

**South Carolina Commission on Higher Education
Committee on Access & Equity and Student Services**

**Minutes of the Meeting
Virtual Meeting
September 3, 2020
2:45 p.m.**

Committee Members Present

Mr. Paul Batson, Chair
Dr. Bettie Rose Horne, Assistant Chair
Mr. Jim Battle
Dr. Cleveland Sellers
Dr. Mark A. Smith

Commission Members Present

Mr. Patrick White

Guests Present

Dr. Charlie Spell, SC State University
Ms. Reinell Thomas-Myers, SC State University
Mr. Trey Simons, SC Student Loan Corporation
Mr. Ray Jones, SC Student Loan Corporation
Ms. Cathy S. Franklin, Carolina Cluster Career Pathways
Dr. Twaina Harris, Claflin Carolina Cluster Career Pathways
Mr. Kimoni Hickman, Voorhees Carolina Cluster Career Pathways
Ms. Tondaleya Jackson, Benedict Carolina Cluster Career Pathways
Dr. Daren Timmons, USC Aiken

Staff Members Present

Dr. Rusty Monhollon
Dr. Karen Woodfaulk
Ms. Laura Belcher
Ms. Lisa Collins
Ms. Lorinda Copeland
Mr. Kevin Glears
Dr. Gerrick Hampton
Ms. Kathryn Harris
Mr. Jesse Kimbrough
Mr. Frank Myers
Ms. Colette Reamer
Dr. Regine Rucker
Ms. Laverne Sanders
Ms. Leslie Williams

1. Introductions and Approval of Minutes

Chairman Paul Batson called the meeting to order. Dr. Karen Woodfaulk introduced the presenters on the agenda. Ms. Laverne Sanders introduced the guests in attendance and confirmed that the meeting was held in accordance with the Freedom of Information Act.

Chairman Batson requested a motion to amend the agenda to approve the election of officers. A **motion** was made (Smith), **seconded (Horne)** and **carried** to approve amending the agenda.

Commissioner Bettie Horne **motioned** to nominate Commission Batson to remain as Chair of the Committee on Access & Equity and Student Services, Commissioner Smith **seconded**, and the motion **carried**.

Commissioner Jim Battle **motioned** to nominate Commissioner Bettie Horne as Assistant Chair of the Committee on Access & Equity and Student Services, Commissioner Smith **seconded**, and the motion **carried**.

A **motion** was made (Horne), **seconded** (Smith), and **carried** to approve the minutes of June 4, 2020.

2. South Carolina State University SC-PRRMT FY2019-20 Annual Report and FY2021-22 EIA Allocation Request (For Approval)

Dr. Woodfaulk provided a brief overview of the SC Program for the Recruitment of Minority Teachers. She stated that several years ago the Committee approved an expansion plan to extend the SC-PRRMT sites around the state. She stated that the Proviso, Part 1B, Section 1A, was provided with the committee meeting materials. Dr. Woodfaulk explained that in addition to requesting an expansion plan, the Committee asked SC-PRRMT to include the program cost, number of participants in the program, the number of graduates and the number of graduates that are teaching in critical geographical and subject areas in the state. She said the Committee receives quarterly reports from SC-PRRMT and their recruitment efforts around the state. Dr. Woodfaulk provided some of the information from SC-PRRMT Annual Report. She reported that ten students graduated in the 2020 Academic Year (AY). Dr. Woodfaulk explained that all ten of the students met teacher certification requirements. She said nine of the ten students were already teaching at SC State University's critical geographical or subject areas. Dr. Woodfaulk reported that SC-PRRMT has increased their regional sites which includes the addition of Laurens County District 55 and Newberry County School District per the Expansion Plan. She stated that SC-PRRMT reports that the projected sites for FY2021-2022 are Abbeville, McCormick, Kershaw, Sumter, Chester, Lancaster, Union, York Anderson, Cherokee, Greenville, and Oconee Counties. Dr. Woodfaulk further stated that SC-PRRMT is requesting the same funding in their budget request as last year, \$339,482.

