



SC Higher Education Tuition Grants Commission

Providing Opportunity. Promoting Choice.

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Katherine H. Harrison
Executive Director

MINUTES

South Carolina Higher Education Tuition Grants Commission Meeting
Monday, July 31, 2023
Special Commission Meeting Teleconference Call
Columbia, South Carolina

Commission Members Participating via Conference Call:

Dr. Boone Hopkins, Converse University, Chair
Dr. Gene Fant, North Greenville University, Vice Chair
Dr. Lester McCorn, Clinton College, Secretary
Dr. Michael Bryant, Interim President, Charleston Southern University
Dr. Buz Wilcoxon, Acting President, Presbyterian College
Dr. Nayef Samhat, Wofford College
Ms. Hannah Craig, proxy for Dr. William Barker, Southern Wesleyan University
Ms. Laura Belcher, proxy for Dr. Rusty Monhollon, SC Commission on Higher Education, Ex-officio

Commission Members Absent:

Dr. Maurice Scherrens, Newberry College

Non-Commission Member College Presidents Participating:

Dr. John Dozier, Columbia College
Dr. Ronnie Hopkins, Voorhees University

Dr. Boone Hopkins, Commission Chair, called the meeting to order at 10:03 AM. Dr. Hopkins welcomed all in attendance and requested a roll call of the Commission Members participating via conference call. Ms. Katie Harrison, Commission Executive Director, informed participants the meeting is being held in compliance with the Freedom of Information Act, welcomed all in attendance and conducted a roll call of the Commission Members participating via conference call. Ms. Harrison confirmed all participating Commission Members in attendance and noted that Ms. Hannah Craig is serving as proxy for Dr. William Barker, Southern Wesleyan University, and Ms. Laura Belcher is serving as proxy for Dr. Rusty Monhollon, SC Commission on Higher Education. A quorum was established. Ms. Harrison recognized and welcomed the non-Commission members in attendance.

Dr. Hopkins explained the reason for this special-called Commission Meeting is to discuss the freshman academic requirements, as well as an increase to the Maximum Award Amount. Dr. Hopkins called upon Mr. Zachary Christian, Commission Deputy Director, to present the staff recommendation regarding Freshman Academic Requirements. Mr. Christian explained the current Freshman Academic Requirements as needing to meet one of four academic markers to qualify. State statute requires that all students must show "academic merit," but does not specify how that must be met. The staff recommendation for the change to the Freshman Academic Requirements would benefit an average of over 75 students annually, while also meeting the requirements of State statute. Mr. Christian presented the recommendation to change the Freshman Academic Requirement to read as follows:

Incoming freshman who are admitted as degree-seeking students based on the college's academic requirements for admission, and who have obtained a high school diploma or its equivalent (GED or Adult Education Diploma) shall be considered academically eligible for South Carolina Tuition Grants.

Dr. Hopkins called for a motion to vote to accept the changes to the Freshman Academic Requirements. Dr. Lester McCorn, Commission Secretary moved to approve the changes. Dr. Buz Wilcoxon, Presbyterian College seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Dr. Hopkins called upon Ms. Harrison to present the staff recommendation regarding the Maximum South Carolina Tuition Grants Amount for 2023-2024. Ms. Harrison announced, based on carry-forward funds currently available, and following the established awarding philosophy of equalized grant values, the staff recommends an increase of the Maximum Grant from \$4,700 to \$4,800 for the 2023-2024 Award Year. Dr. Hopkins pointed out that an increase in the Maximum Grant amount would have a greater impact for the students, and does not overspend current funding predictions. Dr. Hopkins called for a motion to vote on the increase of the Maximum Grant amount. Dr. Nayef Samhat, Wofford College, moved to approve the change, and Dr. Wilcoxon seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Dr. Hopkins asked if there was any old business to discuss, and with there being none, moved on to new business. Ms. Harrison announced an in-person meeting and training for financial aid administrators is to be held Wednesday, August 2, 2023, at Presbyterian College. The meeting's purpose is to give a brief update and training with a demonstration of the upcoming student information system "myTG" given by Ms. Becca Graham, IT Manager for Nelnet Diversified Services/GrantPro.

Dr. Hopkins reminded everyone that the scheduled Commission Meetings for 2024 are March 12, 2024, and June 18, 2024.

Dr. Hopkins called for any other new business. There being none, Dr. Hopkins adjourned the meeting at 10:23 AM.

Respectfully submitted,

Mrs. Kira Demery
Acting Secretary for
Dr. Lester McCorn, Secretary
South Carolina Higher Education Tuition Grants Commission