Annual Accountability Report

Fiscal Year 2002-2003

Conrad Festa
Executive Director

September 15, 2003

His Excellency, Mark Sanford, Governor
And Members of the General Assembly

The South Carolina Commission on Higher Education is pleased to submit for your review this annual accountability report for the fiscal year June 30, 2002. This report includes an executive summary, a business overview, and information pertaining to the elements of the Malcolm Baldrige Award Criteria (per the Budget & Control Board's "2003 Accountability Report" guidelines). The activities of the Commission, including the mission, goals, and performance measures are approved by the appointed Commission members as a component of the Executive Director's annual evaluation process. The institutions of higher education report separately, in accordance with Code Section 59-101-350.

This past year, the Commission continued its role as the coordinating board for the state's 33 public institutions of higher education. These institutions provide post-secondary educational opportunities to over 150,000 students. Highlight activities of the Commission include the awarding of financial assistance to 2,985 Palmetto Fellows Scholarship recipients, 24,491 Legislative Incentives for Future Excellence (LIFE) Scholarship recipients, 2,188 HOPE Scholarship recipients, 23,790 Lottery Tuition Assistance recipients and 22,973 Need-based Grants recipients.

We are very proud of the work of the Commission in fulfilling its role as the state coordinating body for higher education. If I can provide any further information or material relating to our agency, please contact me at 737-2260.

Cordially,

Conrad D. Festa
Executive Director

Enclosure

# S. C. Commission on Higher Education
# Annual Accountability Report
# Fiscal Year 2002-2003

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## Section I
## Executive Summary

The Commission on Higher Education serves as South Carolina's coordinating board for the state's 33 public post-secondary institutions. The Commission serves a dual role within state government acting both as an advocate for higher education as well as an oversight entity on behalf of the General Assembly. Fourteen Commissioners, including the chair, are appointed by the Governor and serve four-year terms. A term exception is made in the case of three members: institutional trustees that represent the different sectors of higher education who serve two-year terms. The Commission staff for the 2002-2003 year was organized along functional lines into the following divisions: Academic Affairs & Licensing; Planning, Assessment & Performance Funding; Finance, Facilities & Statistical Services; Student Services; and Administration. At the beginning of the 2003-2004 year, the Planning, Assessment & Performance Funding division was integrated into the Academic Affairs & Licensing and Finance, Facilities & Statistical Services divisions.

## Mission and Values

The mission statement of the Commission was developed during a planning retreat for the Commission members during the fall of 2000. During this discussion, there was significant conversation with participation from all members. The very definite intention of the group was to have a clear, concise statement of what the Commission should be working toward, and what those efforts should yield for the state of South Carolina. At the conclusion of the session, the following statement was crafted:

*The South Carolina Commission on Higher Education will promote quality and efficiency in the state system of higher education with the goal of fostering economic growth and human development in South Carolina.*

The Commission's values include the importance of quality higher education, the accessibility of this education to the citizens of the state, and the accountability of the institutions to their students and the General Assembly. The Commission expects excellence on the part of its staff in performing its functions, as well as excellence on the part of the institutions in providing educational opportunities to the students. These values permeate the Commission's operations, from the processing of scholarship applications, to the evaluation of institutional

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performance and quality of academic programming, to the process whereby allocation of state resources is determined.

## Key Strategic Goals for Present and Future Years

The Commission's major goals are reviewed on an annual basis and included in the Executive Director's planning process and performance evaluation process. Provided below are the most significant of those goals:

### *Agency Wide:*

- Develop a more focused agenda for higher education and a plan for accomplishing this agenda by
- Contracting with the National Center for Higher Education Management System (NCHEMS) and the Association of Governing Boards (AGB) to conduct an independent study of higher education;
- Through the study, identifying a public agenda for higher education by identifying major strategic priorities needing attention;
- Through the study, assessing the effectiveness of existing major policy mechanisms or identifying needed policy mechanisms to achieve the goals and objectives of the public agenda for higher education.

- Advocate for additional state resources on behalf of public higher education institutions for the following items:
  - ➢ Performance Funding funds for operations
  - ➢ Research funding
  - ➢ Funding for statewide purchases of electronic databases for academic libraries
  - ➢ Increased funding for the Need-Based Grants program

### *In the area of Academic Affairs and Licensing:*

- Develop appropriate guidelines, provide staffing, and implement new programs established under the South Carolina Lottery, including the Teacher Scholarship Program and the Centers of Excellence for Research/Endowed Professorship Program. The software and electronic application for the Teacher Scholarship program will be revised and made more user-friendly.

- Develop and implement a new competitive grants program to replace the Eisenhower program as required under the new federal legislation, the *No Child Left Behind Act*, which reauthorizes elementary and secondary education, and serve on the various working committees established by the State Department of Education to implement the various components of this Act.

- Implement the new formal policy on program productivity authorized by CHE to insure increased program efficiency, cost effectiveness, and reduce unnecessary duplication of academic programs.

- Continue to work with K-12 by revising the Centers of Excellence in Teacher Education competitive grants program to work in partnership with low performing schools.

- Contract with appropriate consultants and begin data collection in preparation for national accreditation visits to nine teacher education programs by the National Council for the Accreditation of Teacher Education next year as part of the State's nationally recognized three-way Partnership with the State Department of Education, the CHE, and NCATE.

- Provide continued staff support to the Review Board of the Research Centers for Economic Excellence program, coordinate its competitive grants program, identify appropriate peer reviewers and on-site evaluators,  prepare required reports, track pledges and matching funds, and disseminate lottery funds in accord with the enabling legislation and program guidelines.

- Participate as a state in a national pilot project with four other states (IL, KY, NV, OK) called the National Forum on College-Level Learning project, in order to inform the national conversation on accountability issues for higher education in the area of student learning; with CHE serving as the state-level coordinator of this Pew Charitable Trusts initiative, and working with both public and private two- and four-year institutions, the project is attempting to identify potential measures of student learning for future use as part of the *Measuring Up* state report card provided to the U.S. Congress every two years.

- Obtain legislative approval of two pieces of proposed legislation related to the CHE's licensing responsibilities:  1) one allows the use of bonds for closed schools to be used for students to complete their programs at another institution or to subsidize the CHE's maintenance and servicing of student records from the closed school;  and 2) the other makes the presentation of false academic credentials a misdemeanor.

- Fully integrate Institutional Effectiveness and the Fund for the Improvement of Secondary Education (FIPSE) grant functions and personnel into the Division of Academic Affairs and Licensing as required by the internal reorganization of the Commission.

-  Continue the second year implementation of the FIPSE grant through the following means:
  - Gather input on the grant's defined accountability issues, e.g., cost containment, student achievement, and public trust in higher education, using focus groups, individual interviews and surveys;
  - Coordinate with other participating states (CA, CT, OK) and State Higher Education Executive Officers (SHEEO) to begin national data gathering efforts;
  - Coordinate participating states' research to meet grant goals;
  - Begin planning for a national meeting at grant's conclusion;

➢ Plan and host "Mini-Conference" of grant leaders and selected participants from grant states.

- Conduct an analysis of how Institutional Effectiveness reporting is aligned with Performance Funding and Legislative requirements, taking into account potential changes in the systems due to revised CHE structure.

