

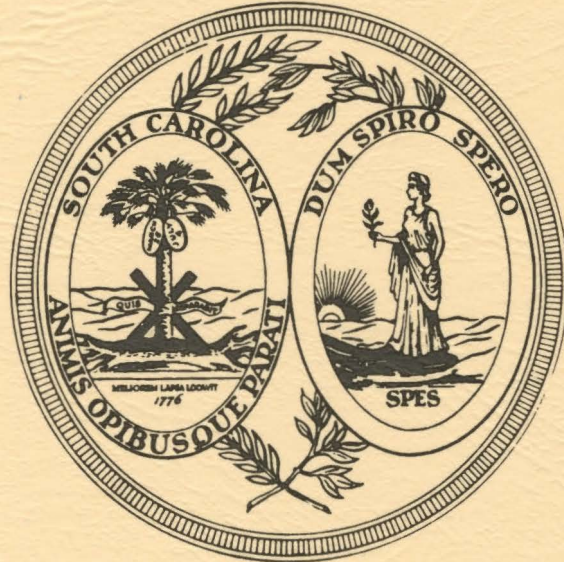
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A Special Report to the
Higher Education Study Committee:
Overlapping and Unnecessary
Duplication in Higher Education
January 18, 1977

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THE STATE OF SOUTH CAROLINA

GENERAL ASSEMBLY

LEGISLATIVE AUDIT COUNCIL

A SPECIAL REPORT TO

HIGHER EDUCATION STUDY COMMITTEE:

OVERLAPPING AND UNNECESSARY DUPLICATION

IN HIGHER EDUCATION

The Legislative Audit Council wishes to
acknowledge the assistance and cooperation of
Mr. Thomas Linton and the staff of the
Legislative Council in printing this report

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PREFACE

A fundamental tenet of a democratic society holds that government agencies entrusted with public resources and the authority for applying them have a responsibility to render a full accounting of their activities. No governmental entity should ever be allowed to function beyond the reach of the people or their elected representatives. Total and unconditional disclosure, which is what accountability is all about, must be achieved if decisions are to be made on a basis of honesty, fairness, and objectivity. Accountability should be inherent to the governmental process. It is to this end that this report and all other work performed by the Legislative Audit Council is dedicated.

SCOPE AND PURPOSE

On October 14, 1976, the Higher Education Study Committee of the General Assembly requested that the Legislative Audit Council conduct a study on overlapping and unnecessary duplication of academic offerings within South Carolina's public higher education system. The committee also requested that the study be completed by January. This document is the result of that study.

As a part of this audit, the Legislative Audit Council interviewed numerous officials working in the field of higher education both in South Carolina and other states. This included the entire staff of the Commission of Higher Education, Technical Education officials on both the state and local level, University officials, Vocational Education officials, and several professional people in other states who are involved in the management of higher education. In addition, material regarding academic offerings in South Carolina was studied along with the available literature on management of higher education. The Council also reviewed the Commission's procedures for the approval of new programs and the implementation of these procedures for several program proposals made within the last 18 months. Finally, a number of onsite visits were made to South Carolina's state-supported institutions of higher learning.

The scope of this audit did not include such areas as the effectiveness of the Commission itself and the viability of the current formula used to fund higher education institutions. Thus, the Council cannot render an informed opinion in these areas.

BACKGROUND: THE COMMISSION ON HIGHER EDUCATION AND HIGHER
EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS IN SOUTH CAROLINA

THE COMMISSION ON HIGHER EDUCATION

The South Carolina Commission on Higher Education (CHE) consists of nine members appointed by the Governor and eight members representing institutions of higher education in the state.

The Commission is responsible for "...making studies of the state's institutions of higher learning relative to both short and long-range programs which shall include:

- (a) The role of state-supported higher education in serving the needs of the state and the roles and participation of the individual institutions in the statewide program;
- (b) Enrollment trends, student costs, business management practices, accounting methods, operating results and needs and capital fund requirements;
- (c) The administrative setup and curriculum offerings of the several institutions and of the various departments, schools, institutes and services within each institution and the respective relationships to the services and offerings of other institutions;
- (d) Areas of state level coordination and cooperation with the objective of reducing duplication, increasing effectiveness and achieving economies and eliminating sources of friction and misunderstandings;
- (e) Efforts to promote a clearer understanding and greater unity and goodwill among all institutions of higher learning, both public and private, in the interest of

serving the educational needs of the people of South Carolina on a statewide level." (S. C. Code 22-15.7)

HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS IN SOUTH CAROLINA

At present South Carolina has 12 four-year colleges, eight of which offer graduate degrees. In addition, it has 21 public two-year institutions. This includes 16 Technical Education Centers (TEC) and 5 two-year branches of the University of South Carolina.

