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South Carolina joins organization to increase college completion rates, break down barriers to student success

Columbia, SC. – The South Carolina Commission on Higher Education (CHE) was joined today by Governor Henry McMaster to announce South Carolina’s membership in Complete College America, an organization dedicated to increasing college completion rates and ensuring everyone, no matter who they are, has a path to postsecondary success. The Governor has appointed the CHE to be the lead state partner in the effort.

“We must do all that we can to ensure South Carolinians have opportunities to further their education and find a good-paying job to support themselves and their families,” said Gov. Henry McMaster. “We’ve worked hard to dramatically increase needs-based financial aid available to low-income students in our state, but there’s more work to be done. Complete College America will help South Carolinians identify these opportunities and set them on a path towards prosperity, which will lift all of South Carolina.”

The CHE, in its Public Agenda for higher education, Ascend 60x30, has set a goal of reaching 60 percent of the state’s residents holding a high-quality postsecondary credential by 2030. “High-quality” credentials are ones that lead directly to employment or further education. The CHE believes South Carolina can reach that goal by reducing achievement gaps among different groups of students, whether by socioeconomic status, race or ethnicity, or geography.

Currently, about 48 percent of South Carolina’s working age (25-64) population hold a high-quality postsecondary credential, which is very low compared to other states. Completion or success rates at both the two-year and four-year level have room for improvement.

“Increasing higher education attainment for learners of all backgrounds, but especially for low-income students, first generation college-going students, adult learners, and minoritized students, is a national concern,” said Dr. Yolanda Watson Spiva, president of CCA. “Increased college completion within a state like South Carolina stimulates their labor economy and makes the state attractive for investment. Complete College America looks forward to partnering with higher education leaders across the state of South Carolina to develop college completion and student success action plans to meet the education and economic goals of the state.”

Complete College America is a national advocate for increasing college completion rates and breaking barriers to enrollment by working with states and institutions to ensure all students, regardless of race, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, or familial educational achievement, have equal opportunities to access and complete a college education.

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