



SCICU Legislative Strategic Plan – 2010

The primary objective of the South Carolina Independent Colleges and Universities Legislative Strategic Plan is to establish an agenda and course of action for a program of education and advocacy before the Governor's Office, General Assembly, and state agencies on matters of critical importance to the independent institutions of higher learning in South Carolina.

Relevant matters under review will include general and special appropriations for student grants and scholarships, legislation related to higher education, postsecondary students, and non-profit organizations, and education-related public policy issues before state agencies and commissions.

Within the context of this legislative plan, SCICU staff will monitor and report on higher education issues at the federal level. SCICU will work closely with the legislative staff at the National Association of Independent Colleges and Universities and the South Carolina Congressional delegation on funding and policy matters that affect independent higher education.

The Public Policy Committee and the SCICU Board of Trustees will be kept informed of all relevant budget and legislative issues through newsletters, special e-mail alerts, and regular meetings. In the event of an issue requiring immediate action, the Committee Chair and the SCICU President will work with the full Committee, an Ad Hoc Committee, the Executive Committee, or individual Board members and Presidents, as appropriate, to marshal the resources of the independent college community to address the particular issue.

Legislative Priorities

1. SC Higher Education Tuition Grants Program

- 1.1. Support the FY 2010-11 budget request of the South Carolina Higher Education Tuition Grant Commission for an additional \$1,686,843. This figure represents increased funding commensurate with the 3.6% increase in Higher Education Price Index for the past year. If funded, the maximum award will increase from \$2700 to \$2800 based on 14,900 recipients.
- 1.2. If new state revenues are not sufficient to increase the Commission's budget for FY 2011 to the requested level, advocate for funding at levels no less than those established in the FY 2010 and FY 2009 budgets.
- 1.3. Resist all efforts to reduce appropriations allocated to higher education needed-based grants and merit scholarships from the levels established in the previous year's budget.

1.4. Resist all efforts to amend the statute that exempts tuition grants and other scholarships from mid-year budget cuts.

2. PASCAL (Partnership Among SC's Academic Libraries)

2.1. Support CHE's \$2.0 million budget request to restore full funding to PASCAL.

(Note: PASCAL is a partnership among public and private higher education academic libraries that promotes and enables all the partners to exchange resources through a central electronic card catalogue and delivery system. PASCAL also operates a purchasing consortium that negotiates reduced costs for subscriptions to electronic journals. SCICU members benefit from the expanded resources and cost efficiencies of PASCAL, elements essential for maintaining accreditation.)

3. Need-based Scholarships

3.1. Support the budget request of the Commission on Higher Education for an increase in need-based scholarships. The Tuition Grants Commission receives approximately 18% of the need-based appropriation to CHE to be used for tuition grants. The 18% relates to the proportion of students attending independent colleges and universities compared to the number attending public higher education institutions

4. Merit-based Scholarships

4.1. Advocate for full funding of Palmetto Fellows, LIFE, HOPE, and Lottery Tuition Assistance scholarships to all eligible students to include both lottery and general fund appropriations

Strategic Activities

December 2009

- Meet with Campus Legislative Coordinators (December 9)
 - Plan and implement student letter writing campaign
 - Plan for Independent Higher Education Day (April 14)
- Encourage member institutions to hold "Thank You" events on campus to build and maintain relationships with Legislative delegations
- Review pre-filed legislation

January 2010

- Session begins January 12 and ends June 3
- Meet with key House and Senate members and Governor's Office staff to provide advance explanations of related budget issues
 - Chairman of House Ways & Means Committee
 - Chairman of Ways & Means Subcommittee on Higher Education
 - Chairman of Senate Finance Committee
 - Chairman of Finance Subcommittee on Higher Education
 - Chairman of the House Education & Public Works Committee
 - Chairman of the Senate Education Committee

- Republican and Democratic Party Leadership
- Governor's Fiscal and/or Education advisor
- Monitor and track legislation for bills of interest
- Request Governor's designation of Independent Higher Education Week/Day (April 12-16)
- Legislative committees to be monitored include:
 - House: Ways & Means Committee; Education & Public Works Committee
 - Senate: Finance Committee; Education Committee
- Meet with House Ways & Means Committee staff to review budget requests
- Support the Tuition Grants Commission budget request before the Ways & Means Subcommittee
- Support relevant portions of the Commission on Higher Education before the Ways & Means Subcommittee
- Meet with individual Subcommittee members to discuss request
- Monitor all House and Senate session activity
- Meet with individual Legislators as needed

February

- Hold SCICU Public Policy Committee meeting
- Meet with Senate Finance Committee staff to review budget requests
- Monitor House Ways & Means Committee budget activity
- Monitor all House and Senate session activity
- Meet with individual Legislators as needed

March

- Monitor House budget activity
- Support the Tuition Grants Commission budget request before the Senate Finance Subcommittee
- Support relevant portions of the Commission of Higher Education before the Senate Finance Subcommittee
- Meet with individual subcommittee members to discuss requests
- Monitor Senate Finance Committee budget activity
- Monitor all House and Senate session activity
- Meet with individual Legislators as needed

April

- Independent Higher Education Week (April 12-16)
 - Banquet for Excellence in Teaching Award recipients (April 13)
 - Students visit to the Statehouse (April 14)
- Monitor Senate Finance Committee budget activity
- Monitor all House and Senate session activity
- Meet with individual Legislators as needed

May

- Monitor Senate budget activity

- Monitor Conference Committee budget activity
- Monitor all House and Senate session activity
- Meet with individual Legislators as needed

June (Session concludes June 3)

- Monitor Conference Committee budget activity
- Monitor all House and Senate session activity
- Make final Legislative Report to Public Policy Committee and Board of Trustees

July – August

- Make visits and send thank you notes to Legislators that were particularly helpful during session

September – November

- Review SCICU Legislative Strategic Plan for 2010
- Prepare priorities and strategy for 2011 session
- Public Policy Committee meets

December

- Meet with Campus Legislative Coordinators
- Evaluate Budget Requests for relevant state agencies to determine issues in need of SCICU support.
- Meet with key House and Senate members and Governor's office to provide advance explanations of related budget issues
 - Chairman of House Ways & Means Committee
 - Chairman of Ways & Means Subcommittee on Higher Education
 - Chairman of Senate Finance Committee
 - Chairman of Finance Subcommittee on Higher Education
 - Chairman of the House Education & Public Works Committee
 - Chairman of the Senate Education Committee
 - Republican and Democratic Party Leadership
 - Governor's Fiscal and/or Education advisor
- Review pre-filed legislation for bills of interest