



Minutes of the SC Commission on Higher Education  
Executive Committee Meeting  
April 27, 2021  
Via Zoom

In Attendance:

**Executive Committee Members Present**

Mr. R. Wes Hayes, Chair  
Dr. Bettie Rose Horne, Vice Chair  
Mr. Paul Batson  
Mr. Charles Dalton  
Mr. Charles Munns

**CHE Staff Present**

Dr. Rusty Monhollon, President & Executive Director  
Ms. Laura Belcher, Operations Manager  
Ms. Monica Goodwin, Director of Research-Data & IT  
Dr. John Lane, Director of Academic Affairs  
Ms. Shakara Smith, Executive Assistant  
Mr. Georges Tippens, Facilities Program Manager  
Ms. Bunnie Ward, Director of Governmental Affairs & Communications  
Mr. Bryce Wilson, Director of Fiscal Affairs  
Dr. Karen Woodfaulk, Director of Student Affairs

Chair Hayes called the meeting to order at 10:00 a.m. It was confirmed that the meeting was being held in accordance with the Freedom of Information Act.

**1. Approval of Minutes February 23, 2021**

**Wes Hayes**

Chair Hayes called for a motion to approve the minutes of the February 23 Executive Committee meeting. Commissioner Horne motioned and Commissioner Dalton seconded to approve the minutes. Chair Hayes called for the vote and the minutes were approved unanimously.

**2. Review of the May 06, 2021 CHE Draft Meeting Agenda**

**Wes Hayes**

Chair Hayes called on President Monhollon to summarize his upcoming President's report. President Monhollon stated that his report would include updates regarding grants received by the CHE; College Decision Month; new staff introductions; Council of Presidents Meeting on April 13, Public Agenda Implementation, and a potential external speaker. President Monhollon then welcomed any questions or comments.

Commissioner Munns stated that universities' fall reopening plans as it relates to COVID-19 is an important topic and positioned that the CHE should consider asking presidents their needs. Commissioner Munns suggested convening the Council of Presidents to have this conversation and that the CHE advocate in that regard. President Monhollon shared that he, along with Mr. Tippens, have communicated with the presidents providing guidance on vaccine mandates and that he meets with presidents weekly to



discuss this recurring topic. President Monhollon stated that the CHE's general counsel informed presidents that there is not a stipulation preventing colleges from conducting routine COVID-19 testing and discussed incentives that could be considered for those who have been vaccinated. Commissioner Munns asked whether universities plan to share their plans for reopening in the fall, to which President Monhollon responded that all institutions are planning to return to normal operations and are working out the details of mask requirements and spacing considerations. Commissioner Munns stated that COVID-19 testing should be included in those plans and asked that President Monhollon keep the Commissioners abreast.

Commissioner Horne asked whether businesses, colleges and universities would be exempt from liability if they followed the recommended guidance from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), to which President Monhollon said that the legislation extends to higher education, as well. Commissioner Munns asked President Monhollon to highlight actions that the CHE has done to support the colleges with their decisions pertaining to COVID-19 plans during his report, to which President Monhollon agreed.

Chair Hayes stated that during the Executive Committee report he would confirm the dates for the August Retreat and Business Meeting, August 11 and 12. Chair Hayes said that he would also like to have a discussion regarding proposed retreat topics.

Chair Hayes asked Ms. Ward to provide a preview of the legislative report update. Ms. Ward shared that the Senate is considering the budget and that the CHE budget request, including need-based grant and PASCAL funding, were recommended to the Senate by Senate Finance. According to Ms. Ward, \$343 million in deferred maintenance funds were recommended for all institutions and that there are capital projects included as line items by institution to include: UofSC funding for the School of Medicine, Clemson University additional twenty slots for veterinary school, and various other projects from institutions. Ms. Ward said that budget deliberation will continue through June, then redistricting will be considered in the fall.

Ms. Ward said that the SC Tuition Grant Commission was funded \$470 thousand for their database, which would improve student privacy. She shared that a childcare initiative is currently being considered, which would provide free childcare for one year as part of the American Rescue Plan for students who have a child eligible for 4k. Chair Hayes asked whether the transfer proviso was included for consideration, to which Ms. Ward confirmed. Commissioner Dalton asked whether the threshold on deferred maintenance project would increase from \$1 million to \$5 million, to which Ms. Ward confirmed that it has been finalized in Senate Finance and will be considered by the Senate during budget deliberations this week.

