



PREPARED IN MIND and Resources?

A Report on Public Higher Education in South Carolina

American Council of Trustees and Alumni
with the South Carolina Policy Council



ACTA
AMERICAN COUNCIL OF
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Acknowledgments

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The American Council of Trustees and Alumni is an independent non-profit dedicated to academic excellence, academic freedom, and accountability at America's colleges and universities. Since its founding in 1995, ACTA has counseled boards, educated the public, and published reports about such issues as good governance, historical literacy, core curricula, the free exchange of ideas, and accreditation. ACTA has previously published *Made in Maine: A State Report Card on Public Higher Education*, *Here We Have Idaho: A State Report Card on Public Higher Education*, *What's Happening Off the Field?: A Report on Higher Education in the Big 12*, *At a Crossroads: A Report Card on Public Higher Education in Minnesota*, *For the People: A Report Card on Public Higher Education in Illinois*, *Show Me: A Report Card on Public Higher Education in Missouri*, *Shining the Light: A Report Card on Georgia's System of Public Higher Education*, and *Governance in the Public Interest: A Case Study of the University of North Carolina System*, among other state-focused reports.

The South Carolina Policy Council, founded in 1986, brings together community and business leaders from across South Carolina to discuss innovative policy ideas that advance the principles of limited government and free enterprise. The Council provides state policymakers up-to-date research, ideas, and analyses on issues such as education, taxes, environmental policy, and health care.

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Overview

The South Carolina Motto “Animis Opibusque Parati,” or “Prepared in Mind and Resources,” underscores the fundamental importance the state places on knowledge and learning; and since 1777, this motto has been a part of the state’s Great Seal. Among the Palmetto State’s resources is a diverse cohort of institutions of public higher education, including prestigious research universities, the 45,000-student University of South Carolina System, and the nation’s 13th oldest university—the College of Charleston. With such a variety of public institutions comes the potential for South Carolina to offer a model system that serves the manifold needs of 21st century students, taxpayers, and employers.

In recent years public confidence in higher education throughout the nation has fallen. Half of the respondents in a recent Public Agenda survey said that they believe colleges could spend less and still maintain academic quality; 48% agreed that their state’s public college and university system needed to be fundamentally overhauled.¹ Such erosion of public confidence is not surprising in light of major studies of student learning. In *Academically Adrift*, sociologists Richard Arum and Josipa Roksa showed that 45% of college students demonstrated little or no learning gains in critical thinking, reasoning, and writing skills in the first two years of college, and a staggering 36% failed to achieve significant intellectual growth after four (expensive) years of college. The federal government’s National Assessment of Adult Literacy revealed that 26% of four-year college graduates would have difficulty computing the total cost of ordering office supplies from a catalog.²

In 2011, South Carolina Governor Nikki Haley signed into law the South Carolina Higher Education Efficiency and Administrative Policies Act, maintaining the transparency and accountability that lead to increased academic quality and affordability at colleges and universities. It is in this context that ACTA offers this review of public higher education.

For years, colleges and universities had a simple solution to funding challenges: demand more state money and raise tuition. But increasingly, that approach is not possible. In the wake of stock market volatility and the crash of the housing market, there has been a growing concern that higher education is in a “bubble,” with the cost of a four-year degree far outstripping the benefits of acquiring one. In an uncertain environment, it is imperative that state policymakers ensure that money spent on higher education—whether that money comes from students, parents, donors, or taxpayers—is being expended wisely so that students are graduating with the skills and knowledge they need to succeed. At the same time, it is imperative that policymakers

have in place a statewide system that ensures quality and cost—with accountability to the taxpayers of the state.

To ascertain how South Carolina higher education is doing in these key areas, we looked at eight campuses in the state’s public university system: the University of South Carolina (USC) campuses at Columbia, Aiken, Beaufort, and Upstate (Spartanburg); Clemson University; South Carolina State University; Coastal Carolina University; and the College of Charleston. These institutions, taken together, represent not only the geographic breadth of the state but also educate the vast majority of undergraduate students who are enrolled at South Carolina’s four-year institutions.

First, we examined **cost and effectiveness**. We asked how much families are paying to attend schools, how the schools are spending that money, and what students are getting in return. And we found that this is an area of real concern. From 2005-06 to 2010-11, in-state tuition and fees at institutions in South Carolina increased between 18 and 36%. Meanwhile, at only three out of eight campuses did we find even two-thirds of the students receiving a degree within six years—suggesting that not only is tuition going up, but many students are paying well beyond the expected four years, and even beyond six years. Indeed, less than a quarter of students graduated within four years at a majority of the institutions studied.

With prices rising, are students getting a quality education? In far too many places, the answer is no. We examined **general education**—those courses usually completed within the first two years of a bachelor’s degree program to ensure a common intellectual background, as well as college-level skills critical to success in the workforce. Here we found that while over half of institutions require a majority of seven core curricular subjects, only three areas—composition, mathematics, and natural or physical science—are part of the core curricula of the majority of institutions. Only one school (College of Charleston) has an intermediate-level foreign language requirement, and only one requires students to take any coursework in economics (South Carolina State University). Fewer than half of the institutions reviewed require a survey course on U.S. government or history, a sad statistic in a state that has such a significant and illustrious history.

Finally, we turn to South Carolina’s higher education **governance** structure as seen through actions by the state’s Commission on Higher Education (“Commission”) and by institutional boards of trustees. These boards are responsible for the academic and financial well-being of the institutions they oversee and for safeguarding the public interest. Our examination of structure and outcomes, based on board minutes and other publicly available materials, suggests that South Carolina will never achieve

an effective, coherent plan to meet the state’s educational needs of the state until it overhauls the structure of its boards.

The economic recession that has caused hardship for the nation has occasioned a rethinking of higher education cost and effectiveness. ACTA’s hope is that this report will be an urgent call to action—to help the citizens and policymakers of South Carolina strengthen the state’s public higher education system and demonstrate leadership in being “Prepared in Mind and Resources.”

Anne D. Neal
President
American Council of Trustees and Alumni

COST & EFFECTIVENESS

1 How much are students paying for college?

For generations, public higher education has opened the door of opportunity to working families by offering an affordable alternative to private colleges and universities. Increasingly, however, that door is closing. Over the last thirty years, inflation-adjusted tuition and fees at public four-year colleges and universities nationwide have increased 359%—significantly more than at private colleges and universities. In just the last decade (2001-2011), inflation-adjusted tuition and fees at public four-year institutions have gone up on average 5.6% every year.³

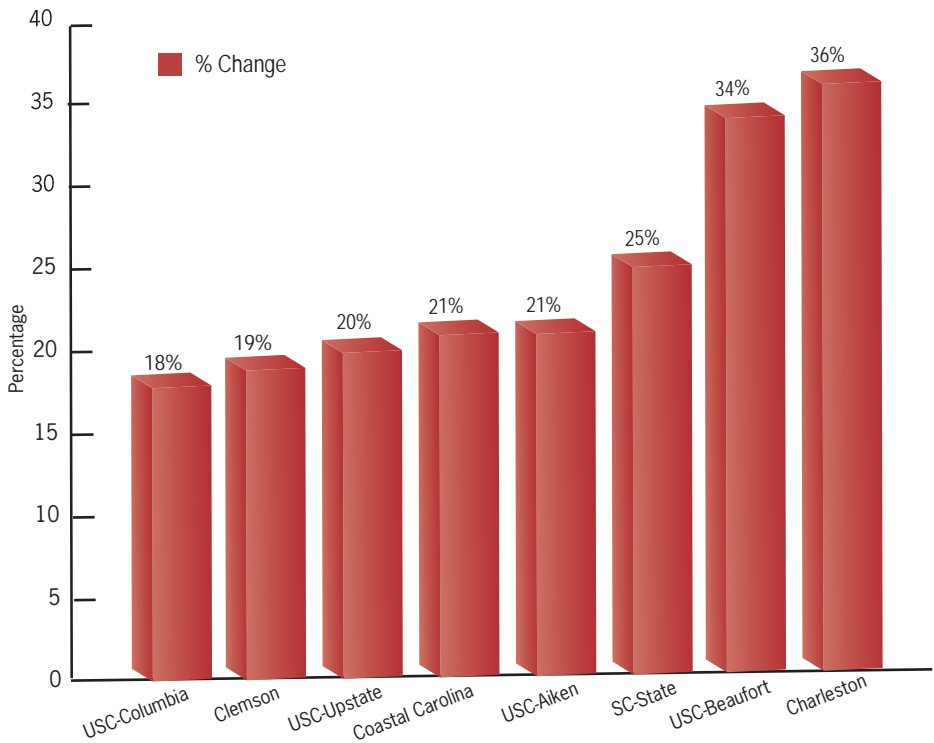
The cost of higher education has gone up all over the country, but it has exploded in South Carolina. Inflation-adjusted, in-state tuition and required fees increased dramatically over the five-year period across the institutions reviewed.⁴ Tuition at four-year institutions of the University of South Carolina System increased anywhere from 18 to 34%; similarly, tuition at Clemson, Coastal Carolina, and the College of Charleston rose from 19 to 36%.