In the fall of 1974, about 85,000 students were enrolled in these institutions (CHE estimate). Of the state's college age students (18-21), 46% attended post secondary schools in South Carolina in 1974. Ten years earlier, only 22% attended.

Expansion of higher education in South Carolina has occurred at an extremely rapid rate during the last 6 years. In the fall of 1970 South Carolina had 6 four-year state-supported colleges. In 1976 it had 12. In addition, various universities have created numerous new programs. Some of these programs had their origins within institutions who, in turn, sought and were granted approval for the new program from the Commission on Higher Education. Other programs and institutions came into being when the General Assembly enacted legislation providing for the creation of an institution or program.

LACK OF ADEQUATE PLANNING, DIRECTION AND GOALS FOR THE HIGHER EDUCATION SYSTEM

The Council found that the overall administrative system for higher education in South Carolina does not provide adequate planning, direction or goals for higher education institutions and programs.

In general this situation appears to be caused by two major factors:

(1) The roles of educational institutions and parties to the decision-making process are not adequately defined resulting in responsibilities being fragmented among various institutions; and (2) CHE has not been able to set, and require adherence to, the goals necessary to achieve orderly and efficient growth of higher education in South Carolina.

As a result, there are numerous instances of unnecessary duplication and overlap in the higher education system. The remainder of this report contains specific examples of this situation and recommendations for improvement.

NEED FOR IMPROVED DEFINITION OF ROLES OF HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS

The Council found that one of the major causes of inadequate planning, direction, and goals in South Carolina is that the institutions do not have adequately defined and restricted roles. This was found to produce overlapping and duplication at several points:

(1) Between the TEC system and the vocational education system (Voc. Ed.); (2) between the TEC system and the University system; and (3) within the University system.

Duplication of TEC and Vocational Education Facilities

The primary responsibility for providing vocational training in South Carolina has been divided between the TEC system and the Voc. Ed. system. The Voc. Ed. system serves high school students, and the TEC system serves post-high school students. Both systems provide training in specific occupational skills. It appears that this division of responsibility has led to unnecessary duplication of facilities.

For example, the Council found apparent duplication of facilities in Lexington County. Between 1969 and 1972 as many as 400 students from

9 Lexington County High Schools obtained vocational training at the Airport Campus of Midlands TEC. Currently, less than 10 high school students attend the Midlands TEC Airport campus because a number of these Lexington County high schools have built their own Voc. Ed. facilities. Both Airport High School and Brookland-Cayce High School have constructed Voc. Ed. wings, yet these schools are located only 1 and 5 miles respectively from the Airport campus of Midlands TEC.

The situation as it existed in 1972 probably needed improvement. Students from some of those schools had to be bussed more than 30 miles to go to Midlands TEC. Because of the speed controls the state places on school buses, this could have required a student to spend over 2 hours of his school day on a school bus. Some students probably chose to forego vocational training because of the enormous time requirement. But the transportation problem does not affect schools that are close to Technical Education Centers and should not have necessitated the construction of Voc. Ed. wings at Airport and Brookland-Cayce High Schools.

An official of the Office of Vocational Education said that the only reason for the change was that the high school students differed, in maturity, from their older classmates; the average age of the TEC student was 26. Midlands TEC officials disagreed claiming that there was no problem of this nature. They said that their system permits individuals to work at their own pace. Slower learners can be trained alongside faster students, and maturity was not a problem. Both sides agreed that there had been no problems with the way TEC was running the programs. The instruction and facilities were all adequate.

Clearly some change was necessary. It may be true that TEC and high school students should not be in the same classrooms. Even so, the building of vocational education facilities in close proximity to TEC centers is unnecessary because classes could have been scheduled at different times within one facility. The coordination of schedules could have reduced both utility and personnel costs.

Another example of duplication of facilities apparently exists in Orangeburg. Calhoun-Orangeburg TEC is located only 1 mile from the Voc. Ed. center for Orangeburg and Calhoun Counties. The problem of duplication of facilities between Voc. Ed. and TEC exists in other areas of the state as well. Wherever this occurs there is at least some unnecessary duplication of facilities. Combining such facilities could have saved money for both the state and the school districts involved.

