



Katherine H. Harrison  
 Executive Director

## AGENDA

Tuesday, March 14, 2023; 10:30 A.M.

**Zoom Web Conference: Meeting ID: 856 4049 2347; Passcode: 432831**

If needed, attendees may dial in using any of the numbers below:

1-312-626-6799

1-929-205-6099

1-301-715-8592

Meeting ID: 856 4049 2347

1. Welcome and Commission Roll Call..... Katie Harrison
2. \* Approval of Minutes of June 21, 2022 Commission Meeting..... Scott Cochran, Chair
3. Final Report on 2021-2022 Program Reviews..... Katie Harrison
4. Update on the 2022-2023 Award Year..... Zach Christian
5. Agency Updates and Initiatives..... Katie Harrison  
*Staff Updates, New System Update, FAFSA Simplification, House Legislative Oversight*
6. SCICU Letter Writing Campaign Update..... Eddie Shannon
7. Review of 2023-2024 Budget Request..... Katie Harrison
8. 2023 Legislative Outlook..... Jeff Perez
9. \* Staff Recommendation: Mission and Vision Statement Updates..... Katie Harrison
10. \* Staff Recommendation: Change to Non-Traditional ..... Zach Christian  
 Calendar Program Eligibility
11. \* Staff Recommendation: Initial 2023-2024 Award Amounts..... Katie Harrison
12. Reminder: State Ethics Forms for SCTG Commission Members..... Scott Cochran, Chair  
**Due March 30**
13. New Business..... Scott Cochran, Chair
14. Adjournment..... Scott Cochran, Chair  
***Next Scheduled Commission Meeting..... Tuesday; June 20, 2023; 10:30 AM***

**\* Commission Vote or Action Needed**

*In compliance with the Freedom of Information Act, the Higher Education Tuition Grants Commission notified media outlets of the time and location of this meeting on March 8, 2023.*



# SC Higher Education Tuition Grants Commission

*Providing Opportunity. Promoting Choice.*

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## MINUTES

South Carolina Higher Education Tuition Grants Commission Meeting  
Tuesday, June 21, 2022  
Teleconference Call  
Columbia, South Carolina

### Commission Members Participating via Conference Call:

Dr. Darrell Parker, Limestone University, Chair  
Mr. Scott Cochran, Spartanburg Methodist College, Vice Chair  
Dr. Leroy Staggers, Morris College, Secretary  
Dr. Ronnie Hopkins, Voorhees University  
Dr. Rusty Monhollon, CHE President and Executive Director, Ex-officio

### Commission Members Absent:

Dr. Dondi Costin, Charleston Southern University  
Dr. Steven Adamson, Erskine College  
Dr. Maurice Scherrens, Newberry College  
Dr. Nayef Samhat, Wofford College

### Non-Commission Member College Presidents Participating:

Dr. Tom Bogart, Columbia College  
Dr. Elizabeth Davis, Furman University  
Dr. Lester Agyei McCorn, Clinton College

Dr. Darrell Parker, Commission Chair, called the meeting to order at 10:30 AM. Ms. Katie Harrison, Commission Executive Director, informed participants the meeting is being recorded 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 and Non-Commission Member College Presidents in attendance. A quorum was established.

Dr. Parker called for a motion to approve the March 15, 2022, Commission Minutes. Dr. Ronnie Hopkins moved to approve the Minutes and Mr. Scott Cochran seconded the motion. The motion was approved unanimously.

Dr. Parker called on Ms. Harrison to report on Agency Updates. Ms. Harrison indicated Commission Staff have noticed positive outcomes from the decisions of the March 2022 Commission Meeting, specifically the allowance of 5<sup>th</sup> Year Grant Appeals. It was noted that the handful of 5<sup>th</sup> Year Grant Appeals submitted, most of these students are working toward degrees in intensive majors, such as Nursing. Ms. Harrison stated the full impact of the changes made at the March meeting will be realized at the conclusion of the 2022-2023 Award Year, when a full comparison can be made over the previous Award Year.