TRENDS IN IN-STATE UNDERGRADUATE TUITION & FEES

INSTITUTION	2005-06	2010-11	% Change
Clemson University	\$10,013	\$11,908	19%
Coastal Carolina University	7,792	9,390	21
College of Charleston	7,574	10,314	36
South Carolina State University	7,360	9,198	25
University of South Carolina-Aiken	6,960	8,424	21
University of South Carolina-Beaufort	6,002	8,020	34
University of South Carolina-Columbia	8,307	9,786	18
University of South Carolina-Upstate	7,680	9,242	20

Source: Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS)

Note: 2005 dollar amounts are expressed in 2010 inflation-adjusted numbers.



2. How do tuition rates compare to family income?

Increases in college costs are paid for by individuals or families who, in many cases, are already straining to pay mortgages and put food on the table. The charts on the following page illustrate the challenge in South Carolina.

In 2005-06, South Carolina families could expect to pay an average of 17.2% of their household income for annual in-state tuition and fees (not including room, board, books or other costs); in 2010-11, nearly 23% of median household income was required, a proportional increase of almost one-third, even after adjusting for inflation. While the median household income in South Carolina dropped by 7.1% from 2005 to 2010,⁵ each institution reviewed raised tuition over the same time period.

The solution for most students and their families: ever-increasing debt loads. The Institute for College Access & Success reports that in 2009, 71% of Coastal Carolina graduates borrowed money to pay for school. The average student left college with educational debt of \$26,646; likewise, students at the Columbia campus of the University of South Carolina incurred an average of \$21,755 in debt, while the average Clemson University graduate left college with \$18,463 in debt.⁶ The statewide student debt average of \$22,277 in 2009,⁷ while close to the median of that in other states, was over 54% of the median household income in South Carolina.⁸

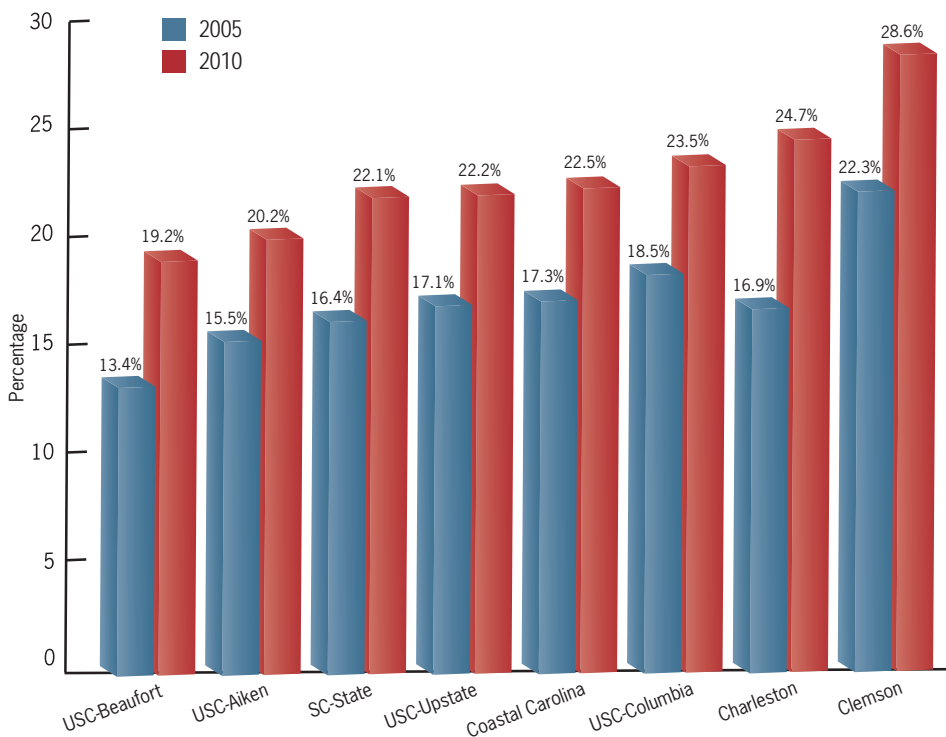
Such rapid tuition increases make it difficult for students and their families to plan for college expenses. Indeed, at this rate of increase, families with children now beginning middle school will be expected to pay nearly one-quarter of their income to send just one child to an institution in the South Carolina system. Simply put, tuition hikes of this magnitude will create havoc in household budgeting.

UNDERGRADUATE TUITION & FEES AS A PERCENTAGE OF MEDIAN HOUSEHOLD INCOME

INSTITUTION	2005	2010	Change in % Points	% Change
Clemson University	22.3%	28.6%	6.3%	28%
Coastal Carolina University	17.3	22.5	5.2	30
College of Charleston	16.9	24.7	7.9	47
South Carolina State University	16.4	22.1	5.7	35
University of South Carolina-Aiken	15.5	20.2	4.7	30
University of South Carolina-Beaufort	13.4	19.2	5.9	44
University of South Carolina-Columbia	18.5	23.5	5.0	27
University of South Carolina-Upstate	17.1	22.2	5.1	30

Source: IPEDS and U.S. Census Bureau

Note: 2005 dollar amounts for tuition & fees and median income were based on 2010 inflation-adjusted numbers.



3. Are freshmen returning?

Just as businesses track their repeat customers, colleges and universities track their freshmen retention rates. This measure examines the percentage of first-time, full-time freshmen who continue the following year as sophomores. In effect, this is the first-year drop-out rate.

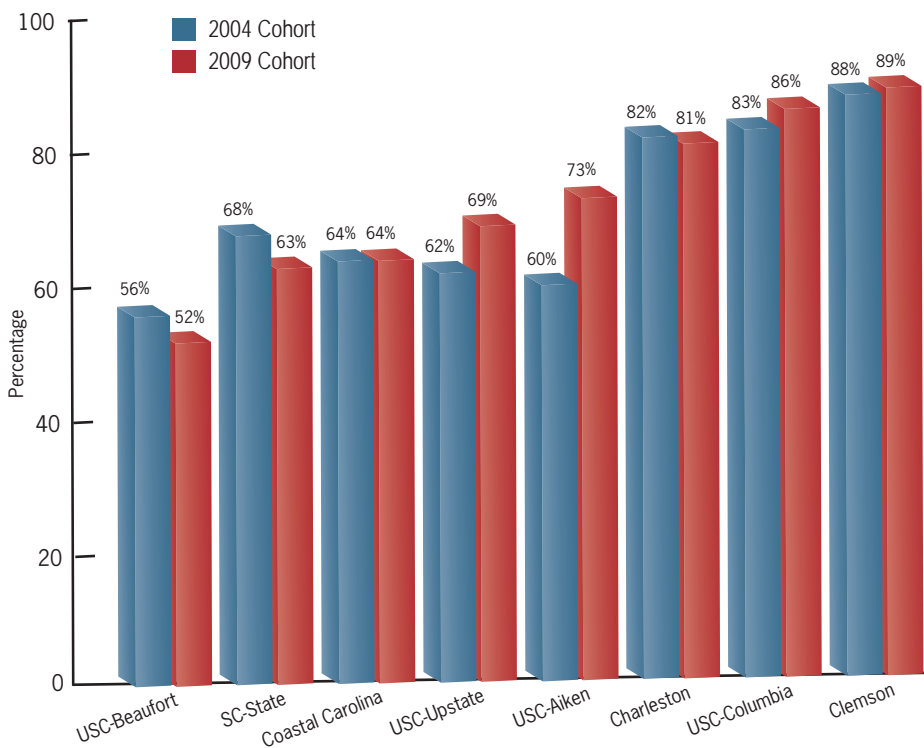
Generally speaking, South Carolina institutions have done a satisfactory job of retaining their freshmen, with six out of eight of the institutions reviewed retaining at least 64% of freshmen in the most recent cohort studied. Commendably, the two largest institutions in the state, University of South Carolina-Columbia and Clemson University, boast freshman retention rates of 86% and 89%, respectively. The College of Charleston also retains 81% of first-time, full-time freshmen, while at the Aiken campus of the University of South Carolina, retention rose to 73%, a 13% increase from five years prior.

