



South Carolina
Commission on Higher Education
Access | Affordability | Excellence

Minutes of the Council of Presidents
May 31, 2022
USC Alumni Center
900 Senate Street
Columbia, SC 29201

Council of Presidents Members Present:

Dr. Michael Benson, Coastal Carolina University
Dr. Luther (Fred) Carter, Francis Marion University
Dr. Walt Collins, University of South Carolina Lancaster
Dr. April Cone, University of South Carolina Salkehatchie
Dr. Susan Elkins, University of South Carolina Palmetto College
Dr. Marilyn Fore, Horry-Georgetown Technical College (Virtual)
Dr. Anthony Guiseppi-Elie, Tri-County Technical College
Dr. Bennie Harris, University of South Carolina Upstate
Dr. Andrew Hsu, College of Charleston (Virtual)
Dr. Patricia Lee, Williamsburg Technical College
Ms. Angie Leidinger, Clemson University

Dr. Randy Lowell, University of South Carolina Union
Dr. Forrest Mahan, Aiken Technical College (Virtual)
Dr. Keith Miller, Greenville Technical College
Dr. Stacey Moore, York Technical College
Dr. Al Panu, University of South Carolina Beaufort
Dr. Jeffrey Perez, South Carolina Independent Colleges and Universities
Dr. Kevin Pollock, Central Carolina Technical College
Dr. Ronald Rhames, Midlands Technical College
Dr. Lisa Saladin for Dr. David Cole, Medical University of South Carolina (Virtual)
Dr. Mike Sonntag, University of South Carolina Sumter
Dr. Walt Tobin, Orangeburg-Calhoun Technical College (Virtual)

CHE Staff

Dr. Rusty Monhollon, President & Executive Director

Other Guests Present

Mr. Ray Jones, Vice President, SC Student Loan Corporation

I. Welcome

Al Panu

Chair Panu called the meeting to order at 11:03 a.m. and welcomed all meeting attendees. The meeting agenda was posted on the Commission on Higher Education (CHE) website with proper notice of the meeting. The meeting was held in accordance with the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA). There were no public guests or media present.

II. Approval of Minutes

Al Panu

Chair Panu introduced the draft minutes for the March 30, 2022, Council of Presidents (COP) meeting, and asked whether there were any additions or corrections. Dr. Fore and Dr. Hsu noted a few corrections. Dr. Benson made the motion to accept the minutes with the edits. The motion was seconded by Dr. Carter. Once a quorum was established the minutes, with edits, were unanimously approved.



Election of new Council of Presidents Chair for 2022-23

Chair Panu called for nominations for the next chair to serve in academic year 2022-23. Dr. Carter nominated Dr. Fore, which was seconded by Dr. Hsu. There were no further nominations. Dr. Tobin moved to close nominations. Chair Panu called for the vote and Dr. Fore was named chair.

III. Discussion Topics:

Recap of Higher Education Related Bills from Legislative Session

Rusty Monhollon

Dr. Monhollon reported on the following:

- The General Assembly will reconvene for a special session on June 15 to consider the budget and conference committees' work.
- Last week, the Board of Economic Advisors released a revised estimate, which is higher than their previous estimate.
- On May 16 Governor McMaster signed H.4608, Save Women's Sports Act.
- The Governor also signed H.3591, Teacher Educator Preparation, which will entail of publishing an online report card. The CHE will be the lead agency, assisted by the SC Department of Education. The CHE will design a website and purchase the software, however, the CHE is currently not slated to receive any funding for this project.
- The Coordinating Council for Workforce Development bill was ratified.
- The SC WINS scholarship was signed on May 16, 2022. (SC Workforce Industry Needs) was signed on May 16, 2022.
- A conference committee was appointed for H.3588, which requires high school students who are eligible for LIFE Scholarships to successfully complete a math, computer science, and an English course in their senior year to offset the learning loss between their junior year and the start of college.
- The proposed CHE regulations for tuition and fees, LIFE and Palmetto Scholarships, and need-based grants were finalized.
- Next year, the CHE would like a change in statute regarding the doctoral professional university classification so there is clear statutory authority for institutions of higher education. Currently, the classification is only a proviso.
- Dr. Carter noted some proviso implications:
 - The Chicago Statement (academic freedom) was adopted by the Senate with an implementation date of August 1, 2022.
 - Students will have the right to have legal counsel present during disciplinary hearings. This may have been approved by both the House and Senate.
 - Briefly discussed how both sides suspended the Name, Image, and Likeness (NIL) proviso to allow SC student-athletes to become more aggressive with their deals.
 - Dr. Monhollon announced that the student transfer proviso was renewed. There were two different versions.

Dr. Monhollon reported that the CHE has requested funding for additional staff and resources.

When asked about the status of the tenure review bill, Dr. Monhollon said that he had no further information since his last conversation with Representative Taylor.

Dr. Carter noted that the border institutions' request for an in-state tuition reciprocity bill for Georgia and North Carolina residents did not cross over in time, but will be pushed to next year.

Student Debt – Challenges and Strategies

Ray Jones, SC Student Loan Corporation

Mr. Jones presented on South Carolina Loan Debt - Challenges and Strategies, which included the structure of student debt, monthly payments, federal loan repayment, current public service loan forgiveness, and potential federal loan forgiveness.