Duplication of TEC and Vocational Education Programs

The Council also found instances where neighboring TEC and vocational education facilities offer the same programs. For example, in Orangeburg, both Calhoun-Orangeburg TEC and nearby Calhoun-Orangeburg vocational center offer beginning courses in auto mechanics. The students trained in the vocational education school may transfer credit to the TEC auto mechanics program. This transferability clearly indicates that both beginning courses have the same educational objectives.

Also, both TECs and vocational education centers offer courses at night for post-secondary students. In 1975-76, 34 vocational education centers offered courses at night. During the same period, night courses were also offered by all 16 TECs. In 1974-75, both Calhoun-Orangeburg

TEC and Calhoun-Orangeburg Vocational Education Center offered night courses, although the Vocational Education Center is not offering them this year. It is neither efficient nor economical to offer night courses at neighboring institutions if for no other reason than the expense involved in keeping both buildings open at night.

The 2 systems have attempted to coordinate so they will not offer identical courses within 15 miles of each other. A 1976 study conducted by TEC and Vocational Education revealed that 19 courses out of 498 (3.8%) were duplicated within 15 miles. The conclusion agreed to by both parties was that this was not significant duplication. While this may be true, the study did not address the larger issue mentioned earlier: Is it necessary to duplicate facilities within a few miles of one another?

Unnecessary Duplication Between TEC and College Programs

Another type of overlapping was found to exist between the colleges and TECs. This duplication is apparently caused by the failure of the 2 groups of institutions to be assigned mutually exclusive functions.

The purposes of two-year programs are: (1) to offer a student a vocational degree; and/or (2) to prepare a student for transfer to a four-year school. Both TECs and the colleges serve these 2 purposes. This division of responsibility appeared to be ineffective and to result in unnecessary duplication.

One of the most obvious examples of this is found in Sumter where a two-year branch of USC is adjacent to a TEC. The 2 schools each have a library. These libraries are only a few hundred yards apart. In a situation such as this, facilities, administration and faculty costs are all duplicated at the taxpayer's expense and with little

benefit to anyone. A similar situation was found to exist in other areas such as Aiken, Beaufort, and Spartanburg, where there are TEC as well as branches of USC offering two-year education.

Not only do both systems offer associate degrees, but in some cases they were found to offer the same degree in close proximity to one another. Some examples are:

- (1) Criminal Justice; both the University of South Carolina and Midlands TEC offer an Associate Degree in Criminal Justice. Officials from both institutions admit that these programs have the same educational objectives.
- (2) Secretarial Science; both the University of South Carolina and Midlands TEC offer an Associate Degree in Secretarial Science. Again, officials from both institutions admit that these programs have the same educational objectives.

Under the present system where funding is based on enrollment, the University and Midlands TEC are competing with each other for students. If two-year education were the sole mission of either of the institutions, unnecessary duplication and competition among educational institutions could be avoided.

INCONSISTENCY OF PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT

The problem of role definition was also found to exist within the state's four-year college and university system, although the results are not so easily demonstrated.

The development of educational programs within the college system has followed an illogical pattern resulting in needless duplication of faculty and support staff. For example, in the field of "student personnel", 4 schools offer degrees. The Citadel offers only a

master's degree. South Carolina State offers a bachelor's and a master's degree. USC offers only a doctorate and Winthrop offers only the masters.

By tradition, graduate programs are built upon baccalaureate programs if at all possible. Higher education officials agree with this philosophy.

If 1 institution offered all the degrees available in this field, faculty and support services could be more effectively and efficiently utilized. In addition, the quality of the program as a whole would be enhanced.

Another example was found in the field of "special education." Two colleges offer only bachelor's degrees and 2 others offer only the masters. One offers both degrees. Again, consolidation of the degree program could result in strengthened programs and better utilization of the state's resources.

CHE officials agree that a more logical pattern in the development of programs such as these is desirable. However, the Commission does not have the authority to terminate programs or transfer them to other institutions.

INABILITY OF CHE TO COORDINATE HIGHER
EDUCATION IN SOUTH CAROLINA

The Commission on Higher Education (CHE) is responsible for approving new programs at public colleges and universities as well as associate degrees at Technical Education Centers. A new program is defined by CHE as "any combination of courses, or curriculum leading to the award of a new major or to a new level or degree or certificate not previously offered."

