



F.A.C.E.

the FACTS

scasfaa

spring 2004

A message from SCASFAA

The South Carolina Association of Student Financial Aid Administrators extends our support to all guidance counselors in South Carolina. You are our partners in educating our young people about the available financial aid resources. The Counselor Relations Committee seeks to increase your awareness of financial aid options and provide updated information about important issues.

This issue of F.A.C.E. the Facts contains the latest information on the state-based programs and the guidance counselor summer intern program.

We would like to hear from you about ways we can help you and your students! Please send your comments or suggestions to Sandra S. Davis at sdavis@scsu.edu.

Sandra S. Davis
SCASFAA Counselor Relations
Committee Chair
South Carolina State University

Guidance Counselor Internship Program

For the fourth straight year, high school guidance counselors from across the state will have the opportunity to get a first-hand look at the financial aid process. The South Carolina Association of Student Financial Aid Administrators (SCASFAA) and the South Carolina Student Loan Corporation are now accepting applications for the 2004 Summer Guidance Counselor Internship Program.

This successful program offers guidance counselors the chance to work in a financial aid office at several colleges across the state. Counselors are paid \$12 per hour for up to 160 hours for performing a variety of tasks including verifying applicant data, helping students with questions, assisting in forms design and reviewing files for completion.

According to financial aid officers, the program has been beneficial in providing guidance counselors with a more thorough knowledge of the financial aid process as well as giving their office some valuable help.

Institutions serving as hosts for this summer are:

- College of Charleston
- Florence Darlington Technical College
- Furman University
- Horry Georgetown Technical College
- Lander University
- South Carolina State University
- Spartanburg Methodist College
- Winthrop University
- York Technical College

Any guidance counselors interested in participating in this program can contact Sandra Davis at sdavis@scsu.edu or 803-533-3712.

Printing Courtesy of:



www.scstudentloan.org

South Carolina Lottery Tuition Assistance and Dually Enrolled Students

Throughout history, educational opportunities have been offered primarily to the elite of the community, the gifted and the affluent. Today's society is comprised of a diverse student population. Students from various backgrounds and communities can excel in college if given access. Dual enrollment programs have been the pathway for many students to gain access to explore higher education opportunities.

According to the U.S. Department of Education, nationwide numbers are not available on the growth of dual enrollment programs and little research has been conducted on its effectiveness. However, the popularity of these programs is spreading throughout the states. Many states have reported that the numbers of dually enrolled students have tripled. Dual enrollment programs also support the goal of the ***No Child Left Behind Act***, encouraging greater academic rigor during high school.

The Education Commission of the states reports that 21 states have comprehensive dual enrollment programs where the student pays minimal or no tuition costs and 26 states have limited dual/concurrent programs where the student pays total tuition cost.

Postsecondary education has become more accessible in South Carolina, particularly for high school students, through dual enrollment and the Lottery Tuition Assistance Program. There has been an increase in the number of students who have taken advantage of the program because they fulfill their high school requirements or simply want to get an early start on entering college. Since the inception of the Lottery Tuition Assistance program, approximately 850 students have taken college courses and received assistance. The Lottery Tuition Assistance Program is available at SC public and independent two-year institutions including the technical colleges, USC Regional Campuses, and Spartanburg Methodist College.

The following legislation is being considered to allow high school students taking dual enrolled courses to receive Lottery Tuition Assistance without being degree-seeking and completing the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA).

- **H.4978—Reps. Townsend, Still, J.M. Neal, Gilham, Laurie, and Pinson:** A High School student who is dually enrolled in an eligible two-year institution is not required to be a degree-seeking student and is not required to complete a Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA).
- **Status:** This bill has currently been referred to the Senate Education Committee for consideration. We will keep you inform as additional information becomes available.

Eligibility requirements for the South Carolina Lottery Tuition Assistance Program:

- Enroll 6 credit hours
- Be a South Carolina resident

(Additional eligibility requirements can be obtained by contacting the financial aid office at the local two-year institution or visiting by our website at www.che.sc.gov)

For more information on the Lottery Tuition Assistance Program, contact the financial office at the local two-year institution in your area or contact Michelle McDowell (803) 737-2271 at the Commission of Higher Education.

