunities offered to other USC students such as participation in USC courses, on campus housing, student organizations, sporting events, work-study, and commencement.

### **Winthrop THINK College Program:**

Cost of program: On-campus \$30,346. Off-campus \$22,522.

Fall 2017 total participants: 19 with 8 CTP eligible

Winthrop University's Think College (WTC) Program creates customized schedules for each student using a person-centered planning approach. The schedules include traditional courses, internships, and specialty courses to support student development of specific skill sets. The focus of WTC, according to Winthrop, is to build and strengthen skills in the areas of employment, self-determination, health and

nutrition, social networking, and independent living. WTC is a two-year program. Several students are invited to live on-campus during their second year with a Peer Mentor.  
 Overview of the South Carolina CTP programs and disbursements.

**TABLE 1**

Institution	Length of Program (All programs offer on & off campus housing)	Certification Awarded	Total Participants				
			2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	Estimated Fall 2017
<b>Clemson University</b>	2 Years An optional 3rd year is available for select students	Certificate of Postsecondary Education upon completion of 2-year program	1	2	3	5	8
<b>Coastal Carolina University</b>	4 Years	University Certificate of Completion	8	9	8	9	7
<b>College of Charleston</b>	4 Years	Certificate of Completion	3	0	0	0	1
<b>University of South Carolina</b>	Students have the option to enroll in a 2, 3, or 4 Year program	Certificate of Completion	8	7	7	7	8
<b>Winthrop University*</b>	2 Years	Letter of Completion	N/A	8	11	11	8
<b>Total Participants in CTP</b>			<b>20</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>32</b>

*Effective Spring 2015 Winthrop University's CTP program received final federal approval required for their program implementation.*

**TABLE 2**

Institution	Award Disbursement				
	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	Projected Award Disbursement Fall 2017 Only
<b>Clemson University</b>	\$7,000	\$19,913	\$13,952	\$42,533	\$30,000
<b>Coastal Carolina University</b>	\$55,736	\$58,465	\$50,550	\$76,195	\$26,250
<b>College of Charleston</b>	\$21,000	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$3,750
<b>University of South Carolina</b>	\$56,000	\$63,220	\$43,755	\$70,000	\$30,000
<b>Winthrop University*</b>	N/A	\$37,259 <i>*Spring Only</i>	\$68,079	\$85,000	\$30,000

*Table 1 illustrates an overall steady growth in CTP students since initiation of the program, with the exception of the 2017-18 academic year whereas the program seems to have leveled out.*

*Table 2 illustrates the Award Disbursement at each participating institution. In FY 2013-14 and 2014-15 the maximum award could not exceed \$7000 per student. As the program participants continued to increase, the funding available to each student decreased. With the rise of tuition & program fees at each institution and the anticipated growth of program participants, CTP was funded an additional \$170,833; total of \$350,000 for FY 2016-17. To help in recruitment efforts, the award amount for the FY 2016-17 could not exceed \$10,000. For the FY 2017-18, the award amount is currently up to a maximum of \$7,500 per student.*