Ms. Harrison reported Ms. Monique Lemmon, Commission Program Coordinator, and Ms. Gena Miles, Commission Financial Officer, recently attended the State's personnel training for 7-Habits of Highly Effective People. Ms. Lemmon & Ms. Miles will also be completing Data Privacy training, offered by the Department of

Administration's (Admin) Division of Technology Operations (DTO), online in the coming weeks. Ms. Harrison thanked the Commission for its support in the Agency's initiatives to attend professional development opportunities provided by the State. Ms. Harrison also announced that Mr. Zachary Christian, Commission Deputy Director, is serving as an instructor at the Southern Association of Student Financial Aid Administrators' (SASFAA) 2022 New Aid Officer Workshop, which is being hosted at Wofford College.

Dr. Parker and Ms. Harrison honored Ms. Miles with a certificate in recognition of 45 years of dedication to the Agency. Ms. Miles started working with the Agency as an intern in high school and was offered full-time employment after graduation. Since then, Ms. Miles has played a vital role in ensuring students' funds are disbursed accurately and efficiently.

The Agency successfully completed the required state audit with the Office of the State Auditor. The audit reviews the Agency's internal processes over agency operations, such as accounting and the maintenance of personnel files. The Agency received a clean audit with no exceptions or findings for the 2021 Fiscal Year. Ms. Harrison thanked the Commission Staff for their assistance in preparing for the audit.

The Agency received notification from the State Division of Information Security and Enterprise Privacy Office for a 6-week Audit & Assessment Program to audit the Agency's information security procedures. The review was successfully completed. An official report is currently unavailable; however, the Agency received positive feedback regarding the work that has been done with such limited resources. Ms. Harrison will notify the Commission once an official report is received and if assistance is needed in making any information security decisions.

As President of the National Association for State Grant Aid Programs (NASSGAP), Ms. Harrison has the privilege to work alongside the State Higher Education Executive Officers Association (SHEEO) to implement a two-year plan to help State Agencies discuss and implement changes regarding the FAFSA Simplification Act. The kick-off for a Statewide Learning Community starts tomorrow. Nine states including South Carolina will participate in the learning community to determine impacts of the FAFSA Simplification Act and how states can best serve their students. Dr. Karen Woodfaulk, Commission on Higher Education (CHE) Director of Student Affairs Division, and her staff, along with Ms. Harrison and Mr. Christian will be in attendance to represent South Carolina.

The Agency has received a draft Request for Proposal (RFP) from the State Procurement Office. Ms. Harrison and Mr. Christian will make final updates to have the RFP submitted to the State Fiscal Accountability Authority for approval and begin the procurement process for the Agency's new student information system. Ms. Harrison anticipates a new system will be available for all Financial Aid Offices to use by Fall 2023.

Dr. Parker called on Mr. Christian to report on the 2021-2022 Award Year and provide an update on the 2022-2023 Award Year. The Agency has a current funding amount of \$53,600,000 for the 2021-2022 Award Year. As of today, the Agency has awarded and disbursed to over 11,200 students which is down 7% from the previous year. Mr. Christian reported that the Agency has noticed a 3.45% increase in 2022-2023 applications received in comparison to this time last year. Mr. Christian attributes this increase to the efforts of the Agency and the participating colleges and universities to strategically remind returning students to complete their applications prior to the June 30 deadline. With the 2022-2023 Maximum Tuition Grant amount being \$4,500 and the elimination of Non-Traditional program's Maximum Grant pro-rations, as approved at the March 2022 Commission meeting, the anticipated average grant for 2022-2023 is \$4,290. There were no questions.

Dr. Parker called on Dr. Jeffrey Perez, President and CEO of the South Carolina Independent Colleges and Universities (SCICU), to report on the Status on the 2022 Legislative Session. Dr. Perez looks forward to sharing with the General Assembly the Commission's efforts in being proactive in serving our students regarding the FAFSA Simplification Act. The General Assembly approved the preservation of the increased \$10,000,000 in Lottery funding for the Tuition Grants Commission, with a total budget appropriation of

\$54,400,000. Dr. Perez praised the 2022 Higher Education Day for creating a spirit of collaboration with the General Assembly. The General Assembly will return June 28, 2022, to address any Executive vetoes. No vetoes are expected to affect Higher Education. Dr. Perez provided additional observations in Legislative leadership changes. Representative Murrell Smith, Jr. was unanimously elected Speaker of the House. Representative Gary Simrill, former Chair of the House Education Committee, and a strong supporter of higher education, has retired. A replacement for Representative Simrill has not been announced at this time. Senator Ronnie Cromer is the Senate Higher Education Chair. Dr. Parker thanked Dr. Perez for his thorough review.

