



# South Carolina Commission on Higher Education

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Dr. Garrison Walters, Executive Director

## **MEMORANDUM**

Date: May 14, 2008

To: Presidents of South Carolina's Public and Independent Colleges and Universities

From: Garrison Walters  
Executive Director, Commission on Higher Education

Re: **FY 08-09 Budget Outlook and Effect on the Statewide Higher Education Electronic Library (PASCAL)**

As you know, we have been working hard throughout the budget process to secure stable and adequate funding for the Statewide Higher Education Electronic Library (PASCAL), which is universally regarded as the finest expression of statewide cooperation among all institutions and sectors of higher education. Because of the value which this unique enterprise has demonstrated in the four short years for which it has been funded, PASCAL has been at the top of the Commission on Higher Education's priority list in the budget. However, a sharp decline in anticipated FY 2008-09 state revenues as the budget reached the Senate has had adverse consequences for the electronic library funding. The Senate has included in its FY 2008-09 recommendations \$200,000 recurring funds toward the \$2,000,000 in nonrecurring funding that has been provided in each of the past 4 years. With the House's amendment to the budget last week, the House is also recommending \$200,000 recurring. Given where we are in this stage of the budget process and continuing concerns about the economic outlook, the situation with respect to funding for the electronic library is unlikely to change.

In a meeting held here on April 18, a group of university presidents requested that the Commission develop a plan to present to all institutional presidents for protecting PASCAL's status for the coming year. In consequence, we met with Rick Moul, Executive Director of PASCAL, and asked him to put a plan together at the earliest possible time. Rick had already been thinking about this issue and had developed some ideas about how to implement such a process. Given that there still appeared to be some flexibility in the budget at that time, we asked him to hold in contacting campus liaisons while we—the entire higher education community—made a sustained last ditch effort to restore funding. In light of the status described above, we have now agreed that it is time to go ahead with discussions. The goal at this point is to present a draft plan for your consideration that preserves as much of PASCAL's contribution as possible for the upcoming year. We realize that you are already well into your work regarding institutional budget-making processes and that time is of the essence. At the appropriate point we will send a letter summarizing the status of the discussions Mr. Moul is leading, though we expect you will also have regular feedback from your library representatives. In the meantime, I also welcome any suggestions you may wish to share with me.

Thank you for your continued support for PASCAL. As we mentioned in our testimony to both the House and the Senate, it is a government “best practice” that sets a standard for improving efficiency and effectiveness in higher education.

cc: Mr. Rick Moul, Executive Director, PASCAL  
Librarians, Public and Independent Institutions in South Carolina