

August 9, 2004

**MEMORANDUM**

**To:** Mr. Dalton B. Floyd, Jr., Chair and Members  
Commission on Higher Education

**From:** Mr. Daniel Ravenel, Interim Chair and Members  
Committee on Student Services and Access & Equity

**Palmetto Fellows Scholarship Program**  
**Proposed Regulatory Amendments - 2005-06 Academic Year**

The Commission on Higher Education proposes five amendments to the Palmetto Fellows Scholarship Regulation. The first amendment will allow students to rank within the top six percent of the class instead of the top five percent of the class to be eligible to apply for the scholarship. Second, the classes used for eligibility will be expanded from the sophomore and junior classes to also include the senior class. Third, students will be allowed more opportunities to meet the minimum 1200 SAT score requirement (or 27 on the ACT) by adding language to extend the deadline through the June national test administration. The fourth amendment proposes language that will allow students to use the new Writing subsection as additional way to meet the minimum 1200 SAT score requirement for initial scholarship eligibility. Finally, the fifth amendment proposes language that will allow for active duty service members of the United States Armed Forces to receive the maximum number of terms of scholarship eligibility due to military mobilization.

Under the current Palmetto Fellows Scholarship regulation, high school seniors must meet the following three criteria in order to be eligible to apply: 1) score at least 1200 on the SAT (or 27 on the ACT); 2) earn a cumulative 3.50 grade point ratio on the Uniform Grading Scale at the end of the junior year; and 3) rank in the top five percent of the class at the end of either the sophomore or the junior year. The typical application deadlines have been in mid-January and mid-May. However, during the 2004 legislative session, the General Assembly approved Proviso 5A.26 as part of the 2004 Fiscal Year Budget. Proviso 5A.26 allowed students who ranked in the top six percent of the class to be eligible for the scholarship. It also allowed for the senior year to be included in the eligibility criteria. In addition, the Proviso allowed the top two students from each high school to apply.

### **Top Six Percent & Senior Class (Amendments 1 and 2)**

In order to meet the intent of the Proviso, two award cycles are proposed: 1) early awards in December; and 2) final awards in June. The following is a summary of the recommended changes in the initial eligibility for Palmetto Fellows Scholarship for the 2005 freshmen cohort included in the regulation:

**Applications for early awards** must be submitted to the Commission on Higher Education for the Palmetto Fellows Scholarship by the date established in December each academic year. Students must meet the following three academic criteria in order to be eligible to apply for the early awards (**same criteria used previously except increased class rank from top five percent to top six percent**):

- Score at least 1200 on the SAT or 27 on the ACT. Test scores must be submitted to the Commission on Higher Education by no later the established deadline in December;
- Earn a cumulative 3.50 GPR on the UGS at the end of the junior year; and
- Rank in the top six percent of the class at the end of either the sophomore or the junior year.

**Applications for final awards** must be submitted to the Commission on Higher Education for the Palmetto Fellows Scholarship by the date established in June each academic year. Students must meet the following three academic criteria in order to be eligible to apply for the final awards (**new criteria that incorporates the changes outlined in Proviso 5A.26**):

- Score at least 1200 on the SAT or 27 on the ACT. Test scores will be accepted through June of the senior year;
- Earn a cumulative 3.50 GPR on the UGS at the end of the senior year; and
- Rank in the top six percent of the class at the end of the senior year.

### **SAT Score (Amendments 3 and 4)**

Currently, test scores must be certified by the high school on the Palmetto Fellows Scholarship application by no later than the scholarship deadline. The proposed language will allow for test scores to be accepted through the June national test administration of the senior year. Another proposed amendment relates to the implementation of the new Writing subsection of the SAT beginning Spring 2005. Currently, SAT scores may be the best combined scores from the Math and Verbal subsections. The proposed amendment will allow students to use the highest Math score combined with the highest Critical Reading score (formerly known as the verbal score) or the highest Math score combined with the highest Writing score.

### **Military Mobilization (Amendment 5)**

Due to the events that occurred on September 11, 2001, service members of the United States Armed Forces are being called to active duty and are required to withdraw from college due to deployment. The Commission on Higher Education does not want to penalize these students for events that are beyond their control. The term(s) the service member is called to active duty will not count against the eight terms of maximum eligibility. The institution must provide the student with a refund based on the institution's policies and procedures, but are strongly encouraged to provide a full refund or credit in a comparable amount. Thus, the inclusion of Section 62-351 ("Military Mobilization") in the proposed regulation will allow each institution the authority to reinstate the scholarship upon the service member's re-enrollment.