Dr. Parker called on Ms. Harrison to report on the 2023-2024 Budget Request to the Executive Budget Office. The Commission will request a continuation of \$10,000,000 in additional Lottery funding. No additional money is needed beyond that at this time. Given new funding received from Lottery is non-recurring, there are two different approaches the Commission can take when asking the General Assembly to maintain the increase in funding for the Program:

(1) Create a request for recurring general funds (State appropriations) in the requested amount. Using this approach, the Legislature will view the request as a monetary need to sustain the increased grant amount moving forward. If approved, this would create a more stable source of funding; however, if the amount is not available in recurring funds through general State appropriations, they could opt to provide the funding once again through Lottery allocations.

(2) Create an annual request for non-recurring funds in the requested amount as Lottery appropriations. According to Jake Scoggins, Senior Budget Analyst for Senate Finance, programs relying on Lottery appropriations should technically be asking for funds in this manner each year since they are considered non-recurring annual allocations. Some agencies currently take this approach while others do not. Since the Tuition Grants Commission began receiving a portion of its Program funding through Lottery allocations, it has always been considered a "given" that the Program would continue to receive a base amount in Lottery funding, although theoretically this pot of money is supposed to be treated with zero-based budget principles in mind.

Dr. Parker recommends the Commission request the amount of funding remains the same and that to the extent they are able, a portion of the funds be moved to recurring general funds. There were no suggestions or comments. Dr. Parker called for a motion to request that funding amounts for 2023-2024 be retained with a request to have a portion of Lottery moved to recurring funding. Dr. Ronnie Hopkins moved to accept the recommendation; the motion was seconded. Dr. Parker asked if there were any questions. There were none. The motion was approved unanimously.

Dr. Parker called on Mr. Christian to report on the Crescerance Contract for 2022-2023. The Tuition Grants Commission has contracted with Capitol Impact, a sole source legacy system by Crescerance, annually to provide geocoded listings of all South Carolina Tuition Grants recipients. This information is used in two ways. First, it is used to provide to each participating college a list of South Carolina Tuition Grants recipients attending their college with the corresponding South Carolina House member and South Carolina Senate member for each recipient that enables their participation in the SCICU Letter Writing Campaign (now exceeding 35 years). Second, it gives the Commission the ability to provide each state legislator information and a spreadsheet (via secure internet download) indicating the names of recipients from their legislative district with an estimated amount of total funds that those recipients receive in South Carolina Tuition Grants. The use of Capitol Impact to provide the geocoded listings has significantly helped the Commission to accurately communicate the impact of the South Carolina Tuition Grants Program to the State Legislature. The pricing upon contract renewal in November 2022 is \$2,500 for the annual license and the geocoding is \$650 for up to 43,000 records. The total cost will be \$3,150. Dr. Parker called for a motion to renew the Crescerance Contract for 2022-2023. Mr. Scott Cochran moved to approve the contract; Dr. Ronnie Hopkins seconded the motion. The motion was approved unanimously.

Dr. Parker called on Mr. Christian to review South Carolina Tuition Grants Program Reviews. All Program Reviews for the 2021-2022 Award Year are due to the Commission by December 31, 2022. Each college received a Preliminary version of the Auditor's Copy of the 2021-2022 Applicants Report in May; a report used by auditors when choosing the random selection of recipients at each college for the purposes of the review. Ms. Lemmon contacted each College and respective President to confirm their third-party audit firm in April. Mr. Christian thanked those in attendance for their swift response. All audit firms have received a copy of the 2021-2022 Program Review Guide. A final copy of the Applicants Report will be made available to each college on July 5<sup>th</sup>. Program Review reminder notices will be sent to colleges and their respective audit firm starting in October.

Dr. Parker reported on the 2021-2022 Agency Director Performance Evaluation. Dr. Parker congratulated Ms. Harrison for another productive year with the Commission. Ms. Harrison's overall performance score increased from 4.79 to 4.89. The Commission can expect an emphasis from Katie regarding training and development for Agency Staff and simplification of Agency awarding processes in the upcoming year.