- Compile and publish the required annual report of institutional effectiveness and distribute it electronically through the Legislative Printing Office to the General Assembly.

## *In the area of Finance, Facilities, and Statistical Services:*
- Continue the accessibility of Commission data by creating a "Decision Support" area whereby common data from all CHE divisions will be electronically available to CHE staff and outside users.
- Automate the transmission, editing and notification of CHEMIS data to and from institutions, thereby eliminating processing delays resulting in greater efficiency and accuracy.
- Complete the electronic gathering of student specific CHEMIS data for all students from all the independent institutions.
- Implement the process of ensuring that all financial aid funds (Palmetto Fellows, LIFE, HOPE, Tuition Assistance and Need-Based) are disbursed to institutions prior to the beginning of each semester, so that the reconciliation process will take place after the fact.  This will ensure timely receipt of funds available to an institution for its operation.
- Purchase and implement SPEEDE/ExPress for CHE.
- Begin a study of higher education funding models, to include evaluation of the current Performance Funding model, as compared to other approaches employed in the other states.
- Begin an analysis of the needs and feasibility of developing a comprehensive K-20 unit record database. This work will involve discussions and collaboration with the Department of Education, the Education Oversight Committee and the State Board for Technical & Comprehensive Education.

## *In the area of Student Services:*

- Promulgate regulations and implement student aid programs.
- Amend the LIFE and Lottery Tuition Assistance Legislation to promote consistency among the State scholarship and grant programs.
- Allow for an additional application deadline, which will provide another opportunity for students to become eligible for the Palmetto Fellows Scholarship program.
- Expand public awareness of and simplify participation in state-funded financial aid programs in South Carolina.
- Develop a database to track the participants in the S.C. National Guard Student Loan Repayment Program.
- Continue to self-assess the Veterans Education and Training program annually as well as comply and respond to the annual assessment conducted by the ELR of the

Veterans Administration per PL323. Additionally ongoing efforts will be made to enhance awareness of and participation in our programs for veterans.

- Improve the GEAR UP/HEAP/and AIM COLLEGE programs so that the college-going rate for S. C. students and the college completion rates for both 2-year and 4-year institutions increases.

- Continue to develop and expand through the GEAR UP and HEAP Programs, college awareness programs with the intention of increasing the college-going rate for S. C. students and the college completion rates for both 2-year and 4-year institutions.

- Sponsor the statewide conference on Campus Safety.

## Opportunities and Barriers that may Affect the Agency's Success in Fulfilling its Mission and Achieving its Strategic Goals

Unfortunately, in the current fiscal climate, there are limitations affecting the opportunities for the Commission in relation to successful achievement of its mission and goals. Base budget reductions, a "reduction in force," mid-year cuts, and the loss of "carry forward" funds used to soften the effect of these reductions have all had a negative impact on Commission operations. Ironically, there has been considerable growth in programs requiring CHE administration, but the budget cuts do not allow for sufficient personnel to manage the programs as we would desire. Further, discussions of probable future cuts for the third year in a row are having a chilling effect on planning efforts. However, there are still opportunities for successes. Reductions in available resources are forcing the Commission to look very critically at how functions are performed, and every process is being reviewed for potential efficiencies. Also, the current environment is helping the Commission to focus on its primary mission and utilize all available resources toward that end.

In addition to the fiscal issues discussed above, the Commission is also involved in a political discussion about the structure of higher education in the state. Various proposals have been introduced that could significantly alter the structure and authority of the Commission. These discussions will likely continue for the foreseeable future.

## Major Achievements of the Past Year

### In the area of Academic Affairs and Licensing:

- Two staff members also staffed the Research Centers of Economic Excellence/Endowed Professorship Review Board, including developing policies and procedures for this competitive grants program ($30 million), contracting with evaluators and consultants, and coordinating the peer review and on-site visitation processes, resulting in successful awarding of program funds.

- A second $33 million proposal to the National Science Foundation to establish the SC Math and Science Partnership program was submitted, bringing together 10 four-year public institutions and 76 school districts to provide intensive professional

development in science and mathematics with the initial focus on middle-level schools.  It was not funded but we will resubmit or seek Foundation funding.

- A scholarship grant program (from lottery funds) for teachers was developed and implemented using an electronic application and software developed specifically for this program.

- A competitive grants program for technology investment, funded with Lottery dollars, was developed, and a team of national experts was brought into the state and served as an evaluation panel.  For two-year institutions that did not have to undergo a competitive grants process, an equitable distribution methodology was developed in consultation with the institutions.

- Extensive collaboration continued with the SC Department of Education through staff service on several task forces and committees in its work to establish a performance-based teacher education approval process.

- The second year of the SC Research Incentive Grants Programs was completed, with grant period running for one full calendar year (January 1, 2001 to December 1, 2002) for 33 grant awards; a follow-up report detailing grant achievements and leveraging of other resources was published for both grant year projects, highlighting outcomes such as licenses, patents, other external grants, publications, etc..

- The Commission continued to monitor the findings of the statewide Colleagues-in-Caring report on the statewide and national shortage of nurses, with particular attention to ways of increasing associate and baccalaureate prepared Registered Nurses, especially minorities and males; a major study on the shortage situation has been completed in draft form, pending addition of some missing institutional data.

- The Commission has continued to seek, albeit unsuccessfully, funding for a statewide electronic library, an idea which originated in SC in 1993 and has since been adopted by almost every other state in the Southern region, and it has continued to work with various stakeholder groups to increase the visibility of the project and emphasize potential of group purchases of electronic data bases and efficiencies of group purchasing of the same new library (software) management systems.  The Council of College and University Presidents endorsed this project as their first priority.

- A major study of program productivity in the four-year institutions under existing standards was conducted, and data was presented to the institutions in different formats; a new policy and procedures for program productivity were subsequently approved and are in the process of being implemented with a second data collection and analysis study underway, which will recommend closure of programs not meeting the standards.

- The second Service Learning competition was held with two winners selected, representing respectively the four-year and two-year sectors.  In subsequent years, this program will be expanded to include private institutions.

- Implementation of the first full year with enhanced numbers of stakeholders at the table in the Advisory Committee on Academic Programs was completed successfully, with the addition of three representatives of the technical colleges and one from the USC two-year regional campuses.

- Following the retirement of a staff member, appropriate training was conducted and responsibility for the Professor of the Year program was transitioned to another existing staff member.

## *In the area of Planning, Assessment, and Performance Funding*

- An Institutional Effectiveness summary report review committee was convened, trained, and produced evaluations of institutional summary reports to use in report improvement.

- Standards for Performance Indicators were reviewed based on state, national, and peer data. Input was gathered from institutions regarding the type and extent of possible changes.

- Staff worked with the institutions and external agencies, notably the Employment Security Commission, to revise indicators relating to student employment and employer satisfaction. The examination of possible strategies for implementation or change continues.

- Chief Academic Officers of the institutions were included in meetings to consider revisions of indicators.

- The Commission was granted a three-year grant by the Fund for the Improvement of Post-Secondary Education (FIPSE) for $800,000 to study best practices in higher education accountability. The grant includes three other states, California, Connecticut, and Oklahoma, as sub-grantees.