Clarification of Rank Process for Homeschool Students to Qualify for LIFE & Palmetto Fellows Scholarship

In order for homeschooled students to be eligible for state scholarships, students must provide official rank verification from either the approved homeschool association or the public high school the student would have attended if he/she had not homeschooled. The SC Commission on Higher Education is pleased that homeschool students are able to participate in the LIFE and Palmetto Fellows Scholarship Programs.

We need your continued support in providing some homeschooled students with the necessary documentation to meet the class rank requirement for LIFE and Palmetto Fellows Scholarship Programs. Lately, there has been some confusion among high school guidance counselors about what documentation is acceptable.

The following are two reasons why a homeschool student could come to you (**the public high school the student would have attended if he/she had not home schooled**) to obtain a class rank:

- If the student homeschools through the district in which the student resides
- If the student homeschools through an approved third option homeschool association that does not rank (please see current listing provided by State Department of Education's website: www.myschools.com/offices/sq/homesch.htm)

The SC Commission on Higher Education has suggested that the student make an appointment with the guidance counselor. Because this work is done on the counselor's own time, we have asked homeschool students to be considerate of your time and be cognizant of any pending deadlines. We have also suggested that parents/students bring with them to the meeting a brief description of the homeschool program and the courses taken in order to give the guidance counselor the necessary information to

assign the appropriate weighting for each course under the Uniform Grading Scale.

You should provide the homeschool student with a "hypothetical rank" only. This rank does NOT count against your high school's 30% (for LIFE) or 5% (for Palmetto Fellows) of students allowed. Therefore, you should not be concerned about jeopardizing your students who are eligible for either program by providing a hypothetical rank to any homeschool student.

The guidance counselor will write a letter to the SC senior institution (for LIFE) or to the SC Commission on Higher Education (for Palmetto Fellows) on official public high school letterhead, stating that the homeschool student has met the minimum class rank requirement for that program. The guidance counselor must give the student's class rank (hypothetical) and total class size. The counselor should also include the student's name, social security number, scholarship program (LIFE or Palmetto Fellows) and sign the letter.

As a reminder, students must meet the following academic requirements to be eligible for the scholarship:

To qualify for the LIFE Scholarship at a senior institution, students must meet two of the following three criteria: 1) earn a cumulative 3.0 grade point average on the Uniform Grading Scale; 2) graduate in the top 30 percent of the class; or 3) score 1100 on the SAT or 24 on the ACT. All applicants for the Palmetto Fellows Scholarship must meet the criteria of scoring at least 1200 on the SAT (or equivalent 27 on the ACT), earning a cumulative 3.5 grade point ratio on the Uniform Grading Scale through the junior year, and ranking in the top five percent of their sophomore or junior class.

For more detailed information regarding the LIFE or Palmetto Fellows Scholarship Programs, you may access our website at: www.che.sc.gov. You may also contact us at our toll free number: (877) 349-7183. Thank you for your assistance.

From the South Carolina Student Loan Corporation

The South Carolina Student Loan Corporation is a private, non-profit organization formed in 1974 to make educational loans for the families and educational institutions of South Carolina. You can reach them at 803-798-0916 or 1-800-347-2752. They also encourage you to visit their web site at www.scstudentloan.org.

The Corporation offers Federal Stafford Loans for college students and Federal PLUS Loans for their parents. They are also the only organization to administer the state-funded South Carolina Teachers Loan and Career Changers Loan for students interested in teaching in critical areas in the state.

Below are some endeavors that the Corporation is undertaking that you may not be aware of:

- Along with the SC Department of Education and the SC Technical College System and Career Planning System, the Corporation is a proud sponsor of the **South Carolina College and Career Planning System**, in association with the Kuder Career assessment system. This one-of-a-kind system allows students to evaluate themselves and see what careers they are best suited for. It will also provide them with information on those careers. Guidance counselors all over South Carolina are currently being trained on this system. The Corporation offers a link to it at their web site.
- And speaking of the Corporation's web site, each month they give away a \$1,000 scholarship to a different student just for logging on. It is called the **\$1K Giveaway**, and all that a student has to do to qualify is be a high school senior or college student attending school in South Carolina or be a South Carolina resident attending an out-of-state college. The student logs on and follows the instructions for entering the drawing.
- Also found on their web site is a link to www.mapping-your-future.org. This is wonderful web site that provides loads of information on planning and paying for college. To access the link, you simply log on to the Corporation's web site and click on "Guidance Counselors" at the top of the page. Once there, you can find all kinds of useful information on budgeting and applying for financial aid.