

## CHE Legislative Update, 4/3/2014

Since our last meeting, the House approved its budget. As you'll recall from earlier reports, the House Appropriations and Capital Reserve Fund Bills changed very little from the recommendations of Ways and Means and were the same in terms of recommended funding for higher education. Increases in recurring dollars higher education institutions remained at zero and included only requested funds for SREB (\$180,810) and Tuition Grants (\$258,764) and a new stipend program for students at technical colleges funded with \$1.5 million. (Prior Reports available at [http://www.che.sc.gov/CHE\\_Docs/infocntr/legisl/2014/Notes\\_W&M\\_FY15\\_Budget%2002-20-2014.pdf](http://www.che.sc.gov/CHE_Docs/infocntr/legisl/2014/Notes_W&M_FY15_Budget%2002-20-2014.pdf) and [http://www.che.sc.gov/CHE\\_Docs/infocntr/legisl/2014/CHE\\_WeeklyUpdate\\_10Mar2014.pdf](http://www.che.sc.gov/CHE_Docs/infocntr/legisl/2014/CHE_WeeklyUpdate_10Mar2014.pdf) )

The full Senate Finance Committee will meet next week to consider its recommendations. It is expected that the Committee will approve its recommendations next week and reach the full Senate for consideration by the end of April.

The Senate will be working with the same level of funds as were available to the House. The Board of Economic Advisors (BEA) has not changed its recommendations so there is no additional funding that can be considered to date by Senate Finance. We are running only slightly ahead of the estimates and whether any change will be made is not certain. However, if there is a change it likely would produce only limited additional one-time revenues.

We are nearing the crossover date which is at the end of the month. Legislation that has not crossed over from one chamber by May 1 must receive a two-thirds vote to be taken up. The House will not be in session the week before and after Easter. The Senate will not hold session the Thursday before Easter or the week after Easter.

With respect to bills that are in process, there are several updates:

- H.3784, relating to the National Guard College Assistance Program, has passed and has been enrolled for ratification.
- H.3410 which transfers oversight of the Regional Education Centers from the State Department of Education to Commerce has also passed and been enrolled for ratification.
- H.3086 and S.93 relating to relating to in-state tuition rates for veterans remain on the Senate calendar awaiting consideration for second reading as does S.266, the Accountability Based Funding bill.
- Bills relating to Common Core Standards remain under debate on both sides as does legislation relating to K-12 reading initiatives (Read to Succeed) and which has implications for teacher certification.
- Of note, legislation was introduced since our last meeting in the House, H.4988, which would change CHE's academic program approval by removing CHE's approval authority for associate degrees in applied science and providing that authority to the Technical College System Board.
- Finally, The Charleston University Act, H.4632, which as introduced would merge MUSC and the College of Charleston, has been under review in the House. A special ad hoc committee chaired by Representative Jim Merrill and including Representatives Stavrinakis, G.M. Smith, Limehouse, Bingham, Cobb-Hunter, and Anthony has met three times. At the first meeting, Charleston Mayor Joseph Riley and Charleston Chamber of Commerce representative Mary Graham testified and at the second meeting, Dr. Sutton and Commerce Secretary Robert Hitt addressed the committee. (For Dr. Sutton's remarks, [Click Here.](#)) A third meeting was held yesterday with brief notice and at which MUSC and College of Charleston were to speak. However, neither did

and instead the committee quickly adopted amendments and reported the bill out of committee to the full committee as amended.

The amendment backs off of the merger and instead

- designates the University of Charleston, South Carolina as a comprehensive research university under the College of Charleston Board of Trustees;
- requires a mission statement to be submitted by January 1, 2015 and approved by CHE by April 1, 2015;
- specifies that there will be no change to the College of Charleston as a four-year liberal arts college;
- states that the University of Charleston may not duplicate any degree programs in the Charleston region;
- enables the University of Charleston to participate in the Centers of Economic Excellence (SmartState) program; and
- amends the SmartState legislation to require that the endowed professorships and senior research universities shall seek collaboration and develop partnerships with similar focused programs at the technical colleges to meet workforce demands in South Carolina.