

## Legislative Updates of Interest for Higher Education

Week of Mar. 10 - 14, 2014

(Highlighted and bolded text is linked to source. Bill numbers go to the most recent version on the SC General Assembly website, [www.scstatehouse.gov](http://www.scstatehouse.gov), which is the latest version adopted House or Senate. As a result, bills may not reflect action of committees or the bodies for amendments under consideration. Text appearing in all caps following a bill reflects a copy of the bill title. This report is not intended to be all inclusive. For additional information on the 2014 session, see SC General Assembly website. For information reports on CHE's website, [Click Here](#))

### In the House –

- The House began its budget deliberations Monday afternoon and worked quickly through the budget, finishing its work on the Appropriations Act (H.4701) and Capital Reserve Fund Bill (H.4702) by Wednesday morning. The House did not hold Session on Thursday. For higher education, there were no changes of significance to the recommendations as advanced by House Ways and Means Committee. (For an earlier report on the Committee's recommendations, see [Click Here](#)). While amendments were discussed to restore the “other funds” which were cut for the College of Charleston and USC Upstate related to book choices, the amendments did not pass and the funds were not restored. The only changes from the Committee recommendations for higher education items included:
  - 1) adoption of a new proviso for colleges and universities that reads: *CHE: Distribution of Materials on College Campuses) Institutions of higher education shall not impose restrictions on the distribution of the Constitution of the United States or the Constitution of the State of South Carolina by students properly enrolled in the institution or otherwise eligible to enter the institution's property, so long as the distribution does not interrupt a class in session, a school-wide assembly or other school sponsored function. Restriction of such distribution will result in the withdrawal of State funding from the institution. For purposes of this proviso, an athletic event is not considered a class, school-wide assembly or school sponsored function;*
  - 2) clarification added for the use of non-recurring funds recommended for Technical College of the Lowcountry for military transition programs to enable the funds to also be used for building renovation, parking, and road improvement; and
  - 3) clarification added to the proviso concerning the new STEM stipend initiative that was introduced by Ways and Means and for which \$1.5 million in recurring funds were recommended, such that the proviso to direct this initiative was amended to read: *25.5 (TEC: Critical Needs Workforce Development Initiative Stipend) Of the funds appropriated to the State Board for Technical and Comprehensive Education for Critical Needs Workforce Development Initiative, a stipend shall be awarded to students who are enrolled in a training program for a critical needs field. For this purpose, critical needs shall be defined as areas of Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics and fields or regions with unmet employment demands shall be identified by the Department of Commerce. The conditions of the award are such that a student shall be eligible regardless of other financial assistance he or she may receive, the student must be a South Carolina resident, and awards are made per semester and are available for both credit seeking and non-credit seeking students. No student shall receive an award for more than six semesters.*

The budget is still in process and now moves to the Senate for consideration and all information provided is subject to change until the final budget is passed. For the full text of the budget as passed by the House, [Click Here](#).

### In the Senate –

- The budget bills for FY 2014-15, the Appropriations Act ([H.4701](#)), and the Capital Reserve Fund Bill ([H.4702](#)) were introduced in the Senate on Wednesday, March 12.
- On Thursday, the Senate received the report of the Joint Legislative Committee to Screen Candidates for College and University Boards of Trustees. The report, which was also received by the House is accessible in the [March 13 Senate Journal](#).