



Committee on Academic Affairs and Licensing (CAAL)  
Meeting Minutes  
November 21, 2024

**Members Present**

Commissioner Eddie Dyer, Chair  
Commissioner Terrye Seckinger, Vice Chair

Commissioner Jenni Bryson  
Commissioner Oran Smith

**Members Excused**

Commissioner Mick Zais

Commissioner Doug Snyder

**Commission Staff Present**

Jeffrey Perez  
Jessica Berry  
Melissa Price  
Darnell Holland  
Mark Swart

Kentia Pitts  
Lishu Yin  
Tanya Weigold  
Christopher Glenn  
Tracy Solet

**Guests**

Beth Bell, Clemson University  
Rob Essaf, Clemson University  
Teresa Burns, Coastal Carolina University  
Mark Del Mastro, College of Charleston  
Allison Steadman, Francis Marion University  
Will Carswell, Francis Marion University  
James Colbert, Lander University  
Erin Paysinger, Lander University  
Suzanne Thomas, Medical University of South Carolina  
Nancy Carson, Medical University of South Carolina  
Keli Fewox, Piedmont Technical College  
Karin Roof, The Citadel  
Laurie Boeding, Trident Technical College

Phil Bridgmon, University of South Carolina Aiken  
Eric Skipper, University of South Carolina Beaufort  
Brian Mallory, University of South Carolina Beaufort  
Trena Houpp, University of South Carolina Columbia  
Bill Mustain, University of South Carolina Columbia  
Jenell Peoples, University of South Carolina Columbia  
Walter Collins, University of South Carolina Palmetto  
Pam Steinke, USC Upstate  
Beth Costner, Winthrop University  
Tim Drueke, Winthrop University  
Lisa Harris, Winthrop University  
Lis Johnson, Winthrop University  
Sebastian van Delden, Winthrop University

All attended either in-person or via Zoom

**1. Welcome, Introduction, Quorum**

Chair Dyer convened the meeting at 10:04 a.m. and welcomed all in attendance.

**2. Introductions, Quorum, FOIA**

Ms. Solet introduced the Commission members and the in-person guests, confirmed a quorum, and announced the meeting was being held in accordance with the Freedom of Information Act.

**3. Approval of Agenda**

Chair Dyer called for a motion to approve the agenda. **Commissioner Smith motioned and Commissioner Bryson seconded.** Chair Dyer called for the vote and **the motion passed unopposed.**

#### 4. Approval of Minutes

Chair Dyer called for a motion to approve the meeting minutes from the October 24, 2024 meeting. **Commissioner Seckinger motioned, which was seconded by Commissioner Bryson.** Chair Dyer called for the vote and **the motion passed unopposed.**

#### 5. Election of Chair and Vice Chair

- a. Chair Dyer called for a nomination to elect a committee Chair. Commissioner Seckinger nominated Commissioner Edgar Dyer, which Commissioner Bryson seconded. **Commissioner Smith moved to close the nominations and the Chair be elected by acclamation, which Commissioner Seckinger seconded. Chair Dyer was reelected as committee Chair without opposition.**
- b. Chair Dyer called for a nomination to elect a committee Vice Chair. Commissioner Seckinger nominated Commissioner Smith, which Commissioner Bryson seconded. Commissioner Smith declined. Commissioner Bryson nominated Commissioner Seckinger, which Commissioner Smith seconded. **Commissioner Bryson motioned reelection of Commissioner Seckinger as committee Vice Chair by acclamation, which passed unopposed.**
- c. Chair Dyer introduced and welcomed two new committee members, Commissioners Oran Smith and Mick Zais.

