

The State Of the State

A Newsletter of The SC State Student Association

Winter 2005/2006

Dear Fellow Students....

It is with great excitement and anticipation that I am writing you today. Much has been happening in our great state of South Carolina; much of which significantly affects you, the student. Over the past years, tuition has been on the steady ascend, and it will only continue to do so unless something is done. Two years ago, a group of students from South Carolina decided that they were being under-represented in the decisions that directly affected their education.

Out of this idea grew the South Carolina State Student Association (SCSSA), an organization that has grown to over 60,000 members in its only three years of existence. The idea of the organization is simple; 'the voice of one is often overlooked, but the voice of thousands is impossible to ignore'.

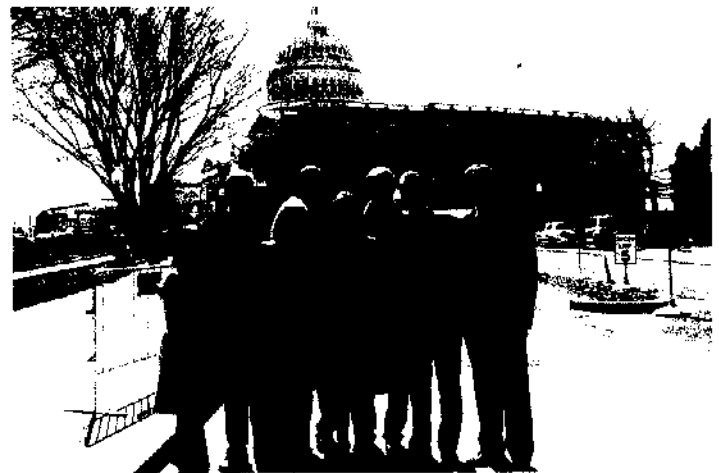
Our mission - to empower students of our state to improve higher education; through education, governmental affairs, and listening, we are the voice for the students of South Carolina's colleges and universities. This mission remains as the quintessence of our organization, but without you, the student, our organization would remain only that - a mission statement. Hopefully, this newsletter will give you some idea as to what this organization has and will offer to your university or college. If any questions should arise, please do not hesitate to contact me.

For the State, the Student, and the Association
K.L. Sheldon
SCSSA State Chair

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Representing South Carolina students, SCSSA stormed Capitol Hill during the D.C. Summit in March 2005, where they met with House and Senate members.

Contact SCSSA: ksheldo@clermson.edu

Visit soon: www.scstudents.org

What is SCSSA

In October of 2004, student leaders from across the state joined on USC's campus to discuss the critical need for student involvement in the higher education decisions made at the state and national levels. Never before had SC students stepped forward to take on the task addressing the issues that impact our educational environment. These students were determined to change that, and thus began the inaugural year of the South Carolina State Student Association (SCSSA).

What we do

SCSSA, as it is commonly referred to, has had an extremely successful year. In a relatively short period of time we have begun to establish working relationships with leaders at both the state and federal level. The Commission on Higher Education (CHE) has also taken a vested interest in the development of our association, because of the potential impact students can have. Constantly bombarded by professionals, SCSSA offers a fresh perspective to the legislature, a resource that has been virtually untapped. Together, with the CHE, we hope to help South Carolina Higher Education progress.



SCSSA meets with Sally Stroup (Assistant Secretary for Postsecondary Education) during their visit on Capitol Hill.

Through unity we can envision a
MAGNITUDE larger result

EMPOWERMENT

Support bringing empowerment to the students of
South Carolina



The Bigger-Piece-of-the-Pie Campaign
Kely, Meghan and Tommy – sporting the Bigger-Piece-of-the-Pie aprons during the recent lobbying day at the SC State House on April 20th, 2005.