Then Committee Chairs reviewed their committee reports for the CHE meeting.

Commissioner Munns said that Committee on Academic Affairs and Licensing (CAAL) will meet after the CHE meeting and would have several proposals to consider during the June CHE meeting. He shared that the Committee would also continue to review criteria for licensure requests. Commissioner Horne requested that Dr. Woodfaulk provide a FAFSA update, to which Commissioner Batson welcomed a report from Dr. Woodfaulk during the report of the Committee on Access and Equity and Student Services. Commissioner Horne also inquired regarding the distinction between the Council of Presidents meeting and the weekly meeting of presidents, to which President Monhollon explained that the Council consists of all public institutions of higher education, USC two-year campus deans, and two affiliates, whereas the weekly presidents meeting consists of presidents of four year institutions.

Commissioner Munns asked when in-person meetings would resume, to which President Monhollon shared that the first in person meeting would be held in August. Chair Hayes agreed that the August timeline would be appropriate.

Commissioner Horne asked about the CHE focusing its attention on a transfer plan, to which Chair Hayes agreed that the legislature is considering it in a proviso and that this topic is included in the Public Agenda Implementation. Dr. Lane explained that some years ago the CHE helped to coordinate an effort to address transfer and articulation concerns. Dr. Lane said that there are existing resources, such as the South Carolina Transfer and Articulation Center (SC TRAC), which is serviced by Academy One, eight-six transfer courses between public institutions, and ten core curriculum courses by discipline that assists with these efforts, as well.

Commissioner Dalton shared that the Committee on Finance and Facilities would meet at 10:30 a.m. to consider eight project proposals and one lease. He said that Mr. Tippens will discuss March and April staff approvals and the 3<sup>rd</sup> quarter budget report would be provided by financial staff. Commissioner Dalton said that Commissioner White would also provide an update on the Deferred Maintenance Subcommittee and shared details regarding the committee's composition. A full report from the Deferred Maintenance Subcommittee will be provided during the June CHE meeting, said Commissioner Dalton.

Chair Hayes said that the August Retreat and Business meeting should be discussed next under other business and asked if President Monhollon would share potential topics to consider.

President Monhollon stated that he would like to consider topics regarding the Public Agenda Implementation and Strategies; 2022 Legislative Agenda; Deferred Maintenance; Enrollment Trends and the Future of Higher Education, Board Development, and Accreditation Issues. Chair Hayes commented that Transfer and Articulation should be included on the agenda, and could be discussed as part of the Public Agenda Implementation update. President Monhollon added that discussion regarding the formation of a Council of Board Chairs could be considered for discussion. President Monhollon also mentioned that potentially a president from each sector and the Council of Presidents Chair, Chancellor Al Panu, could join the meeting.

Commissioner Munns agreed and added that enrollment trends should be part of the discussion and that CAAL would meet in August. Commissioner Horne asked to have an informal meeting with presidents, to which Chair Hayes agreed that we should include a social time. Chair Hayes asked to lay out a list of topics to discuss at the retreat, to which President Monhollon asked CHE staff to summarize the list of topics so that it may be finalized at the May Executive Committee Meeting.

Commissioner Batson shared that Access and Equity would meet immediately following the CHE meeting.

### **3. Other Business**

President Monhollon discussed the importance of establishing a clear line in authority, as it relates to special project and data requests from Commissioners to CHE staff. He advised that Commissioners deter from pursuing staff directly when making such requests, rather route all research project requests through him copying Ms. Smith. Chair Hayes stated that he would reiterate President Monhollon's announcement during his report at the May CHE meeting. Commissioner Horne asked how this pertains to work between Committee Chairs and CHE staff, to which President Monhollon stated that he would prefer that requests are sent to him first to make the determination of how to proceed. Commissioner Munns suggested that if a question or request is received outside of the Committees' established process, it should be sent to President Monhollon with a copy to the Committee Chair for consideration.

### **4. Adjourn**

The Executive Committee adjourned the meeting at 11:21 a.m.