

A STATEMENT OF POLICY PRINCIPLES

(Adopted by the South Carolina Commission on Higher Education to inform the public, the Governor, the General Assembly, and constituent groups on the framework for its decision-making processes.)

The Commission on Higher Education is dedicated to promoting postsecondary programs of quality and excellence at all levels for the people of South Carolina, ensuring appropriate access for all South Carolinians at an appropriate level of higher education. Additionally, the Commission will seek to ensure the prudent use of public resources in meeting its stated goal.

The Commission will promote the development of a high quality system of public higher education whose institutions will have appropriately differentiated missions, now consisting of three research universities offering a wide array of programs through the doctoral level, nine senior colleges or comprehensive teaching universities offering programs through the master's level,* and a system of two-year colleges.

The Commission will encourage interinstitutional cooperation to the maximum extent possible in academic programs, facilities, faculties, libraries, and other related endeavors to utilize vital state resources most effectively and to enhance quality in the state's higher education institutions.

The Commission and the Council of Public College and University Presidents will maintain mutually active communication to ensure the opportunity for consultation on issues significantly affecting higher education; additionally, the Commission will encourage consultation prior to taking action on such issues or engaging in major studies.

The Commission's policies and activities will uphold as a matter of principle and commitment equal educational opportunity regardless of race, color, gender, age, national origin, religion, or disability.

*The only exception to this is the Ed.D. Program at South Carolina State University.

ACADEMIC AFFAIRS

1. The Commission will ensure that the demand for new academic and other related services will be met throughout the state, but that this goal will be accomplished through the utilization of existing public and private institutions, through the increased reliance on emerging and existing technologies to deliver programs and services throughout the state, and through cooperative endeavors among existing institutions whenever possible.
2. The Commission will encourage the development and sustenance of academic programs of exemplary quality which are rigorous in academic content, supported with optimal resources, and evaluated on a regular basis.

3. The Commission will encourage the development of exemplary financial aid and student services programs which will eliminate financial need as a barrier for students desiring to attend the state's postsecondary institutions.

4. The Commission will encourage the development of programs of exemplary quality for teacher preparation and professional development, at both undergraduate and graduate levels, that emulate state-of-the-art standards.

PLANNING AND ASSESSMENT

1. The State Commission on Higher Education will maintain a statewide planning system to address strategic issues in public and private higher education.

2. Planning will be a cooperative venture, fully involving both the institutions and the Commission in identifying issues, developing programs, and establishing a statewide context within the college and university governing boards responsible for institutional planning.

3. The Commission will take responsibility for resolving any conflicts or problems arising out of the cooperative planning venture to ensure the best interests for higher education within the state. Further, the Commission will ensure a timely completion of a statewide plan.

4. Proposals for new academic programs, facilities, or financial initiatives will receive consideration by the Commission if they fit within the context of institutional mission or vision statements. However, it will not be assumed that consideration and approval of new programs, facilities, and financial initiatives are synonymous.

5. The institutions and the Commission will be accountable to the General Assembly and the general public through a strong program of institutionally based assessment that includes not only measures of institutional effectiveness, but specific actions for improvement based on those findings.

FACILITIES DIVISION

1. The Commission will endeavor to ensure through its planning and approval process that the state's colleges and universities maintain existing facilities in "satisfactory" condition. Institutions will develop and present plans to improve to "satisfactory" standard those facilities evaluated below that level.

2. The Commission will require institutional campus master plans as part of its facility decision making process.

3. The Commission will ordinarily require that facility expansion be predicated upon demonstrable need through utilization analysis of existing space.

EXTERNAL AFFAIRS

1. The Commission will continue full and open communication with the news media and observe fully the provisions of the Freedom of Information Act.
2. The Commission will maintain active communication with South Carolina's public and private colleges and universities, the General Assembly, the Governor's Office, and state agencies to provide timely and accurate higher education-related information.
3. The Commission will work with South Carolina's public and private colleges and universities to achieve educational excellence through commonly endorsed statewide initiatives.
4. The Commission will support statewide initiatives to expand opportunities for minority students, faculty, and staff at public colleges and universities. Moreover, in all of its policies and activities, the Commission will ensure that minorities receive access to and equity within public higher education institutions in South Carolina.
5. The Commission will encourage collaboration among South Carolina public and private colleges and universities and K-12 schools to strengthen further and improve access to and the quality of education in the state.

FINANCIAL AFFAIRS

1. The Commission will ensure that funding requests to the General Assembly for support of public colleges and universities are at levels that are competitive both regionally and nationally.
 2. The Commission will ensure that the funding mechanism, while remaining essentially enrollment driven, is sensitive to quality incentive measures that recognize and reward institutions for achievement of specific objectives identified by the Commission.
 3. The Commission will ensure that each institution will receive an equitable share of funds appropriated by the General Assembly for basic operational purposes.
 4. The Commission will encourage implementation of statewide and national objectives for excellence in higher education by seeking funding for these objectives in the Commission's annual budget request.
 5. The Commission will encourage the establishment of tuition and fees charged by the colleges and universities that are competitive regionally and nationally.
 6. The Commission will strive to ensure that the educational and general spending as well as capital expenditures represent an efficient utilization of the state's financial resources appropriated to higher education.
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7. The Commission will coordinate the establishment of a comprehensive and centralized management information system, capable of addressing the state's needs for collection of higher education data to be used for research and analysis purposes.

LICENSE DIVISION

1. The Commission will work toward the establishment of written policies for standards of progress in all institutions offering programs approved for veterans education to ensure the availability of legitimate education experiences.

2. The Commission will work with commerce and industry to expand opportunities for apprenticeship and on-the-job training programs that are available to veterans to provide employment and to bring federal dollars into the State's economy.

3. The Commission will use its licensing authority to work with non-public postsecondary institutions to ensure that those education and training programs are of high quality and that students are properly safeguarded from financial harm.

Adopted by the Commission on Higher Education, 12/3/92.