

ATTACHMENT VI



WINTHROP

UNIVERSITY

Office of the Vice President for Academic Affairs

April 13, 1999

Alan S. Krech
Senior Executive Assistant for Policy and Administration
SC Commission on Higher Education
1333 Main Street
Suite 200
Columbia, SC 29201

Dear Alan:

We have reviewed the draft report of the Commission's data verification visit to Winthrop University and found one error of fact. We have submitted documentation that we did in fact report the correct expenditures for Expenditure of Grants for 1993-94. We have also submitted a corrected report for the 1996-97 grant expenditures.

We appreciate the effort and time involved with the data verification visit and report. We are pleased with the outcome. The CHE staff involved were collegial and helpful during the visit and follow-up. We look forward to receiving the final report.

Sincerely,

Karen C. Jones
Assistant to the Vice President
for Academic Affairs

**Report of the Data Verification
Team Visit
to
Winthrop University**

December 8-10, 1998

Introduction

On December 8-10, 1998, a team of staff members visited Winthrop University for the purpose of verifying data that are submitted in reports in support of the performance funding process, the CHEMIS (Commission on Higher Education Management Information System), and state administered financial aid programs. This was the first visit for an evolving data verification process; the staff is appreciative to Winthrop University for offering to serve as the site for this "pilot" visit. The areas in which data were reviewed follow:

Average Class Size (Performance Funding Indicator 3A1)
Financial Support for Reform in Teacher Education (Performance Funding Indicator 9A)
Legislative Incentive for Future Excellence (LIFE) Scholarship Freshmen Grade Point Averages
Student Residency
Ratio of Full-time Faculty as Compared to other Full-time Employees (Performance Funding Indicator 3C)
Scores of Graduates on Licensing and Certification Examinations (Performance Funding Indicator 7D)
Transferability of Credits (Performance Funding Indicator 8A)
Review of administration of LIFE, Palmetto Fellows, and Need-Based Grants
Availability of Faculty to Students Outside of the Classroom (Performance Funding Indicator 2E)

The team members appreciate the hospitality and support provided by Winthrop during the visit. Special thanks are owed to Ms. Karen Jones, who served as Winthrop's coordinator and liaison with the team during the visit, as well as to the many administrators, staff and faculty who provided assistance and responded to questions posed by team members.

The main body of this report summarizes the purpose for verifying each element, the method used to do the verification, observations and/or findings as a result of the verification, and any recommendations for the institution or the Commission. As is true with any case where complex processes and data are being verified, there were a number of instances where initial problems or discrepancies were resolved through more detailed examination and/or explanation. Detailed data (where it does not violate privacy), background and supporting materials, and individual team members complete reports are available in the Commission offices.

The final section of the report consecutively lists all findings and recommendations in the report, and the Appendix lists team members and those individuals who were interviewed or who assisted the team as the data were examined.

Data Elements

Average Class Size (Performance Funding Indicator 3A1)

I. Purpose: To verify that course enrollments are accurately reported to the Commission by the institution.

II. Method: A random sample (5 each) of lower division, upper division, and graduate courses was selected by the Commission from the Fall, 1997 CHEMIS course data. Detailed data on the fifteen courses was checked to confirm the accuracy of the course number, section, level of course, contact hours, method of instruction, enrollment type, course credit hours, course enrollment, instructor identifier, days of week of course, start time, end time, site identifier, building identifier, and room identifier. Computer screens were used to check these data. If differences existed between the data on the computer screens and the CHEMIS data, class rolls and individuals' records were examined to determine that the differences were appropriate.

III. Observations: All reported course data matched with the data on the computer screens or was reconciled with class rolls and individual's records. Courses are coded with appropriate CIP codes.

IV. Recommendations: None

Financial Support for Reform in Teacher Education (Performance Funding Indicator 9A)

I. Purpose: To determine if the institution's reported listing of grants and expenditures for teacher education as stipulated in the measure agrees with copies of funded grant proposals and actual expenditure records.