### **Additional Clarifications**

Additionally, the following clarifications are also being proposed for consideration:

- 62-310(E) – The definition for "high school" was added to be consistent with the LIFE and SC HOPE Scholarship Programs. This definition clarifies what programs are eligible to participate in the program.
- 62-310(F) – The definition for "home institution" was added to define which institution service members are eligible to receive scholarship funds.
- 62-310(K) – The definition for "remedial/developmental coursework" was added to be consistent with the LIFE and SC HOPE Scholarship Programs. Scholarship funds cannot be applied to these courses.
- 62-315(C) – Language was added to provide specific instructions for verification of the GPR and rank based on the Uniform Grading Scale for home school and out-of-state students to determine scholarship eligibility.
- 62-320(A) – Language was added to ensure that the top two students are eligible from each high school regardless whether they rank in the top six percent of the class. Students must meet all other eligibility criteria.
- 62-360(A) – Language was added to be consistent with the LIFE and SC HOPE Scholarship Programs. Scholarship funds cannot be disbursed during the summer except during certain circumstances as specified under this section.

### **Recommendation**

The Committee on Student Services and Access & Equity recommends that the Commission on Higher Education approve the proposed amendments to the regulation for the Palmetto Fellows Scholarship Program. If approved by the Commission on Higher Education, the amended regulation will be submitted to the General Assembly for approval under the Administrative Procedures Act.

**Palmetto Fellows Scholarship – Proviso 5A.26**

**5A.26.** (CHE: Palmetto Fellows Eligibility) When calculating eligibility for Palmetto Fellows Scholarships, students that rank in the top six percent of the graduating class at the end of their sophomore year, junior year, or at the end of the first semester of their senior year shall be considered for the scholarship. When calculating eligibility for Palmetto Fellows Scholarships in schools where the top six percent of the graduating class is two students or less, the top two students shall be considered for the scholarship regardless of class rank. The top six percent of the graduating class must meet all Palmetto Fellows Scholarship eligibility requirements in order to receive a scholarship.

Document Number  
**COMMISSION ON HIGHER EDUCATION**  
Chapter 62  
Statutory Authority: 1976 Code Section 59-104-20

**62-300 Palmetto Fellows Scholarship Program**

**Synopsis:**

The Commission on Higher Education proposes to amend and replace in its entirety R.62-300 of the Palmetto Fellows Scholarship Program. The proposed amendments will clarify the policies and procedures for administering the Palmetto Fellows Scholarship Program. Beginning with the 2005-06 academic year, one of the proposed amendments will allow students to rank within the top six percent of the class instead of the top five percent of the class in order to be eligible to apply for the scholarship. The classes used for eligibility have been expanded from the sophomore and junior classes to also include the senior class. Regarding the SAT, students will be allowed more opportunities to meet the minimum 1200 score requirement by adding language to extend the deadline through the June national test administration. Also included is proposed language that allows students to use the new Writing subsection as an additional way to meet the minimum 1200 SAT score requirement for initial scholarship eligibility. Finally, another proposed amendment will allow active duty service members of the United States Armed Forces to receive the maximum number of terms of scholarship eligibility due to military mobilization.

**Instructions:** Add new R.62-300, Palmetto Fellows Scholarship Program, to Chapter 62 regulations.

**Text:**

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## 62-300 Purpose of the Palmetto Fellows Scholarship Program

Pursuant to Act 458 which was initially established as Title 59 of the 1976 Code as amended under Section 18A.28 of the 1997-98 Appropriations Bill, the Commission on Higher Education shall promulgate regulation and establish procedures to administer the Palmetto Fellows Scholarship Program. The General Assembly established the Palmetto Fellows Scholarship Program to foster scholarship among the State's postsecondary students and retain outstanding South Carolina high school graduates in the State through awards based on scholarship and achievement. The purpose of the Palmetto Fellows Scholarship Program is to recognize the most academically talented high school seniors in South Carolina and to encourage them to attend eligible colleges or universities in the State. A secondary purpose is to help retain talented minority students who might otherwise pursue studies outside the State.

## 62-305 Allocation of Palmetto Fellows Scholarship Funds to Public and Independent Institutions

A. Funds made available for higher education grants and scholarships under Chapter 143 of Title 59 of the 1976 Code, as amended under Act 458, South Carolina Children First: Resources for Scholarship and Tuition Act of 1996, shall be included in the annual appropriation to the Commission on Higher Education. Fifty percent of the appropriation shall be designated for the Palmetto Fellows Scholarship Program and the remaining fifty percent shall be for the Need-based Grants Program. However, in instances where the equal division of the appropriated funds between the Palmetto Fellows Scholarship and Need-based Grants Programs exceeds the capacity to make awards in either program, the Commission on Higher Education has the authority to re-allocate the remaining funds between the two programs. The Commission on Higher Education shall award to eligible students attending public or independent eligible institutions as Palmetto Fellows Scholarships as follows:

1. Of the funds allocated to public institutions, the percentage shall be equivalent to the percentage of the public institution's share of the total South Carolina resident undergraduate full-time headcount enrollment in the preceding year.

