

**Proposed Guidelines for Access & Equity Undergraduate Scholars Program****Description and Goals**

The Access & Equity Undergraduate Scholars Program is an optional method of pursuing any or all of the following Access and Equity Program goals:

1. Address financial needs of ~~traditional~~ **historically** underrepresented students by structuring and maintaining state programs for undergraduate students.
2. Remove barriers that inhibit transfer from two-year to baccalaureate degree granting institutions.
3. Continue to strengthen historically black colleges to ensure that they will be able to fulfill their missions as full partners in the higher education system and provide quality education programs.

Senior institutions, regional campuses of the University of South Carolina, and South Carolina technical colleges may utilize a portion of their access and equity funds to provide scholarships to **historically** underrepresented students to diversify the educational enterprise.

The program is designed to serve "~~traditional~~ **historically** underrepresented" South Carolina resident students who have proven their ability to do college-level work. Therefore, grantees who maintain a cumulative grade point average (GPA) of at least ~~2.0~~ **2.5** will be eligible to receive additional ~~grants~~ **scholarships** in subsequent years if funds are available.

Priority should be given to applications of full-time students when making Access & Equity Undergraduate Scholar awards. Remaining available funds may be awarded to part-time learners enrolled in ~~baccalaureate~~ degree programs at the public institutions defined in Chapter 112 of Title 59.

**Eligibility Requirements**

Have a high school GPA of at least 3.0 on the SC uniform grading scale (2.5 for technical colleges);

If a student's cumulative GPA falls below 2.5, but not below a 2.0, the student will have a one year grace period to raise their cumulative GPA back to the minimum 2.5 before the student loses their scholarship.

If a student's cumulative GPA falls below 2.0, there is no grace period for this student and the student loses their scholarship. When the student increases their cumulative GPA to the minimum 2.5, the student may reapply for the scholarship.

Current scholarship recipients are exempted from the recommended guidelines until academic year 2008-2009.

New scholarship recipients will adhere to the recommended guidelines beginning academic year 2007-2008.

**I. Full-time Students**

The amount authorized for each "Access & Equity Undergraduate Scholars Program" grantee is any amount up to ~~\$1,000~~ \$2,000 for the academic year with no guarantee that "Access & Equity Undergraduate Scholars" funds will be provided for the student in subsequent years.

**A. First-time Entering Freshmen Students**

In order to be eligible to receive an "Access & Equity Undergraduate Scholars" award, the applicant must:

- a. be a United States citizen;
- b. be a South Carolina resident; who satisfies the requirements of residing in accordance with state statutes for tuition and fees, statute 59-112-10 and all related guidelines and regulations promulgated by the Commission on Higher Education;
- c. enroll as a full-time, degree-seeking student.

**B. Sophomore Students Continuing Students**

In order to be eligible to receive an "Access & Equity Undergraduate Scholars" award, the applicant must:

- a. be a United States citizen;
- b. be a South Carolina resident; who satisfies the requirements of residing in accordance with state statutes for tuition and fees, statute 59-112-10 and all related guidelines and regulations promulgated by the Commission on Higher Education.
- c. have completed at least ~~30~~ 24 semester hours (~~24 hours for technical colleges~~) in an academic program. ~~in which the institution offers a baccalaureate degree, or have completed at least 30 semester hours towards the requirements for the Associate in Arts, the Associate in Science, or any other associate degree at an institution which is regionally accredited;~~
- d. have a cumulative GPA of at least ~~2.0~~ 2.5;
- e. ~~have received an "Access & Equity Undergraduate Scholars" award as a first-time entering freshmen.~~

C. Eligibility Requirements – Full-time Students Transfer Students to 4 Year Institutions

In order to be eligible to receive an “Access & Equity Undergraduate Scholars” award, the applicant must:

- a. be a United States citizen;
- b. be a South Carolina resident; who satisfies the requirements of residing in accordance with state statutes for tuition and fees, statute 59-112-10 and all related guidelines and regulations promulgated by the Commission on Higher Education.
- c. ~~Have completed at least 60 semester hours in an academic program in which the institution offers a baccalaureate degree, or have completed the requirements for the Associate of Arts, the Associate of Science degree or any other associate degree at an institution which is regionally accredited;~~
- d. have a cumulative GPA of at least ~~2.0~~ 2.5 or the minimum required for the degree program of study;
- e. enroll as a full-time, degree-seeking student.

II. Part - time Students

The amount authorized for “Access & Equity Undergraduate Scholars” awards for students in this category will be prorated based on the number of credit hours for which the student is enrolled.

To be eligible to receive an “Access & Equity Undergraduate Scholars” award, the applicant must:

- a. be a United States citizen;
- b. be a South Carolina resident; who satisfies the requirements of residing in accordance with state statutes for tuition and fees, statute 59-112-10 and all related guidelines and regulations promulgated by the Commission on Higher Education.
- c. ~~be at least 21 years old as a first-time freshman or have been out of school at least two years prior to re-enrolling;~~
- c. have a high school diploma or equivalent (G.E.D. Certificate)
- d. ~~have completed at least 12 hours in an academic program in which the institution offers a baccalaureate degree~~
- d. have a cumulative GPA of at least ~~2.0~~ 2.5;

- e. enroll at least half-time as a degree-seeking student ~~at a 4 year institution and for technical colleges half-time~~ as defined by institutional guidelines and regulations.

### **South Carolina Commission on Higher Education Administrative Responsibilities**

**The South Carolina Commission on Higher Education is the state agency responsible for implementing the statewide policy.** The South Carolina Commission on Higher Education will have overall administrative responsibility to include:

1. requesting Access and Equity Program funding through the Budget and Control Board;
2. biannual evaluation notifying eligible institutions in timely fashion concerning steps required on their parts in the application, awarding and reporting procedures;
3. receiving and processing requests from institutions for funding;
4. recommending allocation of funds to institutions in equitable fashion on the basis of available funds and institutional estimates of eligible students;
5. gathering and analyzing pertinent information regarding grant recipients from institutions.

### **Eligible public postsecondary institutions will have the following responsibilities:**

1. College and university administrators oversee campus budgets, set policies such as admissions standards, coordinate degree programs, and facilitate credit transfer and articulation between the state's public colleges and universities, therefore guidelines (in addition to the minimum statewide scholarship guidelines) may be imposed by the institution.
2. providing matching funds on a dollar for dollar basis for the Access & Equity Undergraduate Scholars program;
3. receiving and screening scholarship applications, and selecting recipients;
4. utilizing other available financial aid funds in conjunction with these awards to recruit and assist as many "underrepresented" students as possible;
5. submitting to the Commission on Higher Education any information concerning recipients needed and requested by the Commission for reporting and accounting purposes. Such information shall include certification that all students receiving "Access & Equity Undergraduate Scholars" awards are South Carolina residents.

### **Recommendation:**

The Committee on Access & Equity and Student Services recommends approval of the guidelines for the Undergraduate Scholarship as presented above.