II. Method: Following the protocol established for verification of this data element, all the expenditures for grants to support reform in teacher education for 1993-94, 1994-95, 1995-96, and 1996-97 were verified. This was done by comparing the expenditure total listed on the spreadsheet provided by Winthrop against the matching account on a computer screen.

A sample of three grants was selected and the folders for those grants were requested and examined to identify any problems the institution might have in reporting the data

including (for example) making determinations as to whether a grant is a grant to the institution or a grant housed at the institution. The three grants that were selected were 1) Arts in Basic Curriculum 1994-96 (5-24044), 2) Computer Workstations for Investigative Laboratories (5-20134 and 1-12022), and 3) DeWitt Wallace Incentive Award (5-27018).

III. Findings and Observations:

a. Findings: Recording of Expenditures of Grants

A discrepancy was found with the recording of expenditures for Computer Workstations for Investigative Laboratories for 1996-97. The expenditures on the spreadsheet were entered as \$16,488.40. The amount of the actual grant expenditures was \$18,488. The change would increase the total expenditures to \$641,172.33.

b. Observation: Classification of Grants

The deans decided which grants met the qualification for teacher reform. As the grant folders were examined, the purpose of the grant and the write-ups for the proposal could be found in each folder. Although decisions appeared to be appropriate, institutions make determinations as to which grants qualify as being directed toward teacher reform without clear guidelines from the Commission. *The Commission staff recognizes and is addressing this concern.*

IV. Recommendations: Institutional records should be corrected to reflect an accurate expenditure for the grant in which an error was found and the corrected information should be submitted to the Commission.

Legislative Incentives for Future Excellence (LIFE) Freshman Grade Point Averages

I. Purpose: To verify that the grade point averages (GPAs) that were used to qualify 1998 freshman students for LIFE scholarships were appropriately calculated, and that the SAT verbal, SAT math, and ACT scores were accurate. The request to review the calculation of grade point averages was initiated by officials at Winthrop University.

II. Method: Ten Fall 1998 freshmen who qualified for LIFE scholarships were selected at random. High school transcripts were examined; three GPAs required no conversion. The calculation of GPAs was discussed for seven that involved more complex conversions or calculations to try to arrive at a standard high school GPA.

III. Observation: The transcript on each student who was discussed provided evidence of the complexity of calculating a standard high school GPA for all South Carolina graduates. Conversions from numerical averages to a 4.0 scale, for example, often

proved difficult. Some transcripts showed weighted and unweighted GPAs. Winthrop chose to use the unweighted GPAs. In several cases where there was a difference between the GPA on the transcript and what was reported, Winthrop had received the high school scale and converted the student's GPA to a 4.0 scale. Of the students sampled, all appropriately qualified for LIFE scholarships. *Given the complexity of converting numerous grading scales to a standard 4.0 scale, the interpretations required, and the resultant potential for error, the Commission may wish to support proposed legislation that would establish a consistent grading scale for high schools across the State.*

IV. Recommendations: None

Student Residency

I. Purpose: To verify that student residency classifications, which are used by the Commission and the institutions for performance funding, calculation of the MRR, and determination of qualification for student scholarship programs, are accurately reported to the Commission by the institutions.

II. Method: A random sample of 150 undergraduate students enrolled at Winthrop during Fall 1997 was selected from the Commission on Higher Education Management Information System (CHEMIS). CHEMIS residency data represents residency for fee purposes. Graduate students were not sampled at Winthrop due to a recent review by the State Reorganization Commission in which graduate residency was thoroughly examined and considered.

Residency determinations are made at the time of admission based on information reported by applicants on their admissions applications. Therefore, the staff used original (hard copy) files to substantiate the appropriateness of the classification that had been reported on CHEMIS. Information that was reviewed included students' statements of permanent address, mailing address, parents' address and employment, high school address, and statement of legal residency. In instances in which students were out-of-state residents or classified as in-state residents for fee purposes although their legal residence was not in South Carolina, information on Winthrop's SIS database was also reviewed to determine if they were appropriately charged. For those on scholarships, GPA requirements were checked to ensure students had maintained required GPAs to retain scholarship and residency for fee purposes.

