

EXHIBIT A

STATEMENT OF COMMISSION ON HIGHER EDUCATION

August 5, 1971

In recent weeks higher education in South Carolina has become the subject of intense discussion by many people and controversial views have appeared with regularity in the news media. Topics receiving attention include the need for a post-high school master plan for education, differing views on two year colleges and consideration of the possible need for a second medical school. The Commission consequently feels that it might be useful at this time to clarify its role and its position on some of these matters.

The Commission has been engaged over the past two years in developing a plan which it calls a "Statement of Goals and Objectives in Higher Education to 1980". Reports have been received from the eight major committees representing a wide spectrum of educational ideas, and the basic report is now being compiled. After review, public hearings and approval by the Commission, the report together with appropriate recommendations for action, will be forwarded to the Governor and General Assembly early next year. This report should provide the basis for clear-cut decisions by the General Assembly on how state-wide goals and objectives in higher education for this decade may be achieved. The basic goal is to provide maximum educational opportunities for all South Carolinians in an efficient manner and within the potential of our resources.

At the same time the Commission is working jointly with the Advisory Committee on Technical Education, as directed by the General Assembly, to study and devise a system of community colleges compatible with the overall plan for higher education being devised by the Commission. A ten man

committee is making the basic study which will be considered by the Commission and the TEC Board and submitted by January, 1972. The basic purpose of the plan is to better meet the needs of our young people at the community level as economically and efficiently as possible. There is question whether the systems of two year institutions now in existence provide completely adequate opportunities, even though each serves well in restricted areas of activity. A policy on two year institutions is needed which is responsive to specific community desires and needs.

This subject has been considered by the Commission for several years and its fundamental position has been made clear in its reports. More definitive recommendations will await action by the ten man committee now studying this matter. In any event it is clear that at least one method by which South Carolina can move from the lowest rank in college attendance in the nation is to improve opportunities for our young people to attend meaningful programs in two year institutions on a commuting basis. Whatever program emerges should be tailored to the needs of the community being served, but should be coordinated at the state level.

In the area of education of physicians the Commission has made some recommendations and is appointing a broadly-based committee to study the present status and possible future of medical education. The committee will address itself directly to the question of whether South Carolina's needs for medical doctors can be met by accelerating activities at the South Carolina Medical University or whether another medical school is necessary. There is no doubt that the output of physicians must be stepped up if the expanding health needs of our state are to be met effectively. At the same time medical education is very expensive and the most economical means must be found

to do the job. Adequate studies have been made and the essential facts are available. The next step involves evaluation of the data by a competent and objective group of people, followed by recommendations for action by the Commission to the Governor and the General Assembly by January, 1972.

As the Commission on Higher Education evaluates these critical issues in post high school education in the state it also is carrying out its statutory duties of approving new programs in public colleges and universities, coordinating budgets of these institutions, reviewing building proposals of public institutions, and carrying out many studies. Its mission is to work with the colleges and universities toward the objective of improving the output and quality of higher education in the state in the most economical way possible. The Commission will have specific recommendations available so that decisions for the decade ahead may be made by the General Assembly next spring. It requests the thoughtful consideration of these issues by all citizens and reasoned discussion in the months ahead.