



## **SCICU Legislative Strategic Plan – 2019**

The primary objective of the South Carolina Independent Colleges and Universities Legislative Strategic Plan is to advance the missions of the member institutions by establishing an agenda and course of action for a program of education and advocacy before the Governor’s Office, General Assembly, and state agencies.

Relevant state matters under review 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 strategic 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 (NAICU) 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](http://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 coordinate the resources of the independent college community to address the particular issue.

### **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

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. 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.

Note: The Tuition Grants Commission receives approximately 16.5% of the need-based appropriation to CHE to be used for tuition grants. The 16.5% relates to the proportion of students attending independent colleges and universities compared to the number of students attending public higher education institutions. The Tuition Grants Commission would receive an additional \$247,500 if CHE is successful in its request.

## 4. PASCAL (Partnership Among South Carolina Academic Libraries)

Support CHE's budget request for \$1.5 million in recurring state general 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 the state education lottery. If new state revenues are not sufficient to restore core funding to PASCAL, advocate funding \$1.5 million as a first priority in excess unclaimed lottery prize funds or similar line item.

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 and publications. SCICU members benefit from the expanded resources and cost efficiencies of PASCAL, elements essential for maintaining accreditation.

## 5. Higher Education Opportunity Act

Sen. Sheheen at the end of the 2018 session introduced the "Higher Education Opportunity Act," which impacts state support of the public colleges and universities, the Tuition Grants Program and the allocation of state merit scholarships. This extensive legislation:

- Increases the Tuition Grants Program by no less than \$19 million over the first three years this law is in effect.
- Creates a "Higher Education Opportunity Trust Fund," which will be funded from the dedication allocation of future Internet tax revenues. The Fund will be distributed to public universities for need-based scholarships (10%) and "to fund the costs of the various institutions for educating South Carolinians." Once the Fund reaches \$125 million, the monies will be allocated. In the first year public universities must cap tuition, and in subsequent years hold tuition increases to the HEPI.

- Creates for public institutions the “Higher Education Facilities Repair and Renovation Fund,” supported by a required annual appropriation of 40% of the capital reserve fund and at least \$25 million.
- Returns the state to the 7-point high school grade scale, limits annual funding increases for merit scholarships to HEPI, but no greater than 2.75%, and limits STEM supplements to juniors and seniors.
- Requires public institutions to administer a “Student Loan Default Aversion and Financial Literacy Program” that will be developed for the state by a vendor selected through the procurement code.

#### 6. Dual Enrollment

At the recent SCICU Board of Trustees meeting at Presbyterian College on September 26, 2018, Dr. Mark Smith, President of Columbia International University (CIU), noted the potential of dual enrollment, through which high school juniors and seniors take college classes that count both toward their high school graduation and college attendance, to generate revenue and increase enrollment. Currently dual enrollment is only available to students attending the 16 technical colleges. Dr. Voss stated that the college presidents would like for SCICU to investigate expanding dual enrollment in South Carolina.

7. Work for passage of specific bills that would benefit SC independent colleges and protect the interests of independent colleges by opposing bills that would be harmful.

#### 8. Federal Higher Education Issues

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

### **Legislative Activities**

#### November 2018

- Support the efforts of the college and university presidents to host campus meetings with members of their legislative delegations
- Meet with Public Policy Committee (November 20)
- Review the materials discussed at the NAICU Fall Leadership Meeting (November 14-16) for federal legislative and policy briefings

December 2018

- Meet with Campus Legislative Coordinators (December 7)
  - Plan and implement student letter writing campaign
  - Plan for Independent Higher Education Day (April 10, 2019)
  - Encourage member institutions to hold “Thank You” events on campus to build and maintain relationships with Legislative delegations
- Review pre-filed legislation

January 2019

- Session begins January 8 and ends May 9
- 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
- Send SCICU Annual Report for FY 2018 and cover letter to the Governor and members of the General Assembly
- Monitor and track legislation for Bills of Interest
- Request Governor’s designation by proclamation of Independent College and University Week/Day (April 8-12)
- Request Concurrent Resolution of the General Assembly for Independent College and University Week/Day (April 8-12)
- Legislative committees to be monitored include:
  - House: Ways and Means Committee; Education and Public Works Committee
  - Senate: Finance Committee; Education Committee
- Secure introductions of Jeff Perez to the legislative caucuses.
- 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 2019

- 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
- Attend NAICU Annual Meeting and coordinate Advocacy Fly-in Day for SCICU presidents. Meet with members of the South Carolina delegation (January-February)
- Hold SCICU Public Policy Committee meeting (February 20)

March 2019

- 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
- Coordinate federal activities with NAICU as needed

April 2019

- Independent College and University Week (April 8-12)
  - Dinner for Excellence in Teaching Award recipients (April 9)
    - Presidents invite local legislators to dinner
  - Students visit to the Statehouse (April 10)
    - Present SCICU Legislative Champion Award
    - Conclude Legislative Letter-Writing Campaign
- Monitor Senate Finance Committee budget activity
- Monitor all House and Senate session activity
- Meet with individual legislators as needed
- Coordinate federal activities with NAICU as needed

May 2019

- Monitor Conference Committee budget activity
- Monitor all House and Senate session activity
- Meet with individual legislators as needed
- Coordinate federal activities with NAICU as needed
- Session ends May 9, unless otherwise extended
- Make final Legislative Report to Public Policy Committee and Board of Trustees
- Coordinate federal activities with NAICU as needed

June - August 2019

- Make visits and send thank you notes to legislators that were particularly helpful during session
- Send 2019 SCICU College Guide to the Governor and members of the General Assembly

September – November 2019

- Review SCICU Legislative Strategic Plan for 2020
- Prepare priorities and strategy for 2020 session
- Meet with SCICU Public Policy Committee
- Coordinate federal activities with NAICU as needed

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