#### 6. New Program Proposals

- a. *Winthrop University, Doctor of Education in Leadership and Innovation*  
Chair Dyer called on Dr. Berry for any comment from CHE staff. Dr. Berry stated the program is in line with workforce needs and welcomed the presentation. A representative from the institution summarized item 6.a. Commissioner Smith expressed appreciation for program and asked if the capstone of the degree will be a dissertation, project, or combination. The institution explained it will be a dissertation. Discussion was had regarding cost of program, student headcount, and similar programs in the state. USC Columbia commented it has conferred with the institution regarding a niche market this program may want to consider, which USC Columbia is not currently targeting. Commissioner Seckinger requested the agency provide more information regarding in-state enrollment for this type of program. Commissioner Seckinger expressed concern over courses regarding diversity, equity, and inclusion as these terms are no longer going to be allowed in America at the federal or state level and encouraged the institution to contact the Governor's office to discuss the upcoming legislation. The institution expressed appreciation for the perspective and will follow any approved guidelines from the State. The institution wants graduates of the program to be able to look at the needs of the learners no matter the setting, such as reading levels and experiences of individuals, which impact learning. Further discussion was had regarding the use of politically charged words as associated with a political ideology versus the common use of the words. Commissioner Smith suggested possibly referencing the federal Civil Rights Act. Chair Dyer asked if his understanding of what the program is trying to accomplish is relating to the underserved population and discounting race altogether. The institution agreed and stated it is looking at the variability of any learner regardless of setting or other factors. Commissioner Seckinger agreed children learn differently but the use of these politically charged words is caustic to the state and to the incoming administration and further cautioned the institution against using them. Commissioner Bryson expressed agreement regarding the likelihood of the law being passed by the super majority in the upcoming year. **Commissioner Smith motioned approval of the program and suggested a follow up should any relevant law pass at a later date. Commissioner Bryson seconded.** Chair Dyer expressed support of the program and inquired as to the number of hours and if there are similar programs in the Mecklenburg, North Carolina area. Discussion followed regarding the broadness of the program. Chair Dyer mentioned there were no votes against the program at the Advisory Committee Academic Programs (ACAP) meeting, but USC

Beaufort and USC Columbia had abstained, and asked if the institution had discussed this program with these two institutions since the meeting. The institution confirmed the discussion and stated its proposal had been updated to clarify some of the issues. In response to Commissioner Seckinger's earlier question regarding graduation rates data, Dr. Berry stated institutions may request the information via the agency should they wish to include it in the similar program data in their proposals. Chair Dyer asked if staff supports the program, which Dr. Berry confirmed. **Chair Dyer called for a vote, which passed unopposed. Commissioner Seckinger abstained from voting.**

b. *Winthrop University, Mission Statement Change*

Chair Dyer explained the institution's proposed mission statement change to include doctoral programs is regarding the proposal just discussed in agenda item 6.a. The floor was opened to discussion. Hearing none, **Commissioner Smith motioned acceptance of the proposal, which Commissioner Bryson seconded. Chair Dyer called for a vote and the motion passed unanimously.** Commissioner Smith inquired as to the process of amending of mission statements, which Dr. Berry explained is a two-tiered CHE policy. If the proposed change is deemed non-substantive by CHE staff, it can be approved at the staff level. If the change is deemed substantive, the proposal must go through the process for full commission approval.

c. *Winthrop University, Bachelor of Science in Artificial Intelligence*

A representative from the institution summarized item 6.c. Commissioner Seckinger questioned the elevation to a degree program versus a concentration as other programs in the state have done, and asked if the program has consulted with the industry regarding specific needs of this Artificial Intelligence (AI) movement. The institution explained it wants the program to be broader than a concentration, including course work in data science and mathematics, and ABET accreditation, which has very specific requirements, is not necessary for this type of program. Further, the institution explained its discussions and collaborative efforts surrounding the program, and indicated students will be able to use the degree in a variety of careers. Dr. Perez stated this field has been identified as a priority occupation in the state. Commissioner Smith expressed appreciation of the rigorousness of the program and inquired if the institution has a committee to study implications of AI on the campus, which was confirmed as the institution is developing an AI use policy for the students, as well as for use by staff or employees of the institution in the workplace. Further discussion was had regarding social implications of computing and AI. Chair Dyer asked if staff had additional comments and Dr. Berry expressed appreciation for the institution's responsiveness to answering staff questions. **Commissioner Seckinger motioned approval of the program, which Commissioner Bryson seconded. Chair Dyer called for a vote, which passed unopposed.** Chair Dyer commended of the use of "free expression and open civil engagement" in the mission statement and asked if there is an enforcement mechanism in place, which the institution explained would be handled via the appropriate channels. Discussion was had regarding other institutions' adherence to and enforcement of the principles of the "Chicago Statement".

