

Tuition Soars (Again) At USC, Clemson

By [fitsnews](#) • on June 24, 2010



By FITSNews || South Carolina's two largest institutions of higher learning have once again raised tuition on parents – Carolina by 6.9 percent and Clemson by 7.5 percent.

In jacking tuition for the twelfth year in a row (at least), both schools are capping a decade of excess, inefficiency and bureaucratic mismanagement. For the third year in a row, leaders of both universities are also flat out lying to the public – claiming their institutions are suffering from budget cuts even as their total funding continues to soar.

Contrary to the weepy pronouncements of presidents James Barker and Harris Pastides, Clemson and Carolina have both seen their total budgets increase in each of the last seven budget years – Clemson's from \$526 million in FY 2004-05 to \$830.5 million this year and Carolina's from \$614 million to \$918 million over the same time period.

Also, keep in mind that those are appropriated dollars only. We're not even counting the huge piles of foundation money each school has to play with – or the money that will be raised on the backs of parents who'll have to pay these latest exorbitant tuition hikes.

Oh well, this pattern of extortion is nothing new. Prior to this year's increases, South Carolina had already doubled its tuition over the last decade while Clemson had tripled its tuition – even as both schools were getting more money from the taxpayers.

Now ... where is all of this money going?

Well, FITS has already exposed the [massive bureaucratic expansion](#) taking place at Clemson. We've also blown the lid on the colossal failure of USC's [Innovista](#), an empty \$140 million "research campus" in downtown Columbia S.C. that has failed

miserably to produce the jobs and private investment state leaders and University officials promised.

Which, of course, reminds us that colleges and universities aren't here to create jobs – they're here to teach students.

Anyway, numerous efforts to cap tuition hikes have been defeated by South Carolina's "Republican-controlled" General Assembly. Meanwhile, Gov. Mark Sanford – once a champion for higher ed reforms – has completely gone to sleep on the issue. To her credit S.C. Rep. Nikki Haley – the GOP nominee for governor- has proposed tying tuition increases to the higher education price index, which was around 3.6 percent last year.

S.C. Rep. Thad Viers has proposed an outright freeze on tuition, which is the proposal that we support.

Something has to give, though.

According to the latest data available from the [National Association of State Budget Officers \(NASBO\)](#), South Carolina currently spends 18.3% of its budget on a bloated, wasteful, duplicative and inefficient system of higher education. By comparison, the average state spends only 10.1% of its budget on higher ed.

This excess stems in large part from mission creep. Specifically, it stems from a command economic "[pillars and pyramids](#)" strategy endorsed by S.C. House Speaker Bobby Harrell, Senate Finance Chairman Glenn McConnell, Senate President Glenn McConnell and House Ways & Means Chairman Danny Cooper – a plan that aims to dramatically increase government's role in the economy by creating a *de facto* "Commerce Department" that's controlled exclusively by the legislature.

This strategy has been an unmitigated disaster – as evidenced by [Innovista](#) and by other tax dollars that have been drained directly from the private sector. Take, for example, the \$8 million that was [stripped from an entrepreneurial tax credit fund](#) last year by the S.C. Research Authority, whose board is controlled by the three research universities.

Fortunately, FITS was able to [expose this scam](#), thus preventing more money from being poured down the rabbit hole.

And count on us to continue going after these scammers in the months and years to come. After all, it shouldn't be up to parents already struggling in difficult economic times to pick up the tab for politicians' delusions of taxpayer-funded economic grandeur ...

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