



South Carolina Commission on Higher Education

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IN CASE YOU MISSED IT

CHE Student Bill Of Rights Tackles Affordability, Access & Sustainability

Members of South Carolina's Commission on Higher Education (CHE), led by Governor Henry McMaster and Chairman Tim Hofferth, recently adopted a working draft of a [Student Bill of Rights](#).

The Bill of Rights is a set of principles for reform that has started an important conversation across the state about how to make higher education more affordable and accessible for students and families.

Here's what people are saying about CHE's Student Bill of Rights:

As S.C. Colleges Face Potential Fiscal Crisis...

"For more than a year, the Higher Education Commission has been issuing dire warnings that South Carolina's 12 four-year colleges could see revenue shortfalls of up to \$500 million by 2026, a crisis comparable to the state's pension system." ([Robert Behre, Charleston Post and Courier, 5/8/2018](#))

...CHE Student Bill Of Rights Addresses College Affordability, Access and Sustainability, According to State Rep. Bill Taylor

Goal of the Student Bill of Rights is to "start a discussion on how to increase affordability, improve access and quality, as well as bring sustainability to the system." ([State Rep. Bill Taylor of Aiken, Guest Column, Aiken Standard, 5/13/2018](#))

Governor McMaster Is A Fan Of The Student Bill Of Rights...

"One fan of the Student Bill of Rights, however, is Gov. Henry McMaster." ([Paul Hyde, Greenville News, 5/10/2018](#))

...And McMaster Applauds CHE For Addressing Skyrocketing Tuition Costs

"Our state's colleges and universities provide a tremendous service to the people of South Carolina and are important economic drivers for our state, but in order for that progress to continue, we must do what we can to ensure that tuition costs are not unnecessarily prohibitive. I applaud the Commission on Higher Education's efforts in bringing these concerns to light and beginning the necessary discussion about how to best address them." ([Press Release, 5/7/2018](#))

Reforms In Student Bill Of Rights Inspire Legislative Proposal And Expand The Discussion

State Sen. Vince Sheheen's proposal "embodies many of the reforms favored by the Commission on Higher Education in its formal list of priorities, dubbed 'Student Bill of Rights,' which the commission approved last month." ([Lucas Daprile, The State, 5/7/2018](#))

For more information about the Student Bill of Rights, visit <https://www.che.sc.gov/> or email Katie Philpott at kphilpott@che.sc.gov.

Make sure to follow the CHE on Twitter at [@SCCommHigherEd](https://twitter.com/SCCommHigherEd) to read more and stay up-to-date.

DRAFT

STUDENT BILL OF RIGHTS

As the coordinating authority for public higher education in South Carolina, the Commission on Higher Education is committed to promoting institutional and systemwide access, affordability, and excellence. It is our solemn responsibility to assure a balance between student and taxpayer interests, institutional needs and economic development.

We believe that education is a critical component for the continuing economic development and well-being of our state, and that every South Carolina citizen should have the opportunity to achieve a certificate or degree through our public higher education system, leading to better jobs and quality of life, and benefitting our state as a whole.

Given the potentially devastating state and national trends in higher education, we believe that it is essential that our state proactively explore options and take steps to:

- a. ensure the health, sustainability and continued excellence of all South Carolina's institutions of higher learning; and
- b. to make academic access and affordability for South Carolinians a priority.

To that end, we submit this **Student Bill of Rights** as a starting point for discussions on how to achieve these goals. We understand that a "one-size-fits-all" approach is not feasible, given the different missions of each college and university. For this reason, the metrics and implementation timeline may vary at each institution.

I. SC STUDENTS HAVE THE RIGHT TO ACCESSIBLE EDUCATION

- 1) Palmetto Fellow and Life lottery tuition scholarship recipients should be granted automatic acceptance to any public institution of higher learning in South Carolina.
- 2) Qualified in-state students should be first in line in the admission process, and out-of-state growth should not necessitate institutional expansion and capital spending. Out-of-state enrollments should be assessed, managed and potentially capped. We welcome students from throughout the country, appreciate the diversity and enhancement they bring to the educational experience, and encourage them to make South Carolina their home upon graduation. Our priority, however, must be to the taxpayers and students of this state. A significant majority of students attending our public universities should be from South Carolina, and institutions should be encouraged to set admission goals consistent with that standard.

3) Tuition breaks for out-of-state students should be reviewed and potentially capped. We recognize that there is a legitimate benefit for use of some tuition breaks for out-of-state students. It is, however, unfair to the taxpayers of South Carolina to offer broad discounts to students who have not contributed to institutional support through the state tax base. It must also be recognized that by reducing out-of-state tuition, institutions are reducing revenues that could be used to lower the costs passed on to South Carolina students. With few exceptions, out-of-state students should pay out of state tuition.

4) Students should be able to freely transfer qualified courses between institutions. A system should be created to remove transferability barriers.

II. SC STUDENTS HAVE THE RIGHT TO AN AFFORDABLE EDUCATION

5) Cost of attendance should be capped, frozen, or decreased. While there may be rare and extraordinary circumstances that necessitate cost of attendance increases, institutions should actively seek ways to make higher education more affordable. Students should not be faced with the impossible choice of financial burden for their families or crippling debt upon their graduation.

6) Institutions should adopt policies of transparency and consistency in disclosing fees. Students and their families have the right to know exactly what their education will cost. All fees should be clearly stated and transparent, and public institutions should use consistent terminology to allow for comparison.

III. SC STUDENTS HAVE THE RIGHT TO EXPECT EXCELLENCE AND A RETURN ON INVESTMENT IN THEIR EDUCATIONAL EXPERIENCE

7) The Commission on Higher Education should collect, assess and monitor institution budgets (as proscribed by law) and enrollments. Students and their families have the right to expect that at every SC public college and university, they are placing their futures in the hands of strong and financially stable institutions.

8) South Carolina's students have the right to expect that their success and well being will be at the heart of every decision made at every level within the state's higher education system.