The Commission's procedures require answers to the following questions before it approves new programs:

- "(1) Does the state need this new activity, and if so, are there alternative ways of accomplishing the desired objective:
- (2) Is the proposed activity compatible with the basic mission, role and scope of the institution...?
- (3) How much will the proposed program cost for the foreseeable future, and, given the likelihood of limited funding resources, what priority should be given it in funding?
- (4) Does the institution have the necessary personnel, facilities, library holdings and other essentials necessary to conduct a program of high quality, and, if not, is there advanced a defensible plan for acquiring these essentials?"

UNIVERSITIES DEVELOPING PROGRAMS WITHOUT PRIOR APPROVAL

Commission officials pointed out that university officials sometimes request permission to start a new program "that won't cost the state any more money." These institutions will claim that they already have the necessary faculty and course offerings to grant a degree in the given field.

In many instances, higher education institutions have made a conscious decision to offer a new degree. To this end, they acquire the faculty, library holdings and course offerings necessary to offer the new degree prior to submitting the program for approval.

CHE is put on the defensive if they decide not to approve a program brought to them in this manner. The "no cost" argument is made. The program is already developed. And to refuse approval to the program is declared to be a needless denial of educational opportunity to students.

An example of this occurred when Winthrop College proposed a new Masters Program in Personnel and Industrial Relations. When Winthrop requested approval for this program, the CHE staff report stated: "All of the required courses in this specialty have recently been added to the curriculum." It also stated that "No special funding will be required for start up purposes, and none will be requested." This is because the costs necessary to start up the program had already been incurred.

Beginning programs in this fashion, prevents the CHE from viewing higher education needs on a statewide basis. In an attempt to avoid this type of circumvention, other states require universities to obtain permission to plan new programs far in advance of their implementation. For example, in Florida a university must obtain, from the statewide governing board, permission to plan for a new Bachelors Degree Program 1 year before making its proposal for the program. They require that permission to plan new Masters Degree Programs be obtained 2 years before making a proposal for the new program. They require 3 years for Doctoral Programs.

As the system presently exists in South Carolina, it is virtually impossible to look at what educational needs the state has while evaluating efforts that are being made to meet those needs. The lack of an adequate waiting period enables institutions to plan and do preliminary work on new program areas without CHE being aware of their activity. In addition, projections and control of educational costs in South Carolina are not reliable when universities can begin programs at will.

NEED FOR SINGLE AUTHORITY FOR APPROVING NEW PROGRAMS

The law establishing the Commission on Higher Education provides that "No new program shall be undertaken by an state-supported institution of higher learning without the approval of the Commission or the General Assembly." (S. C. Code 22-15.9) Clearly it is the Legislature's prerogative to begin programs where it sees fit. However, independent bodies making independent decisions can lead to unnecessary duplication.

Officials at the CHE stated that funds "just appeared one day" in USC's section of the Appropriation Bill to begin a Masters Program in Criminal Justice. USC officials claim they made no mention of wanting such funds.

The standard procedures used by the CHE were followed in approving this program for USC. However, the basic questions CHE tries to answer in approving new programs were asked "after the fact." That is, by being given the funds, USC was being instructed to begin a graduate program in Criminal Justice.

Again, the General Assembly does have ultimate authority for decisions regarding public higher education. However, if South Carolina hopes to have a truly rational and logical system of higher education, CHE must be actively involved in the decision-making process. If CHE is not providing information the General Assembly finds useful and necessary, it should be altered so that it can consistently fulfill its obligations.

The enabling legislation for setting up CHE provides that, "Supplemental budgetary requests from any institution of higher learning must be submitted to the Commission. If the Commission does not concur in such requests, the institution of higher learning may request a

hearing on such requests before appropriate committees of the General Assembly. The Commission shall have the right to appear at any such hearing and present its recommendations and findings." (S. C. Code 22-15.7:1) Officials at the CHE complained that universities appear before legislative committees such as Ways and Means without Commission staffers being notified. CHE officials felt this circumvented their responsibilities.

The Legislative Audit Council found other instances where decisions regarding higher education were made without approval or advice from the Commission on Higher Education. For example, in 1972 the General Assembly enacted legislation that allowed any two-year branch of the University of South Carolina to offer junior level (3rd year) courses upon reaching an enrollment of 750 Full Time Equivalent Students (FTES's). And that same legislation made USC extensions four-year degree granting institutions when they reached an enrollment of 1,000 FTES's. As a result, 3 two-year branches became four-year colleges before the law was repealed in 1976.