Despite these generally encouraging numbers, two schools show cause for concern. South Carolina State University, while retaining 68% of first-time full time freshmen in 2004, saw that figure decrease to 63% in 2009. USC-Beaufort's retention rate dropped from 56% in 2004 to 52% in 2009.

FIRST-YEAR RETENTION RATES FOR FIRST-TIME, FULL-TIME FRESHMEN

INSTITUTION	2004 Cohort	2009 Cohort	Change in % Points
Clemson University	88%	89%	1%
Coastal Carolina University	64	64	0
College of Charleston	82	81	-1
South Carolina State University	68	63	-5
University of South Carolina-Aiken	60	73	13
University of South Carolina-Beaufort	56	52	-4
University of South Carolina-Columbia	83	86	3
University of South Carolina-Upstate	62	69	7

Source: IPEDS



4. Are students graduating and doing so on time?

Nationally, less than 58% of the students who enroll as freshmen will graduate within six years from that school. Such low rates put the U.S. behind global competitors. Despite spending more on higher education than any other Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) country, the U.S. ranks 16th in the percentage of young adults who have completed college.⁹ Students who enter college but do not graduate represent a failed investment, and there are consequences—for the student, the institution, and taxpayers.

Unfortunately, South Carolina schools do poorly when it comes to graduation. The highest-performing school among those studied was Clemson University, with only half of first-time, full-time students admitted to a four-year program graduating on time. Similarly, at the Columbia flagship campus of the University of South Carolina, only 46% of students graduate within four years. If given six years, those figures rise significantly; 68% of students at USC-Columbia graduate within six years, as do over three-quarters of Clemson students. Approximately two-thirds of students at the College of Charleston graduate within six years.

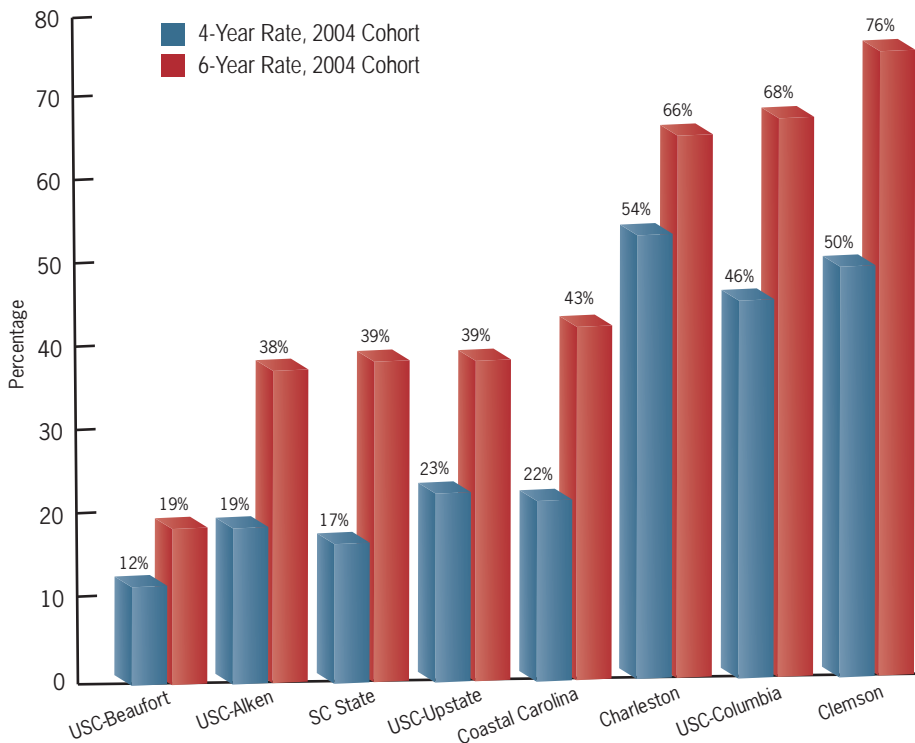
The graduation rates at other institutions are more troubling, as no other school had a six-year graduation rate above 43%. Most alarming, among students who matriculated at USC-Beaufort in 2004, only 12% graduated within four years, while less than one in five finished within six years.

BACCALAUREATE GRADUATION RATES FOR FIRST-TIME, FULL-TIME FRESHMEN

INSTITUTION	1999 Cohort Graduation Rate		2004 Cohort Graduation Rate		Change in % Points	
	4-Year	6-Year	4-Year	6-Year	4-Year	6-Year
Clemson University	44%	75%	50%	76%	6%	1%
Coastal Carolina University	21	43	22	43	1	0
College of Charleston	41	58	54	66	13	8
South Carolina State University	21	47	17	39	-4	-8
University of South Carolina-Aiken	21	43	19	38	-2	-5
University of South Carolina-Beaufort*	N/A	N/A	12	19	N/A	N/A
University of South Carolina-Columbia	41	65	46	68	5	3
University of South Carolina-Upstate	16	40	23	39	7	-1

Source: IPEDS

*No data reported for 1999 cohort.



5. What are institutions spending money on?

Across the country, a growing share of school funds pay for layers and layers of administration. Some support staff are integral parts of instruction. However, the long-term trend is very clear. From 1976 to 2005, the ratio of non-instructional staff to students in American colleges and universities nearly doubled.¹⁰

In the Palmetto State, there was little change in either instructional or administrative spending, as individual categories, over the six-year period studied. On average, instructional spending among the schools reviewed increased by a mere 3.2% from 2003-04 to 2008-09, while administrative spending ranged from a 1.9% decrease to a 4.9% increase over the same time period.

A view of each institution, however, shows that at the majority of schools, the percentage of total expenditures devoted to administrative costs is rising relative to the percentage devoted to instruction. The clearest examples are institutions that are decreasing the portion of their budget devoted to instructional purposes while simultaneously increasing administrative spending. At the University of South Carolina-Aiken campus, the percentage of instructional spending decreased by 7.4% while the percentage of administrative spending increased by 1.1% over a six-year period. Similarly, South Carolina decreased instructional spending by 3.6% while increasing administrative spending by 4.9%. Only the USC-Beaufort campus demonstrated the reverse, increasing instructional spending by 2.1% while reducing administrative spending by 1.9%.

Most troubling is the rate at which schools increased administrative spending relative to Educational and General (E&G) expenditures, indicating how fast administrative spending is growing relative to the rest of the institution's budget. South Carolina State University increased administrative spending relative to E&G at the rate of 43.3% over a six-year period. At this rate, by 2014, over 23% of the school's total costs will consist of administrative expenditures. At the University of South Carolina, the Columbia campus increased its proportion of administrative expenditures at the rate of 41.4% over six years. In contrast, the Beaufort and Upstate campuses decreased administrative expenditures at the rate of 18.7% and 9.6%, respectively.

Even Clemson University, which increased its proportion of instructional spending by 8.6%, also increased administrative spending at the rate of 30.7% over six years.

Although Clemson’s total administrative expenses accounted for only 6.1% of its budget in FY 2008-09, administrative spending reflects a troubling upward trajectory.

Overall, the increases in the percentage of E&G funding dedicated to administrative costs suggest misplaced priorities.

