

REVIEW OF THE 2017-2018 STATE BUDGET REQUEST FOR FUNDING OF THE SOUTH CAROLINA TUITION GRANTS PROGRAM

At the June 2016 South Carolina Tuition Grants Commission Meeting, the Commission approved the budget request to be sent to the State Budget Office for funding of the South Carolina Tuition Grants Program for the 2017-2018 fiscal year. The Commission submitted documents in September 2016 requesting \$5,282,886 in 2017-2018 to increase the program-wide maximum grant by \$450 to \$3,650.

If current year lottery funds flowing to the South Carolina Tuition Grants Program are renewed in 2017-18, an increase of \$4,422,031 is projected as actually needed to increase the maximum grant to \$3,650. This adjusted projection was based on conservative estimates including the actual awardees for Fall 2016 and a one-half (0.5%) increase in eligible students for 2017-18. Additionally, the Commission's Budget Request included a request to fund the agency's increased annual expenses of \$16,000 to insure compliance with the State-mandated Information Security standards and requirements.

The 2017 General Assembly convened on January 10 to begin the legislative year for the State of South Carolina. The South Carolina Tuition Grants Commission appeared before the Higher Education Subcommittee of the House Ways and Means Committee on the first day of session, **Tuesday, January 10, 2017**, in Columbia, before the Legislative Session convened. For 2017, the Higher Education Subcommittee is chaired by Ways and Means Committee Chairman, Representative Brian White (Anderson). He is joined on the subcommittee by Representative Gilda Cobb-Hunter (Orangeburg) and Representative Mike Sottile (Charleston). The full House Ways and Means Committee met in late February to approve budget recommendations to pass to the full House which has now taken up the State Budget. The Commission appeared before the Senate Finance Higher Education Subcommittee on **Wednesday, March 1, 2017**. For 2017, the Senate Finance Higher Education Subcommittee is chaired by Senator John Courson (Lexington-Richland). He is joined on the subcommittee by Senator John Scott (Richland), Senator Darrell Jackson (Richland), Senator Paul Campbell (Berkeley-Charleston-Dorchester), and Senator Shane Martin (Greenville-Spartanburg-Union).

Governor Nikki Haley released her 2017-2018 Executive Budget in January prior to her confirmation as United Nations Ambassador. The Governor's Budget recommended no funding increases for the Tuition Grants Program. The House Ways & Means Committee has approved and submitted to the full House a budget which also has no funding increase for Tuition Grants and an increase of \$16,000 to permanently fund additional expenses needed to meet State-mandated Information Security requirements.