

att. II



**Commission on  
Higher Education**

Layton McCurdy, M.D.  
Chairman

October 30, 2006

The Honorable Mark Sanford  
Governor of South Carolina  
P.O. Box 12267  
Columbia, SC 29211

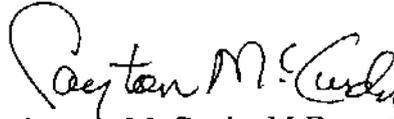
Dear Mark:

This is in response to your letter of October 10, 2006. I appreciate your letter and would like to extend my sincere congratulations to you for putting together the Higher Education Task Force. I think that their report is exemplary in its comprehensive approach to South Carolina's higher education future. While there are many positive things that could be said about our State's institutions for higher education, much remains to be done.

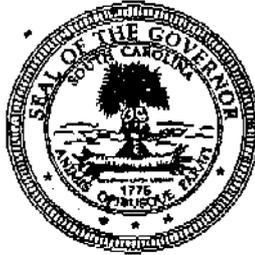
I agree with you completely that a statewide plan could provide a roadmap for the Governor, the Legislature, and the higher education institutions. Please be assured that the Commission on Higher Education is eager to be at the forefront of all of these discussions and of the statewide plan itself. I endorse the Task Force's idea that an external, broadly-representative body would be advisable to conduct this statewide plan. I hope the group that is formed would look to the Commission on Higher Education as a full collaborator and supporter of their efforts. In truth, I believe that this statewide planning group would do well to include some members of the Commission as participants. The Commission's database will serve as a vital asset to the statewide planning effort. In my opinion, this initiative will be vital to our future. I also believe that planning is an ongoing process and that the initial effort will be vital, but only in the sense that it continues. The Commission on Higher Education is well placed to maintain an ongoing plan.

You and I share an opinion about the importance of statewide coordination for higher education. Please rest assured that all of the Commissioners also share our view on this matter. Again, thank you for the leadership you are providing the people of our state.

Sincerely,

  
Layton McCurdy, M.D.

cc: Commissioners, S.C. Commission on Higher Education  
Dr. Gail M. Morrison, Interim Executive Director,  
S.C. Commission on Higher Education



## State of South Carolina Office of the Governor

MARK SANFORD  
GOVERNOR

POST OFFICE BOX 12267  
COLUMBIA 29211

October 10, 2006

Dr. Layton McCurdy  
Chairman, Commission on Higher Education  
3 Chisolm Street, #301  
Charleston, South Carolina 29401

Dear Layton,

As you well know, earlier this year the Governor's Higher Education Task Force was created to take a closer look at our higher education system in South Carolina and to examine in detail the issues of duplication, increasing tuition, and the lack of a statewide plan. The Task Force has released its final report, which is based on long hours of hard work. I believe that this report is an excellent beginning to establishing a dialogue among the major stakeholders in our state's higher education system.

The release of the Task Force report has prompted me to make a request of the Commission on Higher Education. I would like the Commission to join myself, the legislature, and university leadership in moving forward with the report. As the state's designated coordinating higher education body, the Commission is expected to be at the forefront of any discussion involving our state's higher education system.

Over the past year alone, we've seen several examples of the larger problem we have in South Carolina with respect to higher education – namely that politics, not a statewide plan, too often drives the decisions we make. As a result we've got duplication – one reason tuition costs in South Carolina are well over the national average – and going up every year. For the second consecutive time, South Carolina received an 'F' for affordability in the National Center for Public Policy's report, *Measuring Up 2006*. Our state's families are contributing 36% of their entire income to pay for one child's education at our state's four year public universities. The fact that this number is significantly more than our neighboring states—Georgia (23%) and North Carolina (26%)—points to the need for a true statewide plan for higher education. The Higher Education Task Force's report provides a blueprint for establishing that plan. South Carolina cannot afford to continue down a path that is making higher education less affordable, undermining its ability to prepare our citizens to meet the challenges of today's global economy.

It is my hope that by asking the Commission to take a leading role in advancing the Task Force's report, that this will lead to the Commission taking a broader state role in ensuring the quality and effectiveness of our state's higher education system. Take Care.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be "Mark Sanford".

Mark Sanford

MS/cb.kh