INSTRUCTIONAL VS. ADMINISTRATIVE SPENDING¹¹

INSTITUTION		2003-04 FY	2008-09 FY	\$ Change	% Change
Clemson University	<i>Instruction</i>	\$150,452,801	\$238,718,608	\$88,265,807	58.7%
	<i>Administration</i>	18,843,467	31,771,600	12,928,133	68.6
Coastal Carolina University	<i>Instruction</i>	30,284,524	48,062,130	17,777,606	58.7
	<i>Administration</i>	6,374,436	10,121,548	3,747,112	58.8
College of Charleston	<i>Instruction</i>	58,174,848	76,096,178	17,921,330	30.8
	<i>Administration</i>	11,528,699	18,033,569	6,504,870	56.4
South Carolina State University	<i>Instruction</i>	31,483,102	40,293,144	8,810,042	28.0
	<i>Administration</i>	7,292,715	14,440,665	7,147,950	98.0
University of South Carolina-Aiken	<i>Instruction</i>	15,934,717	17,497,652	1,562,935	9.8
	<i>Administration</i>	2,492,716	3,529,031	1,036,315	41.6
University of South Carolina-Beaufort	<i>Instruction</i>	4,919,448	9,139,417	4,219,969	85.8
	<i>Administration</i>	959,219	1,393,005	433,786	45.2
University of South Carolina-Columbia	<i>Instruction</i>	220,780,110	298,504,715	77,724,605	35.2
	<i>Administration</i>	21,793,135	40,189,978	18,396,843	84.4
University of South Carolina-Upstate	<i>Instruction</i>	20,202,013	29,749,703	9,547,690	47.3
	<i>Administration</i>	4,099,674	5,541,636	1,441,962	35.2

INSTITUTION		2003-04 FY as % of E&G	2008-09 FY as % of E&G	Change in % Points	% Change
Clemson University	<i>Instruction</i>	37.3%	45.8%	8.6%	23.0%
	<i>Administration</i>	4.7	6.1	1.4	30.7
Coastal Carolina University	<i>Instruction</i>	51.5	49.2	-2.3	-4.5
	<i>Administration</i>	10.8	10.4	-0.5	-4.4
College of Charleston	<i>Instruction</i>	53.3	53.1	-0.2	-0.4
	<i>Administration</i>	10.6	12.6	2.0	19.1
South Carolina State University	<i>Instruction</i>	48.8	45.2	-3.6	-7.4
	<i>Administration</i>	11.3	16.2	4.9	43.3
University of South Carolina-Aiken	<i>Instruction</i>	56.3	48.9	-7.4	-13.1
	<i>Administration</i>	8.8	9.9	1.1	12.0
University of South Carolina-Beaufort	<i>Instruction</i>	51.4	53.5	2.1	4.0
	<i>Administration</i>	10.0	8.2	-1.9	-18.7
University of South Carolina-Columbia	<i>Instruction</i>	47.4	49.1	1.8	3.7
	<i>Administration</i>	4.7	6.6	1.9	41.4
University of South Carolina-Upstate	<i>Instruction</i>	52.1	51.3	-0.8	-1.6
	<i>Administration</i>	10.6	9.6	-1.0	-9.6

Source: IPEDS

Are boards prioritizing academic programs?

When families face new expenditures, they typically find ways to cut other costs or establish budget priorities. But do colleges and universities do the same? The ratio of new programs to closed programs is one such measure designed to assess how well universities are monitoring program growth and thoughtfully prioritizing their academic offerings.

In its 2010 paper “Perspectives on Program Duplication,” the Commission on Higher Education sets out its framework for evaluating proposed new degree programs, describing its process as “an extensive, multilayered process of consideration that is data-driven, reasoned, and analytical.” For the five-year time period from 2005-06 to 2010-11, the Commission approved 79 new graduate and undergraduate degree programs at the eight institutions, compared to terminating 69 degree programs. However, over half of the program closures (42) took place in the two-year period from 2009-10 to 2010-11, while only 34 new degree programs were added.¹²

Although the Commission has the ultimate authority over program closures, boards of trustees are responsible for initiating the process of program termination. During the five-year period, the four University of South Carolina campuses—all of which are governed by the same board of trustees—opened 31 new degree programs, including a doctoral program in Hospitality Management and a bachelor’s program in Commercial Music, while closing 26. Only two schools closed more programs than they opened over the five-year period: Clemson University (19 closed, 18 new) and South Carolina State University (8 closed, 3 new).¹³

The recent trend has shown a commitment to limiting growth in the number of academic programs. However, institutional boards can do more to validate the cost effectiveness of current and proposed degree programs. Minutes of board meetings reveal that the level of scrutiny given by trustees to new degree programs varies considerably amongst institutions. At most institutions, boards delegate the function of program review and termination, and meeting minutes do not reflect discussion of anticipated cost-effectiveness of proposed programs.¹⁴

Are buildings used efficiently?

It’s a simple truth: There’s no urgent reason to build new buildings, if existing buildings lie vacant during large parts of the day. But that simple truth is sometimes ignored in much of higher education. The demand for new buildings has been high across the nation—even in the midst of the economic recession—making it imperative to assess classroom utilization to gauge how well universities are making use of their existing resources before committing to new ones.

In South Carolina, institutions report classroom utilization data to the Commission, which compiles and reports the data. The Commission's statewide efficiency benchmark is that every classroom be used for academic instruction for at least 30 hours per week, which is a common, albeit liberal standard. A survey of 20 states' classroom usage guidelines conducted by Virginia's higher education coordinating board, for example, showed that the median state standard was 37 hours per week.¹⁵

In 2005, the average classroom on a university campus was used for classroom instruction 27.87 hours out of the week, across each of the institutions studied. That number increased slightly to 29.56 hours in 2010. The two largest institutions in the study, Clemson University and the University of South Carolina-Columbia, showed diverging trends. Classrooms at the Columbia campus were in use 30.9 hours per week in 2005 and increased to 37.38 hours per week in 2010, while at Clemson usage dropped from 31.77 hours per week in 2005 to 28.28 hours, below the state average, in 2010.¹⁶

Of the institutions studied, four schools reported classroom usage in excess of 30 hours per week in 2010: Coastal Carolina University (41.87), USC-Columbia (37.38), USC-Aiken (31.17), and USC-Beaufort (30.52), while four schools did not, including Clemson University (28.28), College of Charleston (24.09), USC-Upstate (23.2), and South Carolina State University (18.75).¹⁷

With exactly half of the institutions studied satisfying South Carolina's 30-hour per week standard, there is some good news. Nonetheless, three schools fail to reach 25 hours per week of use. Of the institutions studied, only Coastal Carolina University kept classrooms in use for a full 40-hour period per week, which includes evening courses. South Carolina should carefully consider how it may take full advantage of current resources before undertaking any expansion projects.

Does South Carolina reward performance?

In 1996, the South Carolina legislature passed Act 359, the "Performance Funding" bill, directing the Commission to develop institutional performance standards according to nine "critical success factors," including "Mission Focus," "Classroom Quality," and "Administrative Efficiency."¹⁸ The Act also directed the Commission to "develop a higher education funding formula based entirely on an institution's achievement of the standards set for these performance indicators."¹⁹ Currently, the Commission assesses institutions' performance relative to other institutions on an annual basis in areas including the percentage of degree programs that are nationally accredited, the percentage of faculty with terminal degrees in their primary teaching area, and graduation rates.²⁰

Despite the statute's requirement that the formula be "based entirely on an institution's achievement," in addition to performance factors, South Carolina also employs a needs-based funding formula named the Mission Resource Requirements Funding Model (MRR). Under this model, the Commission assigns each institution a baseline funding amount based on the Commission's assessment of "nationally comparable costs for institutions of similar mission, size, and complexity of programs."²¹ The institution ultimately receives a percentage of the baseline amount based on the institution's scores under the performance indicators.²²

The fact that South Carolina uses a performance funding model is very encouraging. There are, however, two elements that can be improved. The first is in the metrics used by the Commission to measure performance—most are either input or output measures (e.g., number of accredited programs, research grants received), while few are devoted to academic outcomes which are the ultimate barometer of institutional quality.

Another recommendation is to place more emphasis on performance measures than on the MRR model. As currently implemented, an underperforming institution that serves a need may actually receive increasing appropriations. The Commission should consider modifying the funding formula to encourage institutions to focus on providing high academic quality, rather than positioning themselves to serve needs they may not be equipped to fulfill.

GENERAL EDUCATION

6

What are students actually learning?