Things accomplished

In an attempt to further establish ourselves as a resource to the South Carolina legislature, SCSSA held its first lobbying day at the State House on April 20, 2005 aptly titled "A Bigger Piece of the Pie." With pie-shaped stress balls in hand, 25 student leaders from University of SC, Clemson University, Coastal Carolina University and Medical University of South Carolina attended and took the cause of Higher Education to the legislature. In a press conference SCSSA intimated to the public the importance of the student voice in decisions that directly impact us. Lieutenant Governor André Bauer, Senate Education Committee Chairman John Courson, CHE Chairman Conrad Festa, Higher Education Advisor to the Governor Rita Allison, and CHE member Julie Carullo were all present to show support for the association. SCSSA officers Kely Sheldon (Chair) Meghan Hughes, (Vice-Chair), and Tommy Preston (Legislative Affairs Director), also spoke of the importance of sufficient funding, tuition caps and efficient spending, citing directly the Governor's Higher Education Budget plan. SCSSA seeks to defy the stereotype of apathetic college students by stepping forward to offer a new perspective on a growing problem.



Meghan, Kely and Tommy and Clara Heinsohn (K-12 Research Director for the Senate Education Committee, who came to speak to SCSSA at the Summer Conference.

H.R. 609 by Tommy Preston, Jr.

The U.S. Congress recently started working on H.R. 609 and S. 1614, the re-authorization of the Higher Education Act. These bills have the potential to drastically increase the cost of higher education for students and families across the country.

We are concerned with the intent of the legislation to eliminate the fixed rate option in student loan consolidation. The fixed rate allows student and parent borrowers to have lower, more predictable loan payments. Eliminating the fixed rate will force borrowers to pay higher rates and will cost them thousands more in repayment. The Congressional Research Service estimates about a \$3,300 increase in student loan costs if this component is approved.

This elimination has the potential of having the worst impact on students, and I have urged members of Congress to consider this matter before voting on it. Students in 2005 face serious challenges to financing a college education. Congress could help meet those challenges by increasing student aid and making student loans more affordable.

Unfortunately, without serious changes, H.R. 609 will neither help students, nor uphold the values of equality represented by the Higher Education Act.

In writing this column, I want to encourage all interested Americans to contact their Congress member and express their concern with this legislation. The re-authorization process takes place only every five years, so the time to address the inadequacies with this Act is now.

D.C. Summit

In March of this year SCSSA representatives attended the D.C. Summit, a national student association conference in Washington, D.C.

While interacting with other associations around the nation, SCSSA quickly took leadership positions in facilitating a number of workshops and discussions on how to establish a successful association. During the visit we also had the opportunity to meet with most of the South Carolina delegation including Representatives Bob Inglis, Gresham Barrett, Henry Brown, and Joe Wilson, Senators Jim DeMint and Lindsay Graham. In addition to the South Carolina delegation, they had meetings with President George W. Bush's Domestic Policy Advisor, Claude Allen, Deputy Secretary of Higher Education, Sally Stroup and a representative from the Senate Education Committee.

The meetings were centered around the general idea of informing federal leaders about concerns of students both in South Carolina and the nation. Topics such as the Reallocation of the Higher Education Act, student loan consolidation, fixed interest rates, and nation-wide tuition increases were discussed. SCSSA was so widely received by the South Carolina delegation that many of them agreed to sign on to legislation, which they had originally intended not to, that would support the concerns that we addressed. This significant accomplishment came as a result of a year's worth of dedication, and has paved the way for a credible relationship with our federal leaders.

Because of the hard work and dedication of the members of SCSSA, new focus has been placed upon the needs of the students in our state and nationwide. No longer are legislators overlooking the student voice, rather they are taking notice and addressing our concerns. There is a long road ahead of us, but the students of South Carolina should rest assured that their elected peers are working hard to ensure that the quality of higher education in South Carolina continues to improve with the caliber of students our state has to offer.

DIVERSITY

It is never the effort of one school for one school

Smoking on MUSC campus

At the Medical University of SC in Charleston, the SGA has begun to address the problem of smoking in high traffic thoroughfares on campus. Following student complaints, MUSC's policies were reviewed and students' opinions were solicited. A letter to the administration was drafted with student support, and a positive response has been received from the administration. However, in order to enforce any policy on a state government campus, amendments for Universities would need to take place. MUSC is thus proposing a bill to amend sections 44-95-10 of the SC Code of Laws cited as the Clean Indoor Air Act of 1990 to add section 44-95-70, which would give the Board of Trustees of state institution of higher education the authority to regulate outdoor smoking however they see fit. In order to be successful, a policy at MUSC needs 'teeth'. MUSC is not pushing for a citywide ban, it is just asking to let each institution decide what they want to do when it comes to this particular issue. If you would like more information regarding this topic, please contact **Alex Whitley**, SGA President, at sga@musc.edu.