III. Observations: A total of 143 (95%) of the students in the sample were listed as SC residents on CHEMIS and seven (5%) as nonresidents. Of the 143 students listed as residents for fee purposes, 130 were from South Carolina. Of the 13 remaining students two had residency petitions on file and were appropriately determined to be residents.

Eleven were considered residents based on Winthrop's Board Policy to provide waivers of the out-of-State tuition for undergraduate nonresidents awarded institutional scholarships of \$50 or more per semester. (According to a Winthrop official, the amount of scholarship per semester for waiver of out-of-State tuition is under consideration.) One student who had not maintained the GPA petitioned for and was granted an exception for Fall 1997. The student failed to meet stipulated conditions and lost residency status for fee purposes in Spring 1998. None of the 13 from out-of-State classified as residents for fee purposes had received LIFE scholarships, need based grants, or Palmetto Fellow scholarships while enrolled at Winthrop. Residency classification for fee purposes as reported to CHE was determined to be appropriate for all 150 students who were reviewed.

On June 4, 1998, the Commission approved a policy that requires that only those undergraduate and graduate students who have academic scholarships of \$250 or more, who are graduate assistants, who have received fellowships, or who are participating in the Academic Common Market be counted as residents in the revenue step of the funding model. All other such nonresident scholarship recipients would be counted as nonresidents in the revenue step, regardless of whether the institution has waived the out-of-State fees. The Commission's policy is to be fully implemented by Fall 2000.

CHEMIS data prior to 1998 has required institutions to report students as resident (1) or nonresident (2) as defined by meeting residency requirements for fee purposes. Beginning in Fall, 1998, institutions continue to report students as 1 or 2 but must qualify those students who are classified as residents (1) according to eight categories related to exceptions that have been made by the General Assembly according to the current State Code. If a student is a nonresident and receiving a "scholarship approved by the Board of Trustees (§59-112-70)," the institution should report the student as a 1 and indicate category F (i.e., "Resident - Exception, Scholarships approved by Boards of Trustees).

Data collected through CHEMIS will not necessarily provide the Commission with enough information to determine whether nonresident students who have received scholarships and an abatement of out-of-State fees should be included in the revenue step of the funding model. For example, a student would be correctly reported to CHEMIS as 1F (i.e., resident due to scholarship per board policy) if the student was a nonresident who received a \$100 athletic scholarship and an abatement of the out-of-State tuition differential. However, this student should not be counted as a resident student in the Commission funding model per the CHE policy adopted June 4, 1998. *Because an institution's board policy on abatement of out-of-State fees for nonresident scholarship recipients may conflict with Commission policy for determining residency in the revenue step of the funding model and CHE does not collect these data on CHEMIS, Commission staff will develop a process to account for such differences and to ensure consistency across institutions in determining residency in the revenue step.*

Recommendations: None

Ratio of Full-time Faculty as Compared to other Full-time Employees (Performance Indicator 3C)

I. Purpose: To verify that information reported on the institution's IPEDS Fall Faculty Survey accurately reflects employee information.

II. Method: A judgement sample consisting of one randomly selected individual from each of the State's Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) categories was selected for verification. The resulting sample consisted of 17 employees from those appearing on a report that was used to determine totals reported on the IPEDS Fall 1997 Staff Survey. Employment information for the selected sample was verified using official employment paper files at Winthrop. Numbers reported on the survey were validated against work papers used to derive the reported data.¹

III. Observations: All 17 employees reviewed were classified according to appropriate EEO categories for positions held as indicated by employment files and tallied in appropriate categories as defined by the IPEDS Fall Staff Survey. "Faculty" and "Other Staff" totals reported on the Fall 1997 IPEDS Staff Survey were consistent with information used in tallying the totals.