Ms. Reinell Thomas-Myers, SC-PRRMT Program Manager, reported that one of the SC-PRRMT graduates will be teaching in Allendale County for the AY2020-21. She stated that SC State University is at present, totally virtual. All sites are combined and taking classes with SC State University's students this AY. Ms. Thomas-Myers said she and Dr. Woodfaulk discussed virtual introduction meetings with the schools for this AY2020-2021 and possibly for AY2021-2022. Ms. Thomas-Myers stated that SC-PRRMT will continue to address the state teacher shortage as part of its overall initiative to establish and maintain sites throughout the state.

Dr. Charlie Spell, Chairman, Department of Education, SC State University, stated that SC State University is committed to moving forward. He said the enrollment numbers are good, and that SC State University is retaining their current students.

Commissioner Horne inquired about ways SC-PRRMT helped students to adjust to attending classes virtually because of the pandemic. Dr. Spell replied that SC-PRRMT is in partnership with the school districts. He stated many of the school districts work in collaboration with SC-PRRMT to advance staff development activities. He said many participants are assigned mentor teachers when they begin teaching. He said students have adapted very quickly. He stated the program continues work with school districts that are progressive and are pleased with the assistance SC-PRRMT is receiving.

Chairman Batson inquired whether students had any increased apprehension about going into the teaching profession. Dr. Spell replied that normally SC-PRRMT has 10-15 student candidates

each semester. However, this semester SC-PRRMT has 35 student candidates. Dr. Spell said that that the State Department of Education's assistance helped with the increase.

Chairman Batson asked if the justification for reallocation of \$15,000 was the same as previous years. Dr. Woodfaulk explained that the justification is the same allocation for FY2020-21.

Commissioner Horne **motioned** approval of the South Carolina Program for the Recruitment and Retention of Minority Teachers FY2019-20 Annual Report and FY2021-22 budget request in the amount of \$339,482 for minority teacher recruitment. Commissioner Smith **seconded**, and the motion **carried**.

3. SC Student Loan Corporation SC Teachers Loan Program *(For Information)*

Dr. Woodfaulk gave an overview of the ongoing conversations about the SC Teachers Loan borrowers. She introduced Mr. Trey Simons, President and CEO of the SC Student Loan Corporation (SLSLC) and Mr. Ray Jones, Vice President, SC Student Loan Corporation.

Mr. Ray Jones, Vice President of Loans, SC Student Loan Corporation, provided information on the SC Teachers Loan repayment services that SCSLC currently performs. He stated that SCSLC handles loan forgiveness for borrowers who are qualified to have a percentage of their Teachers Loan forgiven in exchange for up to five years of teaching in the state. He explained that there are some Teachers Loan borrowers who decide not to teach or who are not teaching in critical subjects or geographical areas. These borrowers do not qualify for loan forgiveness. Mr. Jones stated that these borrowers would enter into repayment of their loan.

Mr. Jones stated that last year SCSLC and the Commission agreed to moving the student loan borrowers who unfortunately, defaulted on their Teachers Loan, to a third party servicer collection agency. He explained that the third party servicer presently provides the outbound collection services on the SCSLC private loan portfolio. Mr. Jones stated part of that collection effort allows for SCSLC to perform a setoff on the defaulted borrower's state income tax. Mr. Jones said loans that are not repaid are placed into collections for repayment. As part of the collection effort, SCSLC utilizes authority under the Setoff Debt Collection Act. Title 12, Chapter 56 entitled, Setoff Debt Collection Act, which authorizes the SC Department of Revenue (SC DOR) to garnish state income tax refunds of defaulted borrowers, upon request of SCSLC, for repayment of defaulted Teachers Loans including accrued interest.

Mr. Jones stated that due to the COVID-19 pandemic, SCSLC recommended to the Commission in 2020 Spring to suspend garnishment of state income tax refunds for repayment of defaulted Teachers Loans for the 2020 tax year. He stated that SCSLC plans to continue to monitor the challenges due to the pandemic with the servicer. Mr. Jones stated that he spoke with Dr. Woodfaulk along with the SC Teachers Loan Advisory Group to confirm that postponement. He stated that this upcoming year SCSLC will plan to postpone sending the request to the SC DOR in October 2020. Mr. Jones said loan borrowers will remain responsible for the defaulted loan debt plus any accrued interest. SCSLC will continue to reach out to Teachers Loan borrowers to provide options for successful loan repayment and other collection activities will continue as normal.