2. Of the funds allocated to independent institutions, the percentage shall be equivalent to the percentage of the independent institutions' share of the total South Carolina resident undergraduate full-time headcount enrollment in the preceding year and will be determined annually by the South Carolina Commission on Higher Education and the Tuition Grants Commission.

B. Under the South Carolina Education Lottery Act, a designated amount shall be allocated for Palmetto Fellows Scholarships and shall be included in the annual appropriation to the Commission on Higher Education.

C. After expending funds appropriated for Palmetto Fellows Scholarships from all other sources, there is automatically appropriated from the general fund of the State whatever amount is necessary to provide Palmetto Fellows Scholarships to all students meeting the requirements of Section 59-104-20.

## 62-310 Definitions

A. "Academic year" is defined as the twelve-month period of time during which a full-time student is expected to earn thirty credit hours. The period of time used to measure the academic year will consist of a fall, spring and summer term (or its equivalent).

B. "Baccalaureate degree program" is defined as an undergraduate program of study leading to the first bachelor's degree at a location approved by the U.S. Department of Education for participation in Federally funded Student Aid Programs.

C. "Degree-seeking student" is defined as any student enrolled full-time in a program of study that leads to the first baccalaureate degree or a program of study that is structured so as not to require a baccalaureate degree at an eligible institution.

D. "Full-time student" shall mean a student who has matriculated into a program of study leading to the first baccalaureate degree or a program of study that is structured so as not to require a baccalaureate degree and leads to a graduate degree and who enrolls full-time, usually fifteen credit hours for fall and spring terms or twelve credit hours for fall, eight credit hours for winter, and twelve credit hours for spring trimester terms. In order for the student to be eligible for scholarship disbursement, the student must be enrolled full-time as stipulated by Title IV Regulations, except that credit hours may not include remedial/developmental coursework.

E. "High school" shall be defined as a public or private high school located within South Carolina, an approved home school program as defined in relevant State Statute (Sections 59-65-40, 45, and 47) or a preparatory high school located outside of the state while the student is a dependent of a legal resident of South Carolina who has custody or pays child support and college expenses of the dependent high school student. A "preparatory high school" (out-of-state) is defined as a school recognized by the state in which the school is located to offer curricula through the twelfth grade and prepares students for college entrance.

F. "Home institution" shall mean the institution where the student is currently enrolled as a degree-seeking student and may be eligible for financial aid at the same institution.

G. "Independent institutions" is defined, for the purposes of the Palmetto Fellows Scholarship Program shall, as those institutions eligible to participate in the South Carolina Tuition Grants Program as defined in Chapter 113 of Title 59 of the 1976 Code, which stipulates that an "independent institution of higher learning means any independent eleemosynary junior or senior college in South Carolina whose major campus and headquarters are located within South Carolina and which is accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools." However, independent two-year institutions are not eligible for participation in this program.

H. An "offense" shall mean a violation of any law or rule in any state or Federal criminal justice system.

I. "Program of study that is structured so as not to require a baccalaureate degree" is a program of study that is structured so as not to require a baccalaureate degree for acceptance into the program and leads to a graduate degree, which will be the student's first academic degree awarded, at a location approved by the U.S. Department of Education for participation in Federally funded Student Aid Programs. Students are eligible to receive the scholarship for a maximum of eight terms (or its equivalent) as long as all other eligibility criteria are met and the program is approved by the Commission on Higher Education. Students who have been awarded a baccalaureate or graduate degree are not eligible for scholarship funding.

J. "Public institutions" is defined, for the purposes of the Palmetto Fellows Scholarship Program shall, as those four-year baccalaureate degree-granting institutions as defined in Chapter 103 of Title 59 of the 1976 Code, which stipulates "public higher education shall mean state-supported education in the post-secondary field." Public two-year institutions and technical colleges are not eligible for participation in this program.

K. "Remedial/developmental coursework" shall mean sub-collegiate level preparatory courses in English, mathematics, and reading.

L. "South Carolina resident" shall be defined as an individual who satisfies the requirements of residency in accordance with the state of South Carolina Statute for Tuition and Fees, Section 59-112-10, and all related guidelines and regulations promulgated by the Commission on Higher Education as determined by the institutional residency officer each academic year.

M. "Transfer student" is defined, for the purposes of this program, as a student who has changed full-time enrollment from one eligible institution to another eligible institution.

