

Expanding Postsecondary Opportunity for a Globally Connected South Carolina

Strengthening national security and South Carolina's workforce with postsecondary learning that prioritizes quality credentials and affordability for all.

Training students for the future workforce

By 2020, 62 percent of our state's jobs will require postsecondary education, a little over half of that (34 percent) require at least some college, an associate's degree, or a postsecondary certificate.¹ If current trends continue, only 55 percent of South Carolinians will have acquired that level of education, resulting in a skills gap of seven percent.² "South Carolina is making progress towards increasing educational attainment, but still lags when compared to the national average."³

Since 2008, South Carolina has improved its overall rate of educational attainment by 7.6 percentage points, but more progress needs to be made to ensure our workers are competitive and businesses can find skilled workers.⁴ Across our state, postsecondary institutions provide the education credentials



With an economic impact of \$32.9 billion, the logistics industry is a critical component of our state's economy. To stay competitive, South Carolina must work to remove barriers to postsecondary education.

Brigadier General John L. Finan

U.S. Air Force, Retired; Former Chairman, SC
Commission on Higher Education

and skills that prepare students for careers in South Carolina's top-performing industries.

South Carolina's Logistics Industry is Booming

In 2017, for the 7th consecutive year, South Carolina posted a record \$31.3 billion total export sales—a \$400 million increase over 2016.⁵ Supporting this growth are 113,865 workers, totaling \$5.4 billion in compensation with a wage premium of 17.3 percent among all jobs supported by S.C. Logistics (\$47,247), compared to all jobs in S.C. (\$40,293), resulting in an economic impact of \$32.9 billion.⁶ The logistics industry is expected to grow significantly and has seen \$2.2 billion in investments over 10 years.⁷

Expanding Postsecondary Opportunities for Students

The SC Council on Competitiveness recognizes South Carolina is a great state in which to do business and also understands the importance of educational success and its impact on filling jobs. Our state was given a Grade "A" for both its manufacturing industry health and for global reach in international trade; earning an average salary of \$54,630.⁸

South Carolinians looking to enter the logistics industry should consider careers in global manufacturing, procurement, etc. To increase access and facilitate a path into this industry, postsecondary institutions must collaborate with regional businesses and other community partners to ensure degrees and credentials are adequately preparing students for their careers and yielding family sustaining employment in logistics and other fields. Colleges and universities also need to provide options that allow for flexibility in educational format (including learning

opportunities on campus, online, on a job site, on military deployment or on other new and emerging platforms) to meet the needs of today's students.

Strengthening our nation through postsecondary education

Our nation's military faces a skills gap that's similar to the one faced by the business community. In the Palmetto State, 73 percent of young people are ineligible to serve in uniform due to three main disqualifiers, one of which is poor academics.⁹ Home to nine military bases from every branch, our state needs more eligible, educated youth who are ready to help solve the challenges of the future.¹⁰



Our state's fastest growing industry since 2010, advanced manufacturing is counting on the logistics industry at twice the rate of the average South Carolina industry, thus partnering with postsecondary institutions to support students is critical.

**SC Council on
Competitiveness**

Additionally, military service has long allowed Americans to access GI benefits, making college, apprenticeships, or job training accessible. Ensuring that students are academically prepared is a critical part of maintaining an accessible pathway to a postsecondary credential and the middle class. According to the U.S. Department of Veterans' Affairs, 700,000 veterans across the country used their education benefits, in FY 2016.¹¹

South Carolina is home to 403,948 veterans (FY 2016), of which 16,222 (four percent) were GI beneficiaries and over 25 percent had a BA or higher.¹² The U.S. Department of Veterans' Affairs has projected the number of veterans will be 321,000 by 2045, 61,381 of which will be less than 40 years old, and 123,723 will be age 40-64, many of whom will use their educational benefits to update their skills.¹³

Programs should recognize students' past learning experiences as a valuable contribution to their current educational goals. Servicemembers who completed more specialized military training should be permitted to leverage that service to obtain civilian licensure or certification in those areas.¹⁴

Conclusion

Business and military leaders are united in their concerns regarding our state's future workforce. Public policy can play a key role in ensuring student success by providing affordable educational pathways to all potential students, targeting financial support to encourage both institutions and students to focus on success, and reducing or eliminating barriers that prevent timely progression to credentials. Partnerships between businesses, the military and postsecondary institutions are an important factor in building a strong workforce.



Case Study: The College of Charleston Prepares Students for the Global Marketplace

In the fall of 2017, the College of Charleston started offering the Global Logistics and Transportation Professional Development Program with the purpose of providing the practical knowledge and necessary training for success in the field, and to provide a pathway for students to launch or advance their careers in global logistics and transportation. The college is also preparing students for the global marketplace by offering exam preparation for the National Association of Small Business International Trade Educators (NASBITE) Certified Global Business Professional (CGBP) national exam.

Endnotes

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1212 New York Avenue NW / Suite 300 / Washington, DC 20005 / 202.464.7005



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