



**SOUTH CAROLINA COMMISSION ON HIGHER EDUCATION**

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## MEMORANDUM

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**DATE:** March 25, 1999

**TO:** Members, Commission on Higher Education

**FROM:** Rayburn Barton, Executive Director

**SUBJECT:** Information to Accompany Recommendations of the Access and Equity  
Ad Hoc Advisory Committee

At its April 1 meeting, the Commission will consider the fourteen (14) recommendations contained in the Report of the Access and Equity Ad Hoc Advisory Committee. A copy of these recommendations is attached.

To assist in your decision-making, this memorandum provides background information on recommendations 4, 5, 12, 13 and 14.

### **Recommendation 4: Definition of Minorities**

For the purpose of the Access and Equity Program, the term "minorities" has traditionally been considered as applying exclusively to African-Americans. This recommendation is to adopt the current racial/ethnic designations as approved by the US Department of Education: American Indian or Alaskan Native, Black/African American, Asian or Pacific Islander, Hispanic, White/Non-Hispanic, Other.

### **Recommendation 5: Access and Equity Funding**

When South Carolina was under the federal court order during the 1980s, Access and Equity funding for the institutions was \$2.2 million. The funding has decreased over the succeeding years to the current level of approximately \$500,000 annually.

Indexing the access and equity funding to current State appropriations of \$700 million for higher education yields the following amounts:

1%	\$ 7.0 million
¾%	\$ 5.25 million
½%	\$ 3.50 million
¼%	\$ 1.75 million

### **Recommendation 12: Recruitment and Retention of "Other Race" Faculty**

The performance funding indicator on accessibility (8C, Accessibility to the Institution of All citizens of the State) was revised by the Commission on Higher Education at its March meeting to include the percentage of "other race" faculty at an institution. Beginning with the 1999-2000 performance year, institutions will propose benchmarks for "other race" faculty and will be evaluated on performance in relation to their benchmark.

### **Recommendation 13: Performance Funding Planning Reports**

Currently, institutions' reports related to performance funding include information on "other race" students and faculty; however, information on "other race" staff, administrators, and trustee/commission members is not included. Performance funding measures are reviewed annually for possible modification. The indicator that relates to planning reports (Adoption of a Strategic Plan to Support the Mission) could be reviewed as part of this annual review process to see if information concerning staff, administrators, and trustees/commission members could be included. The performance funding calendar for 1999-2000 calls for modifications to measures to be considered by the Planning and Assessment Committee, at its meetings on November 16, 1999, and for the Committee's recommendations to be considered by the Commission at its December 2, 1999 meeting.

### **Recommendation 14: State-Sponsored Scholarship Programs**

In December 1997, the Commission on Higher Education approved revisions to the proposed regulations for the Palmetto Fellows Scholarship Program and submitted the revisions to the General Assembly. The revised regulations included a change in the eligibility criteria which would allow students to meet two of the three criteria to be eligible for the Palmetto Fellows Scholarship: 1) an SAT score of 1200 or an equivalent ACT or PSAT score; or 2) GPA of 3.5 on a 4.0 scale; and/or 3) rank in the top five percent of either the sophomore or junior class. The revisions to the proposed regulations were forwarded to the General Assembly during the 1998 legislative session. The Standing Committees of the General Assembly (House and Senate) requested that the Commission on Higher Education withdraw and resubmit the proposed regulations for the Palmetto Fellows Scholarship Program. The Standing committees both recommended that the minimum eligibility criteria for the Palmetto Fellows Scholarship include all three criteria (an SAT score of 1200 or an equivalent ACT; GPA of 3.5 on a 4.0 scale; and rank in the top five percent of either the sophomore or junior class).

Att.

RB/bg

### Recommendations

1. The Commission should clearly articulate, in its mission statement and the strategic plan for higher education, expressions of support for goals to improve minority access and equity in higher education.
2. The Commission should work with colleges and universities and annually monitor progress toward attaining Statewide access and equity goals, in accordance with Access and Equity Program policies.
3. The CHE staff should prepare an annual report that includes data on institutional progress toward meeting Access and Equity goals. The report should be distributed to the Commission and the Legislature.
4. The Commission on Higher Education should broaden the focus of the Access and Equity Program to include all underrepresented racial groups, while maintaining a focus on African Americans, the State's largest minority population who continue to be underrepresented in college enrollments, graduation classes, and among faculty members and executive level administrators.
5. For increased success in pursuing Access and Equity Program goals and fulfilling the mission of higher education in South Carolina in 1999 and beyond, we recommend annual program allocations of at least one half of one percent of annual higher education appropriations. The allocated funds would be used as follows: 40% for basic grants; 40% for competitive grants; 10% for graduate fellowships; and 10% for enhancement programs at S.C. State University and Denmark Technical College.
6. Provide an additional \$10,000,000 for need-based financial aid to enable more students to overcome economic barriers and attend college on a full-time or part-time basis. (This recommendation was advanced earlier and was approved by the Commission at its December 1998 meeting.)
7. Periodically review State and institutional policies to ensure that opportunities for access to higher education are provided equitably for minority students at both two-year and baccalaureate degree granting colleges.
8. Colleges and universities should express diversity as a value and should include goals to achieve and maintain diversity in appropriate institutional documents, such as strategic plans and recruitment materials.

9. The Commission staff should gather information from all public institutions and prepare a report which describes access and equity programs and strategies that institutions have found to be effective on their respective campuses. The report should be disseminated to the Commission, the Legislature, and others who work to improve access and equity in higher education.
10. Eligibility for the Palmetto Fellows Scholarship Program should be implemented with more flexibility, allowing students to qualify for this Scholarship by meeting any **two** of the three criteria.
11. Eligibility for the LIFE Scholarship Program should be implemented with more flexibility, allowing entering freshmen who enroll in four-year colleges and universities in the State to meet **one** of the two current eligibility criteria.
12. Specific Performance Funding incentives should be given for the recruitment and retention of "other race" faculty.
13. Institutions should be required to include in their Performance Funding Planning Reports information on the recruitment and retention of "other race" students, faculty staff, administrators and trustees/commission members.
14. Consideration should be given to using the following criteria for establishing and maintaining eligibility for future State-sponsored scholarship programs:
  - (a) at least a B average, as determined by the student's high school;
  - (b) evidence that the student was involved in extra-curricular activities;
  - (c) evidence that the student meets the college admissions requirements; and
  - (d) evidence that the student meets the institution's definition of progression toward the completion of a degree.