#### 62-315 Student Eligibility

A. In order to qualify for consideration for a Palmetto Fellows Scholarship, a student must:

1. Be enrolled as a senior in high school and be a legal resident of South Carolina as defined in applicable State Statute governing the determination of residency for tuition and fee purposes at the time of college enrollment;

2. Be a U.S. citizen or a permanent resident that meets the definition of an eligible non-citizen under State Residency Statute;

3. Meet the following three criteria: a minimum score of 1200 on the Scholastic Assessment Test (SAT) or equivalent ACT score, and a cumulative 3.5 grade point ratio (GPR) on the Uniform Grading Scale (UGS) at the end of either the junior or senior year, and rank in the top six percent of the class at the end of the sophomore, junior, or senior year based on the UGS (refer to "Student Application" Section);

4. Be seriously considering attending, have applied, or have been accepted for admission to an eligible four-year baccalaureate-granting public or independent college or university in South Carolina as defined under Chapter 143 and Chapter 113 of Title 59 of the 1976 Code as a first-time, full-time, degree-seeking student;

5. Certify that he/she has not been adjudicated delinquent, convicted, or pled guilty or nolo contendere to any felonies, alcohol, or drug related offenses under the laws of this or any other state or under the laws of the United States by submitting a signed affidavit each academic year to the institution testifying to the fact, except that a high school or college student who has been adjudicated delinquent, convicted, or pled guilty or nolo contendere of an alcohol or drug related misdemeanor offense is only ineligible for the next academic year after the date of the adjudication, conviction or plea; and

6. Submit the official Palmetto Fellows Scholarship Application by the established deadline(s) and comply with all the directions contained therein.

B. The high schools shall ensure that all students meeting the eligibility criteria are given the opportunity to be included in the applicant pool.

C. A high school student who transfers into the State, a student who is enrolled in a high school located outside of the State, and a student enrolled in an approved home school program are eligible to participate in the program providing that the student meets all eligibility requirements as described herein, as well as all residency requirements as described in the "Program Definitions" Section above. An out-of-state or home school student may apply on the condition that the counselor or principal at the high school or approved home

school at which the student is presently enrolled provides official high school transcripts and appropriate documentation of compliance with all eligibility criteria, including State residency status; SAT score or equivalent ACT score; GPR at the end of either the junior or senior year based on the UGS; and, rank at the end of the sophomore, junior, or senior year in high school based on the UGS (refer to "Student Application" Section). Because the GPR and rank must be based on the UGS, the out-of-state or home school student may request both the GPR and "hypothetical" rank from the public high school the student would have attended if he/she had not chosen to home school or attend high school out-of-state. An official letter on the public high school's letterhead must be written to the Commission on Higher Education stating the student's class rank (hypothetical), total class size and GPR based on the UGS. The hypothetical rank will not count against the number of students eligible from that high school for Palmetto Fellows Scholarship eligibility. Students who are enrolled at an out-of-state high school are personally responsible for contacting the Commission on Higher Education about the application process and must adhere to the same established deadline(s).

D. A student who graduates immediately after the high school junior year is eligible to apply for the Palmetto Fellows Scholarship, providing that the student meets all eligibility requirements as described in the "Student Eligibility" Section, and providing that the student is entering a participating college or university not later than the fall term immediately following high school graduation.

E. Students receiving a Palmetto Fellows Scholarship are not eligible for a LIFE Scholarship, S.C. HOPE Scholarship or Lottery Tuition Assistance.

F. Any student who attempts to obtain or obtains a Palmetto Fellows Scholarship through means of a willfully false statement or failure to reveal any material fact, condition, or circumstances affecting eligibility will be subject to applicable civil or criminal penalties, including loss of the Palmetto Fellows Scholarship.

#### 62-320 Student Application

A. The Commission on Higher Education will send information regarding the application process to South Carolina high schools. High school officials will identify students who meet the specified eligibility criteria by each established deadline. Applications must be submitted no later than the established deadline(s) along with the appropriate official signatures and the students' official transcripts by the principals to the Commission on Higher Education.

B. The high schools shall complete and return a list to the Commission on Higher Education indicating the names of all students who meet the eligibility criteria according to the high school. The list shall indicate whether the student is submitting a completed application or declining the opportunity to submit an application. If the student declines the opportunity to submit an application, the high school will submit a form for each of these students, signed by both the student and the parent/guardian, and indicating the reason(s) for not submitting an application.

C. Applications for early awards must be submitted to the Commission on Higher Education for the Palmetto Fellows Scholarship by the date established in December each academic year. Students must meet the following three academic criteria in order to be eligible to apply for the early awards (students cannot use these criteria to meet the final award criteria):

1. Score at least 1200 on the SAT or 27 on the ACT. Test scores must be submitted to the Commission on Higher Education by no later the established deadline in December;
2. Earn a cumulative 3.50 GPR on the UGS at the end of the junior year. Grade point ratios must be reported to two decimal places (minimum) and may not be rounded; and
3. Rank in the top six percent of the class at the end of either the sophomore or the junior year. Rank

percentages must be reported to two decimal places (minimum) and may not be rounded.

