

Comments to Commission on Higher Education

January 8, 2004

Good to the Commission and staff. Thank you for planning this meeting to discuss proposed legislative amendments to Act 359.

- First, I wish to thank and compliment Dr. Conrad Festa for the effective manner in which he has assumed to role of Executive Director. He has been open, direct, candid and cordial in all of his relationships with our system and me.
- He followed this pattern with reference to the issued under discussion today. He called me and reviewed the six items. I requested a copy, which I forwarded to our presidents for information.
- I did not understand the request to be a referendum on the proposal, rather a reaction concerning any aspects of the legislation that would be problematic for our System.
- After **personal review** I called Dr. Festa and made the following points:
 - 1). I asked why the action now before we heard from the Governor and gave appropriate consideration to the Commission's consultant report. Conrad indicated that this is an "interim" action in response to concerns of colleges and universities while more comprehensive action is considered.
 - 2). Therefore, I suggested clarification of recommendation 5 to note that Program Review of Associate Degree Career Programs are delegated by the Commission to the State Board for Technical and Comprehensive Education.
 - 3). I stated that the primary issue with these recommendation, should they be approved, relates to the development of a funding methodology. Our unequivocal position is that all funding methodology revisions must begin with the issue of parity and equity.
- Our State Board or presidents have not discussed these recommendations. We assumed that this meeting was called in order that we might listen to the Commission's rational for these proposed actions. At our president's meeting on January 12 and the State Board meeting on January 27 we will discuss and respond, if this is the request of the Commission.

- However, after participating in yesterday's meeting, hearing the comments of other sectors, and informal comments from our presidents I observed the following trends:
 - 1.) The timing of the proposed changes could be enhanced. We have not studied nor responded to the Commission's consultant's report, which was substantive, creative and deserving of a serious review and action plan.
 - 2.) The proposed amendments do not resolve the basic problems of Act 359. While it proposes to remove the language of performance funding it does not affect the burden of reporting on 37 indicators that may not be appropriately focused on the missions of SC colleges and universities.
 - 3.) Therefore, we support the suggestions presented by Dr's. Sorensen and Greenberg that CHE lead a broader-based study the will be presented following my comments.