Dr. Parker presented the Rotation of the Tuition Grants Commission and Election of Officers. It was noted that the rotation was adjusted such that Dr. Lester McCorn, President, Clinton College, will roll on to the Commission beginning in the 2023-2024 Award Year. Dr. Darrell Parker, Limestone University, Dr. Steven Adamson, Erskine College, and Dr. Ronnie Hopkins, Voorhees College are rotating off the Commission, while Dr. Gene Fant, North Greenville University, Dr. Matthew vandenBerg, Presbyterian College, and Dr. William Barker, Southern Wesleyan University are rotating on to the Commission. Mr. Scott Cochran, Spartanburg Methodist College, has agreed to serve as Chair. Dr. Leroy Staggers, Morris College, has agreed to continue serving as Secretary. Dr. Dondi Costin, Charleston Southern University, has agreed to serve as Vice-Chair. Dr. Parker called for a motion to accept the rotation and nominations of officers. Dr. Ronnie Hopkins moved to approve. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.

Dr. Parker asked if there was any new business. There was none. Ms. Harrison thanked Dr. Parker, Dr. Adamson, and Dr. Hopkins for their dedication while serving as Commission Members.

Dr. Parker reminded all that the next meeting is scheduled for March 14, 2023.

Dr. Parker adjourned the meeting at 11:10 AM.

Respectfully submitted,

Ms. Monique Lemmon  
Acting Secretary for  
Dr. Leroy Staggers, Secretary  
South Carolina Higher Education Tuition Grants Commission



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**2021-2022 College Program Reviews**

*(Submission of Program Reviews is required by December 31, 2022)*

<u>College</u>	<u>Received</u>	<u>Status</u>
Allen	12/29/2022	Closed
Anderson	10/24/2022	Closed
Benedict	12/26/2022	Closed
Bob Jones	11/29/2022	Closed
Charleston Southern	11/10/2022	Closed
Clafflin	10/18/2022	Closed
Coker	11/29/2022	Closed
Columbia	12/30/2022	Closed
Columbia International	11/1/2022	Closed
Converse	12/19/2022	Closed
Erskine	11/2/2022	Closed
Furman	12/2/2022	Closed
Limestone	12/20/2022	Closed
Morris	11/29/2022	Closed
Newberry	12/13/2022	Closed
North Greenville	12/6/2022	Closed
Presbyterian	12/20/2022	Closed
Southern Wesleyan	10/28/2022	Closed
Spartanburg Methodist	12/19/2022	Closed
Voorhees	12/16/2022	Closed
Wofford	12/20/2022	Closed

*12/30/2022*



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**REVIEW OF 2021-2022 and 2022-2023 AWARD YEARS**

<b><u>MAXIMUM GRANT FUNDING SOURCES:</u></b>	<b><u>AVAILABLE FUNDS 2021-2022</u></b>	<b><u>AVAILABLE FUNDS 2022-2023</u></b>
State Recurring:	\$27,558,624	\$27,558,624
Children's Ed. Endowment:	\$6,000,000 *	\$6,000,000 **
State Funds Interest:	\$97,214	\$242,055 ***
State Lottery Funds:	\$20,000,000	\$20,000,000
<b><u>Total Funding</u></b>	<b><u>\$53,655,838</u></b>	<b><u>\$53,800,679</u></b>
Approved Maximum Grant:	<u>\$4,390</u>	<u>\$4,500</u>
Funding Cutoff Date:	June 30, 2021	June 30, 2022
Applications Received:	30,685 (-6.49%)	31,569 (+2.88%)
Commitments Made:	24,767 (-9.21%)	25,706 (+3.79%)
Grants Realized:	11,262 (-7.71%)	12,057 (+7.06%)
Show-up Rate:	45.47%	46.90% (Estimate)
Average Grant:	\$3,952	\$4,450 (Estimate)

\* Independent College Full-time Enrollment for South Carolina Residents for Fall 2021 generated CEE funds of 18.96% of the state-wide total. For 2021-22, annual CEE spending authority was \$6,000,000.

\*\* Independent College Full-time Enrollment for South Carolina Residents for Fall 2022 calculated at 18.84% of the state-wide total. For 2022-23, annual CEE spending authority remained at \$6,000,000.

\*\*\* Spending authority was increased to \$250,000 effective with the final 2021-2022 appropriations bill. Spending authority remains at \$250,000 for 2022-23.