Current and potential enrollments are certainly important considerations when reaching a decision such as this but making enrollments the only criteria is unsound. For example, a temporary increase in the number of veterans attending school during a limited period of time or other such extenuating circumstances could cause enrollments to temporarily rise to the point where a two-year branch becomes a full four-year college. A needs assessment which addressed itself to the future growth of these two-year branches would have, in all probability, revealed this. But this was not done. The need for such analysis is obvious. Only when planning, review and coordination techniques are used consistently in higher education will the

resulting system be characterized by orderly growth toward the accomplishment of statewide goals.

As noted earlier, of the Commissioners of Higher Education, 9 are appointed by the Governor and the remainder are either Chairman of the Board, or representatives from the Board appointed by the Chairman, of each state-supported institution of higher learning. Provisions in the enabling legislation provide that the Governor's appointees shall always exceed institutional representatives by one.

The Legislative Audit Council found that by design this system allows for a built-in conflict of interest. Certain members are selected to serve as institutional representatives, yet, at the same time they are being asked to make decisions about what is best for higher education on a statewide basis. Institutions presenting plans to CHE and staff members analyzing those plans stand before men and women who themselves are institutional representatives. Approval is sought from a Board that more or less has an institutional perspective - not a statewide perspective.

Presently, CHE evaluates the need for the majority of new programs started at South Carolina's institutions of higher learning but this evaluation alone has not been effective. If efforts to better allocate resources for higher education in South Carolina are going to succeed, the statewide body overseeing higher education must be independent and its expertise must be utilized. Finally, it is imperative that it have a truly statewide focus. This means that body should develop and institute long-range planning as well as develop a working definition of each institution's scope, mission, and goals.

CONCLUSION

As a result of this audit, the Council found that overlapping and duplication apparently exists in the higher education system in South Carolina. This situation appears to be caused by a lack of adequately defined roles for both the Commission on Higher Education and higher education institutions as well as the inability of CHE to set, and require adherence to, statewide higher education goals.

The Council believes that the recommendations that follow will provide a framework for improving the management of higher education in South Carolina.

RECOMMENDATIONS

As a part of this audit, the Council examined Senate Bill 813 relating to the State Commission on Higher Education. This bill has been approved by the requesters of this audit and certain sections of it relate directly to this audit. Three of the following recommendations concur, at least in part, with specific sections of S. 813 and are so identified. The fourth recommendation is not addressed in S. 813.

It should be noted that some sections of S. 813 deal with areas that were not addressed by this audit. Thus, the Council has made no recommendation in those areas.

The Council concurs with Sections 2 and 4 of S. 813 respectively in making the following recommendations:

- (1) THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY SHOULD CREATE A "...STATE COMMISSION ON HIGHER EDUCATION TO BE COMPOSED OF EIGHTEEN MEMBERS TO BE APPOINTED BY THE GOVERNOR WITH THE ADVICE AND CONSENT OF THE GENERAL

ASSEMBLY FOR TERMS OF SIX YEARS AND UNTIL THEIR SUCCESSORS ARE APPOINTED AND QUALIFY. THREE MEMBERS SHALL BE APPOINTED FROM EACH CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT. NO MEMBER MAY SUCCEED HIMSELF AND HIS SUCCESSOR SHALL BE APPOINTED FROM A DIFFERENT COUNTY WITHIN THE CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT SO THAT EACH COUNTY WITHIN THE DISTRICT SHALL RECEIVE EQUAL PERIODS OF REPRESENTATION. NO MEMBER SHALL BE AN EMPLOYEE OR MEMBER OF A GOVERNING BODY OF A PUBLIC INSTITUTION OF HIGHER LEARNING. NO MORE THAN THREE MEMBERS SERVING AT THE SAME TIME SHALL BE GRADUATES OF ANY ONE STATE-SUPPORTED UNIVERSITY AND NO MORE THAN TWO MEMBERS SERVING AT THE SAME TIME SHALL BE GRADUATES OF ANY ONE PUBLIC COLLEGE OR TECHNICAL EDUCATION CENTER OR COLLEGE. THE GOVERNOR, BY HIS APPOINTMENTS, SHALL ASSURE THAT ALL ECONOMIC INTERESTS AND MINORITY GROUPS ARE REPRESENTED ON THE COMMISSION. VACANCIES SHALL BE FILLED IN THE MANNER OF THE ORIGINAL APPOINTMENT FOR THE UNEXPIRED PORTION OF THE TERM. THE CHAIRMAN OF THE COMMISSION SHALL BE ELECTED ANNUALLY BY THE MEMBERS OF THE COMMISSION AND MAY NOT SERVE AS CHAIRMAN FOR MORE THAN FOUR CONSECUTIVE YEARS. (S. 813, SECTION 2)

