



2007

Commission on Higher Education Update

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A Note from the Executive Director

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It's been just a little over three months since I began my tenure at the Commission. Getting acclimated—especially to an unusually hot Carolina summer—has had its challenges for someone from Ohio. Fortunately, unlike the summer heat, I am finding the people of South Carolina to be exceptionally generous in their welcome and I am treasuring the experience of getting to know the state and its people better. It is in this light that I'm delighted to share with you my initial impressions.

As a relative newcomer to South Carolina, one of my first observations is that there is tremendous strength in higher education here.

Our research institutions are working more collaboratively than most, are clearly making the tough choices about where to focus, and the available data show that they are very much on the move.

Listening to the presidents' presentations to the Commission in August, I could see that our comprehensive universities are focused on excellence in undergraduate education and are well-connected to their communities. They also have outstanding leadership.

South Carolina's technical colleges enjoy a well-deserved national reputation. I recently heard leaders at BMW point to the colleges' record of success with other German companies as the primary reason they decided to locate a major facility here.

I am less familiar at this point with the state's independent campuses, but I do know from contacts here and in national circles that we are fortunate to have many dynamic and successful private institutions.

Taken together, our public colleges and universities rank among the handful of national leaders in a key metric—graduation rates. Other areas of leadership are demonstrated in significant support of student financial aid and in such programs as the Centers of Economic Excellence that is increasing research and attracting talent to enhance our competitiveness in the knowledge-based economy.

My first observation leads to this initial conclusion: we need to do a much better job of making others across the nation more aware that South Carolina has an outstanding system of higher education. Perception matters if we are to continue our success in retaining the talent we have and in attracting smart business and smart people to the state.

A second observation is that, despite our considerable strengths in higher education, we have to do better—and quickly. Companies locate in states where there is a workforce to support them, and we must significantly increase our education levels; just think where we could be if we raised the percentage of South Carolinians who hold a bachelor's degree from the current 22% for those aged 25 to 64 to the national average of 27%? We need even more research and innovation and even stronger training and educational services geared toward the knowledge economy. Now is not the time to be complacent. Business and political leaders across the nation and around the globe know that knowledge is the single most valuable commodity in a flat world. These leaders are pouring resources into education and innovation. South Carolina must continue to invest with careful determination or face being left further behind.

This second observation leads to my next conclusion. The state needs a strong Action Plan for higher education. My experience is that traditional "strategic" planning too often results in vague documents with long words and abstract recommendations that require an expanding array of committees and task forces to decipher. By contrast, the Action Plan must have specific, clearly understandable goals and assigned tasks and timetables for reaching them. To be credible, such a plan must be developed collaboratively by higher education, business, political, and community leaders. I'm pleased to report that, under the leadership of Commission Vice Chair Dan Ravenel, work to develop such a plan is being developed through a legislatively appointed Higher Education Study Committee.

This brings me to a final observation and conclusion. The higher education community will need to redouble its efforts to speak in a unified voice on higher education priorities and how they connect to the needs of the state. Our collective success will depend on us all working together to chart a common course and determine how the unique roles we each play can fit together better to ensure that state needs are met. Through my service as the Commission's Executive Director, I hope to lead the Commission in that direction and welcome the opportunity to work with each of you. I am optimistic about the future success of South Carolina's higher education system and the future success of South Carolina.