Commissioner Horne asked how, in present economic times and with any disaster that may occur, could loans be mitigated to assist borrowers who default through no fault of their own during the COVID-19 pandemic. Mr. Jones stated that SCSLC understands the impact across the board and they are looking at ways to offer support to borrowers who used SCSLC services to make sure borrowers are aware of repayment options. Mr. Jones stated that a possible way to assist borrowers is to implement the 90-days disaster forbearance that was previously implemented in April 2020. He said another possible way utilizing the 36 months discretionary forbearance and unemployment deferment time for the Teachers Loan program. Mr. Jones added that SCSLC is seeing a decrease in the number of forbearance requests. He said some of the borrowers who were affected by COVID-19 have returned to a repayment process. Mr. Jones stated the delinquency rate is lower than before the COVID-19 pandemic.

Chairman Batson asked who has the authority to decide not to use the setoff debt collection. Mr. Jones replied that the Teachers Loan program is administered within state guidelines and SCSLC in addition, follows the federal guidelines. He stated the forbearances follow the federal guidelines. Mr. Jones said SCSLC reaches out to the Commission and the Teachers Loan Advisory Group for guidance. Dr. Woodfaulk provided information about the SC Title 12 authorization of SC DOR to garnish the state tax refund of defaulted borrowers upon request of SCSLC. She explained SCSLC is continuing to monitor trends and practices of similar entities in the country for stopping collections and suspending loan repayments, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Commissioner Horne asked Dr. Woodfaulk if there were any other concerns or suggestions for the Teachers Loan borrowers. Dr. Woodfaulk stated that the pandemic continues to be a concern for the borrowers. She said the Teachers Loan borrowers will continue to need the relief efforts provided by SCSLC and the federal government in the future.

Commissioner Smith **commended** South Carolina Student Loan Corporation and SC Commission on Higher Education staff in the efforts to assist students during the COVID-19 pandemic. Commissioner Horne **seconded** and the motion **carried**.

4. Carolina Cluster Career Pathways Program: Benedict College, Claflin University and Voorhees College (For Information)

Dr. Woodfaulk stated that in 2016 the SC General Assembly approved state funding to match a private source of funding for the Carolina Cluster Career Program. She said the private source of funding was through a United Negro College Fund (UNCF) initiative and the Lily Endowment Foundation. Dr. Woodfaulk said the funds were awarded to Benedict College, Claflin University, and Voorhees College. She explained that SC General Assembly authorized the Commission to disseminate matching awards to the three historically Black colleges and universities (HBCUs), provided that the institutions submit annual reports to the Commission, and the awarded institutions receive the matching funds through the UNCF/Lily Foundation. Chairman Batson asked about the matching award amount for Carolina Cluster Career Program. Dr. Woodfaulk replied that the matching award amount is \$350,000. She explained that the award amount for Carolina Cluster institutions will have to be reinstated into the House version of state budget to be considered for future matching funds for the program.

Ms. Cathy Scarborough Franklin, Executive Director, Carolina Cluster Career Pathways Initiative (CPI), provided a brief history of the Carolina Cluster Career Program. She stated three HBCUs in South Carolina - Benedict College, Claflin University and Voorhees College - received a UNCF Career Pathways Initiative Grant that is funded by the Lily Endowment Foundation. She stated because the three HBCU institutions are in SC, it was decided to create a state cluster. The Carolina Cluster Career Pathways state office provides support to all cluster members. She stated the program is designed to make sure students have the skills necessary to navigate their college and career pathways and participate in meaningful learning opportunities. Ms. Franklin stated that the program ensures graduates are work-ready and future-ready. She said the Carolina Cluster Career Program uses the CPI three-prong approach: 1) guided pathways; 2) curricular enhancement; and 3) integrated co-curricular engagement.

A. **Benedict College**

Mrs. Tondaleya Jackson, who is the Executive Director of Benedict College's Career Pathways Initiative and Service-Learning Program, provided highlights of the program. Mrs. Jackson provided Benedict's CPI capacity building for the faculty. She stated 28 percent of the faculty members participated in CPI sponsored professional development activities for 2019-2020. She stated the capacity building supported staff with two new courses, Intercultural and Career Competence and Introduction to Design Thinking.