- The staff and Director of the division were heavily involved in producing materials for the legislature for consideration in their deliberations on higher education governance related bills.

- The  FIPSE grant "Performance Funding in South Carolina: Assessing Institutions' Responses and Student Outcome" was completed.

- The Division was re-organized, with the Performance Funding function and personnel going to the Division of Finance and Facilities and the Institutional Effectiveness function and personnel going to the Division of Academic Affairs and Licensing.

## *In the area of Finance, Facilities and Statistical Services:*

- Efforts were continued with the independent institutions to seek their assistance in reporting expanded student record data on enrollment and degrees awarded to the

Commission's Management Information System. Of the 26 independent institutions that report data to CHE, 15 reported in the expanded student record format during this past year. We will continue to work with the remaining institutions.

- Developmental planning was completed to improve and enhance the Commission's data management information system. Four phases were identified to develop and implement a Decision Support process for the agency. The first part of Phase I was completed through the use of external consultants. This component defined the requirements of our current Management Information System (CHEMIS) to provide data electronically to Commission staff as well as external data users.

## *In the area of Student Services:*

- Increased the number of LIFE Scholarship recipients by 17% from 2001-2002 academic year, increasing the total to $106.5 million for 2002-2003 academic year.

- Awarded 10% more new Palmetto Fellows in 2003 than in the previous year.

- Increased the number of S.C. Need-based Grant recipients by 13% for the 2002-03 academic year compared with the previous academic year.

- Awarded the first group of S.C. HOPE and Lottery Tuition Assistance (two-year, public and independent institutions) recipients and obtained approval of the program regulations according to the Administrative Procedures Act.

- Conducted a statewide review of the residency regulations and, based on input from the colleges and universities around the State, promulgated regulations to include changes and updates.

- Conducted a Residency Workshop for all independent institutions in order to determine eligibility for in-state tuition and fees.

- Surveyed all guidance counselors who submitted Palmetto Fellow Scholarship applications on-line for the first time regarding the new electronic process. Guidance counselors provided feedback about the electronic process. The majority of the counselors responded favorably regarding the electronic process.

- Conducted a Statewide Scholarship and Grants Workshop for new financial aid personnel.

- Established the first annual competition for "best practice" campus safety models in higher Education among the independent colleges and universities. Three public and independent colleges and universities were selected.

- Developed and implemented an Early Graduation Process to allow the increasing number of students who complete their high school graduation requirements early to qualify for the LIFE and HOPE Scholarship programs.

- Modified the Scholarship and Grants Appeals Guidelines to allow students to receive earlier notification of their rendered decisions prior to the onset of the academic year.

- Developed a website for financial aid counselors to access updated Scholarship and Grants information electronically. All scholarship and grants correspondences are now provided to the institutions electronically.

- Participated in over 32 college fairs, presentations, conferences, (including Speaking of Schools) across the State to provide Scholarship and Grants updates and to increase awareness.

- Implemented customer service/outreach initiatives in the Veterans Education and Training program that will enhance the awareness of veterans as to the benefits and opportunities provided by the various programs. There was a new data base system developed and implemented that provides maximum tracking capability for the myriad of process functions related to program objectives. Timeliness in processing actions is a major objective that has been enhanced by the implementation of this system. We are processing actions at a timeliness rate of 97 percent.

- Continued implementation of the GEAR-UP grant funded largely by the U. S. Department of Education.

- Developed and disseminated the AIM COLLEGE (CD Rom) products to 388,000 students in all schools with $6^{th}$ – $12^{th}$ grades statewide emphasizing the importance of higher education and planning early for academic success.

## *In the area of Administration:*

- The Executive Director of the agency resigned to take a position at one of the state's public institutions. The agency completed the fiscal year under the leadership of an Interim Executive Director. On August $25^{th}$, 2003, Dr. Conrad Festa was selected as the new Executive Director of the Commission on Higher Education.

- The Commission expanded its communications outreach programs through the expanded use of electronic notifications of meetings and postings of materials on the Commission website, the preparation and dissemination of *The Chairman's Letter* (an information letter highlighting higher education successes and upcoming events – distributed to approximately 900 higher education trustees and leaders), and the preparation and posting to the Commission's website of a "*Highlights*" summary of Commission meeting activities with notification to the higher education community so as to increase awareness of Commission-related actions.

# S. C. Commission on Higher Education
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## Section II
## Business Overview

Number of Employees and Operation Location

The S. C. Commission on Higher Education employs 6 unclassified, 31 classified, 10 temporary grant/time limited, and 5 temporary part-time employees. The Commission's offices are located at 1333 Main Street, Suite 200 in Columbia.

Expenditures/Appropriations Chart (from www.state.sc.us/osb)

Base Budget Expenditures and Appropriations

| Major Budget Categories | 01-02 Actual Expenditures | | 02-03 Actual Expenditures | | 02-03 Appropriations Act | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | **Total Funds** | **General Funds** | **Total Funds** | **General Funds** | **Total Funds** | **General Funds** |
| Personal Service | $1,764,672 | $1,353,614 | $1,725,753 | $1,398,468 | $1,735,624 | $1,451,807 |
| Other Operating | $857,120 | $525,123 | $778,692 | $519,264 | $884,832 | $519,943 |
| Special Items | $71,543,239 | $51,684,015 | $221,998,617 | $64,951,435 | $116,474,108 | $103,418,263 |
| Permanent Improvements | $0 | $0 | $0 | $0 | $0 | $0 |
| Case Services | $0 | $0 | $0 | $0 | $0 | $0 |
| Distributions to Subdivisions | $0 | $0 | $0 | $0 | $0 | $0 |
| Fringe Benefits | $562,185 | $350,389 | $674,234 | $389,700 | $374,836 | $341,036 |
| Non-recurring | $30,449,255 | $30,449,255 | $12,945,137 | $12,945,137 | | |
| **Total** | **$105,176,471** | **$84,362,395** | **$238,122,433** | **$80,204,004** | **$119,469,400** | **$105,731,049** |

Other Expenditures

| Sources of Funds | 01-02 Actual Expenditures | 02-03 Actual Expenditures |
|---|---|---|
| Supplemental Bills | $30,449,255 | $18,248 |
| Capital Reserve Funds | $0 | $0 |
| Bonds | $0 | $0 |

Interim Budget Reduction

| 01-02 Budget Reduction | 02-03 Budget Reduction |
|---|---|
| $4,569,904 | $1,149,812 |

## Key Customers

As a coordinating board for higher education, the Commission administers several programs, provides services to institutions of higher education, develops and administers policies, and serves as both advocate and watchdog intermediary between the state's public colleges and universities and the Legislative and Administrative branches of state government.

In fulfilling these roles, and in accordance with its mission, the Commission serves three primary customer groups: the citizens of the state, the General Assembly, and the public colleges and universities. In order to meet most effectively the needs of these customer groups, the Commission and its staff have been organized along functional lines into the following divisions: Academic Affairs & Licensing; Planning, Assessment & Performance Funding; Finance, Facilities & Statistical Services; Student Services; and Administration. At the beginning of the 2003-2004 year, the Planning, Assessment & Performance Funding division was integrated into the Academic Affairs & Licensing and Finance divisions.