SCSSA's Summer Conference 2005 was held at the Medical University of South Carolina, Charleston, SC. Student Government representatives from USC, Clemson, Coastal Carolina, Winthrop, The Citadel and MUSC were discussing present and future campaigns, as well as a proposal regarding a smoking ban on campus (see article on left).

The SCSSA Personal Stories Contest

What impact has the state of SC on YOUR education?

This year, our main focus is to come together as Colleges and Universities of SC, and let our state leaders know the students' opinions on higher education. Are you thankful that the state is providing you with grants/scholarships that make it possible for you to attend? Are you concerned, because you have to work two jobs just to pay for school? Let us know! Decisions are being made everyday concerning your education, and everyday the opinions of those affected (the students) are being overlooked. This is your chance to finally let the state know your personal story. Colleges and Universities from all over SC are coming together and collaborating their Student Bodies' personal stories published into one book. Be a part of SC history!

RULES AND REGULATIONS

*Entries must be 100 words or more and must not contain profanity, or any slanderous material.

*Entries must be sent to KSHELDO@CLEMSON.EDU by February 27th, 2006 at 5 pm.

*Judging will be done by the SCSSA State Cabinet, and three awards will be issued.

First Place: \$100

Second Place: \$75

Third Place: \$50

*All entries must contain FIRST and LAST NAME of the author, YEAR in school, and EMAIL address.

*All entries are liable for editing, and all information listed may be published (e.g., name, email, story)

*The SCSSA State Cabinet reserves the right to reject any entry they deem necessary.

For more information, please contact Kely Sheldon (SCSSA Chair) at ksheldo@clemson.edu or William Beaman at wbeaman@clemson.edu.

HOW TO GET INVOLVED

Are you a college or university that wants to get involved? Are you a student wanting to get involved?
WE WANT YOU!

Institutions

To officially join the South Carolina State Student Association: Simply have the Student Body President or equivalent thereof send his or her information to KSHELDO@CLEMSON.EDU.

Include a current contact to be reached, and Kely Sheldon will personally explain all of the details. Please **MARK THE SUBJECT INSTITUTION**.

Students

To officially join the South Carolina State Student Association: Send KSHELDO@CLEMSON.EDU an email with your Name, School, Year, Email, and Phone Number and a short blurb about yourself. This information will be kept confidential, but it will enable you to receive updates of the events that SCSSA is doing and how you can get involved. Please **MARK THE SUBJECT STUDENT**.

Three years running, and over 65,000 members strong – that says something!

Contact SCSSA: ksheldo@clemson.edu

Visit soon: www.scstudents.org

WHY SCSSA?

VOICE

As a unified group of institutions, we immediately have a tremendous voice while speaking for tens of thousands of students at once. With this kind of voice, it quickly draws the attention of legislators, governors, media, and the general public.

DIVERSITY

With all schools joined together, it is never the effort of one school. Every voice gets heard and every idea gets offered into what we do, which ensures that we are speaking for every student in South Carolina.

EMPOWERMENT

With a group this large, the resources we can bring into our state from other successful associations and support organizations are endless. Using these resources, we can learn more and more ways to empower the students of our state.

INFLUENCE

The potential for connections within every institution is greater than we can imagine. Students from within your student body have connections and relationships with legislators and leaders within our state, ranging from congressmen to university presidents, to the governor.

MAGNITUDE

The power of ONE is great. "Unite all of them and envision the results." The entire concept of this association is to fuse all of these voices, ideas, and support into one core organization to make South Carolina a model for the nation in higher education.

WHAT HAVE WE DONE?

On October 23rd and 24th 2004, representatives from eleven public colleges and universities in South Carolina attended a conference hosted by the University of South Carolina. At this conference, we established and signed a constitution, elected officers and began planning our legislative campaign.

SCSSA has already started building relationships with the Commission on Higher Education and members of the South Carolina Senate and House of Representatives.

On March 11-14, 2005 SCSSA leaders attended a national student association conference in Washington, DC. At this conference we met with the South Carolina Congressional delegation to discuss the importance of investing in higher education. They were supportive of our efforts to provide a voice for South Carolina students, and are now considering supporting legislation that aids college students in our state and nationwide.