- (2) THE COMMISSION ON HIGHER EDUCATION SHOULD "...MAKE A COMPLETE AND THOROUGH STUDY OF ALL PUBLIC INSTITUTIONS OF HIGHER LEARNING, INCLUDING TECHNICAL SCHOOLS, THEIR OFFERINGS, GOALS AND

PLANS AND UPON COMPLETION WRITE A MASTER PLAN OF PUBLIC HIGHER EDUCATION. THE PLAN SHALL MAKE THE BEST POSSIBLE USE OF EXISTING PLANTS AND ADMINISTRATIVE AND INSTRUCTIONAL STAFFS. IT SHALL INCLUDE THE MISSION AND SCOPE OF EACH PUBLIC INSTITUTION OF HIGHER LEARNING. THE MASTER PLAN SHALL CREATE A ONE-YEAR PROGRAM FOR EACH INSTITUTION OF HIGHER LEARNING ESTABLISHING ITS GOAL, MISSION, PROCEDURES AND ENROLLMENT OBJECTIVES. IT SHALL INCLUDE A LONG-RANGE PLAN FOR HIGHER EDUCATION AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR LEGISLATION REVISING STATUTES GOVERNING PUBLIC HIGHER EDUCATION TO ELIMINATE DUPLICATION OF AUTHORITY AMONG GOVERNING BODIES OF PUBLIC INSTITUTIONS OF HIGHER LEARNING AND THEIR PROGRAMS AND CURRICULA. (S. 813, SECTION 4)

The Council concurs in part with Section 7 of S. 813. The Council was not requested to analyze the budget mechanism addressed in the first part of Section 7, however, the final paragraph dealing with the approval of programs was analyzed by the Council. The Council's opinion is that the Commission should be designated to approve all higher education programs and the Council has altered the final paragraph of Section 7 to so specify.

- (3) NO HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTION SHALL INSTITUTE ANY NEW PROGRAM WITHOUT PRIOR APPROVAL OF THE COMMISSION. THE COMMISSION SHOULD TERMINATE ANY HIGHER EDUCATION PROGRAM FOUND TO BE UNNECESSARY BY THE COMMISSION. NO PROGRAM TERMINATED BY THE COMMISSION SHALL BE FUNDED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY.

The Council's final recommendation is based on the need for the Commission to have more control over planning for, and setting of, higher education priorities in South Carolina.

- (4) THE COMMISSION ON HIGHER EDUCATION SHOULD PROPOSE, AND THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY SHOULD ENACT, LEGISLATION REQUIRING ALL HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS TO REQUEST AND RECEIVE AUTHORIZATION FROM THE COMMISSION TO PLAN NEW DEGREE PROGRAMS, OR SUBSPECIALTIES WITHIN EXISTING AUTHORIZED DEGREE PROGRAMS, AND ANY OTHER EXPANSION DEEMED APPROPRIATE BY THE COMMISSION AND THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY, PRIOR TO THE SUBMISSION OF A FORMAL PROPOSAL.

THE COMMISSION SHOULD STIPULATE A PERIOD OF TIME BETWEEN AUTHORIZATION TO PLAN AND SUBMISSION OF A FORMAL PROPOSAL. THIS PERIOD OF TIME SHOULD BE SUFFICIENT TO ALLOW THE COMMISSION TO BECOME FULLY AWARE OF FUTURE PROPOSALS PRIOR TO ANY ACTION BEING TAKEN, AND TO STUDY ALL FUTURE PROPOSALS AND THEIR RELATIONSHIPS TO THE MASTER PLAN.

THE TIME PERIOD STIPULATED SHOULD BE A MINIMUM OF SIX MONTHS DEPENDING ON THE TYPE OF INSTITUTION INVOLVED, THE COMPLEXITY OF THE PROPOSAL AND OTHER FACTORS DEEMED IMPORTANT BY THE COMMISSION.