

EXHIBIT A

Statement Presented by Dr. R. Cathcart Smith, Chairman
South Carolina Commission on Higher Education
to
Members of the Commission on Higher Education
and
The Council of Presidents

March 2, 1972

Gentlemen, on February 16, 1972, Governor West appointed me to become Chairman of this group effective March 3, 1972, to replace my long-time friend, Craig Wall, who has been appointed to the Federal Reserve Board of Richmond, Virginia.

I, perhaps more acutely than you, feel that we will seriously miss the wisdom and perceptiveness of this man who has dealt with most of the problems related to higher education in South Carolina since Governor McNair first appointed him as a member of what was initially the Higher Education Advisory Committee and later became the Higher Education Commission. I am more fortunate, however, than the rest of you in that Craig and I have for more than twenty years been close personal friends and live very near each other. Because of this, I will continue to be able to seek and receive the benefit of his advice on matters that will continue to challenge all of us and the people of this State.

As I accept the Chairmanship of this Commission I ask your indulgence and help as I try to find my way through the maze of problems that confront us so that we may come up with answers that will benefit all of the people of our State. I am quite certain that I shall make errors but I promise you that they will be honest errors, and I assure you that I will do the best I can in this capacity.

It is my intention to review the minutes of all previous meetings of this Commission as soon as it is practicable so that I may become better acquainted with what has gone on before.

In the relatively short time that I have been a member of this Commission I have spent a major portion of it in dealing with the problems of medical education. When our Committee submitted its report to the Commission in December I had hoped that the questions related to this were reasonably well answered, and those that were not solved at that time at least were "in our line of sight" and capable of being answered in an orderly manner in the near future. However, as much as we would all like to say, "out, out, damned spot" this problem has not gone away and we are still required to do more work on it. As little as I like to plow this ground again we must, and we shall bring to bear our best and, I hope, unbiased judgement on this subject after further study. I am required to select two other members of this Commission to serve with me on this special study committee as authorized by the Senate and the House of Representatives. This I shall do shortly and perhaps announce these members before this meeting is over.

Lest we allow the medical education problem to overshadow the other serious issues related to higher education, I would like to call your attention to the fact that, despite what some of us may desire to the contrary, we are a body whose powers to change things as they are to what we would like them to be, are rather limited. Certainly until we prove to the people of this State, and through them the law-makers whom they have elected to govern all of us, that this body has the wisdom and nonpartisanship to be a worthwhile instrument, we shall be unable to accomplish what we are charged to do. Our decisions and recommendations for action in the field of higher education

must be well thought-out and ably presented. It appears to me that we must draw on the experience and expertise of responsible authorities not only from the public universities, state colleges, and two-year post-high school institutions, but also from authorized representatives of the private colleges, the State Department of Education and the Technical Education Committee, which may soon become the State Board of Technical and Comprehensive Education. I do not think that it is necessary for these organizational representatives to be members of our Commission. The law constituting this Commission does not authorize this anyhow. I do, however, suggest that we could benefit by inviting the State Superintendent of Education, the Director of the Technical Education Committee, the representative of the Council of Private Colleges, the Governor's Advisor on Education Affairs, as well as the President of the Council of Presidents to meet with us regularly. Likewise, I would request that these organizations allow us to have our Executive Director, or his representative, attend their regular meetings so that a close liaison and working relationship may be maintained between us and all organizations involved in education in this State.

I also suggest that at any regular meeting of this Commission we invite the President, or his designated representative, of any school that is presenting a problem or request to our Commission, to attend that meeting. It has been suggested that should this body take action not in keeping with the desires of an institution, the representative's presence might prove embarrassing. I believe on the other hand that it would be proper for the President to be present so that he could better understand why such actions were taken by this Commission.

I recognize that each public institution does have a representative on this Board. However, I do think that the President may have, perhaps, a little broader knowledge of the problems and can serve us well in arriving at a sound solution.

We should do all that we can to reduce devisiveness, and all of us should work together in a cohesive effort to improve higher education in South Carolina at a reasonable price and within a reasonable period of time.

The reviewing of programs, operating budgets and capital requests should, in my opinion, be done by our staff, assisted by a knowledgeable representative of the schools involved. The proposals, with supporting or dissenting comments, should be submitted to the members of this Commission well in advance of our monthly meetings so that we may have an adequate opportunity to study them before we are required to act. This may necessitate multiple mailings during each month rather than getting all of our material just three to five days before the meeting.

I am going to request, with your permission, that Dr. Morris furnish each member of this Commission with the Commission's telephone credit card so that you will not be hesitant to call our Columbia office or each other on matters related to our work.

I also believe that you may request, if you so desire, supplies of Commission stationery for your use in matters related to the field of higher education.

In so far as it is possible, public announcements by members of the Commission or its staff should reflect our collective judgement. Otherwise, it would appear prudent to identify contrary opinions as personal opinions.

I hope that we may have the cooperation of the universities, State colleges and two-year institutions in making their proposals far enough in advance so that our staff and Commission members may have an ample opportunity to study them before having to act. All of the members of this Commission have other duties that are, like it or not, their primary responsibility. The labor that we, on this Commission, devote to higher education is truly a labor of love for our State that is to some degree above and beyond the call of duty. This, I am sure, we are delighted to do; but in order for us to do this job with intelligence we need and request all of the help we can get.

It is imperative that we develop a sense of cooperation between the institutions, the Commission, its staff, as well as the various divisions of State government.

Again, let me thank all of you in advance for the help and advice I shall be asking of you in the months to come.