Dates to Remember

S.C. Course Alignment Project Kickoff
December 11, 2007

S.C. Campus Safety Conference,
Hilton Head Island
February 20-22, 2008

Access & Equity Conference, Spartanburg
March 19-21, 2008

Higher Education Hall of Fame Banquet,
Columbia
April 3, 2008

CHE News of Note

- At the September Commission Meeting, Mr. J. T. McLawhorn, President of the Columbia Urban League, accepted certificates on behalf of several high school students who worked at CHE this summer as a part of the Summer Work Experience Leadership Program. Mr. McLawhorn stated that the program engaged the students in a positive work experience and provided them with valuable exposure to the value of a college education.
- Work is underway for a legislated committee charged with making recommendations on a strategic plan for S.C. higher education to meet state needs as can be addressed by higher education. Mr. Dan Ravel, CHE Vice Chair, has been appointed to chair the committee. Other members include: Dr. Layton McCurdy (CHE Chair), Mr. Boone Aiken III, Col. Claude Eichelberger, Representative Jerry Govan, Dr. Doris Helms, Mr. Scott Ludlow, Mr. Robert Marlowe, and Dr. John Montgomery. For additional information about the committee, please see: <http://www.che.sc.gov/InfoCntr/HiEdStudyComm.htm>.
- After 34 years of service to the CHE, Ms. Lynn Metcalf retired from her position of Director of Finance, Facilities, and MIS. Everyone at CHE wishes Lynn a happy retirement as she begins this new chapter in her life. Mr. Gary Glenn has been named Acting Director of Finance, Facilities, and MIS.
- On November 1, the two Governor's Professor of the Year awards were announced at a press conference and a luncheon which followed. The award for two-year institutions went to Mr. Galen DeHay, head of the Science Department at Tri-County Technical College; and the award for four-year institutions went to Ms. Nancy Duffy, Assistant Professor of Nursing and head of the undergraduate nursing program at Medical University of South Carolina. These awards focus on excellence in teaching and academic advising among South Carolina's public and private institutions of higher education.
- In the fiscal year 2006-07, the Commission licensed 11 new institutions, five of which were degree-granting institutions.
- Good news for S.C.'s students! CHE staff have been working to implement the following legislated changes to state-funded scholarship programs:
 - Beginning their sophomore year, Palmetto Fellows Scholarship recipients will receive up to \$7,500 per year (compared to the previous amount of \$6,700), and those majoring in eligible math or science programs will receive up to \$10,000 per year.
 - LIFE Scholarship recipients majoring in eligible math or science programs will receive up to \$7,500 beginning their sophomore year, an increase of \$2,500.
 - SC HOPE has increased from \$2,500 to \$2,800.
 - The new SC National Guard College Tuition Assistance Program will allow for qualifying members of the National Guard to receive benefits up to a maximum of four thousand five hundred dollars an academic year not to exceed a cumulative total of eighteen thousand dollars to earn a first one-year certificate, first two-year program or associates degree, or first bachelor's.
- SC GEAR UP has begun year three of the grant to help students along the I-95 Corridor. Over the summer, SC GEAR UP collaborated with the USC Academic Enrichment and Conferences Department to provide on-campus workshops for the eighth grade GEAR UP students who represented 22 middle schools along the I-95 Corridor.
- An Assessment of South Carolina Higher Education Facilities Conditions and Measuring Deferred Maintenance was presented to the Commission at its October meeting. The report updated previous studies and indicated a \$797 million backlog across 918 facilities at public colleges and universities.
- The S.C. Higher Education Foundation has begun planning for the Lightsey Society's second annual Higher Education Hall of Fame Banquet which will be held on April 3, 2008. Secretary Richard Riley will be honored as the second laureate inducted into the S.C. Higher Education Hall of Fame.

News from PASCAL, the Partnership Among South Carolina's Academic Libraries

By now we hope that everyone in South Carolina has heard about PASCAL and its amazing collection of online electronic resources for use in all our public and private institutions of higher education. The collection consists of millions of articles in electronic form built around a collection of well over 13,000 journal titles in core academic disciplines, health sciences, and business. Included are up-to-the minute issues of the key journals of the scientific record such as Nature and Science Online.

The PASCAL group has also been working on implementing "PASCAL Delivers," its latest project to tie higher education institutions closer together. Simply put, PASCAL Delivers will get books (and potentially other materials) from any participating library to any user in another library within three days. Twenty-four hours in some cases!