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## **AGENCY UPDATES AND INITIATIVES**

### **Staff Updates:**

The Tuition Grants Commission welcomed Kira Demery to the staff as the Program Coordinator on January 3, 2023. Kira brings over 15 years of strong customer service and training experience in Retail and Banking to the Commission. In her role as Program Coordinator, Kira serves as the primary liaison to students and to the agency's Financial Aid partners in areas concerning student eligibility and compliant administration of the Program. She is also assisting with many other administrative duties and has quickly proven herself as a strong employee who is quick to comprehend the many nuances of the financial aid profession and state government. As a graduate of Benedict College, Kira understands the importance of an independent higher education.

In 2020, the SC Department of Administration (Admin) provided employees at all State agencies a license for the LinkedIn Learning platform at no cost to the individual employees or their respective agencies. This additional training and professional development platform has been utilized by all Commission staff since becoming available, but especially by Commission Financial Officer Gena Miles. In an effort to increase her skills and knowledge, and to discover ways to allow for increased efficiencies in internal processes, Gena has actively sought out and successfully completed over 20 Courses, Learning Paths, and modules in the system. Gena's dedication to continued professional development has benefited the Agency, and in turn, the students we serve by strengthening agency processes and by actively taking steps to allow for increased efficiencies in day-to-day operations relating to the Agency's financial tasks.

Deputy Director Zachary Christian, in his role as President-Elect of the South Carolina Association of Student Financial Aid Administrators, recently had the opportunity to advocate for student financial aid issues and programs on Capitol Hill as part of NASFAA's annual leadership and legislative conference. Zachary met with education staffers from the offices of Representative Jeff Duncan and Senator Lindsey Graham.

Executive Director Katie Harrison concluded her term as President of the National Association of State Student Grant and Aid Programs in October after the conclusion a very successful annual conference, the Association's first in-person meeting in three years. She continues to serve as part of the leadership planning team for the combined NASSGAP and SHEEO collaboration project to assist state agencies with their FAFSA Simplification efforts.

### **FAFSA Simplification:**

Tuition Grants Commission Staff have been following developments closely and have actively engaged in conversations with the US Department of Education and national organizations like NASSGAP, SHEEO, NCAN, and NASFAA on FAFSA Simplification efforts and issues. The US Department of Education's Office of Federal Student Aid has indicated that there is a high probability the redesigned FAFSA for the 2024-2025 year will NOT be ready to go live on October 1, 2023, but that it will be ready to launch sometime "during the 4<sup>th</sup> quarter" of the year and before January 1, 2024, which is the legal date by which the FAFSA must be available.

This will impact institutions' ability to package need-based aid early, as they have been able to do in the past.

At this time, national estimates indicate that under the new formula, there could be a 30-40% increase in Pell eligible students with predictions that students who currently have EFCs up to \$11,000 will have a corresponding decrease in the new SAI, which would make many students newly eligible. It is estimated that students whose current EFCs are in the \$3,600 range could possibly get the maximum Pell award under the new formula. As an example, a student with a current Pell award of \$3,245 could potentially see an increase to the maximum Pell award (currently \$7,395) under the new SAI formula.

A much smaller percentage of students will see their Pell eligibility reduced or eliminated under the new formula. This will primarily impact students with multiple family members in college and those whose parents will now be required to report the net worth of family farms or small businesses owned as asset values on the updated FAFSA.

There are possible implications for institutional aid, especially if indexed to Pell grant and/or financial need. Institutions may need to be prepared to adjust financial aid packaging philosophies or formulas to accommodate higher financial need and possibly to ensure returning students are not negatively impacted by these changes.

A NASFAA Survey conducted on February 2<sup>nd</sup> shows that 10% of institutions believe they are "not at all on track" in their preparedness efforts, and 42% of respondents stated their institution's senior leadership has been somewhat or very engaged in the process, meaning 58% answered that senior leadership, including their President, was either "somewhat" or "completely" unengaged in discussions and planning efforts surrounding FAFSA Simplification.