One of the simplest ways to control costs while enhancing educational quality is through a solid general education program. General education (sometimes called a core curriculum) refers to required undergraduate courses outside the students' specialization or major. Such courses are designed to provide exposure to a wide range of disciplines, a core of fundamental knowledge, and college-level skills in areas critical to good citizenship, workforce participation, and lifelong learning. Many colleges give the appearance of providing a core curriculum because they require students to take courses in several subject areas other than their major—often called “distribution requirements.” However, within each subject area, it is not uncommon for students to have dozens or even hundreds of courses from which to choose—many of them on narrow or trendy subject matters. The chart on the following page reflects the institutions' general education requirements in seven key categories. In most of the seven subjects, credit is given for requiring a broad, college-level survey course. (For further details on the criteria used, please see the Appendix.)

Institutions that fail to provide students with a general education core curriculum actually jeopardize their graduates' long-term employment prospects. According to a 2010 study by the Bureau of Labor Statistics, the average person born between 1957 and 1964 held an average of 11 different jobs between ages 18-44.²³ A sound foundation of core skills is a powerful advantage in an ever-changing global marketplace.

The importance of a solid general education is compounded by the rate at which whole industries disappear, forcing workers to either adjust or become vocationally obsolete. At least one economic study of the most recent recession suggests that an increasing proportion of workers remain unemployed for long periods of time because they find it difficult to transfer their skills to new industries.²⁴

When viewed individually, the institutions perform well, with five of the eight schools surveyed requiring a majority of seven core subjects. However, when the state is evaluated in terms of whether a majority of institutions require each curriculum area, it performs poorly; only three subjects—composition, mathematics, and natural or physical science—are required by a majority of the institutions reviewed.

GENERAL EDUCATION REQUIREMENTS BY INSTITUTION

INSTITUTION	Gov/						
	Comp	Lit	Lang	Hist	Econ	Math	Sci
Clemson University	●	●				●	●
Coastal Carolina University	●			●		●	●
College of Charleston	●		●			●	●
South Carolina State University	●	●		◐	◐		●
University of South Carolina-Aiken	●	●		●		●	●
University of South Carolina-Beaufort	●					●	●
University of South Carolina-Columbia	●					●	●
University of South Carolina-Upstate	●					●	●

Notes:

Clemson: No credit given for Foreign Language because the requirement only applies to select degree programs.

Coastal Carolina: No credit given for Literature because the "Knowledge of Humanistic Concepts" requirement may be fulfilled with courses in history or philosophy. No credit given for Foreign Language because students may fulfill the requirement with elementary-level study.

South Carolina State: One-half credit given for both U.S. Government or History and Economics because the subjects are folded into the "Economics or Government" requirement, thus students may choose either one or the other. No credit given for Mathematics because the "Quantitative Reasoning and Technological Literacy" requirement may be satisfied by courses with little college-level math content.

University of South Carolina-Aiken: No credit given for Foreign Language because students may fulfill the requirement with elementary-level study.

University of South Carolina-Beaufort: No credit given for Foreign Language because students may fulfill the requirement with elementary-level study. No credit given for U.S. Government or History because a survey course in American government or history is an option, but not required, to fulfill the history portion of the "Liberal Arts" requirement.

University of South Carolina-Columbia: No credit given for Literature because the requirement only applies to select degree programs. No credit given for Foreign Language because students may fulfill the requirement with elementary-level study. No credit given for U.S. Government or History because, for students in select degree programs, a survey course in American government or history is an option, but not required, to fulfill the "History" requirement.

University of South Carolina-Upstate: No credit given for Foreign Language because students may fulfill the requirement with elementary-level study. No credit given for U.S. History or Government because a survey course in American government or history is an option, but not required, to fulfill the "History" requirement.

The institutions have certain curricular strengths: every single school requires at least one course in English composition and in natural or physical science; and all but one institution requires at least one course in college-level mathematics. USC's "Carolina Core Project" is also an encouraging initiative that might be expanded or replicated at other institutions.²⁵

Unfortunately, students in South Carolina can graduate with vast gaps in their skills and knowledge: only one institution (College of Charleston) requires foreign language study beyond the beginning level; and only one (South Carolina State University) received any credit for requiring a course in economics. Only three out of eight institutions require a broad literature survey course. Despite the Palmetto State's rich cultural history and national significance, it is discouraging that few institutions require a survey course in U.S. government or history.

South Carolina does have an excellent framework in place to facilitate cost-effective transfer of credits for students moving between institutions. Currently, the state has a Statewide Articulation Agreement containing 86 universally transferrable courses among public colleges and universities in South Carolina. For courses not subject to the Agreement, the state provides an online search tool—the South Carolina Course Articulation and Transfer System (SCTRAC)—with information on the various transfer agreements among the several institutions. Transfer agreements can vary widely, however, so the framework does not fully guarantee ease of transfer.

In order to be good stewards of their resources and to ensure that students acquire the knowledge they need, institutions in South Carolina should proceed on three fronts. First, they should retain the excellent requirements they already have in composition, mathematics, and natural or physical science. Second, they should strengthen their other requirements so that all students will achieve intermediate-competency in a foreign language, learn basic economic principles, and take broad courses in literature and U.S. government or history. Furthermore, since transfer policies vary widely, the state would be well-advised to develop credit transfer policies with clearly defined subject area qualification rubrics to stimulate the development of a robust core structure system-wide.

GOVERNANCE

7. Is South Carolina's governance structure effective?

Governance of higher education has been a hot topic in virtually every state since the early 1990s. Given declining state resources, and troubling evidence of rising costs and declining quality around the country, the public has increasingly looked for ways to do things differently. In 2007, Public Agenda found that a majority of the public felt that their state higher education system should be overhauled.²⁶

The USC system has not been isolated from such public policy debates. In fact, over the years, the state's governance structure—and its effectiveness—have often prompted comment and questions.

How is the system structured?

There are two major types of higher education governance systems in place today: consolidated governing board systems and coordinating board systems. In the former, the operations of all campuses are centrally governed by a single board, while in coordinating board systems, each institution is overseen by its own board of trustees, which are in turn supervised by a statewide agency. About half the states, including South Carolina, have coordinating board systems, while the rest use consolidated systems.

Commission on Higher Education

The South Carolina Commission on Higher Education is set out in statute and is responsible for establishing a strategic plan by which colleges and universities may make operational decisions with the interests of the state in mind.²⁷ Among the Commission's key coordinating functions are consolidating each institution's budget in an omnibus annual appropriations request to the governor's office, approving or denying new program additions, and obtaining metrics of academic success at each institution.²⁸

The Commission is comprised of 14 members (13 voting), six of whom are selected by legislators from their respective legislative districts and appointed by the governor for four-year terms, and three of whom are "appointed from the state at-large upon the advice and consent of the Senate."²⁹ By statute, these nine nominees "must have experience in at least one of the following areas: business, the education

of future leaders and teachers, management, or policy.”³⁰ As of October 2011, the composition of the Commission includes a former college academic vice president and dean, a vocational education specialist, a computer science professor, and several individuals with extensive management experience.³¹ The majority of Commission members come from the private sector and bring varied perspectives.

In addition, the governor of South Carolina selects four members for two-year terms each, but there are significant restrictions. One must be a trustee from a public senior research institution, one from a four-year public institution of higher learning, one from the “local area technical education commissions or the State Board for Technical and Comprehensive Education,” and one non-voting member must come from “the Advisory Council of Private College Presidents,” currently known as the South Carolina Independent College and Universities, a group of institutions that includes Furman University, Claflin University, and Benedict College.³² All gubernatorial appointees for the Commission are either first recommended by the legislature or are subject to Senate ratification.

Institutional Boards

In South Carolina, each institution has its own board of trustees, appointed according to statute.³³ Trustees have broad powers, including academic policy, administrative and faculty personnel decisions, and internal resource allocation.

Selection of institutional trustees is set out in state statute and institutional bylaws. With one exception, legislatively-elected trustees comprise a voting majority on each board. At the University of South Carolina, 16 of 20 trustees are elected by vote of the General Assembly;³⁴ at Clemson University, the number is 6 out of 13, the remaining seven trustees are life members elected by the board itself;³⁵ at Coastal Carolina University, 15 out of 17;³⁶ at the College of Charleston, 15 out of 18 trustees;³⁷ and at South Carolina State University, 12 out of 13.³⁸ The governor sits on each board as an ex officio member.