d. *Medical University of South Carolina, Master of Science in Pathologists' Assistant Studies*

A representative from the institution summarized item 6.d. Commissioner Seckinger asked why there is such a shortage of pathologists' assistants, which the institution explained is due to a growing population, as well as a shortage of residency programs to train pathologists, so the need is outpacing the ability to create programs. Commissioner Smith asked if the institution would seek accreditation and the cost to do so. The institution will be seeking accreditation and explained the fees are as expected but the process of preparing for accreditation, including preparing the labs and respective equipment is costly. Chair Dyer inquired as to the higher number of credit hours required, the projected loss of money over the first five years, and the possibility of Artificial Intelligence helping

to alleviate the shortage in the industry. The institution explained the hours provide the learning content and internship-type hours required; the program has the full support of the hospital, and the institution is looking at strategic and other funding sources; and the institution is looking at how AI can enhance and promote learning across all professions and programs at the institution. **Commissioner Seckinger motioned approval of the program, which Commissioner Bryson seconded.** With nothing further from staff, **Chair Dyer called for a vote, which passed unopposed.**

## 7. New Center Proposal

- a. *University of South Carolina Columbia, Carolina Institute for Battery Innovation*  
A representative from the institution summarized item 7.a. Commissioner Seckinger inquired as to the funding scheme and if it will be reoccurring. The institution is not asking for recurring funding based on the initial grant money, USC Columbia's contribution, and the income the center will bring in from contract work. The institution confirmed it is not asking for state funds at this time but may in the future. Further discussion was had regarding similar institutes, supply not meeting demand, and workforce needs in South Carolina. Commissioner Smith asked if there is a consideration of energy storage, which the institution confirmed. **Commissioner Seckinger motioned approval of the program, which Commissioner Bryson seconded.** With nothing further from staff, **Chair Dyer called for a vote, which passed unopposed.**

Commissioner Bryson was excused for the remainder of the meeting.

## 8. Other Business / Discussion

- a. *AY 2023-2024 Academic Common Market Program Annual Report*  
Ms. Pitts explained the Academic Common Market (ACM) program and gave an overview of the report. Discussion was had regarding the various programs, especially aerospace and professional pilotage. Ms. Pitts confirmed the agency does track students attending out-of-state programs and is working to address the numbers with programs in-state. Further, the number of students our programs our importing into the state is remaining steady while the number of students exporting to other states is increasing. Ms. Pitts has and will continue to encourage institutions to look at programs no longer participating in the ACM in hopes of bringing more into South Carolina.
- b. *AY 2023-2024 Regional Contract Program Annual Report*  
Ms. Pitts explained the Regional Contract Program (RCP) and gave an overview of the report. December 2025 will be the last cycle of applicants for out-of-state veterinary students in the RCP program due to Clemson University's newly approved DVM program. The Optometry program will continue.

**Chair Dyer called for a motion to submit both reports in agenda items 8.a. and 8.b. to the full commission for consideration. Commissioner Smith made the motion, which Commissioner Seckinger seconded. Chair Dyer called for a vote and the motion passed unopposed.**

- c. *Notification Summary Report*  
Chair Dyer called on Dr. Berry to present the Notification Summary Report. Dr. Berry explained the summary covered the proposed Notifications received from institutions which were reviewed and approved by CHE staff in August and September of 2024. Dr. Berry highlighted a notification regarding USC Beaufort's termination of its A.A./A.S. programs, which were conditionally approved in August of 2023.
- d. Dr. Berry invited everyone to join the December 12, 2024 ACAP meeting as the South Carolina Department of Education will be doing a brief presentation regarding the new mathematics pathways for K-12 students and the impact on college entrance requirements.

9. **Adjournment**

With no further business before the Committee, **the meeting adjourned at 11:30 a.m.**