**Student Information System:** Agency staff have been working closely with the State Procurement Office throughout the RFP process for a new Student Information System. After reviewing proposals and demonstrations, a vendor has been chosen to build a new web-based system to administer the Tuition Grants Program and to house the electronic FAFSA information for all State residents. The State Procurement Office is currently in the negotiations phase with the vendor – when this stage is completed, the agency will enter a contract with the vendor and will begin the process of working closely with them to develop system requirements, assisting throughout the system build, and the testing and deployment stages. A more definite timeline for implementation can be shared after the contract is signed and the work begins.

### **House Legislative Oversight Committee Process:**

As previously disclosed to all college presidents and other interested parties, the Tuition Grants Commission has been selected as one of eight state agencies to undergo an extensive and formal review by the House Legislative Oversight Committee. A public input meeting was held at the State House on March 9<sup>th</sup> to allow members of the public to provide testimony concerning the agency. Commission staff would like to thank Scott Cochran, Commission Chair, and Jeff Perez, SCICU President and CEO, for attending and for providing positive remarks in support of the agency and the Tuition Grants Program. The remarks were well received by members of the Oversight Committee.

The agency will continue to cooperate with the House Oversight Committee staff to provide all requested information throughout the review process and will conclude with a formal presentation to the Oversight Committee at a later date.



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## **REVIEW OF THE 2023-2024 STATE BUDGET REQUEST FOR FUNDING OF THE SOUTH CAROLINA TUITION GRANTS PROGRAM**

At the June 2022 South Carolina Tuition Grants Commission Meeting, the Commission approved the budget request to be sent to the State Executive Budget Office for funding of the South Carolina Tuition Grants Program for the 2023-2024 fiscal year. The agency submitted documents in September 2022 asking for continued funding of the \$10 million increase for the Tuition Grants Program realized in FY 2022 and 2023. The Commission's Budget Request asked for consideration of these funds being moved from Lottery (non-recurring) to General Fund (recurring). In addition, the Budget Request included a request to increase the agency's Authority to Spend Other Funds by an additional \$10 million (for a total of \$16 million). This adjustment would provide the agency with the ability to spend the additional funding it has received from the Commission on Higher Education as its share of need-based grants through the Educational Endowment Fund as a result of the recent increases to need-based funding through the Lottery.

Executive Director Katie Harrison met with representatives from the Governor's office and the Executive Budget Office on **October 6, 2022** to review the request and to discuss the budget request, the impact of the program, and to answer questions.

Governor Henry McMaster released his 2023-2024 Executive Budget in January. The Executive Budget recommended continued funding of the recent increases for both the Tuition Grants Program and CHE's Need-Based Grant Program and included an additional \$10 million allocation to CHE for the Need-Based Grant. The Governor's Executive Budget recommends the funding source for these funds continue to be allocations from the Lottery account.

The General Assembly convened in January 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 **January 17, 2023**, in Columbia. The Higher Education Subcommittee is chaired by Representative Nathan Ballentine (Richland/Lexington). He is joined on the subcommittee by Representatives Gilda Cobb-Hunter (Orangeburg) and Bill Taylor (Aiken/Lexington).

The House Ways & Means Committee has approved the recommendations of the Governor and has submitted to the full House a budget which includes the \$10 million increase in Lottery appropriation for the Tuition Grants Program and the \$10 million increase in "Authority to Spend Other Funds." The House is scheduled to debate the FY24 Budget during the week of **March 13, 2023**.

The Commission appeared appear before the Senate Finance Higher Education Subcommittee on **January 31, 2023**. The Senate Finance Higher Education Subcommittee is chaired by Senator Ronnie Cromer (Newberry/Lexington/Union). He is joined on the subcommittee by Senators John Scott (Richland), Darrell Jackson (Richland), Ross Turner (Greenville), and Tom Corbin (Greenville/Spartanburg). The full Finance Committee is scheduled to meet during the week of **April 4, 2023**. The full Senate is tentatively scheduled to make its recommendations during the week of **April 18, 2023**, which includes Higher Education Day at the State House.