## Key Suppliers

In its role as a state-level coordinating board, the Commission's key suppliers are actually the public colleges and universities, which provide data and information utilized within the various divisions for varying purposes. For example, enrollment data is provided which is used in determining the resource needs for the institutions but is also used in the process of evaluating both existing and proposed academic programs. Student-specific information is also provided for those scholarship and grant programs administered by the Commission. These are but two examples of the numerous types of information and data provided. A secondary source of data is the K-12 community. The Commission relies heavily on information from middle and high schools, students, and parents to insure the effectiveness of our higher education awareness programs.

In addition to the Commission's information needs, as an integral component of our higher education awareness programs (Higher Education Awareness Program-HEAP, and Gaining Early Awareness and Readiness for Undergraduate Programs-GEAR-UP), the Commission utilizes external firms for the development and production of program materials. In developing these programs several years ago, the Commission evaluated the alternatives of developing program materials in-house as compared to utilizing external organizations. Due to the personnel expertise and technology issues associated with particular aspects of these programs, the decision was made to utilize external organizations.

Another area where the Commission relies on an external supplier is for the operation and maintenance of our SCHOLAR on-line application process. This web-based application allows for students to apply electronically to multiple institutions simultaneously, thereby simplifying the college application process. The technical aspects of this process require resources and expertise that is more efficiently provided through external sources.

## Description of Major Products and Services

Major programs operated by the Commission fall within the structure of the divisions listed in Section I and are also shown on the organizational chart that follows. Included below are summaries and descriptions of several of the most significant areas and programs.

### *In the area of Academic Affairs & Licensing:*

Insuring academic program quality is one of the primary functions of the Commission. Statewide academic program review involving objective outside consultants provides a means of providing assurances of quality to the state although the decrease in state funding has virtually eliminated this quality control initiative. Thorough analysis of new program requests to ensure that programs are not unnecessarily duplicative, well developed, and provided adequate resources are a second major arena of activity. A third major area of endeavor is the licensing of both degree and non-degree institutions, profit as well as not for profit, seeking to operate in the state; this process is designed to provide consumer protection by ensuring that minimal standards are met which have been increasingly aligned to the standards of the regional accrediting body, the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools. In addition, fostering an environment for

research and technology initiatives is another important arena of endeavor. The Commission has administered for two years a state funded competitive grant program for four-year institutions that will increase research activities in future years at these institutions. Considerable energy and attention of this division are also directed toward improving teacher education and engaging in K-16 activities through activities related to the State's partnership with the National Council for the Accreditation of Teacher Education, the activities of the State Department of Education, and several grant programs administered by the Commission which are designed to provide enhanced professional development opportunities for pre-service and in-service teachers. This division also serves as liaison to numerous statewide committees and organizations, national and regional organizations, and governmental agencies, all of which are stakeholders in higher education; this liaison activity involves not only attendance at meetings but on occasion participating in interviews, reading grant proposals, and participating in other specific activities.

## *In the area of Planning, Assessment & Performance Funding:*

Performance Funding, as adopted by the General Assembly in 1996, has been a driving force in the Commission's workload since its passage. The Act called for full implementation prior to June 30, 1999, which the Commission achieved. Also, the Commission has created a more unified planning initiative through the Strategic Planning and Implementation Task Force, consisting of business leaders, K-12 representatives, presidents of colleges and universities, and representatives from independent colleges, the State Board for Technical & Comprehensive Education, and the Commission on Higher Education. Under the direction of the Commission, this effort's goal is to create a planning process that will help the state guide higher education. The Division has also undertaken a renewed effort in assessment by providing more feedback to institutions. Lastly, the Division has finished a national project under the Fund for the Improvement of Postsecondary Education that completes a three-year study on the implementation of Performance Funding.

## *In the area of Finance, Facilities & Statistical Services:*

Adequate funding for higher education institutions is one of the Commission's principal goals. The model used as a determination of need for the institutions is the Mission Resource Requirement (MRR) model. The MRR was created in 1997 and has been a work in process since its development. The Commission has recently completed the process of validating this model through the use of a national consulting firm and peer institutions. This validation has helped in the evaluation of the overall level of funding for higher education relative to other states.

The Commission fills an integral role in the state's capital project approval process. All capital projects (any projects with a value greater than or equal to $100,000) for the state's public institutions are subject to review and approval by the Commission. Those projects proposed to be funded with state funds are also rated based on established criteria and submitted to the General Assembly for consideration.

The Commission serves as the state repository for centralized higher education data. Data is collected relative to students, courses, facilities, faculty and scholarships. Collected data is used to provide:
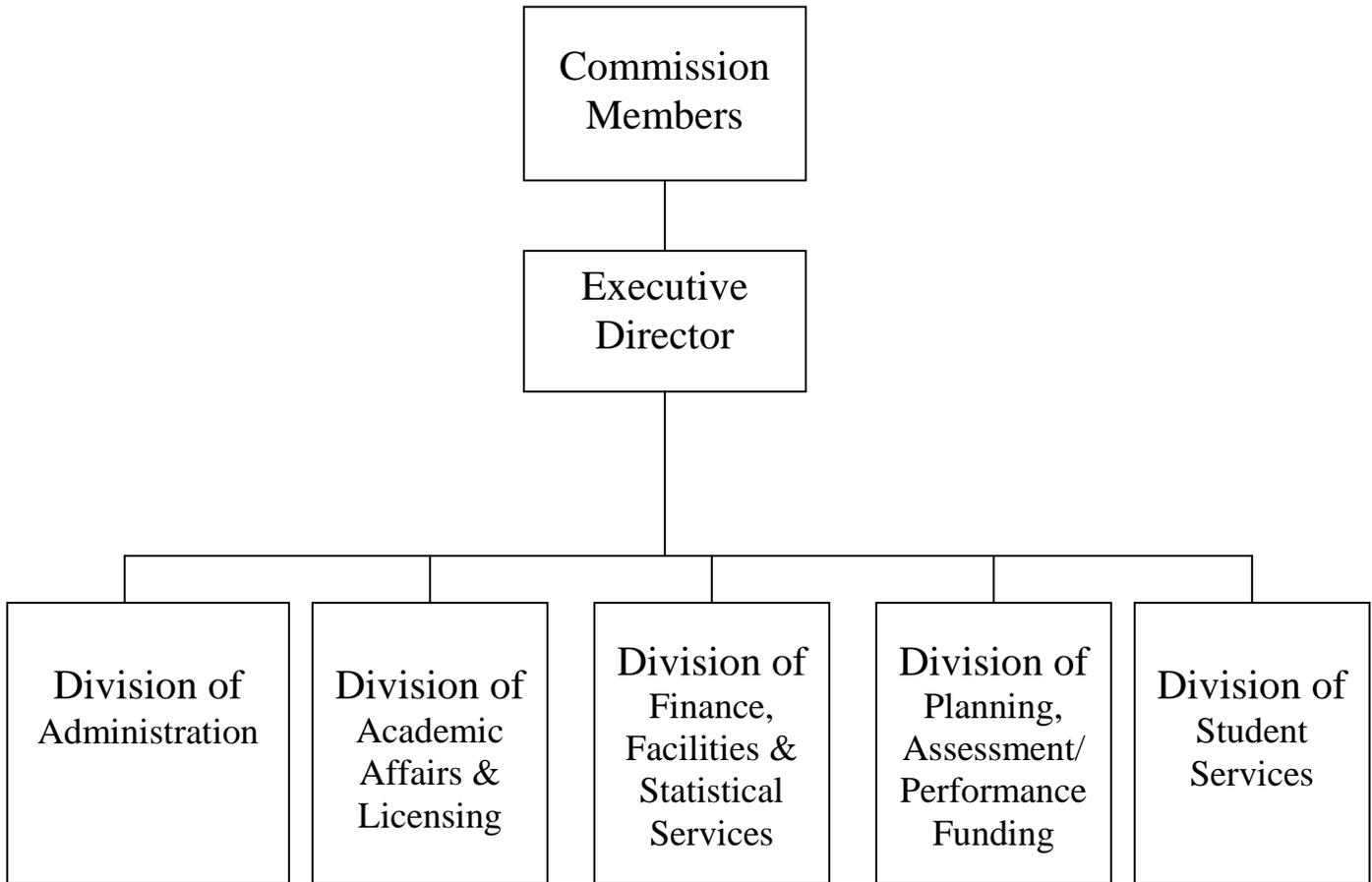
- Institutional data for the Integrated Post Secondary Education Data System (IPEDS) maintained by the US Department of Education.
- Internal data for Commission policy analysis and program administration.
- Responses to external requests including Legislative, media, institutional and general public.
- Data for inclusion in the Commission's publications.

