

Legislative Updates of interest for Higher Education: Week of Mar. 16-20, 2015

(Highlighted & bolded text is linked to source. Bill numbers go to the most recent version on the SC General Assembly website, www.scstatehouse.gov. This report is not intended to be all inclusive. For additional information on the 2015 session, see SC General Assembly website. For information reports on CHE's website, [Click Here](#))

In the House

- Budget Update: The House gave third reading to the FY 2015-16 budget bills (General Appropriations Bill ([H.3701](#)) and Capital Reserve Fund Bill ([H.3702](#)) on Tuesday and sent the bills to the Senate. Before approving the Appropriations Bill, the House adopted one amendment. The amendment was to re-insert language deleted in earlier action by the House that allowed Columbia College and Converse to be eligible for the lottery-funded Higher Education Excellence Enhancement Program. For the prior report on the bills as adopted by the House, [Click Here](#). The budget bills were introduced in the Senate on Wednesday. For the calendar for the budget process, [Click Here](#).
- On Wednesday, the House Education and Public Works Higher Education Subcommittee met and considered [H.3534](#) and [H.3353](#). The Subcommittee took action as described below, and both bills will next be considered by the full Committee.
 - o [H.3534](#) would add Clinton College as eligible to participate in the Higher Education Excellence Enhancement Program (HEEEP). The Subcommittee voted to approve the bill favorably after amending it to also include a provision to qualify as eligible Columbia College and Converse College, both of which have been eligible participants per temporary budget provisos. HEEEP is a lottery-funded program started in FY 2002-03 that provides funds for program enhancement at historically black colleges and universities pursuant to [SC Code of Laws, Section 2-77-10, et seq.](#)
 - o [H.3353](#) adds statutes to pilot programs for GED attainment. The Subcommittee voted to approve the bill favorably after amending it to have the State Department of Education rather than the Technical College System Office oversee the program.
- [H.3663](#) relating to the removal and replacement of the SC State Board of Trustees was amended by the House and given second reading on Wednesday. It was given third reading and sent to the Senate on Thursday. The bill is similar to the provision that was included by the House in the Appropriations Bill recommendations.
- [S.382](#) to authorize the president of SC State University to institute a mandatory furlough was recalled from the House Ways and Means Committee and placed on the House Calendar for consideration.

Introduced in the House:

- [S.475](#) relating to the removal and replacement of the SC State Board of Trustees was received from the Senate and referred to House Ways and Means. (This bill is similar to H.3663 considered and passed by the House, see above.)
- [H.3847](#) a Joint Resolution relating to licensing requirements for speech pathologists was introduced on Tuesday and placed on the Calendar without reference. By Thursday, it was approved and sent to the Senate. The Resolution, if enacted, would enable speech pathology assistants to be licensed who have graduated from a nationally accredited institution with a bachelor's degree in speech-language pathology prior to a change in the law in 2014 relating to licensing eligibility and program accreditation. (Sponsors: G.R. Smith, Burns, Hamilton and others. Referred to: Placed on House Calendar without Reference.)
- [H.3875](#) to call for a public referendum amending the SC Constitution to abolish the State Board of Education. (Sponsors: Toole, Burns, Chumley and Hill. Referred to House Judiciary)
- [H.3876](#) to amend SC Code of Laws to enact the "South Carolina Education Efficiency Act" by amending duties of the Superintendent of Education to provide that the Superintendent administer through the Department of Education all policies and procedures assigned by the Education Oversight Committee rather than the State Board of Education and make other conforming changes. If passed, enactment would be contingent the SC Constitution being amended to eliminate the State Board of Education - see above H.3875. (Sponsors: Toole, Burns, and Chumley. Referred to House Education and Public Works)

In the Senate

- The Senate Finance Higher Education Subcommittee continued its budget hearings during the week. The Subcommittee met on Tuesday and Wednesday and heard from Winthrop, MUSC, AHEC, USC, Lander, and Tuition Grants. The subcommittee includes Senators [John Courson](#) (Chair), [Darrell Jackson](#), and [Danny Verdin](#), and is staffed by Mr. Craig Parks.

During Wednesday's hearing, Chairman Courson commented on the House recommendation to eliminate CHE, indicating that it would not stand in the Senate as the budget was not the proper venue for such action, noting that it should be vetted through the standing committee. The subcommittee considered recommendations regarding budget provisos; funding recommendations have not yet been considered. With respect to the provisos, the subcommittee

- did not adopt recommendations of the House to alter provisos as a result of the House not funding CHE (Part 1B Provisos 11.1, 11.3, 11.4, 11.5, 11.8, 11.9, 11.10, 11.11, and 11.15);
- recommended not adopting new House provisos including 3.5, 3.7, 11.21, 11.22, 11.23, 11.24, 11.25, 11.26, 11.28, 11.30, 11.31, 11.36, 11.37, 11.38, 19.3, and 25.7;
- recommended not deleting 11.13 as had been recommended by the House;
- adopted House recommendations for provisos 3.2, 3.4, 11.7, 11.14, 11.16, 11.17, 11.18, 14.1, 14.2, 19.1, 20.4, 25.1, 25.6, and 117.62;
- did not act on several provisos as they will be considered later with funding recommendations (3.6, 20.3, and 20.5) or are considered by another subcommittee (11.27, 93.18, 117.55);
- amended further provisos as recommended by the House (3.1, 11.2 by not deleting and amending existing, 11.19, 11.29, and 11.35); and
- added a new proviso as requested by CHE relating to the SmartState drawdown process.

Please note that this information is as of 3/19 and is subject to further change by members and subject to technical and/or conforming correction pursuant to staff authority granted by the subcommittee. For copies of provisos as included in the approved House recommendations, [Click Here](#). Provisos are numbered by section and item, i.e., 11.1 is Section 11, proviso number 1)

The full Senate Finance Committee is expected to consider subcommittee recommendations during the week of April 13. The budget is expected reach the Senate for debate during the week of April 27. See above for a link to the budget calendar.

- [S.391](#) was approved by the Senate during the week and sent to the House for consideration. The legislation, if enacted, would enable SC institutions to comply with Section 702 of the federal Veterans Choice Act of 2014. The Senate adopted S.391 as amended by the Senate Education Committee to mirror the federal provisions. During the Senate deliberations, there was discussion about the cost implications. ([Click Here](#) for a copy of the fiscal impact statement of the Revenue and Fiscal Affairs Office). Senators speaking on the bill encouraged consideration of Senate Finance for institutions in the budget.
- The Senate Education Higher Education Subcommittee met on Thursday. The Subcommittee considered [S.528](#), to add provisions for a textbook policy for public institutions of higher education that is intended to help minimize college textbook costs, and also [S.261](#), to amend provisions for free tuition for those sixty years old and over by deleting the requirement that eligible persons must not be full-time employed. Also considered by the subcommittee were proposed Regulations for the National Guard College Assistance Program ([Doc. No. R4533](#)) and proposed regulations to repeal regulations for the National Guard Loan Repayment Program ([Doc. No. R4534](#)) which is no longer active and was replaced by the National Guard College Assistance Program. Both bills and the regulations received favorable reports and will be considered next by the full Education Committee which meets next on Wednesday, March 25.

Introduced in the Senate:

- [S.570](#) to make various changes to the state's provisions for carrying concealed weapons. Among provisions are considerations in Section 8 of the bill that would allow those issued a permit to carry concealed weapons into places previously prohibited. (Sponsor: Bright. Referred to: Judiciary)