



SCICU Legislative Strategic Plan – 2012

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 state matters under review will include: 1) general and special appropriations for student grants and scholarships, 2) legislation related to higher education, postsecondary students, and non-profit organizations, and 3) education-related public policy issues before state agencies and commissions.

Within the context of this legislative plan, SCICU staff will monitor, advocate, 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 the Advocacy Section of the SCICU website (www.scicu.org/advocacy), newsletters, special e-mail alerts, and regular meetings. In the event of an issue requiring immediate action, the Public Policy Committee Chair and the SCICU President will work with the full committee, an ad hoc committee, the SCICU Executive Committee, or individual board members and college and university presidents, as appropriate, to marshal the resources of the independent college community to address the particular issue.

Legislative Priorities

1.0 South Carolina Higher Education Tuition Grants Program

1.1 Support the FY 2012-13 budget request of the South Carolina Higher Education Tuition Grants Commission for an additional \$3,551,563. This figure represents increased funding commensurate with the .9% increase in the Higher Education Price Index for 2010 and includes a projected increase of eligible students of 5%. If funded, the maximum award will increase from \$2600 to \$2630.

1.2 If new state revenues are not sufficient to increase the Commission's budget for FY 2012-13 to the requested level, advocate for funding at levels no less than those established in the FY 2012, FY 2011, FY 2010, and FY 2009 budgets.

1.3 Resist all efforts to reduce or cap appropriations allocated to higher education need-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.

2.0 Merit-based Scholarships

2.1 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.

3.0 Need-based Scholarships

3.1 Support the budget request of the Commission on Higher Education to maintain funding for need-based scholarships at least at the current FY 2011-12 funding level and increase to the extent possible.

(Note: The Tuition Grants Commission receives approximately 16% of the need-based appropriation to CHE to be used for tuition grants. The 16% relates to the proportion of students attending independent colleges and universities compared to the number attending public higher education institutions).

4.0 PASCAL (Partnership Among South Carolina Academic Libraries)

4.1 Support CHE's budget request to restore core funding to PASCAL.

4.2 If new state revenues are not sufficient to restore core funding to PASCAL, advocate for funding at the current level of \$164,289 in general appropriations and up to \$1.5 million as a first priority in surplus unclaimed lottery prize funds.

(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).

Strategic Activities

November 2011

- Meet with Public Policy Committee (November 10)

December 2011

- Meet with Campus Legislative Coordinators (December 14)
 - Plan and implement student letter writing campaign
 - Plan for Independent Higher Education Day (April 11, 2012)
 - Encourage member institutions to hold "Thank You" events on campus to build and maintain relationships with Legislative delegations
- Review pre-filed legislation and carry-over legislation

January 2012

- Session begins January 10 and ends June 1
- Meet with key House and Senate members and Governor's Office staff to provide advance explanations of related budget issues
 - Chairman of House Ways and Means Committee
 - Chairman of Ways and Means Subcommittee on Higher Education
 - Chairman of Senate Finance Committee
 - Chairman of Finance Subcommittee on Higher Education
 - Chairman of the House Education and Public Works Committee
 - Chairman of the Senate Education Committee
 - Republican and Democratic party leadership
 - Governor's fiscal and/or education advisors
- Monitor and track legislation for bills of interest
- Request Governor's designation of Independent Higher Education Week/Day (April 9 - 13)
- Request Concurrent Resolution for Independent Higher Education Week/Day (April 9 - 13)
- Legislative committees to be monitored include:
 - House: Ways and Means Committee; Education and Public Works Committee
 - Senate: Finance Committee; Education Committee
- Meet with House Ways and Means Committee staff to review budget requests
- Support the Tuition Grants Commission budget request before the Ways and Means Subcommittee on Higher Education
- Support relevant portions of the Commission on Higher Education budget request before the Ways and Means Subcommittee on Higher Education
- Meet with individual subcommittee members to discuss requests
- Monitor all House and Senate session activity
- Meet with individual legislators as needed

February 2012

- Meet with Senate Finance Committee staff to review budget requests
- Monitor House Ways and Means Committee budget activity
- Monitor all House and Senate session activity
- Meet with individual legislators as needed

March 2012

- Hold SCICU Public Policy Committee meeting
- Monitor House budget activity
- Support the Tuition Grants Commission budget request before the Senate Finance Subcommittee on Higher Education
- Support relevant portions of the Commission of Higher Education budget request before the Senate Finance Subcommittee on Higher Education
- 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 2012

- Independent Higher Education Week (April 9-13)
 - Dinner for Excellence in Teaching Award recipients (April 10)
 - Presidents invite local legislators to dinner
 - Students visit to the Statehouse (April 11)
 - Present SCICU Legislative Champion Award
- Monitor Senate Finance Committee budget activity
- Monitor all House and Senate session activity
- Meet with individual legislators as needed

May 2012

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

June 2012

- Monitor Conference Committee budget activity
- Monitor all House and Senate session activity
- Session ends June 1
- Make final Legislative Report to Public Policy Committee and Board of Trustees

July – August 2012

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

September – November 2012

- Review SCICU Legislative Strategic Plan for 2012
- Prepare priorities and strategy for 2013 session