## *In the area of Student Services:*

The scholarship and grant programs are key components to meeting the Commission's mission of providing accessibility to higher education for the citizens of South Carolina. The programs provide an opportunity to recognize the achievements of students and provide direct financial incentives for high academic performance. The Palmetto Fellows, LIFE (Legislative Incentives for Future Excellence) and HOPE Programs provided a combined $131 million in merit-based scholarship funding during the 2002-2003 fiscal year. This represents a 40% increase over the 2001-2002 academic year. Also, the Need-based Grant program also provides an additional $15 million and the Lottery Tuition Assistance Program provides an additional $23.6 million in financial aid funding. The GEAR-UP (Gaining Early Awareness and Readiness for Undergraduate Programs) and HEAP (Higher Education Awareness Program) programs generate higher education awareness and provide information on preparing for college. In addition, the Commission's Veteran Education program approves academic and on-the-job-training programs so that veterans can receive related educational benefits. This included approval of degree, diploma and certificate programs at 98 public and independent colleges and universities. The On-the-Job Training Apprenticeship programs involved 94 businesses/organizations across South Carolina and served 358 veterans in 172 career training programs. The Commission also provides a centralized college application process through our SCHOLAR on-line application process. This web-based application allows for students to apply on-line to multiple institutions simultaneously, thereby simplifying the college application process.

Organizational Structure

S. C. Commission on Higher Education
Organizational Chart
As of June 30, 2003

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                    │    Commission    │
                    │     Members      │
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                    │    Executive     │
                    │     Director     │
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│ Admin- │ │Academic│ │Facilities &│ │ Assessment/│ │Student │
│istration│ │Affairs &│ │ Statistical│ │Performance │ │Services│
│        │ │Licensing│ │  Services  │ │  Funding   │ │        │
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# S. C. Commission on Higher Education
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### Section III
### Elements of Malcolm Baldrige Award Criteria

The Commission is in the early stages of implementation of the Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award Criteria. While the concepts of evaluation and continuous improvement are present within the Commission's operations and activities, the specifics of the Baldrige Criteria have not yet been fully implemented. Provided below are descriptions of current examples of the Commission's utilization of the Criteria concepts and principles.

## Leadership

The Commission on Higher Education is a 14 member lay board, appointed by the Governor. The Commission is responsible for the hiring of an Executive Director, who in turn is responsible for developing an appropriate staff and agency structure. The Commission itself has a Chair, appointed by the Governor, a Vice-Chair, and representatives from Congressional Districts, institutional trustees, and the statewide citizenry. The Commission utilizes a committee structure for the handling of business. An Executive Committee, including the Chairman and all committee chairs, provides specific direction to the Executive Director for activities and issues to be addressed by the staff. The staff is organized along the lines of the Commission's committee structure.

More specifically, the Executive Director utilizes an Executive Management Team consisting of Division Directors. The divisions include: Academic Affairs & Licensing; Planning, Assessment & Performance Funding; Finance, Facilities & Statistical Services; Student Services; and Administration (as mentioned previously, at the beginning of the 2003-2004 year, the Planning, Assessment & Performance Funding division was integrated into the Academic Affairs & Licensing and Finance, Facilities & Statistical Services divisions). Each division includes professional staff and appropriate support staff to perform the related functions. The Executive Management Team serves as the planning and evaluative group for the Commission staff. All agency employees have input into the Commission's activities through their respective Division Director.

The Executive Director meets with the Executive Management Team on a weekly basis. In addition, the Executive Management Team meets with the full Commission staff on a monthly basis to discuss current issues and activities of the Commission. Further, individual divisions meet on a regular basis. These various meetings are designed to insure that the entire staff is aware of and involved in the activities of the Commission. These meetings also provide a forum

for the clear communication of the mission, vision, goals and the process to achieve those goals throughout the entire organization.

## Strategic Planning

The Commission relies heavily on strategic planning in all activities. The Commission utilizes a bi-annual planning retreat for members to evaluate the programs and direction of the agency. During alternate years and also on a periodic basis, the Commission's Executive Committee, which includes the Chairman of the Commission and all Committee Chairs, meets to review Commission initiatives and direction. New appointees participate in an extensive orientation process so they may become familiar not only with issues in the field of higher education, but also the pertinent issues and policy decisions facing the Commission. The Council of Public College and University Presidents works with the Commission for the formal development and adoption of a Strategic Plan for Higher Education. Also, the Commission staff's Executive Management Team conducts periodic planning sessions and has regular team meetings to continuously evaluate the agency's activities.

The Commission's specific goals are articulated on an annual basis through the Executive Director's evaluation process and this Accountability Report. Goals are reviewed on a periodic basis by the Executive Management Team with respect to status and progress towards achievement. Also, status and/or completion are reported to the Commission members as a component of the Executive Director's annual evaluation.

## Customer Focus

The Commission provides service to three primary customer groups: the citizenry of the state, the General Assembly, and the public colleges and universities. Each of these groups views higher education from a different perspective. One of the challenges faced by the Commission is to consider all of these perspectives, which at times may be conflicting, in performing its various functions. The Commission's primary opportunity to interact with each of these groups is through one of its twelve regularly scheduled Commission meetings, or numerous committee meetings. These meetings, along with other contacts as discussed below, provide the mechanism for evaluating satisfaction among these customer groups.