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**STAFF RECOMMENDATION FOR CHANGE TO  
AGENCY MISSION AND VISION STATEMENTS**

***Current Mission Statement:***

The mission of the South Carolina Higher Education Tuition Grants Commission is to administer a state-funded, need-based tuition grants program for the State of South Carolina designed to assist eligible South Carolina residents with demonstrated financial need the opportunity to attend certain in-state, accredited independent colleges on a full-time enrollment basis. This mission serves:

To help offset the higher education costs of attending independent colleges for South Carolina students just as the state offsets the higher education costs of our state residents attending SC public colleges; and,

To gain maximum usage of the available independent college facilities located in our state by assisting eligible students to afford the cost of independent colleges and thereby help in the education of our state citizenry; and,

To preserve the dual system of public and private higher education in our state which provides healthy competition between the two sectors; and,

To save the state tax dollars that would have to be appropriated via the automatic state per student subsidy that would go, regardless of financial need, to all independent college students if they migrated into the SC public college system; and,

To give eligible South Carolina students a choice of attending the college that best meets their academic needs.

***Proposed Mission Statement:***

The mission of the South Carolina Higher Education Tuition Grants Commission is to provide access and opportunity for more South Carolinians to pursue a post-secondary education by providing need-based tuition grants to students who choose an independent higher education.

***Program Goals:***

The primary goals associated with the agency's mission are:

- To provide eligible South Carolinians with the choice to attend the college that best meets their individual academic needs
- To help offset the cost of attending an independent college or university, just as the state offsets the tuition costs of residents attending its public colleges
- To preserve the dual system of public and private higher education in our state, which provides healthy competition and innovation among all sectors
- To support optimal use of college facilities available at independent colleges and universities throughout the state
- To save the state tax dollars that would otherwise be appropriated at a higher cost, via state subsidies to public colleges, if students choosing to receive an independent higher education migrated into the public college system

***Current Vision Statement:***

Provide increased state economic benefits and a more educated citizenry by enabling more South Carolinians to obtain a college education by providing financial assistance in the form of need-based state tuition grants to qualified South Carolina residents electing to attend on a full-time basis certain eligible accredited South Carolina independent junior and senior colleges.

***Proposed Vision Statement:***

Providing opportunity and promoting choice while supporting South Carolina's post-secondary attainment goals

***Examples/References:***

(Iowa) Mission Statement:

We advocate for and support Iowans as they explore, finance, and complete educational opportunities beyond high school to increase family and community success.

(Iowa) Vision Statement:

All Iowans can achieve an education beyond high school.

(Illinois) Mission Statement:

Providing Illinois students with information and assistance to help make education beyond high school accessible and affordable.

(North Carolina) Mission Statement:

We help North Carolina pay for education. We are the State agency that promotes access to education by administering financial aid and savings programs, informing students and families about paying for education, teaching educators about financial aid administration, and advocating for resources to support students.

(California) Mission Statement:

Promoting educational equity by making postsecondary education affordable for all Californians.

(California) Vision Statement:

Transforming lives by creating educational opportunities for the state's diverse population, driving its social and economic well-being to ensure a promising future for all.

(Tennessee) Mission Statement:

The Tennessee Higher Education Commission is relentlessly focused on increasing the number of Tennesseans with a post-secondary credential. We pursue this goal by innovating for student access and success, creating a policy environment conducive to increased degree attainment, and protecting students and consumers.



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## **STAFF RECOMMENDATION FOR CHANGE TO NON-TRADITIONAL CALENDAR PROGRAM ELIGIBILITY**

The Commission's current Non-Traditional Calendar Program Eligibility policy requires that approved Non-Traditional Programs in which a student may receive South Carolina Tuition Grants assistance must:

1. Be offered by a college that is already approved for participation in the South Carolina Tuition Grants Program; and,
2. the Non-Traditional Calendar Program must be fully accredited for awarding of a degree and,
3. begin classes no sooner than 10 working days prior to the beginning of the college's traditional fall semester and no later than 10 working days after the beginning of the college's traditional fall semester, and end no earlier than 10 working days prior to the end of the college's traditional spring semester and no later than 10 working days after the end the of college's traditional spring semester (Tuition Grants may not be used for programs of instruction offered during the summer); and,
4. teach sufficient courses to enable a student to obtain a baccalaureate degree within four years; and,
5. regardless of the program structure, teach sufficient courses so that the student has the opportunity to earn a minimum of 24 semester hours during the timeframe outlined in (3) that runs parallel to the college's traditional academic year.

Commission staff have reviewed the structure of currently approved non-traditional programs and find that the "10 working days" requirement often puts a strain and a concern on the continued eligibility of certain programs based on the approved academic calendar of the institution.