IV. Recommendations: None

Scores of Graduates on Licensing and Certification Examinations (Performance Funding Indicator 7D)

I. Purpose: To verify that pass rates on licensure and certification examinations have been accurately calculated and reported.

II. Method: Pass Rates on the National Teacher Examinations (now PRAXIS) are the only results of licensing or certification examinations reported by Winthrop. Using a Commission produced table of reported pass rates on both the Professional Knowledge and Specialty Area examinations beginning in 1995, the data reported to the Commission by Winthrop on a sample of six examination administrations (two examination dates from

¹ CHE is in the process of developing a faculty file to be reported through CHEMIS. When the faculty file is finalized, the CHEMIS file will be used to identify the sample and information about the sample to be verified. When this protocol is in place a larger sample will be reviewed and faculty information will be verified in accordance with the Commissions requirements.

each of three years) were compared to the individual test results reported to Winthrop by the Educational Testing Service. As differences were found, an attempt was made to analyze why the two sets of data did not match.

III. Findings: Discrepancies between pass rates on National Teacher Examinations reported to the Commission and the results reported to Winthrop were found throughout the samples. While most of the difference were minor (one or two students), there was a discrepancy of approximately 55 cases in one of the years. Because Winthrop had not kept a list of the students and results upon which it had originally constructed the data reported to the Commission, it was extremely difficult to determine the reasons that some students and their results had been excluded from the counts. It was clear that changes in the internal methodology for calculating and reporting the data had occurred in many of the years. In the samples from the first two years, only scores of undergraduate students who had been in Winthrop University internships (i.e., student teaching) and of graduate students of the institution who had graduated within the past year were counted; in the 1997-98 academic year, however, the pass rates reported to the Commission included scores of all students (regardless of whether they had ever been students at Winthrop), as long as the scores had been reported to Winthrop. The personnel who calculated and reported the data changed virtually every year that was examined. Lack of a computerized data base and reliance on hand calculation for determining pass rates on teacher certification examinations also accounts for at least some of the discrepancy between reported and verified data. *The University is currently in the process of implementing such a computerized data base. It is suggested that this be completed as quickly as possible.* Lack of a commonly held understanding of exactly which data should be included and reported, both at the State and the institutional level, exacerbated the problem described above. *Staff at the Commission and the institution have clarified the data that are required for reporting.*

IV. Recommendations: Winthrop University should recalculate data from the years that were examined and report corrected data on National Teacher Examination pass rates for purposes of this year's performance funding calculations.²

Transferability of Credits (Performance Funding Indicator 8A)

I. Purpose: To verify that the accuracy of the information submitted by the institution that indicates the extent to which the criteria stipulated in the Commission's "Policy and Procedures for Transferability of Credits" document is met.

² Winthrop officials have submitted corrected data since preparation of this report.

II. Method: A random sample of 30 transfer students enrolled at Winthrop during Fall 1997 was selected from the Commission on Higher Education Management Information System (CHEMIS). Transcripts of the 30 students were individually examined to see whether Winthrop had provided transfer credit from the public two-year institution that was consistent with the transfer/articulation policy contained in the Commission's "Policy and Procedures for Transferability of Credits" document. Individual courses and, where appropriate, potential transfer blocks and junior class status were verified. A meeting was held to determine whether Winthrop's implementation of SPEEDE/ExPress for the electronic transmission of all student transcripts (send and receive) had been or would be completed by January 1, 1999. Further discussions were held to determine the extent of familiarity of transfer coordinators from the colleges of Liberal Arts, Business, and Education with pertinent transfer policies.