The citizenry of the state has a variety of means of addressing the Commission. Citizens can contact the Commission directly, either through members or the staff, with issues or concerns that they would like to see considered. Also, citizens can utilize either of the other two customer groups to provide input into Commission activities. As an additional opportunity for citizens, the Commission maintains a website with a variety of information, data, and links to related sites, such as state colleges and universities. A page specifically designed for parents and students is also provided with relevant information and a link to an electronic application process that allows students to apply on-line to all of our state's colleges and universities. Each division of the Commission maintains information that describes and is relevant to their programs. For example, the Academic Affairs page includes a summary of available degrees and information on the Academic Common Market (a Southern Regional Education Board program that provides

in-state tuition to students attending certain programs in other states).  Also, the Finance, Facilities and Statistical Services page includes copies of current and past *Statistical Abstracts* and the new *Facilities Abstract*.  Finally, the Commission's webpage includes numerous opportunities for communication directly to Commission staff via e-mail.

The General Assembly works with the Commission in one of the following manners: directives through Legislation, contact directly with appointed Commissioners, or contact (directly or through Legislative staff) with the Commission staff.  The Commission maintains on its staff a Legislative liaison who is charged with monitoring and providing coordination with this customer group.  Certain other staff members whose area of responsibility may relate to Legislative activity also work with this customer group.  These interactions with the General Assembly occur both formally and informally.  Budget presentations to House and Senate committees, Legislative hearings on pending legislation, and informational presentations to ad hoc committees are a few of the formal interactions.  Informal opportunities occur through information requests from individual senators and representatives, working with legislative staff in preparing material for consideration, or serving as a resource during staff research of pending issues and discussions.

The public colleges and universities work closely with the Commission and its staff.  The first area of interaction is the membership of the Commission itself.  With the passage of Act 137 of 1995, the Commission membership was modified to include institutional representation. Effective July 1, 1996, three members were appointed to represent the different sectors of institutions.  The members are trustees from each of the following sectors: public senior research institutions, four-year public institutions, and the technical colleges.  Institutions have additional input into Commission activities through advisory committees.  Each functional area of the Commission has one or more advisory committees including representation from every public four-year institution and selected representatives from the public two-year institutions.  These advisory committees provide valuable discussion and recommendations to the Commission staff. Often, the recommendations of these committees are made directly to the Commission, with the support of the staff.  Institutions have further access to the Commission through direct requests. All institutional requests, ranging from academic program approvals to facilities improvements to budget requests, are made to the Commission after appropriate analysis by the staff.  The final area of communication between the institutions and the Commission is through the Council of Public College and University Presidents.  This group meets on a quarterly basis, twice with the Commission, in order to provide coordination among the institutions and direct input into the Commission's activities.  Also, the Commission's Executive Director meets with the Council on an ongoing basis.

## Information and Analysis

The Commission has several activities that rely heavily on the use of data.  The Commission on Higher Education Management Information System (CHEMIS) collects data from institutions relating to student enrollment, student completions, facilities, courses, and faculty.  This system serves as the principal repository for data used in staff analysis of institutional and higher education issues.  This data also provides the basis for the Commission's determination of funding needs of higher education, the evaluation of performance of the state's colleges and universities, and allocation of appropriations.  Program specific data is gathered for

the financial aid programs administered by the Commission, the Gaining Early Awareness and Readiness for Undergraduate Programs (GEAR-UP) grant program, the Access & Equity program, and the Higher Education Awareness Program (HEAP). Also, division-specific data is collected for the Academic Affairs & Licensing division.

In addition to the CHEMIS database, the Commission also acts as the state-level coordinating body for the collection and submission of data for the Integrated Post-Secondary Education Data System (IPEDS), which is maintained by the U. S. Department of Education for the Federal Government. Much of the IPEDS data is also used in the CHEMIS database. The additional data is used for national statistical purposes, which also provides the Commission access to national comparative data.

## Human Resources Focus

As a state coordinating board, the Commission's primary business focus is policy-oriented, rather than direct service or product delivery. As such, the people making up the Commission and its staff are the most valuable asset of the agency. Only through attracting, educating, and retaining a quality staff can the appointed Commission members be assured that they are receiving the best possible analysis and review of issues being considered. Of the 52 members of the Commission staff, seven have Doctoral degrees, 12 have other graduate degrees, and 16 have Bachelors degrees.

Along with the credentials the staff members bring to their positions, the Commission provides opportunities for developing, enhancing, and refining skills. Courses available through the Budget and Control Board provide opportunities. Annual conferences on programmatic areas insure current knowledge of relevant issues. Each year, a member of the staff participates in the State Budget and Control Board's Executive Institute. In addition, several staff members are pursuing additional formal educational opportunities. Also, along with these opportunities, there exists an informal mentoring program provided by the more senior staff members. In short, the Commission places a very high value on the quality of its human resources and recognizes the importance of continual development.

## Process Management

Each area and program provided through the Commission operates with the assistance of one or more advisory committees. Also, all meetings of the Commission, including advisory committees, are held as public meetings, thereby providing public access and accountability. Academic quality is an overriding principle in every educational environment. Higher education is no different. Each concept for a new or modified academic program offering goes through an evaluation by a committee involving institutional academic officers. All issues relating to state funding are discussed with institutional finance officers. Questions and considerations relating to scholarships and financial grants programs are reviewed extensively with institutional financial aid officers. Assessment and performance evaluation issues are discussed with institutional research and/or institutional assessment officers. In each of these areas, and all others within the Commission, processes are reviewed on a periodic basis to insure both quality and efficiency, with input solicited from the participants, the business community, and other constituencies of higher education.

# Business Results

Provided below and on the following pages are a variety of data relating to the Commission's programs and activities. These data are used within the respective programs as means of evaluating levels of activity, progress toward stated goals, or achievement of statewide objectives. As the Commission continues to implement the usage of the Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award Criteria concepts and principles, additional trend data over appropriate time periods will be available. Also, the data included below will be evaluated as to its effectiveness in measuring achievement of agency goals.

With respect to business results, the institutions of higher education report separately in accordance with Code Section 59-101-350. This reporting is achieved through the use of institutional report cards, which are reported to the Legislature annually in the document entitled *A Closer Look at Public Higher Education in South Carolina: Institutional Effectiveness, Accountability, and Performance*. Institutional report cards are also posted on the Commission's website at: http://www.che400.state.sc.us/web/Perform/ReportCards/Report_Frames.htm.

## *Statistics from Scholarship and Grant Awards*

|  | Academic Year | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
|  | 1999-2000 | 2000-2001 | 2001-2002 | 2002-2003 |
| Palmetto Fellows: | | | | |
| Number of New Awards | 700 | 873 | 712 | 1,022 |
| Number of Total Recipients | 2,263 | 2,633 | 2,641 | 2,985 |
| Total Scholarships Awarded | $10.6 | $12.6 | $12.6 | $14.7 |
| | | | | |
| LIFE Scholarships: | | | | |
| Number of Recipients | 17,025 | 17,269 | 20,340 | 24,491 |
| Total Scholarships Awarded | $30.4 | $46.4 | $54.4 | $106.5 |
| | | | | |
| HOPE Scholarships | | | | |
| Number of Recipients | N/A | N/A | N/A | 2,188 |
| Total Scholarships Awarded | N/A | N/A | N/A | $5.2 |
| | | | | |
| Need-Based Grants: | | | | |
| Number of Recipients | 20,567 | 21,306 | 19,779 | 22,973 |
| Total Grants Awarded | $12.5 | $13.8 | $12.0 | $14.7 |
| | | | | |
| Lottery Tuition Assistance | | | | |
| Number of Recipients | N/A | N/A | N/A | 23,790 |
| Total Grants Awarded | N/A | N/A | N/A | $23.6 |