What we have found from research done by the state's PASCAL team is that even the largest of our library collections – the University of South Carolina system – has had its effective collection size more than doubled by this electronic "card catalogue" and rapid delivery system. Our smallest libraries have increased their "collections" thousands of times. In the process, the new system is creating more economic efficiency in library purchasing; better and faster service for library users (students, faculty and staff); better opportunities for

regional economic development; and significant increases in available "brain power" through our libraries. By the middle of the Fall 2007, PASCAL Delivers was operational in 39 of our public and private institutions. The remaining 19 and the State Library will be brought into the system over the spring and summer of 2008.

"We've come a long way baby," since the days in the early 1990s when only some of our libraries were fully automated and only a few shared materials actively with others. Vision by library leaders and the CHE, coupled with funding from the General Assembly since FY 2004-05, has made all this possible in a short period of time. Our libraries can and will be doing more cooperative programming. Of course, continued state funding will be needed in order to improve and advance our students' learning opportunities and the state's economic development in relationship to other states and countries.

Meanwhile, academic libraries – public and private – have demonstrated their willingness and ability to move the state into the future by cooperating with each other for the common good. See <http://pascalsc.org> for additional details.

December Kickoff of the South Carolina Course Alignment Project

In response to the *Education and Economic Development Act of 2005*, the state is embarking on an exciting initiative this fall called the *South Carolina Course Alignment Project*. This project will be led by the CHE in partnership with the S.C. Department of Education and will be facilitated by the Educational Policy Improvement Center (EPIC) at the University of Oregon. EPIC designs and organizes customized projects that promote alignment between high school and college curricula and EPIC provides services to help improve alignment between secondary and postsecondary institutions. The purpose of the project is to determine the degree of alignment between high school courses and entry-level college courses so that students may have a seamless transition from secondary to postsecondary education.

The project will begin with an environmental scan of the South Carolina educational system and an analysis of South Carolina high school standards and *Knowledge and Skills for University Success (KSUS)* standards (created by the nationally-recognized *Standards for Success* project). High school and college courses will subsequently be reviewed for evidence of alignment to the *KSUS* standards in order to assess the differences between actual high school and college classes. EPIC will then work with design teams and local curriculum experts to develop model courses including model syllabi, sample performance tasks, and performance expectations at the secondary and postsecondary levels.

Engaging in this project will help answer questions such as:

- 1) How clear are postsecondary academic expectations to high schools?
 - 2) How well do high school teachers understand the level of preparation required for their students to succeed in college?
 - 3) How well are students prepared for college-level work?
- The project will eventually enable the state to specify key knowledge and skills, analyze course content, and use the results for key policy deci-

sions in both K-12 and postsecondary systems. High schools will then be better able to develop programs aligned with postsecondary expectations based on a frame of reference for entry-level college courses statewide.

The CHE and Department of Education are very enthusiastic about the project and have committed to work together to achieve positive results. In a June meeting, Dr. Gail Morrison, former Interim Executive Director of the CHE, and Dr. Jim Rex, State Superintendent of Education, discussed specific aspects of the project via conference call with Dr. David Conley, CEO of EPIC. Both Dr. Morrison and Dr. Rex reaffirmed their mutual enthusiasm for the project and their commitment to work together to achieve closer alignment of secondary and postsecondary expectations in South Carolina.

A key stakeholders kickoff meeting will be held Tuesday, December 11, 2007, in Columbia and will feature keynote addresses by nationally-recognized speaker and consultant Dr. David Conley of EPIC; Dr. Garrison Walters, Executive Director of the CHE; Dr. Jim Rex, State Superintendent of Education; and Dr. Barry Russell, President of the South Carolina Technical College System. The meeting will include representatives from the state's higher education institutions, the Department of Education, the Technical College System, the CHE, K-12 organizations, high schools, professional teacher organizations, business and industry leaders, legislators and other policymakers, and staff from EPIC at the University of Oregon.

An interactive website will be available to provide information about the issues of alignment. The website will give those involved a medium to ask questions, exchange information, and build relationships and collaborations. Stay tuned for more information as this exciting project unfolds! In the meantime, contact Mr. Clint Mullins (cmullins@che.sc.gov / 803-737-0141) in the CHE's Division of Academic Affairs and Licensing for more information.