III. Observations: It was apparent from the review of the sample of 30 transcripts that due diligence has been exercised in accepting the 74 courses approved for transfer from two-year to four-year public institutions and that they are being given credit towards appropriate degrees at Winthrop. The data verification staff identified a programming problem for seven courses. The problem caused no loss of transfer credit and evidence has already been supplied that the problem has been rectified. An error in the number of one course listed by the Commission was also found, and that has since been corrected. Winthrop is in full compliance with acceptance of the 74 courses required by the transfer policy.

Evidence indicates that students who complete the AA/AS degree before transferring are given junior status. Such students seem to persist to degree completion with greater regularity than those who transfer before completing their associate degrees. It appears that transfer blocks are not well understood and are often not used for advising by the two-year institutions. *All two and four-year institutions should be encouraged by the Commission and the State Board for Technical and Comprehensive Education to advise students to complete the associate degree before transferring into one of the arts and sciences programs. Two-year institutions should be requested to make advisors more aware of the transfer blocks.*

Winthrop staff showed that they will have the capacity to send to and receive from other institutions transcripts by January 1, 1999. However, Speede/ExPress is not yet operable at York Technical College and Winthrop will be unable to perform either the send or receive process on January 1, 1999 with that institution, which is the main contributor of transcripts for transfer.

IV. Recommendations: None

Review of the Administration of Life, Palmetto Fellows, and Need-Based Grants

I. Purpose: To ensure that systems in place are adequate to administer the above awards in accordance with the provisions of pertinent statutes, regulations, and program guidelines.

II. Method: The Commission randomly selected 50 students each who had received LIFE scholarships, Palmetto Fellows scholarships, and Need-Based grants in the Fall of 1998 (a total of 150 students). Using computer screens at the institution to compare reported with actual data, the verification process included the following:

1. A review of award notifications to recipients and affidavit responses to ensure that they were on file, signed and dated;
2. A verification of freshman SAT/ACT scores and High School GPA's on file at the institution;
3. A verification of cumulative GPAs for continuing students;
4. A verification that annual credit hours met minimum award requirements based on the student's classification;
5. A review of "Cost of Attendance;"
6. A verification that FAFSA forms were on file and a need analysis was conducted;
7. A review of institutional disbursements to the students in the sample;
8. A verification that award adjustments for Palmetto Fellows scholarships and Need-Based Grants preceded other adjustments as required by the regulations; and
9. A review of the institution's policy for awarding scholarships/grants (a copy was obtained for Commission files.

III. Observations: It was determined that the overall system in place at Winthrop University is adequate for administering awards for LIFE scholarships, Palmetto Fellows scholarships, and Need-Based grants. Matters of concern that were found and resolved follow:

During the review of the LIFE program, it was noted that the cost of attendance for independent students differed from the cost of attendance for dependent students living off campus. The total costs for students (\$15,533) included the standard cost for tuition (\$4,100), room and board (\$3,877), and books (\$672). However, miscellaneous expenditures (\$6,664) were approximately \$4,100 more than the amount allocated for dependent students living off campus. The regulations for the LIFE scholarship program state that "Cost of Attendance" includes tuition, fees, the student's living expenses while he or she is attending school, and other costs such as costs related to disability or dependent care. The cost of attendance must conform to federal Title IV regulations. Since there was a difference in the amount allocated for independent students and dependent students living off campus, Commission staff requested that the institution

provide the method used in computing costs for independent students, including line item expenditures for miscellaneous costs in the amount of \$6,664.

On January 8, 1999, Commission staff received a response from Winthrop stating that living expenses for independent students totaled \$10,541 (a standard \$3,877 for room and board and \$6,664 for miscellaneous costs) and there was insufficient documentation available to support the line item expenditures for miscellaneous costs in the amount of \$6,664. However, the components for any student budget must include the mandates of the Title IV regulation (e.g., tuition, fees, loan fees if applicable, room meals, transportation, personal and miscellaneous expenses). Winthrop officials also stated that most institutions relied on The College Board's annual assessment of a moderate budget for a nine-month academic year to develop their cost of attendance (a copy was submitted for staff review). While the review showed that Winthrop's living expenses exceeded The College Board's annual assessment (by less than ten percent), Winthrop officials stated that at no time was aid awarded in excess of a student's need. Additionally, they stated that they plan to follow the Board's lead in establishing living expenses for academic year 1999-2000. Therefore, this concern is considered resolved.

