



South Carolina Independent Colleges & Universities 2016 Legislative Priorities and Quick Facts

Legislative Priorities

1.0 South Carolina Higher Education Tuition Grants Program

- 1.1 Support the FY 2016-2017 budget request of the South Carolina Higher Education Tuition Grants Commission for an additional \$2.53 million. If funded at the new level, the maximum student award will be increased from \$3,100 to \$3,200.
- 1.2 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.

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 annualize \$4.54 million in increased support for need-based student aid.

4.0 PASCAL (Partnership Among South Carolina Academic Libraries)

- 4.1 Support CHE's budget request for \$1.5 million in additional recurring funds for PASCAL. PASCAL was funded at the \$2.0 million level prior to the FY 2008-2009 recession. Since that time, PASCAL has received inconsistent funding from surplus unclaimed lottery prize money.
- 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 excess unclaimed lottery prize funds.

5.0 SARA (State Reauthorization Reciprocity Agreement)

- 5.1 Work with public colleges and universities to amend the statutory authority of the Commission on Higher Education to allow CHE to serve as the portal agency for SARA, a national agreement that will allow qualified in-state higher education institutions to provide on-line courses in other states without applying and paying for individual out-of-state licenses.

6.0 Federal Higher Education Issues

- 6.1 Support the agenda of the National Association of Independent Colleges and Universities in the broad areas of student aid funding, regulations, and higher education policy with particular emphasis on the reauthorization of the Higher Education Act.

Talking Points

- Thank you for continued support; explain why grants/scholarships are important
- Independent institutions provide opportunities that may not be available from public institutions. (i.e. size, location, major, financial assistance, religious affiliation, cultural preference, values-based education)
- Independent institutions are a significant contributor to the state's economy in terms of existing industry, education of citizenry, economic development, and workforce preparation.
- If South Carolina did not have independent higher education opportunities, many of the 22,000 in-state undergraduate students would either: (a) leave South Carolina for college, (b) not attend college, or (c) attend one of our public colleges at an increased cost to tax payers.
- Independent colleges help to raise the state's per capita income and attract investment by providing sufficient in-state educational opportunities to be able to retain the best and brightest students without the capital costs of building more public dormitories and classrooms and hiring additional state employees.
- Average Tuition Grant = \$2,672; Average state appropriation per public college student = \$3,537 (AY 2014-15)

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SCICU Member Institution

20 non-profit, liberal arts institutions domiciled in South Carolina and accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools

Fall 2014 Enrollment

Total Undergraduates (25% of state's 4 year enrollment)	30,977
Total Graduate students	2,834
South Carolina Residents-Undergraduate	22,613
Undergraduates receiving state financial aid:	21,447
Percent of all students receiving financial aid:	95%

South Carolina Tuition Grants Program

This need-based grant program was created in 1971 to help offset the difference in tuition between public and private institutions. While the award is invaluable to students, the relative value has declined over time. In FY 2008-09, 12,801 South Carolina residents received an average award of \$3,006 to attend an in-state independent college. In FY 2014-2015, 13,358 South Carolina residents received an average award of \$2,672. The average state general fund per student appropriation to attend a public college in FY 2014-15 was \$3,537—24.5% greater than the average need-based tuition grant during the same period.

	<u>2008-09*</u>	<u>2014-15</u>
Total Available Tuition Grants Funding (excl. Admin.)	\$38,474,871	\$36,095,796
Number of Students Served	12,801	13,358
Average Tuition Grant Award	\$ 3,006	\$ 2,672
% Tuition Covered by Tuition Grant	16.0%	11.8%

*Highest average award in the history of the program

The independent colleges and universities are doing their part to keep the cost of college affordable. In FY 2013-2014, thirty-five percent (\$247 million) of student financial assistance from all sources was awarded directly by the institutions.

Merit-based Scholarships (Palmetto Fellows, LIFE, HOPE, and Lottery Tuition Assistance)

The state's merit-based scholarship programs—Palmetto Fellows, LIFE, HOPE, and Lottery Tuition Assistance—are fully funded (\$325 million) for FY 2015-16 with a combination of lottery proceeds (\$270 million) and general fund appropriations (\$45 million). Students attending one of the independent colleges and universities receive approximately 14% of the scholarship awards. SCICU supports funding of the merit scholarships at the full statutory levels.

Partnership Among South Carolina's Academic Libraries (PASCAL)

PASCAL is a consortium of South Carolina's public and private academic libraries. PASCAL fosters cooperation on a broad range of issues including:

- Electronic Resources – Tens of thousands of core academic journals in electronic form
- PASCAL Delivers – Millions of books available for next day delivery
- Digital Libraries and Scholarship – Coordinated access to electronic resources of all types

PASCAL lost over 90% of its budget in FY 2008 and is currently funded at \$164,289. SCICU supports the Commission on Higher Education in its effort to restore \$1.5 million of core funding to PASCAL or maintain PASCAL's priority for excess unclaimed lottery prize funds.