

**SOUTH CAROLINA COMMISSION ON HIGHER EDUCATION**

Meeting held at  
1122 Lady Street, Suite 300  
Columbia, S.C. 29201  
12:00 p.m.

***Minutes of the Meeting***  
**May 2, 2019**

**Commissioners Attending**

Mr. Wes Hayes, Chair	Ms. Linda Dolny	Mr. Ben Satcher
Mr. Paul Batson	Mr. Edgar Dyer	Ms. Terrye Seckinger
Mr. Jim Battle*	Mr. Devron Edwards*	Dr. Cleveland Sellers
Ms. Julie Godshall Brown	Dr. Bettie Rose Horne	Mr. Patrick White

**Commissioners Absent**

Mr. Chuck Munns, Vice Chair (excused)  
Mr. Charles Dalton (excused)  
Dr. Mark Smith (excused)

**Guests Attending**

Ms. Beth Bell, Clemson University	Dr. James Colbert, Lander University
Dr. Ralph Byington, Coastal Carolina University	Dr. Tena Crews, University of South Carolina*
Dr. Lynn Cherry, College of Charleston*	Dr. Hope Rivers, S.C. Technical College System

\*Attended by phone

**Commission Staff Present**

Mr. Mike LeFever	Ms. Yolanda Myers
Dr. Jennifer Almeda	Mr. Andrew Roof
Dr. Argentini Anderson	Mr. Georges Tippens
Ms. Laura Belcher	Mr. Bryce Wilson
Dr. Samuel Grubbs	Dr. Karen Woodfaulk
Ms. DeVaris Hatten	Dr. Lishu Yin
Dr. John Lane	

Chair Hayes convened the meeting at 12:14 p.m. and welcomed all in attendance. It was confirmed that the meeting was being held in accordance with the Freedom of Information Act.

**1. Introductions**

Ms. Belcher introduced the guests in attendance. A motion was made by Commission Seckinger at 12:16 p.m. to enter executive session for the purpose of discussing legal and personnel matters. The motion, which was seconded by Commissioner Horne, carried unanimously.

**2. Approval of Minutes**

**Wes Hayes**

At 1:06 p.m., the Commission returned to its public business meeting. Chair Hayes then called for a motion to approve the minutes of the Commission’s April 4<sup>th</sup> meeting. Commissioner Seckinger motioned and Commissioner Horne seconded to approve the minutes as presented. The motion passed unanimously.

### **3. Chairman's Report**

**Wes Hayes**

Chair Hayes introduced the newly appointed Commissioner representing the 6th Congressional District, Dr. Cleveland Sellers. Subsequently, Chair Hayes excused the absences of three Commissioners from the meeting: Commissioner Dalton, Vice Chair Munns, and Commissioner Smith. Chair Hayes then relayed to the Commission the Senate's confirmation of his, Commissioner Satcher's, and Commission Dyer's appointments.

Chair Hayes recounted his and Interim President and Executive Director Mike LeFever's attendance at the Council of Presidents meeting convened by University of South Carolina President Harris Pastides on April 9th. He noted the meeting was positive and announced the expressed desire of institutional presidents to meet with the finalists in the search for a permanent president and executive director of the Commission on Higher Education. Mr. LeFever stated that institutional presidents were eager to partner with the Commission in advancing higher education in South Carolina. Commissioner Horne recounted that, in the past when presidents were invited to have an audience with the Commission, technical college presidents were also extended an invitation; recently, however, she observed this practice to have withered. She asked Commissioner Batson if he believed it was a mistake to omit technical college presidents. Commissioner Batson agreed, advocating they be extended invitations in the future due to their integral role in the state's higher education mission. Chair Hayes thanked Commissioners Batson and Horne for drawing attention to this point.

Chair Hayes recognized Commissioner Horne, who was recently presented with the 2019 Women of Excellence Award by the Greenwood Chamber of Commerce.

Continuing, Chair Hayes expressed satisfaction with the work the Search Committee for the next President and Executive Director had been doing to determine candidates for the open position. Afterwards, he asked Mr. LeFever to provide his reports to the Commission.