D. Applications for final awards must be submitted to the Commission on Higher Education for the Palmetto Fellows Scholarship by the date established in June each academic year. Students must meet the following three academic criteria in order to be eligible to apply for the final awards:

1. Score at least 1200 on the SAT or 27 on the ACT. Test scores will be accepted through June of the senior year;
2. Earn a cumulative 3.50 GPR on the UGS at the end of the senior year. Grade point ratios must be reported to two decimal places (minimum) and may not be rounded; and
3. Rank in the top six percent of the class at the end of the senior year. Rank percentages must be reported to two decimal places (minimum) and may not be rounded.

E. Students must have official certification that they earned a score of at least 1200 on the SAT I, or an equivalent ACT score. The Commission on Higher Education shall convert all ACT scores to the equivalent SAT scores. Test scores will be accepted through the June national test administration of the senior year. Students must use the highest Math score combined with the highest Critical Reading score (formerly known as the Verbal score) or the highest Math score combined with the highest Writing score. It is permissible to select scores from different test administrations in order to obtain the qualifying composite score. Students cannot use both Critical Reading and Writing subsection scores to meet the minimum 1200 SAT score.

F. For those high schools that have fewer than forty students in the class, the top two students shall be considered for the scholarship regardless whether they rank in the top six percent of the class. These students must meet all other eligibility criteria.

#### 62-325 Selection Process

A. The Commission on Higher Education shall notify students of their selection as a Palmetto Fellow along with terms and conditions of the award.

B. Students must notify the Commission on Higher Education of their acceptance of the scholarship and designate the participating institution in which they plan to enroll by the date established by the Commission on Higher Education or forfeit the Palmetto Fellows Scholarship.

C. The Commission on Higher Education shall ensure that there is equitable minority participation in the program.

#### 62-330 Policies and Procedures for Awarding Palmetto Fellows Scholarships

A. The institution shall specify exact award amounts based upon applying the Palmetto Fellows Scholarship Regulation and criteria stipulated herein. The annual award amount for each Palmetto Fellow shall not exceed \$6700 per academic year. Half of the scholarship shall be awarded in the fall term and half during the spring term (or its equivalent), assuming continued eligibility.

B. Palmetto Fellows Scholarships are to be used only towards payment for cost-of-attendance as established by Title IV Regulations with modifications set forth in C below for the academic year for which the scholarship is made at the designated institution. The maximum amount awarded shall not exceed the cost-of-attendance as established by Title IV Regulations for any year.

C. Charges for room and board are to be limited as follows:

1. Room charges shall not exceed the average cost of on-campus residential housing; and
2. Board charges shall not exceed the cost of the least expensive campus meal plan that includes 21 meals per week.

D. In determining the amount awarded for the Palmetto Fellows Scholarship, all other sources of gift aid, including Federal, State, private and institutional funds, must be applied to the unmet total cost-of-attendance in accord with Title IV Regulations before calculating the scholarship amount and awarding the scholarship. Adjustments to the financial aid package will be made to the Palmetto Fellows Scholarship in accordance with prescribed Title IV Regulations in order to prevent an over-award.

E. Although a student may be named a Palmetto Fellow, the student may not receive a monetary award if the award, when added to other financial resources, would cause the student to receive total assistance in excess of the student's cost-of-attendance as defined by Title IV Regulations and these guidelines.

F. Participating institutions will notify students of their award along with the terms and conditions of the award.

G. The institution must retain annual paper or electronic documentation for each award to include at a minimum:

1. Institutional Student Information Record (ISIR) or affidavit documenting that the student is not in default or does not owe a refund on any State or Federal financial aid
2. Affidavit documenting that the student has never been convicted of any felonies, alcohol or drug related misdemeanor offenses as stated under "Student Eligibility" and "Duration and Renewal of Awards" Sections
3. Award notification
4. Institutional disbursement to student
5. Refund or repayment (if appropriate)
6. Student's residency status
7. Enrollment and curriculum requirements
8. Student's disability (if appropriate)

H. It is the institution's responsibility to ensure that only eligible students receive the scholarship.

#### 62-335 Duration and Renewal of Awards

A. A Palmetto Fellows Scholarship shall be initially awarded for one academic year. The institution shall adjust the amount of the scholarship award during the academic year in the event of a change in the student's eligibility.

B. Students selected as Palmetto Fellows must enter a participating college or university the fall term immediately following high school graduation.

C. A Palmetto Fellows Scholarship may be renewed annually for no more than a total of eight terms (or its equivalent) of full-time study toward the first baccalaureate degree or a program of study that is structured so as not to require a baccalaureate degree and leads to a graduate degree. Renewal decisions will be made annually and are not automatically guaranteed. Students who have already been awarded their first

baccalaureate or graduate degree are not eligible to receive the Palmetto Fellows Scholarship.

D. The institution shall be responsible for securing institutional certification of each recipient's cumulative grade point average and credit hours earned for purposes of determining eligibility for award renewal.