SCSSA Leaders with Assistant Secretary of Education Sally Stroup

SCSSA officers
Kely Sheldon,
Meghan Hughes
and Tommy
Preston

WHAT CAN YOU DO?

* Let us know you want to help. Leave us your name and e-mail address so we know that we have your support. We will then let you know what you can do to help out.

* Show your support for SCSSA by participating in the first statewide campaign: "Bigger Piece of the Pie." This event will take place at the South Carolina State House on Wednesday, April 20, 2005 and it will be our initial campaign to introduce ourselves to the entire state legislature.

SCSSA CHAIR

Kely Sheldon
kelysheldon@scstudents.org
(704) 617-1831

SCSSA VICE-CHAIR

Meghan Hughes
meghanhughes@scstudents.org
(864) 314-0923

SCSSA Legislative Affairs Liaison

Tommy Preston
tommypreston@scstudents.org
(803) 777-3857

Please visit our web site at:
<http://www.scstudents.org>

OTHER STATE STUDENT ASSOCIATIONS

California State Student Association

Members represent 4,000,000 students Campaign Victories

- * Between 1969 and 1979, no piece of legislation dealing with higher education opposed by CSSA became law, and for disabled students and the International Studies Program.
- * 1990's: CSSA adopted the Student Bill
- * Stopped the student fee increase for four years in a row.

Oregon Student Association

Members represent 100,000 students Campaign Victories

- * OSA recently had a major victory by defeating a bill that would have turned tuition control over to the universities and out of the hands of elected officials.
- * Over the past two major election cycles, OSA helped register 40,000 Oregon youth.

United Council of University of Wisconsin Students, Inc.

Members represent 145,000 students Campaign Victories

- * In 2002, United Council won its state wide campaign in link financial aid to tuition increases.
- * In the same year, United Council eliminated a nonresident tuition charge and limited tuition in creases.

LOOK WHO IS PARTICIPATING

- * Clemson University
- * Coastal Carolina University
- * College of Charleston
- * Medical University of South Carolina
- * The Citadel
- * University of South Carolina - Columbia
- * University of South Carolina - Beaufort
- * University of South Carolina - Salkehatchie
- * University of South Carolina - Sumter
- * University of South Carolina - Aiken
- * Winthrop University

SCSSA FACTS

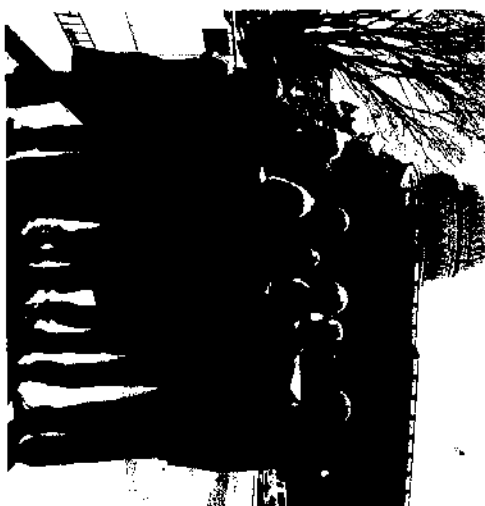
Fact: For Full-Time In-State undergraduate students the tuition prices have increased an average of 19.6% in two years with some institutions experiencing increases up to 36.6%.

Fact: The recommended amount of state dollars spent per student in South Carolina per year is an average of \$9,017.73, but the actual state appropriations are only \$3,621.45 - 40% less than the recommended amount.

Fact: With your help...things are going to change!

Visit us at:

<http://www.scstudents.org>



"To empower students of our state to improve higher education. Through education, governmental affairs, and listening, we are the voice for the students of South Carolina's colleges and universities."



OFFICE OF STUDENT GOVERNMENT

February 1, 2006

Commission on Higher Education
1333 Main Street, Suite 200
Columbia, South Carolina 29201

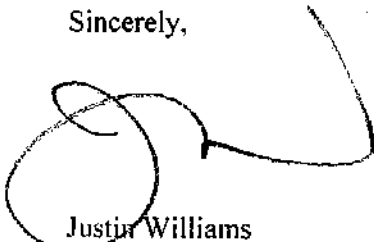
Members of the Commission on Higher Education:

As student body officers at our State's flagship institution, we closely watch the status of higher education in South Carolina. Much of what we see is great. Our university's emphasis on research, "green" behavior, the Honors College, and the statewide branch system are a few of the things that make us proud to be students at the University of South Carolina.