Mrs. Jackson provided data of the COVID-19 transition. Mrs. Jackson reported that 24 percent of the program's summer internships transitioned to virtual or remote options. She stated 40 percent of the participants were offered remote internships, 40 percent of the businesses/placement sites discussed options for internships. Sixty percent of the businesses/placement sites did not foresee COVID-19 impacting future internship opportunities. She stated 40 percent of the program's participants were offered employment after graduation. She said 43 percent of the participants stated that they will work and continue their education.

Mrs. Jackson explained that Benedict College's CPI activities increased by 23 percent, and the career field studies on campus increased participation by 20 percent during FY2019-20.

B. **Claflin University**

Dr. Twaina Harris, Claflin Campus Director for the Career Pathways Initiative, explained that their program focuses on guided career pathways and experiential learning for FY2018-19. Dr. Harris stated that they offered summer school scholarships for students who were off track with their guided career pathways, or if they wanted to advance their career pathways track. She reported that for experiential learning, Claflin University focused on the HCBU talent showcase and study abroad activities.

Dr. Harris provided the goals of the Carolina Career Cluster program at Claflin University. She stated that at least 25 percent of the scholarship recipients state that they are on track or making progress on their guided career pathways. Dr. Harris said they anticipated at least 50 percent of the participants in the talent showcase will express

satisfaction, and that 25 percent will be able to describe what knowledge they gained from the attending the showcase.

Dr. Harris provided the actual outcomes for FY2018-19. She stated 65 percent of the students who received a scholarship were on track in their guided pathways. She said currently 59 percent remain on track. Dr. Harris stated 72 percent of the students were satisfied with the showcase and 72 percent of the students were able to describe the knowledge they gained after participating in the showcase. She said 18 participated in the two CPI sponsored study abroad programs.

Chairman Batson asked when did the study abroad experience occur. Dr. Harris replied that the study abroad occurred in July 2019. Commissioner Horne asked about the additional placement data Dr. Harris presented to the committee. Dr. Harris stated that 78 percent graduated in FY2018-19 and 31 percent of the participants enrolled in a graduate program. Dr. Harris stated 70 percent of the participants returned in 2019.

Commissioner Horne also asked if Claflin University had collaborated with SC State University. Dr. Harris replied that their program data is not ready, because their summer school ended in July. She said the impact data will be ready around November or December. Dr. Harris stated that that they collaborated with SC University students. Dr. Harris stated that SC University students were invited to participate in the HBCU showcase, and transportation was also provided for SC State University students.

C. Voorhees College

Mr. Kimoni Hickman, Director of the Voorhees College Career Pathways Initiative, provided an overview of the Career Pathways Initiative. He explained that the Career Pathways Initiative created a career pathway track for every major offered at Voorhees College. Mr. Hickman also stated that the program created career pathways courses for all classifications. He shared that embedded workforce competencies were added into the Voorhees College curriculum. Mr. Hickman explained that each student must have 120 hours of experiential learning to graduate. He said experiential learning opportunities were built into the coursework required for students to graduate.

Mr. Hickman stated some of the direct student support included paid internship programs, GAP tuition scholarships, emergency aid stipends, and international travel. She stated that 379 students participated in regional conferences.

Mr. Hickman reported that 58 students participated in Voorhees College Paid Internship Program cohort during Summer 2019 – Fall 2020. Commissioner Horne asked if Voorhees College incorporated the expertise of Commissioner Cleveland Sellers within the program. Mr. Hickman replied that Commissioner Sellers makes himself available to the program many times and is an asset to the program.

Commissioner Horne suggested sharing, in a brief format, the Career Pathways Program presentation with the rest of the Commission members. Chairman Batson also asked if some of the students could be included again in a future meeting. Dr. Woodfaulk stated that she would speak with Dr. Rusty Monhollon about the suggestions.

5. Other Business and Adjournment

There being no additional items before the Committee, Chairman Batson requested a motion for adjournment. A **motion** (Horne) was made, **seconded** (Sellers), and **carried** to adjourn the meeting at 4:15 p.m.