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Agenda item 3.02.C

Rayburn Barton  
Executive Director

December 7, 2000

**MEMORANDUM**

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

**From:** Ms. Dianne Chinnes, Chairman, Committee on Academic Affairs and Licensing *D/Chm*

**Consideration of Award to Establish a Statewide Higher Education  
Center for Information Technology**

**Background:**

During the 2000 legislative session, the General Assembly appropriated \$4 million dollars to be used to establish a statewide Higher Education Center for Information Technology. Subsequent year funding will be sought from the General Assembly in the same amount for the continuous support of the Center.

At its meeting on September 7, the Commission approved the following description for the Center:

- The Center will include public higher education institutions with possible involvement of private institutions. The Commission will annually request state appropriations for the management and operations of the Center.
- An institutionally representative Board of Directors will provide oversight of the Center. It would be housed at one of the institutions with satellite centers strategically located at other institutions to provide statewide focus.

- It is expected the Center will focus on business, industry and government need for a workforce that not only understands technology, but that can apply such understanding to create new strategic initiatives and help evolve new business opportunities.
- The successful institution will have the fiscal responsibility for the state appropriations, and its budget will require annual Commission approval.

A Call for Proposals was issued on September 8. Three proposals from the research sector, the College of Charleston, and Midlands Technical College respectively were received by the October 20 deadline. The staff subsequently reviewed each of the proposals, identifying the strengths of each.

On November 3, after sharing copies of the three proposals, Dr. Barton convened a meeting of representatives of the three proposing entities. After extended discussion, Dr. Barton expressed his view that the most effective Center would be one that drew on the strengths of all three proposals in a collaborative effort. It was agreed that the staff would draft a set of recommendations that would establish the parameters for such a cooperative effort, and then distribute them in advance. Draft recommendations have been distributed to the three proposing entities and revised in accord with their feedback.

The recommendations presented below provide broad parameters for the development of a cooperative proposal which would be submitted by January 3 to the Commission staff in order to be considered by the Committee on Academic Affairs at its January 16 meeting and by the Commission at its February meeting.

At its meeting on December 7, the Committee will consider the following recommendations:

1. The Center will be housed at USC-Columbia, which will also serve as fiscal agent, in the College of Engineering.
2. The Center will be governed by a Board of Directors on which will be equitably represented the proposing entities (USC; Clemson; MUSC; College of Charleston; Midlands Technical College) as well as other appropriate representatives such as the Department of Commerce, the Commission on Higher Education, the State Board for Technical and Comprehensive Education, the Budget & Control Board's Office of Information Resources, relevant business and industry representatives, and other higher education institutions such that balanced geographic and sector representation are ensured.

3. The Center's program of work will be outlined in terms of both short term and long term goals and objectives on the assumption that recurring funding at approximately the same level (\$4 million) as well as external grant funds will be sought to advance the work of the Center.
4. The Center's initial year budget shall be allocated as follows and a detailed budget provided as to how funds will be expended within the categories noted:
  - a. Infrastructure development as described in research sector proposal: \$2.75 million
  - b. Funds to the technical college to reinforce and establish infrastructure capacity in distance delivery: \$1.0 million
  - c. Funds to College of Charleston to enhance program capacity and support in areas identified as priority areas by market research \$0.25 million

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**Total: \$4.0 million**

5. The Center proposal shall display a summary budget for years two and three.
6. The final cooperative proposal (not to exceed 12 pages) should follow the format for new programs prescribed in Appendix A of the Commission's *Guidelines for New Academic Program Approval*. To the required relevant elements, sections should be added 1) that clearly describe the organizational and the governance structures of the proposed center; 2) that display a timeline for achieving the short-term and long-term purposes and objectives of the Center as identified under the "Justification" section; 3) and the budgets as described above. The proposal should be submitted in 10 copies by January 3 for consideration by the Committee on Academic Affairs on January 16 and by the Commission on February 1.

**Recommendation:**

The Committee will make its recommendation at the Commission meeting on December 7, 2000.