E. In order to retain eligibility for the Palmetto Fellows Scholarship after the initial year, the student must meet the following continued eligibility requirements:

1. Enroll full-time at the time of the scholarship disbursement;
2. Earn at least a cumulative 3.0 grade point average (GPA) on a 4.0 scale for graduation purposes by the end of each academic year;
3. Earn a minimum of thirty credit hours for graduation purposes by the end of each academic year. Exempted credit hours (such as AP, CLEP, etc.) and credit hours earned before high school graduation cannot be used to meet the annual credit hour requirement;
4. Certify each academic year that he/she has not defaulted and does not owe a refund or repayment on any Federal or State financial aid. If a student has an Institutional Student Information Record (ISIR) or its equivalent on file, the ISIR information will be used to verify default status or refund/repayment owed. Students who have not completed a FAFSA Form must have an affidavit on file to verify that he/she is not in default and does not owe a refund or repayment on any Federal or State financial aid, including the State Grant, Pell Grant, Supplemental Educational Opportunity Grant, Perkins Loan or Federal Stafford Loan; and
5. Certify each academic year that he/she has not been adjudicated delinquent, convicted, or pled guilty or nolo contendere to any felonies, alcohol, or drug related offenses under the laws of this or any other state or under the laws of the United States by submitting a signed affidavit each academic year to the institution testifying to the fact, except that a high school or college student who has been adjudicated delinquent, convicted, or pled guilty or nolo contendere of an alcohol or drug related misdemeanor offense is only ineligible for the next academic year after the date of the adjudication, conviction or plea.

F. Any student who attempts to obtain or obtains a Palmetto Fellows Scholarship through means of a willfully false statement or failure to reveal any material fact, condition, or circumstances affecting eligibility will be subject to applicable civil or criminal penalties, including loss of the Palmetto Fellows Scholarship.

#### 62-340 Transfer of Palmetto Fellows Scholarship

A. Palmetto Fellows enrolled at an eligible public or independent institution as defined in Chapter 103 of Title 59 of the 1976 Code may transfer the scholarship to another eligible institution upon obtaining prior approval from the Commission on Higher Education.

B. Transfer students shall receive the scholarship for no more than eight terms (or its equivalent) at all institutions attended.

C. Transfer students must comply with all standards for continued eligibility as defined under "Duration and Renewal of Awards" Section in order for their scholarship to be eligible for transfer.

#### 62-345 Students with Disabilities

A. Palmetto Fellows who qualify under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 must meet all eligibility requirements as defined in "Student Eligibility"

Section except for the full-time enrollment requirement is eligible to receive scholarship funding. Students must comply with all institutional policies and procedures in accordance with ADA and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973.

B. For renewal, Palmetto Fellows who qualify under ADA and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 must meet all renewal requirements as defined in the "Duration and Renewal of Awards" Section except for a student not meeting the annual credit hour requirement who is approved by the Disability Services Provider to be enrolled in less than full-time status or less than the required number of annual credit hours for that academic year. Each academic year for scholarship renewal, students must earn the required number of hours approved by the institutional Disability Services Provider and earn a minimum 3.0 cumulative grade point average on a 4.0 scale. Students must comply with all institutional policies and procedures in accordance with ADA and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973.

C. The institutional Disability Services Provider must provide written documentation to the Office of Financial Aid each academic year verifying that the student is approved to be enrolled in less than full-time status or less than the required annual credit hours.

D. Palmetto Fellows who qualify under ADA and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 are eligible to receive up to the maximum number of available terms and available funds.

#### 62-350 Enrollment in Internships, Cooperative Work Programs, Travel Study Programs, or National or International Student Exchange Programs

A. Students enrolled in internships, cooperative work programs, travel study programs, or National or International Student Exchange Programs that are approved by the home institution and that the home institution accepts as full-time transfer credit are eligible to receive Palmetto Fellows Scholarship funds during the period in which the student is enrolled in such programs. Students will be required to meet the continued eligibility requirements.

B. Eligible students may use the appropriated portion of the Palmetto Fellows Scholarship funds for internships, cooperative work programs, travel study programs, or National or International Student Exchange Programs that are approved by the home institution and that the home institution accepts as full-time transfer credit. Palmetto Fellows Scholarship funds must be paid directly to the student's account at the home institution. The amount awarded cannot exceed the cost-of-attendance at the home institution or the cost-of-attendance at the host institution, whichever is less. The Commission on Higher Education will not transfer scholarship funds to the institutions where students will participate in internships, cooperative work programs, travel study programs, or National or International Student Exchange Programs. The institution is responsible for scholarship funds according to the "Program Administration and Audits" Section.