(Note: dollar amounts are in millions)

*Statistics from Academic Affairs Programs*

|  | 2000-2001 | 2001-2002 | 2002-03 |
|---|---|---|---|
| Number of Existing Programs Reviewed: | 21 | 0 | 0 |

Existing Academic Program Disciplines Review Completed: (Computer Science)

| | |
|---|---|
| Commendations of Excellence | 3 |
| Full Approval | 18 |
| Probations | 0 |

|  | 2000-2001 | 2001-2002 | 2002-03 |
|---|---|---|---|
| Number of Program Planning Summaries Reviewed: | 32 | 22 | 27 |
| Number of New Program Proposals Reviewed: | 26 | 16 | 39 |
| Number of Existing Programs Terminated: | 27 | 65 | 5 |
| Number of Program Modifications Reviewed: | 11 | 6 | 7 |

Number of New Academic Policies Developed: 3 (New Nursing Agreement, Expansion of Transfer Articulation Courses and Program Productivity)

|  | 2000-2001 | 2001-02 | 2002-03 |
|---|---|---|---|
| Number of Reports/Articles/Presentations Prepared on Academic Issues: | 12 | 27 | 11 |
| Number of Interagency Taskforces & Committees Staffed: | 17 | 26 | 15 |

| SREB Programs: (Number of Students Certified for:) | 2000-2001 | 2001-02 | 2002-03 |
|---|---|---|---|
| N. C. School for the Arts: | 5 | 6 | 6 |
| Contract Programs (Veterinary Medicine & Optometry) | 80 | 90 | 90 |
| Academic Common Market | 97 | 101 | 102 |

| Number of new Grant Proposals/Guidelines Developed: | 2 | 0 | 5 |
|---|---|---|---|

| Number of Grants & Awards Under Various Programs: | 2000-2001 | 2001-02 | 2002-03 |
|---|---|---|---|
|  | (#granted/#submitted) | | |
| Eisenhower | 9/17 | 13/17 | 21/22 |
| Eisenhower Site Visits: | 11 | 0 | 0 |
| Research Incentive Program: | 34 /89 | 33/86 | N/A |
|  | | | (2nd year of 2yr program) |
| Professor of the Year: | 2 Winners | 2 Winners | 2 winners |
|  | 10 /40 | 10/ 39 | 10/37 |
| Center of (Teacher) Excellence: | l/4 | l/4 | 2/3 |
| Technology Grant Program | N/A | N/A | 13/20 |
| Teacher Scholarship Grants | N/A | N/A | 339 |

| Licensing Program: | 2000-2001 | 2001-02 | 2002-03 |
|---|---|---|---|
| New Agent Permits: | 78 | 93 | 115 |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Transcripts Requested: | 286 | 252 | 335 |
| New Licenses – Degree Granting: | | | |
| Amendments | 5 | 2 | 12 |
| Initial | 1 | 6 | 4 |
| Non-Degree Licenses Issued: | 144 | 167 | 164 |
| Licenses Relinquished/ Deferred/Denied/Revoked | 0 | 2 | 4 |
| Student Complaints: | 38 | 64 | 40 |

## *Gaining Early Awareness and Readiness for Undergraduate Programs*

The SC GEARUP program operates a variety of exciting programs across SC with the goal of assisting low-income students to be prepared for and succeed in college. Each of the programs is evaluated for impact and the effectiveness. Evaluations include pre and post surveys, activity evaluations, and/or interviews that include student, parent and educator components.

**GEAR UP Early Awareness Programs** – The 6th grade program – Just Unleash My Potential (JUMP) - and the 7th grade program - Learn the Power to Earn - serves approximately 50,000 students in 141 schools and 69 school districts in South Carolina. The programs provide students, parents, and educators with important academic and career planning information and learning tools that enable the recipients to be better prepared for the challenges and success of high school and college. In addition, the AIM COLLEGE component of GEAR UP reaches all GEAR UP students in 9 – 12 grades. During the 2003/2004 school year, these programs will expand to serve 388,000 students in each 6- 12 grade school – an increase of over 150,000 students.

**GEAR UP High Performance Partnerships** – High Performance Partnerships (HPP) operates out of the SC Chamber of Commerce office with four staff members. HPP is a program charged with improving academic achievement by partnering business with underachieving schools. During the year, the High Performance Partnership staff developed and maintained a total of 123 business partnerships with 91 schools statewide. Each partnership is unique and is supported by the HPP staff as well as the SC GEAR UP staff. (2002-2003 data: 123 business partnerships with 91 schools statewide).

**GEAR UP Mentoring Program** - Housed at the State Department of Education, this program provides training support to the High Performance Partnership business and education program as well as develops new mentor program opportunities around the state. During the 2001/2002 year, the program participated in a newly funded IMPACTS program. This program is in partnership and funded by the SC Department of Health and Human Services Division on Aging. Twenty school districts with GEAR UP programs were awarded as pilot sites. Pilots were completed. The GEAR UP IMPACTS program was awarded $91,000 on July 1, 2002 to expand the program to 24 sites during the 2002/2003 school year. Local mentor coordinators train and place volunteer mentors to assist GEAR UP students. During the 2003/2004 school year five GEAR UP schools will house mentoring programs through the GEAR UP initiative. The SC Department of Education will continue to provide support and training for these programs

**Data Analysis and Statistics** - Data and evaluations are done on a continual basis with GEAR UP. This year the following surveys were completed in various GEAR UP schools/ programs across the state.

| Number Surveyed | 2000-2001 | 2001-2002 | 2002-2003 |
|---|---|---|---|
| Parents | 1,356 | 1,258 | 1,788 |
| Students | 2,812 | 2,957 | 3,137 |
| Teachers | 157 | 139 | 231 |

**GEAR UP Saturday Academies and Summer Institutes (SA/SI)** - Ten college or university based Saturday Academies/Summer Institutes each met for 20 five-hour sessions on Saturday mornings with at-risk seventh graders and for a minimum of five such sessions with at-risk eighth graders to accelerate the students' academic achievement, better prepare them for the PACT, and increase their probability of attending college. The average total daily attendance for $7^{th}$ graders participating in the ten Saturday Academy and Summer Institute programs was 38. In addition, all ten programs met for at least three weeks during the summer with the seventh (rising eighth) graders for the same purpose. Most of the summer programs were all or partially residential. Both school year and summer programs included educational field trips and at least one session with a special science team - TEAM GEAR UP - from the Governor's School for Science and Mathematics (2002-2003 data: average daily attendance was 33)

CHE staff make regular visits to the Saturday Academies/Summer Institutes to observe and visit with students, faculty, and staff for the purpose of monitoring programs and assuring success of the programs. In addition, CHE staff provides training to SA/SI staff in cooperation with ACT

There were 943 students who participated in the SA/SI programs at the ten colleges and universities (The Citadel, the College of Charleston, USC Aiken, USC Columbia, USC Spartanburg, Horry-Georgetown Tec, Midlands Tec, Denmark Tec, Benedict College, Lander University). (2000-2001 data: 782 students participated)