By statute, trustee selection is largely dictated by geography: on the University of South Carolina board, each of the state’s 16 judicial circuits must be represented,³⁹ and at Coastal Carolina University, the College of Charleston, and South Carolina State University, each of six congressional districts must be represented.⁴⁰ Aside from this requirement, the statute governing the composition of all boards requires that selections be “based on merit regardless of race, color, creed or gender and shall strive to assure that the membership of the board is representative of all citizens of the State of South Carolina.”⁴¹

Among trustee boards, a majority—or more often, a supermajority—of each board is elected by the legislature.

Are trustees controlling costs and increasing efficiency?

The Commission deserves credit for its focus on course transferability—a key part of cost control and efficiency, as outlined in the section on General Education.

Despite a lack of academic program review, recent institutional action to address cost and effectiveness is also promising.⁴² Minutes regarding the FY 2010-2011 budget decisions of the USC board document discussions of a number of specific expenditure components.⁴³ And in Fall 2010, the board Executive Committee met with a consulting group to “[a]ssess effectiveness in cost management” and “[d]evelop measures for determining efficiency and effectiveness in administrative and academic programs.”⁴⁴

Clemson’s Bridge to Clemson Program notably leverages the resources of other state institutions. It coordinates with the Tri-County Technical College (TCTC) to provide a program in which successful TCTC students may enroll during their sophomore year.⁴⁵ In June 2009, trustees at Clemson also showed their independence by a split vote approving the administration’s tuition and fees recommendation.⁴⁶

Coastal Carolina University’s board unanimously approved budget motions in February 2010, waiving their personal per diem and travel expenditure; directing the University president to identify \$4 million in budgetary savings; and also requesting that the president identify alternative revenue sources for the University.⁴⁷

The College of Charleston board of trustees unanimously approved the budget motion for the 2010-2011 year, but required that “certain objective performance goals and criteria” be achieved during the term of the president’s contract extension, recognizing the need for an accountability structure.⁴⁸

Yet, even with these excellent steps, board deliberations have never involved big picture discussions that could promote cost cutting and efficiencies around the state. Moreover, our examination of institutional and statewide trends in tuition and costs shows the arrows are pointing up, not down. (See Cost & Effectiveness section.)

Are trustees improving student learning and academic accountability?

All public institutions are required to submit an annual Accountability Report to the Commission, following what the Commission calls “Malcolm Baldrige Award Criteria,” which include categories of: senior leadership, governance and social responsibility; strategic planning; customer and market focus; measurement, analysis and knowledge management; workforce focus; process management; and results.⁴⁹ Schools must also submit a yearly Institutional Effectiveness report to the Commission, which includes data on faculty compensation, faculty credentials, proportion of classes taught by full-time faculty, and graduation rates. The data compiled by the Commission are released in several reports to the governor and

General Assembly and are in part used for funding decisions. As a result, each school has an office of Institutional Effectiveness, or the equivalent thereof, to compile data measures.

In addition to these mandatory reporting requirements, a majority of the schools reviewed—Clemson University, Coastal Carolina University, College of Charleston, and the Aiken, Beaufort, and Upstate campuses of the University of South Carolina—also participate in the Voluntary System of Accountability (VSA),⁵⁰ a program in which participants report the results of learning outcomes assessment testing that measures the level of increase in core collegiate skills such as critical reasoning and expository writing. As part of this program, most, if not all, use the ETS Proficiency Portfolio, formerly the Measure of Academic Progress and Proficiency (MAPP), to quantify critical thinking and written communication skills.

Despite the number of measuring instruments and the amount of data available to assess the academic quality of their institutions, resources that should encourage informed decisionmaking, there are only scattered signals that trustees are taking affirmative steps to improve academic quality and actively address academic matters. Minutes from the Coastal Carolina University board indicate a committee discussion of the “2008 Assessment System which measures the effectiveness of student learning, student development, and the administrative unit operations of the University,” as well as an assessment of the productivity of specific degree programs.⁵¹ The South Carolina State strategic plan includes distinct objectives such as “closing the gap in educational attainment across ethnic group, gender, income levels, and geographical regions.”⁵² And in one meeting of the South Carolina State University board of trustees, one trustee bluntly requested that an administration official investigate the cause of high failure rates in certain courses.⁵³ In another instance, the board minutes show trustees wishing to be consulted prior to any administrative reorganization.⁵⁴ But these examples are few and far between.

Board minutes reveal that many boards delegate important issues to the academic administration or board sub-committees, with virtually all motions carried unanimously. In the case at the College of Charleston, tenure decisions were reported to the board after-the-fact by the provost’s office.

Board members similarly show little interest when it comes to free speech on campus. Although there are policies in place to protect the free exchange of ideas (e.g., Clemson’s directive against introducing unrelated matters into the classroom),⁵⁵ there are also policies that threaten freedom of speech. The Foundation for Individual Rights in Education, which maintains a comprehensive database of threats to free speech, has concluded that restrictive policies are in place at both Clemson and USC. The USC is on FIRE’s “red light” list for clear and substantial restrictions of free speech, while Clemson University earned a “yellow light” warning

for endangering free speech.⁵⁶ Despite the clear suggestion that there is a problem, minutes do not reflect that the trustees have engaged in any significant discussion over the propriety of the policies in place.

With a few noteworthy exceptions, there is scant evidence that trustees are actively seeking ways to measure and improve academic quality. And our review of general education and transfer of credit outlined in the General Education section shows there is still much work to be done.

Prepared in mind and resources?

For over two centuries, the South Carolina motto of “Prepared in Mind and Resources” has served as a telling reminder of the importance of an informed citizenry. Moreover, the statutory mission of the state’s higher education system calls for South Carolina to be “a global leader in providing a coordinated, comprehensive system of excellence in education,” emphasizing goals such as “high academic quality,” “affordable and accessible education,” and “clearly defined missions.”⁵⁷

In this context, we ask the following questions: Is the current system organized in a way to achieve these goals? Can leaders decide on a set of objectives and then effectively implement them? Is the system accountable to the state’s priorities in ways that enable leaders to know whether objectives have been achieved? Is the state’s public higher education system structured to encourage institutions to work in concert to achieve a cohesive statewide vision?

The short answer is no.

Despite the Commission’s statutory responsibility for a strategic plan, it has not adopted one since 2002.⁵⁸ Instead, the Legislature delegated the development of such a plan to the Higher Education Study Committee (HESC), a separate nine-member group appointed by the governor of South Carolina and by leaders of the General Assembly. In 2008, HESC released a report entitled “Leveraging Higher Education For a Stronger South Carolina: The Action Plan Framework,” which set forth four goals for 2009-2015 to be implemented by the Commission:⁵⁹

- “Making South Carolina One of the Most Educated States”
- “Increasing Research and Innovation in South Carolina”
- “Making South Carolina a Leader in Workforce Training and Educational Services”; and
- “Realizing South Carolina’s Potential: Resources and Effectiveness.”

HESC released a follow-up report in March 2009 entitled “Action Plan Implementation,” identifying specific objectives necessary to achieve each goal. For example, under the goal of becoming one of the “Most Educated States,” HESC

emphasized increasing higher education graduation rates, attracting and retaining more graduates, and better preparing high school graduates for college-level academic work; under “Increasing Research and Innovation,” it encouraged creating formal knowledge-sharing mechanisms among South Carolina institutions.⁶⁰

The Implementation objectives provide measurable benchmarks for success. However, nowhere does the Action Plan offer guidance to each institution concerning its specific role within the state. In the absence of guidance, research shows that institutions, through their boards of trustees, have focused on parochial goals rather than state-wide needs. Programs often overlap from institution to institution, at a time when both technological advances and limited state resources call for creative coordination and consolidation.⁶¹ In one case, the strategic plan consists of trying to out-compete other institutions by targeting and attracting students who would attend the state’s other comparable institutions. The understandable loyalty a trustee holds toward his or her home institution can create perverse incentives for institutions to duplicate programs rather than specialize.

The existing appointment process makes reaching a statewide vision difficult to achieve. The legislature currently selects most college and university trustees, largely with regard to local geography. The practice of allocating trustee seats to politically-delineated districts bears little connection to qualities that make for effective trusteeship or statewide coordination. At the same time, legislative bodies, by their nature, face frequent turnover and represent disparate interests. As a consequence, the Commission members and institutional trustees represent varying perspectives, offering no statewide vision, no clear accountability. In effect, the legislative appointment process divorces responsibility from accountability. The legislature is operating as both legislator and executive—appropriating funds and appointing people.