We are, however, concerned with some of the ramifications of the changing climate in higher education today. One clear example is the legislative proposal for a tuition cap. We oppose a tuition cap because such a mandate ties the hands of the University. If a cap is instituted, the University will be forced to cut back on services that benefit the student body as a whole. Furthermore, although a tuition cap seems like a reduction in cost, it simply transfers the current costs manifested in tuition into the student fee system, resulting in no change in cost of attendance.

We thank you for your consideration of the students of South Carolina and hope that you will keep us in mind as these and other proposals are made during this legislative season.


Sincerely,



Justin Williams
Student Body President



Ryan Holt
Student Body Vice President



Tommy Preston
Student Body Treasurer

MUSC

MEDICAL UNIVERSITY
OF SOUTH CAROLINA

Student Government
Association
Harper Student Center
45 Courtenay Drive • SW 213
PO Box 250975
Charleston • SC 29425

Ph (843) 792-2693
Fax (843) 792-0433

2 February 2006

Dear Commission on Higher Education Board Member,

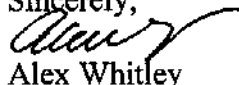
Students in South Carolina are granted with a variety of opportunities to attend college and graduate professional school within the state. As President of the Student Body at MUSC, I write to you to thank you for helping to create the quality education that exists in South Carolina. I chose MUSC for its biomedical science research program to pursue a PhD in the field of Pharmacology. I then turned around and chose MUSC to attain a MD which I just began in 2005. I chose to attend and remain at MUSC for several reasons. I initially chose MUSC because of the quality education that I could receive following which I chose to stay because I learned of the commitment that President Greenberg, his administration, and the Board of Trustees have for continually improving an already excellent education. The only thing I learned that heightened my desire to stay was their commitment to students.

The education that I and the other students at MUSC are currently receiving has come at no small cost. Since starting at MUSC in 2000, I have observed tuition increases almost every year, with it occurring twice a year in a couple of instances. These increases have come only secondarily to cuts from state appropriations and from MUSC streamlining all processes as much as possible.

MUSC students typically exit their undergraduate institution with accumulated debt and therefore really appreciate all the scholarship monies that are available to them. All the need based monies are especially important at this stage. These are the only reasons that MUSC is somewhat affordable. As budget cuts have caused increases in our tuition the answer is not to cap tuition, the answer is to increase funding for higher education.

Interestingly debt at MUSC drives the professional choices students make as they graduate. The more in debt students are, the more likely they are to choose a higher paying field for their profession. These bright students then leave the state of South Carolina. I strongly believe that supporting students in their pursuits of higher education within the state is worthwhile, as the future of South Carolina depends on getting these bright students to college and beyond and finally keeping them within the state.

Sincerely,



Alex Whitley
MUSC Student Body President

February 1, 2006

Dear Member of the Commission on Higher Education,

As President of the Student Body at Clemson University, I write to send you greetings as you begin the legislative session and to give you a perspective on the issue of funding higher education in South Carolina. I am a senior at Clemson and began my college career here in 2002. I chose Clemson for several reasons, but most importantly for the quality of education that I wanted to receive right here in my home state of South Carolina. Beyond the special learning atmosphere at Clemson, I have experienced a true commitment by President Barker and the Board of Trustees to provide me that quality education.

Quality, however, comes with a price and since I have been a student at Clemson University, we have experienced tuition increases each year. I am also aware that since 2000, the state has cut base funding to higher education by 21% or \$170 million. There is a direct correlation between these cuts and tuition increases at the state's research and four-year institutions.

Clemson students recognize and appreciate the value of state scholarships, especially LIFE and Palmetto Fellows, as they have made higher education affordable for the majority of our students. We know that while funding scholarships has helped families pay for higher education, it has not provided any additional base funding for Clemson to provide us the undergraduate education we desire. I believe South Carolina students are worth the investment and only through increased state support can institutions remain affordable and fulfill the promise of a quality education given to them by the opportunity of scholarships.

