



# South Carolina Commission on Higher Education

March 11, 2018

We are writing to notify you of a recent incident that involved the unauthorized exposure of a Palmetto Fellows Scholarship database maintained by the South Carolina Commission on Higher Education (SCCHE). This database contained some of your personal identifying information, including your name, home address, and social security number (which is labeled in the database as your student identification number).

SCCHE acted as soon as the exposure was discovered last week and stopped it immediately. We also brought in forensic investigators to determine the exact cause and nature of the incident. We continue to work with state and private information technology security experts, including the State Law Enforcement Division (SLED), to ensure that scholarship information is not subject to any further unauthorized exposure.

**To be clear, investigators have found no evidence that malicious intent was involved with exposure of the database or that the exposed data has been used for identity theft or any other crime.**

The Palmetto Fellows scholarship database that was exposed is intended to be accessible on SCCHE's website only by authorized users at South Carolina institutions of higher education. The security incident resulted when this database became viewable without the required credentials. At this time, the forensic investigation reveals that the database was viewable without authorized credentials from May 26, 2017, until the discovery of the security incident.

While there is no evidence at this time to suggest that your information has been, or will be, used in any malicious way, we wanted to notify you of this incident out of an abundance of caution and in accordance with our commitment to transparency. We have also notified law enforcement, the S.C. Department of Consumer Affairs and the national credit rating agencies of the incident.

You may contact the S.C. Department of Consumer Affairs at 1-800-922-1594 or visit <http://www.consumer.sc.gov/IdentityTheft> for guidance on protecting yourself from identity theft and dealing with any inappropriate use of your data.

On behalf of the S.C. Commission on Higher Education, we offer our sincerest apology that this unfortunate incident occurred. We assure you that protecting and safeguarding your information is one of our highest priorities and are continually reviewing and strengthening our policies, procedures, and practices to minimize the risk of any unauthorized data exposure. If you have any questions with regard to this notification, please contact SCCHE at 803-737-2260 or visit <http://www.che.sc.gov>.