



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
Tuesday, April 16, 2024
Special Commission Virtual Meeting
Columbia, South Carolina

Commission Members Participating:

Dr. Boone Hopkins, Converse University, Chair
Dr. Gene Fant, North Greenville University, Vice Chair
Dr. Anita Gustafson, Presbyterian College
Dr. Chad Stutz as Proxy for Dr. William Barker, Southern Wesleyan University
Dr. Nayef Samhat, Wofford College

Commission Members Absent:

Dr. Maurice Scherrens, Newberry College
Dr. Lester McCorn, Clinton College, Secretary
Mr. Keith Faulkner, Charleston Southern University
Dr. Gregory Little, SC Commission on Higher Education, Ex-officio

Non-Commission Member College Presidents Participating:

Mr. Jeremy Whitaker, Limestone University
Dr. Roslyn Artis, Benedict College

Dr. Boone Hopkins, Commission Chair, called the meeting to order at 10:32 AM. Dr. Hopkins welcomed all in attendance and announced a delay in conducting a roll call of the Commission Members participating until before the action items, due to not having a quorum. Ms. Katie Harrison, Commission Executive Director, informed participants the meeting is being held in compliance with the Freedom of Information Act, and welcomed all in attendance.

Dr. Hopkins called upon Mr. Zachary Christian, Commission Deputy Director, to present the update on the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) Processing. Mr. Christian noted on March 11, 2024, the Agency received its first 2024-2025 Institutional Student Identification Record (ISIR) file, containing FAFSA data for 11 South Carolina Residents. Mr. Christian gave an overview of the numerous delays and errors by the U.S. Department of Education as part of the rollout of the new FAFSA. While the Commission has begun receiving student FAFSA records (ISIRs) on a daily basis, filings are still down significantly over last year due to continuing issues and problems with the form. Mr. Christian also reported that Commission Staff recently identified an issue with the order in which a student lists their college choices on the FAFSA not being delivered to state agencies correctly, which is impacting multiple states. Mr. Christian explained the U.S. Department of Education stated this issue was addressed quickly with a fix put in place prior to the meeting of the Commission. Mr. Christian announced the Agency is waiting to hear whether it will receive updated files for the students who filed prior to the implementation of the fix.

Dr. Hopkins called upon Ms. Harrison to present the Review of Available and Anticipated Funds for the South Carolina Tuition Grants Program. Ms. Harrison provided an overview of how the Commission receives funding for the Program through both General/Recurring State dollars and Lottery allocations throughout the fiscal

year, and explained that due to the pattern of receiving over half of the Program's lottery-related funding after all annual grants have been disbursed to students, the Commission estimates it will carry forward nearly \$39,000,000 in available funding from fiscal year 2024 into fiscal year 2025. However, Ms. Harrison explained these funds will be used during the Fall 2024 semester to allow the Commission to fully disburse Tuition Grants to eligible students without delay.

Dr. Hopkins requested the roll call be conducted prior to commencing the discussion of the Staff Recommendation for 2024-2025 Award Amounts. Ms. Harrison conducted a roll call of the Commission Members participating via conference call. Ms. Harrison confirmed all participating Commission Members in attendance and noted that Dr. Chad Stutz is serving as proxy for Dr. William Barker, Southern Wesleyan University. A quorum was established. Ms. Harrison recognized and welcomed the non-Commission members in attendance.

Dr. Hopkins called upon Ms. Harrison to present the staff recommendation of maintaining the initial 2024-2025 award amounts. Ms. Harrison described the continuing problems with the FAFSA rollout and the unknown impact the problems will have upon eligibility and enrollment. Due to these ongoing concerns, the staff recommendation for the 2024-2025 Award Amounts is to retain the previously approved Maximum Grant for 2024-2025 at \$4,800 at all institutions and across all programs. A vote of the Commission was not required for this item, since there was no recommended change to the award amount for the upcoming year.

Dr. Hopkins requested Ms. Harrison review the Program Review Requirements discussion, which was had at the March 12, 2024, Commission Meeting and tabled for further discussion when additional data could be presented. After reviewing the discussion points from the March meeting, Ms. Harrison presented data concerning the colleges which would have an impact if the suggested change of requiring a range of between six and twenty percent of student records be selected by the audit firms for the Program Review annual process was enacted. Following discussion amongst the Commission members and other participating college presidents, Dr. Hopkins called for a motion to approve a change in the Program Review Requirements. Dr. Gene Fant, Commission Vice Chair moved to change the verbiage in the Program Review Guide regarding the statistical random sampling size to state a required range of between six and twenty percent, with six percent being the required minimum percentage of awardees selected for review. Dr. Anita Gustafson, Presbyterian College, seconded the motion. There was no further discussion. Dr. Hopkins put the motion to a vote which passed unanimously.

Dr. Hopkins asked if there was other old business to discuss, and with there being none, moved on to new business, of which there was none.

Dr. Hopkins reminded everyone that the next scheduled Commission Meeting is June 25, 2024 at 10:30 AM.

Dr. Hopkins adjourned the meeting at 11:16 AM.

Respectfully submitted,

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