### **4. & 5. Interim President and Executive Director's and Legislative Reports**

**Mike LeFever**

Mr. LeFever informed the Commission that Ms. Laura Belcher was heading a team, which had been cooperating with the Department of Administration's Division of Facilities Management and Property Services, to develop a request for proposals (RFP) to lease new space for the agency, as the lease of its current offices is set to expire in June 2020. Ms. Belcher added that the Department of Administration would like to publicly release the RFP sometime this summer. Mr. LeFever stated the Commission would have to ultimately decide where the agency's offices will be relocated. Commissioner Horne asked if the leaser of the agency's current offices could submit a bid to retain the Commission as a tenant. Mr. LeFever confirmed that they could but doubted the agency would remain in the same suites of the building.

Mr. LeFever announced that CHE, on the requirement that every three years state agencies must conduct recovery audits, made an agreement with Recovery Audit Specialists, a firm that examines accounts payable to retrieve money from overpayments. He stated that the agency will not directly pay the firm, which will instead receive compensation from a portion of the money recovered.

Mr. LeFever informed the Commission that the Senate passed its version of the state appropriations act. He noted that the Senate appropriated more funds to SREB programs and PASCAL, as well as recommended \$1.6 million more in need-based grants funding. Mr. LeFever noted the Senate's budget also included a tuition mitigation fund, to which it appropriated \$36 million dollars. Lastly, he noted the Senate would like to establish a facilities maintenance fund, for which CHE would disburse money and would participate in establishing the qualifications necessary to receive those monies.

Mr. LeFever announced that the Speaker of the House and the President of the Senate would nominate sometime during the following week (May 6-10) members to serve on the budget's Conference Committee, which he

stated would convene the week following announcement of the nominations. Once the budget passes, he stated it will be given to the Governor, who will either give his approval or issue vetoes. Mr. LeFever estimated that, depending on the nature of the vetoes, the General Assembly may either return during the summer or in January at the start of the next year of the session to address the vetoes.

Lastly, Mr. LeFever reviewed the CHE Priorities Report, which describes the activities undertaken by the agency during the preceding month to advance each of the agency's five priorities: College Readiness, College Planning & Affordability, Educational Attainment, Economic & Workforce Development, and Teacher Advocacy.

Mr. LeFever transitioned to the Legislative Report.

He briefly discussed S.35, the REACH bill, which he noted had passed the Senate but on which debate was adjourned by the House Education and Public Works Committee. He said debate of the bill would resume at the start of the next legislative year. Commissioner Horne expressed issues she perceived with S.35 imposing curriculum policy on institutions.

Mr. LeFever stated S.283, the Higher Education Enterprise Bill, had made no progress since his previous report, remaining in the Senate for second reading.

Mr. LeFever stated that S.298, Higher Education Opportunity Act, passed the Senate Education Committee and was committed to the Senate Floor. He noted that the current bill received objections from Senators Hembree and Sheheen. Additionally, he noted S.419, the SC Career Opportunity and Access for All Act, was still in the Senate Education Committee and would not receive a decision this legislative year.

Mr. LeFever stated that H.3099, the Forming Open and Robust University Minds Act, which would mandate institutions ensure free speech for everyone, was still in the House Education and Public Works Committee, having been tabled in subcommittee.

Mr. LeFever stated H.3403 would exempt students in competency-based schools from certain regulations. Commissioner Dolny asked what a competency-based school is, specifically. Mr. LeFever responded that competency-based schools permit students to use prior training in education to exempt certain requirements and criteria.

Continuing, Mr. LeFever described H.3576, SC WINS, as a new scholarship program at technical colleges to provide enhancements for students who major in workforce critical areas. The bill, he stated, passed the House unanimously and was committed to the Senate Education Committee.

Mr. LeFever stated H.3577 would establish alternative teacher certification programs in public and independent colleges. Furthermore, he stated the bill had passed the House and was subsequently referred to the Senate Education Committee.

Mr. LeFever stated H.3759, the House companion bill of S.419, passed the House and was committed to the Senate Education Committee.

Mr. LeFever announced that H.3936, which would permit Palmetto Fellows scholarship recipients to apply their awards at two-year schools, passed the House and was committed to the Senate Education Committee. He commended Dr. Woodfaulk for her work. Commissioner Horne asked if the amount awarded to Palmetto Fellows recipients was the same at 2-year schools as 4-year schools. Dr. Woodfaulk clarified that the award amount could not exceed the cost of attendance.

Lastly, Mr. LeFever announced several pieces of legislation that had been signed into law by the governor: H.4398, the Tucker Hipps Transparency Act; H. 3639, which concerns veterans, their dependents and vocational rehabilitation services; and H.3697, which waived the 25% course completion requirement for students of closed institutions.