In 2002, the General Assembly passed the **Research Centers of Economic Excellence Act** to establish with significant investment of lottery funds unique **Centers of Economic Excellence (CoEE)** at South Carolina's three research institutions (Clemson, USC, and MUSC). Each CoEE specializes in unique, knowledge-economy research that promotes and creates enhanced economic opportunities for the state.

The CoEE Review Board was established to provide program oversight. Following a competitive year-long process of scientific review, the Board approves new CoEE's, each funded between \$2 million to \$5 million. The institutions in turn solicit non-state (private, federal, or municipal) investors to match state funds on a dollar-for-dollar basis. The majority of funds are placed in endowments, used to pay the salaries of the world-class scientists (endowed chairs) specially recruited to lead each CoEE, as well as specialized equipment, laboratory construction, other faculty, and research assistants.

Over time, each research institution has developed concentrated CoEE focus areas. Clemson's core strengths lay in the area of auto-

otive engineering (four CoEE's at the International Center for Automotive Research), as well as in architectural science and materials development. USC's Centers generally fall within the clusters of future fuels (including hydrogen and solid oxide fuel cell research), the biomedical sciences, and nanotechnology. MUSC's strengths lie in the areas of neuroscience, cancer research, vascular disease, and health care quality & finance.

One hallmark of the program is unprecedented scientific collaboration at the academic level. Twelve of the 35 Centers are scientific partnerships between the state's public institutions, including two four-year comprehensive teaching universities. Dr. John Schaefer of MUSC's Clinical Effectiveness and Patient Safety CoEE has noted that such academic collaboration rarely exists—not even at Harvard and Yale. The lure of bonded research partnerships serves as an enticing recruiting tool to the renowned scientists required to lead each Center.

Breakthrough research is not the only byproduct of the CoEE Program. As the legislature envisioned, the program has turned into an economic boon for the state. Of the \$149 million in state funding appropriated from lottery funds since 2002 and approved by the Review Board, \$91 million has been matched by non-state sources. Thus far, the research institutions have collected \$64.5 million of these pledges. With over \$90 million in research investment set to enter the state in the coming months, the CoEE Program is clearly one of the most exciting academic programs in South Carolina history. For more information, see <http://www.sccoee.org>.



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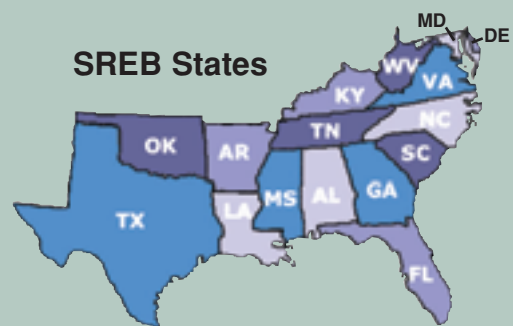
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Higher Education Quick Facts

According to recent data published by Southern Regional Education Board (SREB):

- SC's average six-year graduation rates of full-time, bachelor's degree-seeking freshman who first enrolled in a public four-year college or university in 1999 was 60%, a percentage higher than the national average of 54% and the regional average (SREB states) of 52%.
- SC increased the number of bachelor's degrees awarded from 1995 to 2005 by 24%. Nationally the increase over the same period was 24% and in SREB states 26%. SC awarded 18,792 bachelor's degrees in 2005.
- In 2005, women represented 59% of the bachelor's degrees awarded in SC. Nationally women represented 58% and in SREB states 59%.
- In 2005, black and Hispanic students represented 24% of the bachelor's degrees awarded in SC. Nationally, black and Hispanic students represented 17% and in SREB states 24%.
- Education Pays! Adults with associate's degrees earned on average \$39,700 annually, 25% more than those with high school-level credentials. Those with bachelor's degrees earned \$56,700, 79% more, and those with doctoral degrees earned \$93,600, 195% more.



**For further information on
Higher Education in South Carolina**

www.che.sc.gov