Committee on Academic Affairs and Licensing (CAAL)
Meeting Minutes
July 17, 2025

Committee Members Present
Commissioner Edgar Dyer, Chair
Commissioner Oran Smith
Commissioner Jenni Bryson
Commissioner Doug Snyder
Commissioner Brian Cuddy

Committee Member Excused
Commissioner Mick Zais

Commissioner Present
Dino Teppara

Commission Staff Present
Angela Peters
Jessica Berry
Melissa Price
Darnell Holland
Diane McCree
Endé Clark
Argentini Anderson
Matthew Hartenstine
Crystal Standifer
Leslie Williams
Karen Woodfaulk
Christopher Glenn
Tracy Solet

Guests
Amanda Karls, University of South Carolina Upstate
Beth Bell, Clemson University
Brandon Lockhart, Clemson University
Briana Peele, Clemson University
Claudia Benitez-Nelson, University of South Carolina Columbia
Collyn Taylor, University of South Carolina Columbia
Craig Parks, University of South Carolina Columbia
David Wyman, College of Charleston
Donna Arnett, University of South Carolina Columbia
Frederick Evans, SC State University
Jacki Walsh, SC Department of Education
James Colbert, Jr., Lander University
Jeremy King, Clemson University
Karin Roof, The Citadel
Katie Smith, University of South Carolina Aiken
Kim Burkett, SC Technical College System
Mark Del Mastro, College of Charleston
Michelle Cook, Clemson University
Paul Schwager, College of Charleston
Philip Gibson, Winthrop University
Rob Essaf, Clemson University
Sebastian van Delden, Winthrop University
Stacey Bradley, University of South Carolina Columbia
Teresa Burns, Coastal Carolina University
Trena Houp, University of South Carolina Columbia
Tim Drueke, Winthrop University

All attended either in-person or via Zoom

1. **Welcome, Introduction, Quorum**
   Chair Dyer convened the meeting at 10:00 a.m. and welcomed all in attendance.

2. Introductions, Quorum, FOIA
   Ms. Solet introduced the committee members and the in-person guests, confirmed a quorum, and announced the meeting was being held in accordance with the Freedom of Information Act. Chair Dyer noted Commissioner Teppara had virtually joined the meeting, welcomed Dr. Angela Peters as the new Director of Academic Affairs and Licensing, and expressed thanks to Dr. Jessica Berry for her work as acting director. Further, Chair Dyer introduced the committee's newest member, Dr. Brian Cuddy.

3. Approval of Agenda
   Chair Dyer called for a motion to approve the meeting agenda. **Commissioner Bryson motioned approval, which was seconded by Commissioner Smith.** Chair Dyer called for a vote and **the motion passed unopposed**.

4. Approval of Minutes
   Chair Dyer called for a motion to approve the minutes from the May 15, 2025 meeting. **Commissioner Smith motioned approval, which was seconded by Commissioner Bryson.** Chair Dyer called for a vote and **the motion passed unopposed.**

5. Election of Vice Chair
   Chair Dyer opened the floor to nominations for the committee vice chair. Commissioner Smith noted Commissioner Zais was unable to serve. Commissioner Bryson nominated Commissioner Teppara, who is not on the committee. Commissioner Cuddy was asked if he would serve. He stated he would if needed. **Commissioner Bryson nominated Commissioner Cuddy, which was seconded by Commissioner Snyder**. Chair Dyer closed the nominations and called for a vote by acclimation. **Commissioner Cuddy was unanimously elected Vice Chair**.

6. New Program Proposals
   a. <u>College of Charleston, B.S./A.B. in Entrepreneurship</u>
      Chair Dyer asked for comment from Dr. Peters, who noted the proposal is on the list of priority occupations. A representative from the institution summarized agenda item 6.a., and the floor was opened for questions. Chair Dyer noted the impressive number of students interested in the program and Commissioner Smith expressed appreciation for the program's ability to attract students and commended the movement from a concentration to a major. Commissioner Bryson agreed. **Commissioner Smith motioned agenda item 6.a. go before the full Commission, which was seconded by Commissioner Bryson.** Chair Dyer called for a vote and **the motion passed unopposed.**

   b. <u>Winthrop University, B.S. in Aviation and Business Management</u>
      Chair Dyer asked for comment from Dr. Peters, who noted the proposal is on the list of priority occupations. A representative from the institution summarized agenda item 6.b., and the floor was opened for questions. Commissioner Bryson mentioned the program at the Greenville airport and asked if there were any other similar programs not associated with a public or private university. The representative was unaware of any such programs at any public university, but stated the most similar program is at Charleston Southern University. The representative also noted other flight schools do not result in an academic degree or credential. Regarding the FAA Part 141 accredited flight school, Commissioner Smith asked if the institution has a specific flight school in mind, will there be any additional costs to the student, and what type of liability issues are anticipated. The representative explained they are in the RFP process to determine the flight school partner, FAA Part 141 has different, very regimented standards which are structured like college courses, and the flight school will handle the background checks, planes, and liability insurance, etc. The students will have to pass a medical examination. There are

additional fees of approximately $95,000 over the four years at the institution, which Commissioner Smith noted is similar to that of flight schools, but those students do not receive a degree. With no further comment, **Commissioner Smith motioned agenda item 6.b. go before the full Commission, which was seconded by Commissioner Bryson.** Chair Dyer called for a vote and **the motion passed unopposed.**

