

## **STRATEGIC PLAN FOR HIGHER EDUCATION**

The South Carolina Commission on Higher Education (CHE) and the institutions of higher education are committed to a broadly educated citizenry in order to promote informed leadership, economic development, and workforce preparation to meet the needs of the State of South Carolina.

Well-educated persons possess the knowledge to contribute meaningfully to the improvement of our society. They have the ability to think creatively and critically about a wide range of problems. It is the duty of the higher education community to provide access to higher education for the citizens of South Carolina and to promote their intellectual growth and development.

Toward this end, the Commission coordinates the diverse missions of the institutions within the four sectors of higher education - the research sector (3 institutions), the teaching colleges and universities sector (9 institutions), the regional campuses of the University of South Carolina (5 institutions) and the technical college sector (16 institutions).

The following goals reflect directions that higher education should take for the next five years to serve best the citizens of this State:

### **I. Economic Development**

Because the availability of an educated work force is of prime importance to an industry that is considering South Carolina as its location, higher education can contribute to economic development in many ways. A technical college may respond to the needs of a local employer by providing specialized training. Both two-year and four-year institutions can make available degree programs which are related to and needed by business and industry in the state. From a broader perspective, major industry will find the state more attractive if the general educational level of the potential work force throughout the state and for all of its citizens, regardless of race, creed, or ethnic origin, is high. The availability of faculty expertise and of applied research, coupled with interaction with business and industry, will create an atmosphere in which higher education actively serves the economic needs of the state.

**Goal I: Support and Further the State's Economic Development**

**Objective A: Enhance Workforce Preparation**

**Action Plans:**

1. Conduct market research to determine needs of business and industry in the state. Analyze these needs compared to program offerings.  
*Time Line: 1998-2000*  
*Assignment of Responsibility: CHE working with the State Chamber of Commerce, and the Department of Commerce, and Employment Security Commission.*
2. Form a Business Advisory Council, and hold at least one meeting annually to provide business input into higher education planning and performance.  
*Time Line: 1998-1999*  
*Assignment of Responsibility: CHE*
3. Revise the program approval process to respond rapidly to workforce needs.  
*Time Line: 1998-1999*  
*Assignment of Responsibility: CHE*
4. Revise the program approval guidelines to include encouragement for internships, cooperative education and other work experience in undergraduate disciplines.  
*Time Line: 1998-1999*  
*Assignment of Responsibility: CHE*
5. Develop guidelines for institutional policies to encourage credit for experiential learning.  
*Time Line: 1998-1999*  
*Assignment of Responsibility: CHE*

**Objective B: Encourage and Reward Research Activities That Enhance Economic Development**

**Action Plans:**

1. Develop support for applied research and basic research through the Experimental Program to Stimulate Competitive Research, competitive research grants, competitive technology grants, etc.  
*Time Line:* Continuous  
*Assignment of Responsibility:* CHE, the institutions, the South Carolina Research Authority, and other appropriate groups.
  
2. Revise Program Approval and Review to include involvement of undergraduate students in applied research activities.  
*Time Line:* 1998-99  
*Assignment of Responsibility:* CHE

**II. Advocacy and Accountability**

The South Carolina Commission on Higher Education functions in a dual capacity of advocate for the educational needs of the citizens, as well as ensuring accountability and effectiveness of the higher education system. The Commission, in cooperation with the Council of College Presidents, assumes a leadership role to determine the needs of a nationally competitive higher education system and to gain support from the general public and the state's policy makers. In addition to seeking financial support, the advocacy role should enhance the internal and external image of higher education by strengthening the role of research universities through better public information and communication, and by appropriate program support and development for the comprehensive universities. Several recent legislative acts address mechanisms for accountability for higher education. Act 359 specified nine critical success factors containing 37 performance indicators which will be used as the basis for state appropriations to institutions of higher education. A major focus of the Commission will be on the implementation of performance-based funding to address the accountability issue and provide incentives for continuing improvement.

**Goal II: Communicate the Current and Future Needs of Colleges and Universities, and Demonstrate the Accountability of the Higher Education Community to the Citizens of the State**

***Objective A: Identify and Advocate the Current and Anticipated Needs of the Higher Education Community In Becoming Nationally Competitive***

***Action Plans:***

1. Activate and sustain a coordinated communication and legislative plan in communicating higher education's accomplishments, needs, and aspirations.  
*Time Line:* Ongoing  
*Assignment of Responsibility:* CHE and the Council of College Presidents
2. Continue to advocate for the resources necessary as identified by the Mission Resource Requirement to achieve national competitiveness.  
*Time Line:* Ongoing  
*Assignment of Responsibility:* CHE and the Council of College Presidents
3. Respond to recommendations of the KPMG Peat Marwick Audit Report and the Budget and Control Board's Management Report on the Commission on Higher Education.  
*Time Line:* 1998-2000  
*Assignment of Responsibility:* CHE

***Objective B: Develop and Implement A System of Accountability and Funding for Public Higher Education***

***Action Plans:***

1. Complete the implementation of performance indicators specified in Act 359 according to schedule.  
*Time Line:* 1998-2000  
*Assignment of Responsibility:* CHE and the Institutions

2. **Streamline reporting requirements from institutions.**  
*Time Line: 1998-99*  
*Assignment of Responsibility: CHE*

### **III. Technology and Distance Learning**

It is clear that both the delivery and methodology for learning will be drastically different in the 21st century because of the use of various forms of technology. The Statewide Committee on Planning, in the last two updates of its plan, identified technology as an initiative with higher priority throughout the state. A task force worked for approximately two years, incorporating input from the communications industry, business, and state government. The recommendations of this task force pointed to the acute need for an overall statewide plan for technology. Almost all campuses are in the process of incorporating technology into instructional methods. These initiatives should be encouraged to keep pace with developments in education throughout the nation as well as to enhance access to a variety of learning styles for South Carolina citizens.

Distance learning can take many forms, and can be as individualized as correspondence or independent study courses, or can take the form of interactive video conferences. Because the medium is changing so rapidly, appropriate strategic planning should address the concept rather than the details of which forms of instruction or learning are being used. Policies for distance education should also be stated as broad concepts which can be supported by all institutions.

**Goal III: Develop the Use of Technology to Facilitate and Enhance Learning**

**Objective A: Participate Actively In the Development of State-Level Plans and Policies for Technology and Distance Education**

**Action Plans:**

1. Analyze needs and demands for technology and distance education within the State.  
*Time Line:* 1998-1999  
*Assignment of Responsibility:* CHE
2. Support developing a coordinated statewide plan for technology and distance education which encourages quality and responds to needs.  
*Time Line:* 1998-2000  
*Assignment of Responsibility:* CHE and the Governor's Information Resources Council.
3. Support faculty development efforts directed at technology and distance learning.  
*Time Line:* 1998-2000  
*Assignment of Responsibility:* CHE, with SCETV, institutions, and other entities.
4. Create statewide master contracts for technology hardware, software and linkages.  
*Time line:* Ongoing  
*Assignment of Responsibility:* CHE and the Institutions