C. Students who enroll in one academic term at the home institution and also enroll in an internship, cooperative work program, travel study program, or National or International Student Exchange Program that are approved by the home institution and that do not award full-time transfer credit during the same academic year must earn fifteen credit hours and a cumulative 3.0 grade point average on a 4.0 scale by the end of the academic year to be eligible for scholarship renewal for the next academic year. The student may continue to be eligible to receive the Palmetto Fellows Scholarship for up to a total of eight terms (or its equivalent) at all institutions attended (provided the student meets the continued eligibility requirements).

D. For students enrolling in an internship, cooperative work program, travel study program, or National or International Student Exchange Program that is approved by the home institution but does not award full-time transfer credit for the entire academic year, scholarship renewal for the next academic year will be based on

the prior year's eligibility. The student may continue to be eligible to receive the Palmetto Fellows Scholarship for up to a total of eight terms (or its equivalent) at all institutions attended (provided the student meets the continued eligibility requirements).

E. Students enrolling in an internship, a cooperative work program, a travel study program, or National or International Student Exchange Program that are approved by the home institution during the academic year and did not use their entire eligibility for Palmetto Fellows Scholarship funds during this period shall be allowed to receive one term of Palmetto Fellows Scholarship funds during the succeeding summer. In order to receive Palmetto Fellows Scholarship funds for the succeeding summer term, students must enroll in twelve credit hours at the home institution. In order to maintain eligibility for the next academic year for students who only attend summer school, the student must earn twelve credit hours by the end of the academic year. For students who enroll in summer school and one other term of the academic year, the student must earn a total of 27 credit hours (or its equivalent) by the end of the academic year. The student must meet all continued eligibility requirements, except for the completion of the thirty credit hour requirement for the academic year.

F. The home institution will be responsible for securing official certification of the student's cumulative grade point average and credit hours earned for the purposes of determining eligibility for scholarship renewal for the next academic year.

#### 62-351 Military Mobilization

A. Service members enrolled in college and are affected by military mobilizations will not be penalized for the term they are required to withdraw after the full refund period based on the institutional policies and procedures. Institutions are strongly encouraged to provide a full refund of required tuition, fees and other institutional charges or to provide a credit in a comparable amount against future charges for students who are forced to withdraw as a result of military mobilization. Additionally, the term(s) that the service member is called to active duty will not count against the maximum terms of eligibility. The service member shall be allowed to receive the unused term(s) while on active duty during the succeeding summer term or at the end of the maximum terms of eligibility (provided the service member meets continued eligibility requirements). The service member must re-enroll in an eligible institution within twelve months upon their demobilization and provide official documentation to verify military deployment to the institutional Financial Aid Office upon re-enrollment. Reinstatement will be based upon the service member's eligibility at the time he/she was mobilized. If the service member re-enrolls after the twelve month period, the service member must submit an Appeal Application to the Commission on Higher Education by the established deadline in order to be considered for reinstatement.

B. Service members who are enrolled in college and are called to active duty for a minimum of one academic year may renew the scholarship for the next academic year, if they met the continued eligibility requirements at the end of the prior academic year. Service members may continue to be eligible to receive the Palmetto Fellows Scholarship for up to a total of eight terms (or its equivalent) at all institutions attended (provided the service member meets continued eligibility requirements).

C. Service members who are enrolled in college and are called to active duty for one academic term must complete fifteen credit hours and earn a cumulative 3.0 grade point average on a 4.0 scale by the end of the academic year to be eligible for scholarship renewal for the next academic year. Service members may continue to be eligible to receive the Palmetto Fellows Scholarship for up to a total of eight terms (or its equivalent) at all institutions attended (provided the service member meets the continued eligibility requirements).

D. In order to receive the Palmetto Fellows Scholarship for summer school for the unused term(s), the service member must enroll in twelve credit hours during the succeeding summer term at the home institution. For service members who enroll in summer school and one other term of the academic year, the service member must earn a total of twenty-seven credit hours (or its equivalent) by the end of the academic year. In order to maintain eligibility for the next academic year for service members who only attend summer school, the member must earn twelve credit hours by the end of the academic year. The service member must meet all continued eligibility requirements, except for the completion of the thirty credit hour requirement for the academic year.

E. The home institution will be responsible for securing verification of active duty status, cumulative grade point average and credit hours earned for the purposes of determining eligibility for scholarship renewal for the next academic year.

#### 62-355 Appeals Procedures

A. The Commission on Higher Education shall define the procedures for scholarship appeals.

B. A student who does not meet the continued eligibility criteria for renewal of the Palmetto Fellows Scholarship forfeits continued participation in the program and may request an appeal based on extenuating circumstances.

C. A student is allowed to submit only one appeal each academic year.

D. A student wishing to appeal any non-renewal decision based on extenuating circumstances must submit the following source documents to the Commission on Higher Education by no later than the established deadline of the academic year the scholarship is requested:

1. A completed application for appeal
2. A letter requesting an appeal describing the extenuating circumstances
3. An official transcript(s)
4. Any other supporting documentation to substantiate the basis for the appeal

E. A student who fails to submit an appeal by the required deadline will result in forfeiture of the award.

F. The Palmetto Fellows Scholarship shall be suspended during the appeal period, but will be awarded retroactively if the appeal is granted.