The Commission staff's review of the student data for Palmetto Fellows revealed that affidavits were not readily available for three of the students selected in the sample. If a student has a Student Aid Report (SAR) or its equivalent on file or has applied for Title IV financial assistance by completing the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) form, the SAR information will be used to verify default status or refunds owed. A student who has not completed a FAFSA form must have an affidavit on file to certify that he/she is not in default and does not owe a refund of Federal or State financial aid. Subsequent to the on-site review, the institution submitted evidence that FAFSA forms were on file for each of the three students. Therefore, this concern is considered resolved.

There were no exceptions or concerns noted in the review of the Need-Based Grant Program.

IV. Recommendations: All concerns having been resolved, there are no recommendations.

Availability of Faculty to Students Outside of the Classroom (Performance Funding Indicator 2E)

I. Purpose: To determine whether the institution used recommended administration procedures to survey students on the availability of faculty outside of the classroom and on the availability of faculty advisors.

II. Method: The person responsible for coordinating the administration of the surveys was interviewed and memoranda, answer sheets, and results and their analysis were examined.

III. Observations: The surveys were administered appropriately by Winthrop, the first to students in all courses except those in which the faculty-student ratio is one-to-one and the second to a representative sample.

IV. Recommendations: None

Summary of Findings and Recommendations

Finding #1: Recording of Expenditure of Grants

A discrepancy was found with the recording of expenditures for Computer Workstations for Investigative Laboratories for 1996-97. The expenditures on the spreadsheet were entered as \$16,488.40. The amount of the actual grant expenditures was \$18,488. The change would increase the total expenditures to \$641,172.33.

Recommendation #1: Institutional records should be corrected to reflect an accurate expenditure for the grant in which an error was found and the corrected information should be submitted to the Commission.

Finding #2: Discrepancies between pass rates on National Teacher Examinations reported to the Commission and the results reported to Winthrop were found throughout the samples.

Recommendation #2: Winthrop University should recalculate data from the years that were examined and report corrected data on National Teacher Examination pass rates for purposes of this year's performance funding calculations.³

³ Winthrop officials have submitted corrected data since preparation of this report.

Appendix

List of Data Verification Team Members

Ms. Camille Brown, Coordinator – MIS
Ms. Julie Carullo, Coordinator – Planning, Assessment, and Performance Funding
Dr. Lynn Kelley, Coordinator – Academic Programs
Ms. Isalene Montgomery, Auditor – Student Services
Dr. Karen Woodfaulk, Director – Student Services
Mr. Alan Krech – Sr. Exec. Asst. for Policy and Administration (Chairman)

List of Individuals Interviewed or Assisting the Team

Ms. Mim Armour, Director , Institutional Research
Ms. Bonita Berry, Coordinator, Field Experience/Licensing, College of Education
Dr. Betsy E. Brown, Dean, College of Arts and Sciences
Ms. Cindy Cooley, Director, Student Academic Services, College of Education
Ms. Paula Day, Assistant Registrar
Ms. Geneva Drakeford, Assistant Director, Financial Aid
Ms. Lynn Harand, Advising Director, College of Arts and Sciences
Dr. W. Martin Hope, Professor of Social Work
Ms. Karen Jones, Assistant to the Vice President for Academic Affairs
Ms. Theresa Justice, Budget Director
Ms. Becky Malambri, Advising Director, College of Business
Ms. Linda Mcalily, Programmer Analyst
Ms. Gay Randolph, Advising Director, College of Education
Dr. Rhonda Richards, Assistant Dean, College of Education
Ms. Dinah Southard, Assistant Registrar
Dr. Pat Wolman, Chair, Department of Human Nutrition