No student is happy with tuition increases; however, the critical debate should not be whether or not to cap tuition in South Carolina, but to realize the necessity of increased base funding to higher education. South Carolina's future depends on it.

Sincerely,

Katy Bayless
Undergraduate Student Body President

Sampling of personal stories received from Clemson Undergraduate Students

George Magrath
Senior

From its humble beginnings as Clemson College of Agriculture and Mechanics through the present, Clemson University has been dedicated to improving the quality of life for every person in the state of South Carolina. The early Public Service Activities (PSA) sponsored programs that sent professors across the state to help farmers increase productivity in crops and livestock. More recently, Clemson University has helped the Upstate bring in huge amounts of investment dollars in the automotive industries. These investment dollars give Greenville County the highest per capita foreign investment in the nation. These industries provide a huge number of high-paying jobs to the upstate and also bring in huge amounts of tax dollars for the state government. Many other parts of the state are capable of achieving such success if the state schools are properly funded to provide the technical expertise throughout the state. Technical jobs, such as engineers and agriculturalists, are the foundation of a solid economy. They are the type jobs that thrive in a free market economy and are not threatened but enhanced by emerging economies and improving technology. A technically-oriented university like Clemson provides these professionals to South Carolinians and has huge impact on the economy of the state.

I come from the Pee Dee area and see that our economy is based on tobacco, textiles, and tourism. Each of these is a weak form of economy. Tobacco and other crops are not in itself a weak economy, but when most of the small farmers are not efficient there is little chance of competing with or matching the income of more educated and efficient farmers. Clemson University has spent over one hundred years educating farmers in the state to become more efficient and to make more money per acre of farming through its commitment to agriculture and its PSA program already mentioned. If the PSA has not been cut by the state legislature by over 75%, then farmers throughout the state could be producing more crops more efficiently, leading to higher income for the family and high tax revenue for the state.

Textiles are another industry in the Pee Dee that is quickly on the downfall as China and Central America become the predominate producers of such. Duke, UNC, and NC State have begun a very interesting program in Kannapolis, NC to provide high paying jobs to the former textile workers in that area. They have recently purchased the now defunct Pillowtex plant in Kannapolis and trained many of the former workers in very basic, rudimentary biotechnology to provide a workforce that not only gives these former plant workers better jobs than when they were at Pillowtex, it also brings in huge amounts of investment in biotechnology to a poor area of NC. This idea could be used as a springboard for ideas of improving the economy of the Pee Dee region. Clemson University is already involved in similar programs such as the new ICAR facility in the upstate that will make Greenville the automotive research capital of the world. Many high-paying jobs and opportunities will be provided to the people of the upstate because

of this program from Clemson. Imagine what Clemson could achieve throughout the state if given the proper funding.

Tourism brings in the most money in the Pee Dee region, but it is very shaky economy to have. A recession or another terrorist attack places the Myrtle Beach area in a bad position as tourism would drop drastically. Myrtle Beach is only now recovering from the 200 recession and the September 11 attacks. The workforce of Horry County needs to foster and develop tourism, but it also needs to provide a better trained workforce capable of providing less risky services and commodities. Clemson University is the best place in the state to teach South Carolinians the technical jobs that would provide security and higher pay to the people of South Carolina.

I absolutely love the Pee Dee area of the state and would do anything to help it grow and become a better place for everyone living there. Clemson University is positioned to provide, and has provided me, the needed level of education and expertise to create an innovative, dynamic economy, but the school is becoming too expensive for most people to attend. Even with the Life Scholarship, most would-be college students come from families that cannot afford to send them to a university with drastically rising tuition costs each year. The increased tuition at state schools will only cause the wealth gap in South Carolina to become larger and larger as only the wealthy can now afford as education necessary to achieve a livable income in today's economy. The increases in tuition leave little hope of my region of the state ever attaining a better quality of life. As you prepare to cut higher education's budget again, please keep in mind that without an educated workforce the state of South Carolina will never significantly improve the quality of life of its citizens. By funding Clemson University and other state schools now, we will all reap the benefits in terms of more tax dollars and a stronger overall economy for South Carolina later.