G. The Appeals Committee's decision is final.

#### 62-360 Institutional Disbursement of Scholarship Funds

A. The institution will identify award amounts, which cannot exceed \$6700 per academic year. Half of each scholarship shall be awarded during the fall term and half during the spring (or its equivalent), assuming continued eligibility. Scholarships cannot be disbursed during the summer or any interim sessions with the exception of disbursements that meet the requirements under the "Enrollment in Internships, Cooperative Work Programs, Travel Study Programs, or National or International Student Exchange Programs" or "Military Mobilization" Sections. Palmetto Fellows may not be funded for more than a total of eight terms (or its equivalent) of full-time study toward the first baccalaureate degree or a program of study that is structured so as not to require a baccalaureate degree and leads to a graduate degree.

B. The Palmetto Fellows Scholarship may not be applied to remedial/developmental coursework, a second baccalaureate degree or to graduate coursework, unless the graduate coursework is required as part of a program of study that is structured so as not to require a baccalaureate degree and leads to a graduate degree as defined in the "Program Definitions" Section. In the event of early graduation, the award is discontinued.

C. The institution shall provide an award notification each academic year to Palmetto Fellows recipients, which will contain the terms and conditions of the scholarship and other financial aid awarded. Students will be notified of adjustments in financial aid due to changes in eligibility and/or over-award issues. The Commission on Higher Education, for documentation purposes, requires that each institution obtain verification of acceptance of the Palmetto Fellows Scholarship and terms for the award.

D. After the last day to register for each term of the academic year, the institution will verify enrollment of each recipient as a South Carolina resident who is a full-time degree-seeking student. According to the Scholarship and Grant Programs Policies and Procedures Manual, a listing of eligible recipients by social security number with the award amounts for the term must be sent to the Commission on Higher Education with the institution's request for funds. A year-end reconciliation report will be submitted to the Commission on Higher Education prior to June 30<sup>th</sup>.

E. The Commission will disburse awards to the participating institutions to be placed in each eligible student's account.

#### 62-365 Refunds and Repayments

A. In the event a student who has been awarded a Palmetto Fellows Scholarship withdraws, is suspended from the institution, or drops below full-time status during any regular term of the academic year, institutions must reimburse the Palmetto Fellows Scholarship Program for the amount of the scholarship for the term in question pursuant to refund policies of the institution. Collection is the responsibility of the institution.

B. In the event a student withdraws or drops below full-time status after the institution's refund period and therefore must pay tuition and fees for full-time enrollment, the award may be retained by the student pursuant to the refund policies of the institution.

#### 62-370 Program Administration and Audits

A. The South Carolina Commission on Higher Education shall be responsible for the oversight of functions (e.g., guidelines, policies, rules, regulations) relative to this program with participating institutions. The Commission on Higher Education shall be responsible for the allocation of funds, promulgation of guidelines and regulation governing the Palmetto Fellows Scholarship Program, any audits, or other oversight as may be deemed necessary to monitor the expenditures of scholarship funds.

B. According to the Audit Policies and Procedures for Scholarship and Grant Programs Manual, all eligible institutions that participate in the program must abide by program policies, rules or regulations. Institutions also agree to maintain and provide all pertinent information, records, reports, or any information as may be required or requested by the Commission on Higher Education or the General Assembly to ensure proper administration of the program.

C. The Chief Executive Officer at each participating institution shall identify to the Commission on Higher Education a Palmetto Fellows Scholarship institutional representative who is responsible for the operation of the program on the campus and will serve as the contact person for the program. The

institutional representative will act as the student's fiscal agent to receive and deliver funds for use under the program.

#### 62-375 Suspension or Termination of Institutional Participation

A. The Commission on Higher Education may review institutional administrative practices to determine institutional compliance with pertinent statutes, guidelines, rules or regulations. If such a review determines that an institution has failed to comply with program statutes, guidelines, rules or regulations, the Commission on Higher Education may suspend, terminate, or place certain conditions upon the institution's continued participation in the program and require reimbursement to the Palmetto Fellows Scholarship Program for any funds lost or improperly awarded.

B. Upon receipt of evidence that an institution has failed to comply, the Commission on Higher Education shall notify the institution in writing of the nature of such allegations and conduct an audit.

C. If an audit indicates that a violation or violations may have occurred or are occurring at any public or independent college or university, the Commission on Higher Education shall secure immediate reimbursement from the institution in the event that any funds were expended out of compliance with the provisions of the Act, any relevant statutes, guidelines, rules, and regulations.

#### **Fiscal Impact Statement:**

There will be no increased costs to the State or its political subdivisions.

#### **Statement of Rationale:**