Commissioner Horne inquired about the uniformity within South Carolina's higher education system of the process implemented to address allegations of sexual assault. Dr. Woodfaulk answered that no singular, uniform process existed. After Commissioner Horne suggested that sexual assault policy be a topic of discussion at the Commission's upcoming strategic planning session, Dr. Sam Grubbs, policy analyst, mentioned that Representative Norrell-Powers proposed legislation (H.3921) tackling the subject.

Chair Hayes commended Mr. LeFever for his efforts in monitoring and handling legislation. Chair Hayes also thought the proposed budget was the best for higher education since before the recession. He thanked legislative leaders and Governor McMaster.

## **6. Committee Reports**

### **6.01 Report of the Executive Committee**

**Wes Hayes**

The Committee had no report.

### **6.02 Report of Committee on Academic Affairs and Licensing**

**Terrye Seckinger**

Commissioner Seckinger recounted her involvement in a panel discussion at the SmartState Council of Chairs Forum held in Charleston, South Carolina, from April 24th to 26th. She explained that the SmartState program was a driver of automotive, medical, and security technology development. She thanked Dr. Lane and his staff for their efforts in coordinating the event. Lastly, Commissioner Seckinger discussed a proviso she that prevents CHE from spending funds to market the SmartState program. Stating that more than 40 businesses relocated to South Carolina because of the program, she advocated removing the proviso to benefit the development of industry and university partnerships.

Commissioner Seckinger informed the Commission of the actions taken by the Committee on Academic Affairs and Licensing to address the teacher shortage. She then reviewed a document, which had been prepared by staff and provided to each Commissioner, that more specifically detailed those actions.

### **6.03 Report of Committee on Access & Equity and Student Services**

**Paul Batson**

Commissioner Batson relayed to the Commission that the Committee on Access & Equity and Student Services hosted Mr. David Hammond, direct loans program specialist at the U.S. Department of Education; Mr. Joey Derrick, director of USC Columbia's Office of Financial Aid and Scholarships; Mr. Andy Benoit, vice president of enrollment and access management at Lander University; and Dr. Eric Brown, associate vice president for student affairs at the S.C. Technical College system at its previous meeting on April 4, 2019, for a panel discussion on student loan debt and defaults. He described the exchanges between panelists as insightful, and he recounted the panelists' cardinal advice to students and CHE in alleviating the burden of student loan debt.

### **6.04 Report of Committee on Finance and Facilities**

**Paul Batson**

## **CONSENT AGENDA**

### **A. Permanent Improvement Projects**

1. Aiken Technical College
  - A. Aiken-CEAM Expansion and Renovation for Welding Area
    - Establish Project
2. The Citadel
  - A. Boat Center Redevelopment
    - Increase Budget
3. Medical University of South Carolina
  - A. MUSC/SCEO PEER Program Energy Performance
    - Change Source of Funds
4. Technical College of the Lowcountry
  - A. Lowcountry Culinary Arts Institute and Interpretive Center – Land Acquisition
    - Increase Budget
  - B. Construction of the Lowcountry Culinary Arts Institute and Interpretive Center
    - Increase Budget

Commissioner Batson provided the Committee on Finance & Facilities' report, as Commissioner Dalton was not in attendance. He discussed the purposes, costs, and funding sources of the five proposed capital projects. The consent agenda, which was brought forward as a motion from the committee and therefore did not require a second, **passed** unanimously.

### **B. List of Capital Projects and Leases Processed by Staff for April 2019**

*(For Information, No Action Required)*

Commissioner Batson presented the item for information purposes only.

### **6.05 Report of the Search Committee for the next President & Executive Director      Terrye Seckinger**

Commissioner Seckinger provided the Committee's report due to Commissioner Dalton's absence. She stated that the Committee had been working closely with the Department of Administration's Division of State Human Resources throughout its search process. She mentioned that several candidates had been interviewed the previous week (April 22-26) and that the Committee expected to bring forward a proposal by the end of May.

### **7. Other Business**

There was no other business.

### **8. Public Comment**

There were no comments from the public.

### **9. End of Business Meeting**

With a motion (Satcher), second (Dyer), and unanimous vote, Chair Hayes adjourned the meeting at 2:29 p.m.