



August 14, 2012

Harris Pastides  
President

The Honorable [REDACTED]  
South Carolina House of Representatives  
[REDACTED]

Dear Representative [REDACTED]

On behalf of the Carolina family, I would like to thank you for your support and leadership during the 2012 legislative session.

This General Assembly recognized and addressed many mission critical needs facing the state's flagship university system, allowing us to continue to provide quality education for all South Carolinians.

USC's Palmetto College was enthusiastically embraced and funded by both chambers in a bipartisan fashion. It may be the most significant investment the General Assembly has made to increase affordability and accessibility to four-year baccalaureate degrees in high demand, employable fields. Thanks to your leadership, working or place-bound South Carolinians can complete or earn a USC baccalaureate degree online without leaving their jobs, families or communities.

We are grateful for the General Assembly's continued assistance with addressing the deferred maintenance needs for our eight campuses and six million plus square feet of teaching and research space. Also, a new and functional home for South Carolina's only public school of law is now a reality, thanks to the vision and commitment of you and your colleagues.

This is a critical time in the history of higher education. Our country and state are in great need of more college graduates if we are to compete on the world stage. Our number one priority is to assist as many South Carolinians as possible in attaining a college degree.

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With that in mind, we must work together for meaningful reform in higher education funding. We have reached a critical threshold:

- Wild funding disparities now exist between our state universities with the amounts arbitrarily appropriated to each university loosely related to SC resident enrollments and missions.
- Constrained revenues and unstable economic conditions make it unrealistic the General Assembly can restore the 50 plus percent of direct state support lost by higher education over the last decade.
- Unpopular tuition and fee increases are not a long-term remedy to remain competitive in the higher education marketplace. This unfortunate situation no longer serves the interests of our state's taxpayers, parents or students.

Reform— through performance, transparency, accountability and affordability metrics - can be a large part of the solution in providing critical and necessary state support for public higher education. With our successful students, faculty, alumni and staff, I am confident we can demonstrate and deliver results, making USC a worthy continued investment in South Carolina's future.

Again, thank you for your leadership and support. There are many bright opportunities for our great state of South Carolina, and I look forward to working with you to make them a reality.

Sincerely,



Harris Pastides

HP/jm