The average national student loan debt is \$39,351; however, the average SC student loan debt is slightly lower at \$38,662. The average monthly student loan payment is \$393. The average master's degree student loan from a public institution is \$58,300 as compared to \$96,700 loan debt from a private for-profit institution. The average student loan debt for a doctorate degree is \$98,700. The total student loan debt is \$1.7 trillion nationally. Mr. Jones also explained Parent PLUS Loans. The average Parent PLUS loan debt is \$28,486.

Mr. Jones discussed the need for early financial literacy training. High school counselors are spending most of their time on social issues that are impacting students leaving little time to discuss financial aid. Students miss out on state scholarships as they are unaware that state scholarships are tied to their high school GPA. By their junior year, it could be too late to achieve the required GPA for scholarships.

Mr. Jones explained that private schools have a higher default rate than state institutions. Students who do not graduate have the highest default rate. Each institution has its own default rate. Institutions need to look at their graduation completion rates. Most student borrowers default on less than \$8,000. The default rate of for-profit institutions is drastically higher. Finishing college in four years is key to repayment. Fifth and sixth years students' debt is typically higher, as scholarships are no longer available after the fourth year.

The federal government has made it easier to apply for the Public Service Loan Forgiveness Loan program. The student has to agree to 10 years of services in eligible public areas such as teaching, hospitals, or state government. The student is required to have a qualified plan. However, most applicants are denied because they are not working in the right industry or in the right plan. The federal government has made some adjustments.

Mr. Jones stated the federal interest payment pause is set to expire on August 31, 2022.

Mr. Jones discussed their new project, Better Outcomes, Less Debt (BOLD). By creating a better outcome, including partnering with schools and employers, student debt can be reduced. Employers are willing to help pay down student's debt if the student agrees to employment with their company post-graduation. He also discussed the bottleneck of nursing students in the state. The SC Student Loan Corporation is researching ways to solve this issue in collaboration with hospital associations (relationships and career pathways with hospitals through project BOLD).

Mr. Jones recommended a website, www.credible.com, to view student loan statistics.

Diversifying State's Economy through Increase of Knowledge-Economy

Rusty Monhollon

Dr. Monhollon explained that the SmartState program, which began in 2002, was created to drive economic growth. The State invested funds by endowing chairs at the three research institutions (RI). There are now 76 endowed chairs whose research lends itself to start-up companies. The CHE has had the responsibility of administering support for SmartState. The group recently met and is considering next steps. The group discussed possibly requesting additional investment from the State, or additional funding for additional endowed research chairs, while others thought of

taking the original infrastructure and connecting it to more economic development and entrepreneurial growth – SmartState 2.0. The CHE has not yet taken a position, as Dr. Monhollon would like to see additional state investment for research funding. Funds could be distributed not only to the RI institutions, but across the other state universities/colleges. Dr. Panu provided examples of how North Carolina and Georgia shifted to a more knowledge-based economy. Dr. Saladin discussed how a knowledge-based education system attracts businesses, not only in research but also in communications infrastructure and technology infrastructure. Dr. Monhollon expressed that further conversations were needed, especially if there is some legislative interest.

Dr. Carter suggested that Mr. Bob Quinn from the South Carolina Research Authority (SCRA) and Secretary of Commerce, Mr. Harry Lightsey are invited to attend a future COP meeting. Dr. Saladin explained how Georgia’s plan expanded from Emory College and Georgia Technical College to other state institutions, but also included major industry leaders. She would like to see South Carolina do the same.

CHE Public Agenda

Rusty Monhollon

Complete College America Initiative Update:

Dr. Monhollon discussed the statewide goal to have 60 percent of the state’s adult working population achieve either a workforce-relevant certificate or degree by 2030. Currently, the state’s educational attainment is 48 percent. The Georgetown University Center on Education and the Workforce now predicts by 2028, that 70 percent of all positions will require a postsecondary credential. To achieve this goal all achievement gaps will need to be eliminated. Additional resources from the General Assembly will be needed, along with a statewide transfer and articulation agreement, degree paths, schedule sequences, and encouraging students to complete their degrees on time, if the state wants to meet its goal.

There are approximately 475,000 adults who have some college credits, but no degree. Ways to reduce the time in obtaining a degree including degree paths, class schedules, alternative delivery methods, and transfer issues were discussed. The CHE is hoping to move away from regulatory oversight to more of a lead agency to drive the completion agenda in the State. Dr. Monhollon said that each institution needs to set its own goals and benchmarks. The CHE will be putting together a state-wide advisory team. It was suggested that Complete College America professional development workshops may be needed.

Dr. Carter requested that the COP and the CHE review the regulatory reports.

IV. Old Business

Chair Panu asked if there was any old business to discuss. There was no old business to discuss.

V. New Business

Announcements:

Dr. Monhollon thanked Dr. Panu for serving as the chair for the last year.

Dr. Panu announced he was going to launch the Capital Approval Review Process Committee this week. The Committee will report to the new COP Chair President Marilyn Fore.

Dr. Monhollon reminded the Council that only two universities had made voluntary contribution to the Foundation funds. He explained that the contributions will pay for meeting space and expenses of the Council of Presidents.

VI. Adjournment

The Council of Presidents meeting adjourned at 2:00 p.m.