Jennifer Craig
Freshman

Dear Legislators,

My name is Jennifer Craig, and I am a freshman here at Clemson University. I came to Clemson for many reasons, which include the family atmosphere, distinct setting, and education. My major is Secondary Education, and I feel that this university will prepare me for teaching better than other schools that I could have attended. I receive the Life Scholarship and for that I thank you, but my tuition is still extremely high. My parents have taken notice to how much more expensive tuition is for me than when my brother graduated. As a result, my dad has to take money from his retirement plan in order to send me to Clemson. I know plenty of students from my high school who have been unable to go to their schools of choice due to the rise in tuitions. If the base funding was increased for higher education, then the burden of raising tuition would not be so great. I hope you act as a result from our stories. Thank you very much.

Connelly-Anne Bartle
Senior

Esteemed Members of the South Carolina General Assembly,

My name is Connelly-Anne Bartle from Rock Hill, and I am a senior at Clemson University. I will be graduating in December 2005 with dual degrees both Political Science and Communication Studies.

Clemson University has given me many opportunities that have developed and shaped me into the person I am today. My grandfather, Harold Page Connelly, Sr, was a member of the class of 1932 and encouraged me at a young age to attend Clemson. During his time as a cadet, it cost a little more than fifty dollars to attend Clemson because the tuition was offset from the state Fertilizer Sales Tax. He always told me to come to Clemson, to be somebody, and to make him proud. More than seventy years later, I will finally accomplish this goal.

Despite the high tuition increases, I have been able to afford Clemson. I do know that many of my classmates have had to sacrifice a lot to pay for their education. It is imperative that higher education funding be analyzed for its value for the future as well as the benefit for business and jobs in South Carolina.

Higher education in South Carolina is in trouble. Institutions like Clemson and USC are losing money faster then we receive it. Budget cuts are killing higher education and the future workforce of South Carolina.

Basic economic principles tell us that you have to spend money in order to gain a return. If we want to have a successful workforce in South Carolina, the state needs to spend money on higher education in order to keep the best and brightest in the state.

I know as a legislator, you are faced with difficult decisions on a daily basis. Please reconsider your stance on the importance of higher education funding with the best interest for South Carolina's future in mind. Thank you for your time.

Jenny Harmon
Senior

Dear Legislators,

As a freshman, I hardly noticed how much my mom and dad were paying for me to go to Clemson, live in the dorms, and have a good meal plan. I knew it cost a lot but I was just proud of myself for having good enough grades to get a Life Scholarship. The Life Scholarship is great, by the way, and would normally seem like a lot of money; however, it hardly puts a dent in the fortune it costs to send a child to college.

Last Christmas, in the middle of my junior year, I got married. My husband Jordan is an undergraduate as well. Now that we are handling our own finances, every little tuition hike is taking money away from us personally. Federal aid has helped a lot with our tuition, but we still living expenses to take care of and it isn't easy. Our parents help us, but they shouldn't have to.

There may be a couple of students out there who don't notice or care one way or the other when tuition soars, but most of us are at least trying to be responsible with what little money we have and this is putting undue strain on us and on our parents. A Clemson education is worth a lot. I came to Clemson because of its history and because of mine; most of my family attended Clemson, and I've always thought it was a great place. I should know—I've lived here my whole life!

Katie Hocevar
Senior

I adore Clemson more than I could ever say. I have never once regretted my decision to come here; I think every day how much I love my school. I transferred to Clemson my sophomore year from College of Charleston. After a single visit to Clemson on Homecoming weekend, I knew instantly that I would rather be here.

And yet, as lucky as I am here, an unfortunate burden has been placed on my as a student. I graduated in the top five percent of high school class, and as a senior at Clemson I have a 4.0 grade-point average. I participate regularly in community service and leadership activities, and I have been involved in choir and departmental honors research. Despite my efforts to be an excellent student here at Clemson, I am still in debt over ten thousand dollars because of the loans I have had to receive to attend school here. In order to be the best school it can be, Clemson needs to be able to support high-caliber students in financial need. With the lack of state funding that Clemson receives, students like me are not receiving scholarships, but loans. If the best students in the state are not receiving scholarships; then I have to ask you, who is?