

Agenda Item 3.03.A
CHE Meeting
2/4/99

SOUTH CAROLINA COMMISSION ON HIGHER EDUCATION

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MEMORANDUM

TO: Austin Gilbert, Chairman, and Members
S.C. Commission on Higher Education

FROM: Frank Gilbert, Chairman *FG*
Committee on Access & Equity and Student Services

Update on the Palmetto Fellows Scholarship Program

The postmark deadline to apply for a Palmetto Fellows Scholarship was **January 15, 1999**. The S.C. Commission on Higher Education has received approximately 955 Palmetto Fellows Scholarship applications. The following selection process includes four verification steps. As you are aware, last year the Palmetto Fellows Scholarship Advisory Committee and the Commission's Executive Committee approved the selection process. Also last year, this process was shared with the colleges and universities and the high school counselors in the form of a "Fact Sheet."

Currently, we are comparing and verifying the information on the applications against the official transcripts and test score reports (**FIRST VERIFICATION STEP**).

During the first week in February, we will enter the application information into a database. We will also mail a roster of all applicants to the high school counselors and colleges.

During the second week in February, we will generate a report of the information entered into the database, including grade point average, class rank, test score, extracurricular/work activities, and counselor recommendation for each application. One Commission staff member will compare all information on the report against the original application. This step will verify that the information entered in the database is accurate (**SECOND VERIFICATION STEP**).

During the first week in March, we will perform the second verification step again. However, this step will require two Commission staff members to verify each application at the same time (**THIRD VERIFICATION STEP**).

During the second week of March, the computer program will assign points for each applicant based on grade point average, class rank, test score, extracurricular/work activities, and counselor recommendation. Once the computer has assigned points, the points will be manually calculated to check for accuracy of the computer program (**FOURTH VERIFICATION STEP- REQUIRES A RANDOM SELECTION OF APPLICATIONS**).

During the third week in March, we will mail letters of notification and acceptance forms to first round of scholarship offers. Students will be informed that they have a choice between a public or private college or university. Those students who choose a private institution must return a reservation form postmarked by **April 23, 1999**. Students who choose to attend a public institution must return acceptance forms postmarked by **May 3, 1999**. Students who select a private institution must have their form postmarked earlier in order for the Commission to manage the split in funding between public and private institutions as mandated in the law. Currently, the private institutions receive approximately 18% of the available funding. We will also mail a roster of the first round of awards to high school counselors and colleges.

After the deadlines above have passed, the Commission will proceed in awarding scholarships based on the student's ranking until all available funding has been allocated.