Given the geographic diversity of South Carolina, there is considerable potential for a robust state-wide vision with discrete roles for each of its institutions. Coastal Carolina’s desire to distinguish itself among other South Carolina public institutions would be an advantage to the state, were it focused on unique programming, rather than competition for enrollment. Likewise, when more than one institution shares similar strategic goals—as is apparently the case in the health care programs at Clemson and the University of South Carolina—resource sharing is imperative.⁶² Yet, while the state statute contemplates a “coordinated, comprehensive system of excellence in education,”⁶³ the current system allows institutional interests to outweigh those of the state.

When taken as a whole, the findings of this report are troubling. Many students throughout the state can graduate with large gaps in their knowledge. Tuition and

costs are rising rapidly, and families are being asked to pay more and more of their hard-earned dollars. Meanwhile, graduation rates remain woefully low. There is little evidence that either the Commission or the institutional boards have a coordinated or consolidated vision. The state's desire to ensure high academic quality, affordability, and accessibility—and the clear challenges to the goals documented in this report—make a review of the state's higher education governing structure both urgent and timely.

End Notes

1. John Immerwahr and Jean Johnson, *Squeeze Play: How Parents and the Public Look at Higher Education Today*, a report prepared by Public Agenda for The National Center for Public Policy and Higher Education (Washington, DC: 2007), 23.
2. National Center for Education Statistics, *A First Look at Literacy of America's Adults in the 21st Century*, National Assessment of Adult Literacy 2003, U.S. Department of Education, 15 <<http://nces.ed.gov/naal/pdf/2006470.pdf>>.
3. College Board, *Trends in College Pricing 2010*, 13.
4. The period of evaluation is generally five years. However, periods of measure vary slightly based on data availability and the specific measure. The most recent year for which data is available is consistently between 2005-06 and 2010-11. The data include “early release” data from the Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS) of the U.S. Department of Education Institute of Education Sciences, and may be subject to revision.
5. U.S. Census Bureau, *Median Household Income by State—Single-Year Estimates*, accessed 10 October 2011 <http://www.census.gov/hhes/www/income/data/historical/household/2010/H08_2010.xls>.
6. Institute for College Access & Success, *The Project on Student Debt*, accessed 10 October 2011 <http://projectonstudentdebt.org/state_by_state-view2010.php?area=SC>.
7. Institute for College Access & Success, *The Project on Student Debt: Student Debt and the Class of 2009*, 3 <<http://projectonstudentdebt.org/files/pub/classof2009.pdf>>.
8. The median household income in South Carolina for 2009 (in 2009 dollars) was \$41,101. U.S. Census Bureau, *Median Household Income by State—Single-Year Estimates*, accessed 10 October 2011 <http://www.census.gov/hhes/www/income/data/historical/household/2010/H08_2010.xls>.
9. Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, *Education at a Glance 2011*, accessed 11 October 2011 <<http://www.oecd.org/dataoecd/61/5/48631550.pdf>>.
10. Richard Vedder, *Over Invested and Over Priced: American Higher Education Today* (Washington, DC: Center for Affordability and Productivity, 2007), 9.
11. For the purposes of this report, administrative expenditure data are derived from the IPEDS expense category reported under “Institutional Support.” According to IPEDS, Institutional Support is defined as: “[T]he sum of all operating expenses associated with the day-to-day operational support of the institution. Includes expenses for general administrative services, central executive-level activities concerned with management and long range planning, legal and fiscal operations, space management, employee personnel and records, logistical services such as purchasing and printing, and public relations and development.” Notably, institutional support does not include debt expense (reported under “Interest”), capital expenditures such as deferred maintenance (reported under “Operation and Maintenance of Plant”), and the catchall group of “Independent Operations,” which includes costs “associated with operations that are independent of or unrelated to the primary missions of the institution.” As such, the actual level of non-instructional expenditures reported can be significantly higher.

12. Data sources are derived from the *Annual Report on Approved and Terminated Programs* by the South Carolina Commission on Higher Education.
13. Ibid.
14. Meeting minutes from the South Carolina State University board of trustees show thoughtful exchanges between trustees and university leadership regarding the funding for proposed degree programs. At Coastal Carolina University, trustees are deeply engaged in program review and do not delegate that function.
15. State Council for Higher Education in Virginia, *Space Utilization and Comparison Report*, accessed 10 October 2011 <<http://www.schev.edu/Reportstats/2004SpaceUtilizationComparisonReport.pdf>>.
16. South Carolina Commission on Higher Education, *Current & Historical Facilities Data*, accessed 10 October 2011 <http://www.che.sc.gov/New_Web/Rep&Pubs/Facilities.htm>.
17. Ibid.
18. South Carolina Commission on Higher Education, *A Closer Look at Public Higher Education in South Carolina: Institutional Effectiveness, Accountability, and Performance*, accessed 10 October 2011 <<http://www.scstatehouse.gov/reports/CommissiononHigherEd/ACloserLookJanuary2009FINAL.pdf>>; S.C. Code §§ 59-103-30, 59-103-45.
19. S.C. Code § 59-103-45(d).
20. South Carolina Commission on Higher Education, *A Closer Look at Public Higher Education in South Carolina: Institutional Effectiveness, Accountability, and Performance*, accessed 10 October 2011 <<http://www.scstatehouse.gov/reports/CommissiononHigherEd/ACloserLookJanuary2009FINAL.pdf>>.
21. South Carolina Commission on Higher Education, *Mission Resource Requirements Funding Model*, accessed 10 October 2011 <http://www.che.sc.gov/Finance/Fin/MRRManual/2008-09_MRR_Booklet.pdf>.
22. South Carolina Commission on Higher Education, *Performance Funding Workbook: A Guide to South Carolina's Performance Funding System for Public Higher Education*, accessed 10 October 2011, <http://www.che.sc.gov/Finance/Perf_Fund/Perform/Workbook_Yr9/PF_Yr9%20PFWorkbookRev100804.pdf>.
23. Bureau of Labor Statistics, *Number of Jobs Held, Labor Market Activity, and Earnings Growth Among the Youngest Baby Boomers: Results From a Longitudinal Survey*, U.S. Department of Labor, USDL-10-1243, September 2010.
24. A. Hornstein et al., *Potential Causes and Implications of the Rise in Long-Term Unemployment*, Economic Brief, Federal Reserve Bank of Richmond, EB11-09, September 2011.
25. Through the “Carolina Core” program, the University of South Carolina “provides the common core of knowledge, skill, and academic experience required for all Carolina graduates.” Applicable to all USC campuses, this program emphasizes seven key components including: Aesthetic and Interpretive Understanding; Analytical Reasoning and Problem-Solving; Effective, Engaged and Persuasive Communication; Global Citizenship and Multicultural Understanding; Information Literacy; Scientific Literacy; and Values, Ethics and Social Responsibility.

26. John Immerwahr and Jean Johnson, *Squeeze Play: How Parents and the Public Look at Higher Education Today*.
27. The responsibilities of the Commission are set out in S.C. Code § 59-103-10 *et seq.* Broadly stated in the statute, “the mission for higher education in South Carolina is to be a global leader in providing a coordinated, comprehensive system of excellence in education by providing instruction, research, and life-long learning opportunities which are focused on economic development and benefit the State of South Carolina.” S.C. Code § 59-103-15(A)(1). The statute prescribes six goals to achieve this mission: high academic quality; affordable and accessible education; instructional excellence; coordination and cooperation with public education; cooperation among the General Assembly, Commission on Higher Education, Council of Presidents of State Institutions, institutions of higher learning, and the business community; economic growth; and clearly defined missions. S.C. Code § 59-103-15(A)(2).
28. S.C. Code §§ 59-103-25, -30, -35.
29. S.C. Code § 59-103-10(1).
30. *Ibid.*
31. South Carolina Commission on Higher Education, “Board Member Biographies,” accessed 10 October 2011 < <http://www.che.sc.gov/ExecutiveDirector/COMBIOS.pdf>>.
32. S.C. Code § 59-103-10 (listing gubernatorial appointment requirements); South Carolina Independent Colleges and Universities, accessed 10 October 2011 < <http://www.scicu.org>>.
33. S.C. Code § 59-117-10 (University of South Carolina); § 59-119-40 (Clemson University); § 59-136-110 (Coastal Carolina University); § 59-130-10 (College of Charleston); § 59-127-20 (South Carolina State University).
34. S.C. Code § 59-117-10.
35. S.C. Code § 59-119-40.
36. S.C. Code § 59-136-110.
37. S.C. Code § 59-130-10.
38. S.C. Code § 59-127-20.
39. S.C. Code § 59-117-10.
40. S.C. Code § 59-136-110; § 59-130-10; § 59-127-20.
41. S.C. Code § 59-117-10 (University of South Carolina); § 59-119-40 (Clemson University); § 59-136-110 (Coastal Carolina University); § 59-130-10 (College of Charleston); § 59-127-20 (South Carolina State University).
42. The analysis covers board actions from January 2009 through June 2011. Board meeting minutes, meeting materials, policies and bylaws, other documents and media reports were consulted.
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44. University of South Carolina Board of Trustees, “Minutes of December 20, 2010 Meeting,” accessed 10 October 2011 < <http://trustees.sc.edu/minutes/122010.pdf>>.