The Staff is of the opinion that the 10-day requirement (item 3) should be reevaluated and updated to align with Commission's defined Academic Calendar for the Tuition Grants Program, which spans from August through May. This change would allow for non-traditional programs that begin in August, alongside the institution's traditional Fall semester, and end in May, alongside the institution's traditional Spring semester to meet eligibility criteria more broadly than the current 10-day restriction.

**The staff recommends that the Commission consider the following change to the Non-Traditional Calendar Program Eligibility Policy:**

**Effective with the 2023-2024 Academic Year, the requirements of Non-Traditional Calendar Program Eligibility should be:**

1. Be offered by a college that is already approved for participation in the South Carolina Tuition Grants Program; and,
2. the Non-Traditional Calendar Program must be fully accredited for awarding of a degree and,
3. **begin classes no sooner than the first day of August and end classes no later than the last day of May, to coincide with the traditional fall and spring semesters; and,**
4. teach sufficient courses to enable a student to obtain a baccalaureate degree within four years; and,
5. regardless of the program structure, teach sufficient courses so that the student has the opportunity to earn a minimum of 24 semester hours during the timeframe outlined in (3) that runs parallel to the college's traditional academic year.

**A vote by the South Carolina Tuition Grants Commission is required to change the currently approved Non-Traditional Calendar Program Eligibility Requirements.**



SC Higher Education  
Tuition Grants Commission

*Providing Opportunity. Promoting Choice.*

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info@sctuitiongrants.org

Katherine H. Harrison  
Executive Director

**STAFF RECOMMENDATION REGARDING INITIAL 2023-2024**  
**SOUTH CAROLINA TUITION GRANTS**

Based on the continued recommended support of \$20,000,000 in Lottery Funding by the House Ways & Means Committee, and with the expectation that the Senate will concur, along with evaluation of funds available to carry-forward, following the established awarding philosophy of equalized grant values, the Commission staff recommends to the Commission that initial grants for 2023-2024 be approved as follows:

The Maximum Grant should be increased from the current 2022-2023 Maximum Grant of \$4,500 to a Maximum Grant of **\$4,700** for the 2023-2024 Award Year.

**A vote by the South Carolina Tuition Grants Commission is required to approve the Maximum Tuition Grant for the 2023-2024 academic year.**



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Katherine H. Harrison  
Executive Director

**MEMORANDUM**

**TO: South Carolina Tuition Grants Commission Members**  
**FROM: Katie Harrison, Executive Director**  
**DATE: February 6, 2023**  
**SUBJECT: Required Completion of State Ethics Commission's  
Statement of Economic Interests Form**

As a current member of the South Carolina Tuition Grants Commission, you are required by South Carolina State Law and by the State Ethics Commission to complete the Statement of Economic Interests (SEI) report for the 2023 calendar year. The filing requirement for the Statement of Economic Interests report includes, regardless of compensation, the members of all state boards, commissions or agencies.

A completed report **must be filed** with the State Ethics Commission by each individual Commission member no later than **March 30, 2023**, so that you are not penalized **\$100 or more per day** for failure to do so.

Each filer is required to complete their report electronically. After going to the State Ethics Commission's web site, you may review the User Guides section or go directly to the Electronic Filing link to proceed. If you do not already have an online account with the State Ethics Commission, you must create a user account after clicking the Electronic Filing link. The main web site is:

<https://ethics.sc.gov>

**PLEASE NOTE: The Ethics Commission website, including the SEI filing system, was completely redesigned recently. If you have filed the SEI form in previous years and have an existing online account, you may need to *migrate your existing account* before proceeding.**

**For detailed instructions, including how to migrate an existing account, please visit <https://ethicsfiling.sc.gov/filing/help>.**

**REMINDER: Per State Ethics Commission requirements, all filers must disclose (1) the source and (2) the type of any private income received in the previous year by the filer or a member of the filer's immediate family under the Income & Benefits section of the 2023 SEI. The dollar amount is required ONLY for government income. The dollar amount box will close when you click on "private" if the source of the income is a non-governmental employer.**

If you have any questions about the required completion of the SEI form, please contact the State Ethics Commission directly at (803) 253-4192.

Please be sure that your completed report is completed online with the State Ethics Commission by the **March 30, 2023 deadline**.

Thank you for your prompt attention to this matter.