GEAR UP students in the SA/SI programs all take the ACT Explore test. The test is used as a student assessment tool to determine what areas the students are weak in and to determine what areas the teachers will address during instruction time for SA/SI programs. During the 2002/2003 year 434 $7^{th}$ graders took the Explore Test. (2001-2002 data: 957 students were tested)

**GEAR UP Partnership with SC Governor's School for Science and Mathematics**: During the 2002/2003 year, 51 juniors and seniors from Aiken, Anderson, Beaufort, Berkeley, Calhoun, Charleston, Cherokee, Darlington, Dillon, Dorchester, Florence, Georgetown, Greenville, Horry, Lancaster, Lexington, Newberry, Oconee, Orangeburg, Pickens, Richland, Spartanburg, and York Counties participated in the TEAM GEAR UP program. These students served 498 middle school students across the State during a total of 13 workshops. In addition, 15 rising 9th grade GEAR UP students and 12 rising 10th grade GEAR UP students were awarded scholarships to attend the SC Governor's School for Science and Mathematics Summer Science program. Many of these students show the promise of becoming Governor's School students themselves in the next few years. (2001-2002 data: 39 students served 575 middle schools during 15 workshops)

Five GEAR UP students from The Citadel, Midlands Tech, and Lander University SA/SI programs were selected to participate in the Sloan Summer Student Program, a collaboration between the Central Virginia Governor's School for Science and Technology, the South Carolina Governor' School of Science and Mathematics, the Center for Advanced Studies/Wheeler High School, and the North Carolina School of Science and Mathematics. The program was hosted by the NC School of Science and Mathematics The five GEAR UP students had the opportunity to expand their knowledge in the areas of robotics, physics, chemistry, and biology research as they participated in an inquiry-rich curriculum and visited research laboratories at the University of North Carolina, North Carolina State University, Duke University, and North Carolina Central University.

Finally, the Governor's School successfully recruited its first GEAR UP student for their fulltime program this year.  The student, from the USC Aiken GEAR UP, has begun classes.

During the 2002/2003 year the **South Carolina Educational Television** (SCETV) partnership presented two television shows - One Step at a Time - for parents and educators to be shown statewide on their local networks in the Spring of 2003.  In addition, SCETV prepared and produced the first distance learning GEAR UP course – One Step at a Time - for 50 educators that began in August and was held again in Spring 2003.   The course will produce local parental involvement components that include educator training and support and will utilize the scenarios produced during the television series

## *Higher Education Awareness Program (HEAP)*

**HEAP Purpose**
To provide information to eighth grade students and their parents in order to increase their knowledge about the availability of post-secondary education in South Carolina and to motivate them to aspire to higher education with the purpose of increasing the college going rate in South Carolina.

**ACT 271 of 1992**
- Increase the college-going rate in South Carolina by making 8th-Grade students and their parents aware of:
  - ➢ SC Higher Education opportunities
  - ➢ Academic Prerequisites
  - ➢ Tuition & Fees
  - ➢ Financial Aid possibilities
- This communication campaign encourages 8th grade students to consider college by understanding that a post-secondary education gives them better access to employment opportunities & enhanced purchasing power, thus giving birth to the phrase "College Pays"
- SC Commission on Higher Education given coordinating responsibility
- Cooperation required from:
  - ➢ SC Department of Education
  - ➢ All public institutions of higher education
  - ➢ All public schools with 8th grades
  - ➢ Local school boards

**Participants**

- Public 4-year Colleges    (12)   Mandated
- Public 2-year Colleges     (5)   Mandated
- Technical Colleges        (16)   Mandated
- Public Schools            (252)  Mandated
- Private Colleges          (19)   Voluntary

**History**

- 1991 - 1992: 7 schools, 1100 students, 6 higher education partners
- 1992 - 1993: 96 schools, 18,000 students, 37 higher education partners
- 1993 - present: 262 schools, 56,000 students, 54 higher education partners

**Implementation**

The materials include an interactive CD Rom for each student to be implemented by independent learning group activities, media lab interaction, and/or self directed activities. The CD Rom contains all of the earlier material in a digital format with additional activities and information, with a curriculum emphasis, that is based on academic skills to improve performance on standardized testing and college preparedness.

Schools incorporate HEAP activities into regular classroom lessons. For example, English teachers have built writing assignments around letters to colleges and librarians used colleges and careers as a reference search assignment.

| # Schools | # Students | Average 8$^{th}$ grade size | Smallest | Largest |
|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| 262 | 55,698 | 222 | 28 | 812 |

**Partnerships**

- Each school is partnered with an institution of higher education

- Each institution is partnered with two to nine schools

Through the use of regional meetings, 237 schools (of the 268 middle schools originally involved – six schools subsequently merged to result in the 262 schools referenced above) were contacted and provided information, materials, and counseling regarding the program.

## *Access & Equity Program*

**Era of Compliance:** From 1981 to 1986 South Carolina implemented a federally mandated desegregation plan designed to: (1) Enhance the State's public historically black colleges; (2) Desegregate student enrollments at the State's baccalaureate degree granting public colleges and universities; and (3) Desegregate faculties, staffs, and governing bodies of all public colleges and universities in South Carolina. In 1985, the Commission on Higher Education adopted the South Carolina Plan for Equity and Equal Opportunity in Public Institutions of Higher Education - 1986-87 and Beyond, which over a three-year period, provided funds to support (1) a Graduate Incentive Fellowship Program; (2) an Other Race Grants Program; (3) a Minority

Recruitment and Retention Grants Program; and (4) programs to enhance the State's two public Historically Black institutions.

**Era of Commitment:** In February 1988, the Commission approved guidelines for the Access and Equity Program. Implementation of the Program began on July 1, 1989, allowing funds to be awarded to institutions with well-planned activities that (1) flow from the institution's mission and address the recruitment and retention of minority students and employees; (2) meet specific institutional requirements related to the characteristics of students and faculty; (3) are carefully conceptualized; and (4) are linked to guidelines to emphasize the need to achieve campus climates and academic settings that encourage participation and achievement by African-American students

The Commission provides statewide governance to 33 institutions in the area of Access & Equity. The vision of Access & Equity is to achieve educational equity for all students and faculty in higher education. Minority enrollment should be at least proportional to the minority population in South Carolina and minority graduation rates should be comparable to the graduation rates of other students. Progress in the recruitment and retention of minority faculty should be made to enhance diversity among those who convey knowledge to our students.

The development of the **GIS Scholars database** enables colleges and universities to access the students in the GIS Pipeline for employment opportunities. Their information is posted on the web for the purpose of assisting them in acquiring employment in state.

The **integration of Web technology** has been a major emphasis for Access & Equity. A website has been designed with valuable information about the program and each respective institution. All of the correspondence has been converted to electronic mail and all forms can be accessed at any time via the CHE website.

**Expenditure Report/ Accountability Component** was established in 2001 to help validate the Access & Equity program success. The Commission on Higher Education generated a survey to be completed with End of the Year report; in addition, institutions must generate a survey that gathers feedback from students (to include students receiving scholarships). Results of the institutional survey are shared with the Commission to improve program performance.