45. Clemson University, “2011-12 Bridge to Clemson Program,” accessed 10 October 2011 <<http://www.clemson.edu/admissions/bridge>>.
46. Clemson University Board of Trustees, “Minutes of June 18, 2009 Meeting,” accessed 10 October 2011 <<http://media.clemson.edu/bot/Minutes/2009/061809.pdf>>.
47. Coastal Carolina University Board of Trustees, “Minutes of February 26, 2010 Meeting,” accessed 10 October 2011 <http://www.coastal.edu/board/minutes/feb26_10min.pdf>.
48. College of Charleston Board of Trustees, “Minutes of June 7, 2010 Meeting,” accessed 10 October 2011 http://trustees.cofc.edu/pv_obj_cache/pv_obj_id_F0AF13162654AC212CC2384E8778B46D5C7B0100/filename/minutes-jun0710.pdf; College of Charleston Board of Trustees, “Minutes of February 8, 2011 Meeting,” accessed 12 October 2011 <<http://trustees.cofc.edu/documents/minutes/february-8,-2011.pdf>>.
49. E.g., South Carolina Commission on Higher Education, “Annual Accountability Report Fiscal Year 2010-2011,” accessed 10 October 2011 <http://www.che.sc.gov/ExecutiveDirector/AgencyAcctRpt.pdf>; S.C. Code § 59-101-350.
50. College Portrait of Undergraduate Education, accessed 10 October 2011 <<http://www.collegeportraits.org/SC>>.
51. Coastal Carolina University Board of Trustees, “Minutes of February 20, 2009 Meeting,” accessed 10 October 2011 http://www.coastal.edu/board/minutes/feb20_09min.pdf; Coastal Carolina University Board of Trustees, “Minutes of July 17, 2009 Meeting,” accessed 12 October 2011 <http://www.coastal.edu/board/minutes/jul17_09min.pdf>.
52. South Carolina State University, “Strategic Plan 2006-2011,” accessed 10 October 2011 <<http://www.scsu.edu/files/2006-11StrategicPlan.pdf>>.
53. South Carolina State University Board of Trustees, “Minutes of April 30, 2010 Meeting,” accessed 10 October 2011 <<http://www.scsu.edu/files/BOTMeeting043010.pdf>>.
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55. Clemson University, “Faculty Manual,” accessed 10 October 2011 <<http://www.clemson.edu/faculty-staff/faculty-senate/documents/manual-archive/2011-12.pdf>>, 8.
56. The Foundation for Individual Rights in Education, “Institutions in South Carolina,” accessed 10 October 2011 <<http://thefire.org/spotlight/states/SC.html>>.
57. S.C. Code § 59-103-15.
58. South Carolina Commission on Higher Education, “Strategic Plan for Higher Education in South Carolina,” accessed 10 October 2011 <http://www.che.sc.gov/AcademicAffairs/IE/Introduction/StrategicPlanText_2002.doc>.
59. Higher Education Study Committee, *Leveraging Higher Education for a Stronger South Carolina: Action Plan Framework*, accessed 10 October 2011 <http://www.che.sc.gov/InfoCntr/HESC_Files/HESC_FrameworkPlan_Letter.pdf>, 12 (designating the Commission as “responsible for overall coordination of plan implementation and evaluation”).

60. Higher Education Study Committee, *Leveraging Higher Education for a Stronger South Carolina: Action Plan Implementation*, accessed 10 October 2011 <http://www.che.sc.gov/InfoCntr/HESC_Files/che_2169_leverage_leave_behind_web.pdf>.
61. The University of South Carolina and Clemson University have significant overlap in their strategic plans to establish themselves as national public research institutions. For example, part of USC's Advance Carolina strategic plan involves the creation of a Health Sciences Task Force, an "integrated structure" with the purpose of gaining national recognition for "initiatives in the areas of health policy, global health, undergraduate and graduate education, and clinical medicine." Similarly, Clemson University's 2020 Road Map includes expansion into the fields of "biomedical engineering, molecular/infectious diseases, smart hospitals, food systems, functional genomics, [and] translational animal medicine."
62. Both USC and Clemson will likely incur significant expenses pursuing these objectives, as both plan to expand their facilities to accommodate this growth. This becomes yet more tangled when one considers that USC has a medical school, while Clemson does not. One might wonder whether molecular/infectious diseases would make better sense attached to a medical school, while issues of health policy might attach themselves to Clemson's strong economics and political science programs.
63. S.C. Code § 59-103-15.

Appendix

SELECTION CRITERIA FOR CORE COURSES

Distribution requirements on most campuses today permit students to pick from a wide range of courses that often are narrow or even outside the stated field altogether. Accordingly, to determine whether institutions in fact have a solid core curriculum, ACTA defines success in each of the seven subject areas as follows:

Composition

An introductory college writing class focusing on grammar, clarity, argument, and appropriate expository style. Remedial courses and SAT/ACT scores may not be used to satisfy a composition requirement. University-administered exams or portfolios are acceptable only when they are used to determine exceptional pre-college preparation for students. Writing-intensive courses, “writing across the curriculum” seminars, and writing for a discipline are not acceptable unless there is an indication of clear provisions for multiple writing assignments, instructor feedback, revision and resubmission of student writing, and explicit language concerning the mechanics of formal writing, including such elements as grammar, sentence structure, coherence, and documentation.

Literature

A comprehensive literature survey or a selection of courses of which a clear majority are surveys and the remainder are literary in nature, although single-author or theme-based in structure. Freshman seminars, humanities sequences, or other specialized courses that include a substantial literature survey component count.

Foreign Language

Competency at the intermediate level, defined as at least three semesters of college-level study in any foreign language. No distinction is made between B.A. and B.S. degrees, or individual majors within these degrees, when applying the Foreign Language criteria. Credit is also awarded to schools that require two semesters of college-level study in two different languages.

U.S. Government or History

A survey course in either U.S. government or history with enough chronological and topical breadth to expose students to the sweep of American history and institutions. Narrow, niche courses do not count for the requirement, nor do courses that only focus on a limited chronological period or a specific state or region. State- or university-administered, and/or state-mandated, exams are accepted for credit on a case-by-case basis dependent upon the rigor required.

Economics

A course covering basic economic principles, preferably an introductory micro- or macroeconomics course taught by faculty from the economics or business department.

Mathematics

A college-level course in mathematics. Specific topics may vary, but must involve study beyond the level of intermediate algebra and cover topics beyond those typical of a college-preparatory high school curriculum. Remedial courses or SAT/ACT scores may not be used as substitutes. Courses in formal or symbolic logic, computer science with programming, and linguistics involving formal analysis count.

Natural or Physical Science

A course in astronomy, biology, chemistry, geology, physical geography, physics, or environmental science, preferably with a laboratory component. Overly narrow courses, courses with weak scientific content, and courses taught by faculty outside of the science departments do not count. Psychology courses count if they are focused on the biological, chemical, or neuroscientific aspects of the field.

Half-Credit

If a requirement exists from which students choose between otherwise qualifying courses that meet two What Will They Learn™ subject areas (e.g., math or science; history or economics, etc.), one-half credit is given for both subjects.



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