

REMARKS TO SOUTH CAROLINA COMMISSION ON HIGHER EDUCATION

Cordell Maddox, Chairman
Advisory Council of Private College Presidents

February 5, 1976

As chairman of the Advisory Council of Private College Presidents, I am honored to be here today and say a few words to this distinguished group. Let me say, in the beginning, that after the Governor's address, and the Lake Committee report, I am glad to see you here and in business.

Governor Edwards, fresh from the DSS controversy, called education our most difficult assignment. Certainly, this is true! But without the services of this Commission over the past few years, Higher Education in this State would have been in a chaotic situation and every citizen of South Carolina should be grateful and appreciative for your leadership.

There are twenty-five private colleges in our State, enrolling about a third of our college population, including 60% of the State's black students. Last year these colleges collected and spent about \$80 million in the education of 24,000 students. Our physical plants are valued at over \$200 million and we hold endowments of \$50 million.

In reporting to you on the private colleges, I can best summarize by labeling them an "endangered species" -- healthy and vigorous, but under continuing threats from forces outside their control.

Even after the recent shock of inflation and recession, fewer of our private colleges are operating at deficits than three years ago when the Tuition Grants Program began. Our enrollments have increased significantly for the first time in ten years. This program has been a life-saver for some colleges and is most important - even critical - to all nineteen participating institutions.

The coming year, 1976-77, will be the fourth year of these grants and it is extremely important to complete the job by allocating enough funds to cover next year's freshman class. The Tuition Grants Committee has done some extensive belt tightening to respond to the State's financial condition. This will reduce the average award next year by about 20%. Even so, without an increase over our current appropriation level - \$7.3 million - it will be impossible to assist all who qualify. I believe full funding of the State Tuition Grant Program will serve well Higher Education in South Carolina.

It may be of interest to this Commission to have some of our thoughts about the educational questions facing the State.

First, as you know, the cost of teaching a student is about the same whether it is done at an independent or a State college - but the price varies widely - \$600 at the public universities, and over \$2400 at some private ones. The average difference in tuition is about \$1350 per year. This is one of the factors which make us an endangered species and puts full funding of the Tuition Grants Program as our first priority.

Second, we feel adequate planning for Higher Education is necessary and agree that a master plan should be developed as soon as possible. I know that every private college will assist and cooperate in the development of such a plan.

Third, we think the 1202 Commission would be better suited to direct planning if it were enlarged to insure proportionate representation from the private sector. At present, we have only one representative and the publicly supported colleges have eight.

Fourth, the private colleges are working hard to keep tuition as low as possible. In spite of our efforts, the cost of educating a student continues to rise at an alarming rate and we have no choice but to pass this cost on to the student. Every private college in South Carolina has been forced to increase tuition, room and board charges for next year. The tuition increases ranged from \$100 to \$325, and averaged \$195 per college. Room and board charges increased an average of \$92. Tuition for next year ranged from \$1300 to \$3050, and the average charge is \$1915.

Fifth, and finally, we are all in agreement about avoiding wasteful duplication. The independent colleges would go a step further and add that, without effective control and regulation by the Commission, duplication will continue to flourish.

The days ahead for Higher Education in South Carolina are going to be difficult and challenging. I hope all of us who have responsibility in this area will work together in a spirit of cooperation. If we do, we can meet the challenge and insure that students in future generations will receive a quality, post-secondary education.

Thank you for your attention, and if you have questions I will be delighted to try to answer them.

SOUTH CAROLINA COMMISSION ON HIGHER EDUCATION
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January, 1976