Primary Legislative Priorities

1. South Carolina Higher Education Tuition Grants Program
   Support the FY 2019-2020 budget request of the South Carolina Higher Education Tuition Grants Commission for an additional $1.903 million for grants. If funded at the new level, the maximum student award will increase from $3,300 to $3,450.

2. Merit-based Scholarships
   Support full funding of Palmetto Fellows, LIFE, HOPE, and Lottery Tuition Assistance scholarships to all eligible students to include both lottery and general fund appropriations (2018 = $320 million).

3. Need-based Scholarships
   Support the budget request of the Commission on Higher Education for an increase of $1.5 million in recurring state general funds for need-based grants.

Talking Points

- Independent colleges help 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; except for a special statutory program, independent colleges do not receive direct state appropriations.

- Independent institutions provide excellent opportunities for personal choice that may not be available at public institutions (i.e. size, location, personal attention, major, financial assistance, religious affiliation, cultural preference, values-based education).

- Independent colleges award more than $252 million in institutional scholarships each year, exceeding state financial aid by more than 3:1; private colleges are deeply invested in the success of each of their students.

- If SC did not have independent higher education opportunities, many of the 21,000 in-state undergraduate students at SCICU schools 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 of approximately $826 per student.

Background

- Tuition Grants are need-based grants available to SC residents attending a SC private non-profit college or university (AY 2017-2018 = $39.8 million for 13,604 students) [Includes non-SCICU member Bob Jones University]

- Average Tuition Grant (AY 2017-18) = $2,906; Average state appropriation per public college student = $3,732; It costs the state approximately $826 more per year to send a student to a public college ($826 x 13,604 students = $11.2 million in annual savings).

- Students attending independent colleges also qualify for merit scholarships (AY 2016-2017 = $46.2 million for 9,276 students) [Includes non-SCICU member Bob Jones University]