c. Winthrop University, Master of Business Administration
Chair Dyer asked the institution representative to present agenda item 6.c., which was summarized, and the floor was opened for questions. Chair Dyer asked if the program will be financially self-supporting and if the growth in York County is helping enrollment, both of which the representative confirmed and noted approximately 85% of their students are in-state students and South Carolina is a net growth state. With no further comment, **Commissioner Bryson motioned agenda item 6.c. go before the full Commission, which was seconded by Commissioner Smith.** Chair Dyer called for a vote and **the motion passed unopposed.**

d. Clemson University, M.S. in Finance
Chair Dyer asked for comment from Dr. Peters, who noted the proposal is on the list of priority occupations. A representative from the institution summarized agenda item 6.d., and the floor was opened for questions. Commissioner Smith expressed appreciation for the concentration in finance versus a broad business program and expects the program will be very marketable. Chair Dyer asked if the program is expected to be revenue neutral and pay for itself with increased enrollment, which the representative believed so. **Chair Dyer called for a motion for agenda item 6.d. to go before the full Commission, which was made by Commissioner Bryson and seconded by Commissioner Smith.** Conversation was had regarding the projected enrollment covering costs and the growth in numbers of undergraduates majoring in finance at the institution. With no further comment, Chair Dyer called for a vote and **the motion passed unopposed.**

e. Clemson University, B.S. in Science Teaching with Chemistry Concentration
f. Clemson University, B.S. in Science Teaching with Physics Concentration
The institution representative requested to present agenda items 6.e. and 6.f. together, which Chair Dyer approved. Dr. Peters had previously noted both programs are on the priority occupation list. The programs were presented and the floor opened for questions. Commissioner Smith expressed appreciation for these programs allowing students to become certified in teaching chemistry or physics without having to double major to do so. With no further comment, **Chair Dyer called for a motion to approve both agenda items 6.e. and 6.f. to go before the full Commission, which was made by Commissioner Bryson and seconded by Commissioner Cuddy.** Chair Dyer called for a vote and **the motion passed unopposed.**

7. New Center Proposal and New Accrediting Agency
   a. University of South Carolina Columbia, Center for American Civic Leadership and Public Discourse
Chair Dyer asked the institution representative to present agenda item 7.a., which was summarized, and the floor was opened for questions. Chair Dyer commended the center and stated academia sorely needs a place where civil discourse and civil debate can take place. In response to questions, the representative explained the center will not offer academic programming, but the faculty will offer courses and intend to develop an interdisciplinary minor which will be affiliated with the center. Further, the center will have guest speakers and will host lectures and events. Commissioner Cuddy asked how much funding the center expects from the State and if it will be a recurring need. The representative stated it would be a recurring request with the first year being $1.845 million, the second will be $2.775 million, and likely a varying amount each year. Discussion

was had regarding possible alternate ways of obtaining funding such as the Mellon Foundation, private sector and federal funding, noting there are federal funds only applicable to universities with these types of centers. Comments were made regarding the opportunity for not only college students but also for high school upperclassman, and how the center would likely benefit the nation, not just the state or region. Commissioner Smith noted funding could possibly come from someone wanting to name the center after family. And also stated the center will blend well with the institution's newly approved economics-based center, which will put the institution in the irresistible position of leading debates on public policy with the possibility of hosting live, nationally broadcast debates. With no further comment, **Chair Dyer called for a motion to approve agenda item 7.a. to go before the full Commission, which was made by Commissioner Smith and seconded by Chair Dyer.** Chair Dyer called for a vote and **the motion passed unopposed.**

b. University of South Carolina accreditation (for information)
Chair Dyer asked the representative to present agenda item 7.b. for informational purposes only. The Commission for Higher Public Education (CPHE) was presented and the floor opened for questions. Commissioner Smith asked for clarification of HLC and asked if South Carolina is unique in not having the sovereignty of other states. The representative explained HLC stands for the Higher Learning Commission and is formerly the regional accreditor of the Midwest which currently accredits the largest number of institutions in the United States. Also, the University of South Carolina system and the Texas A&M system are alike as they do not represent every four-year college and university. CPHE will be dealing with different government structures. When asked what would motivate a change to this new accrediting body the representative stated the process of accreditation will be much more streamlined and will focus on public institutions in ways that leverages and make obvious the public good. It was suggested there be further exploration of the cost analysis for this new process. The representative stated the current business plan suggests the first few cohorts using this commission will pay no fees through possibly year five, especially in cases in which the institution would initially need to be accredited by two accrediting bodies. It was noted the state of Florida has contributed $4 million, which should help offset the lack of fees being charged for the first few years.

8. Other Business / Discussion

a. REACH Act Anti-Federalist Papers (for discussion)
Chair Dyer mentioned in light of the current state of affairs between the national government and the states, it may make sense to add the Anti-Federalist Papers as another option to comply with the REACH Act. Commissioner Smith noted the struggle in getting the REACH Act passed and stated and changes would require an amendment by the General Assembly. And further stated the REACH Act is relatively new and should probably sit for a while before considering adjustments. Chair Dyer asked Commissioner Smith to see what the committee members at the State House think about the proposal. Commissioner Snyder stated his committee is in the process of reviewing statutes in conjunction with the strategic plan and suggested this be part of the overall review. Chair Dyer stated he would still like Commissioner Smith to see if the legislators have an opinion on this suggested change. Commissioner Smith agreed with Commissioner Snyder stating it may be better to have more than one agenda item to discuss when approaching educational leadership at the House and Senate. Commissioner Snyder suggested discussing this at the Commission's upcoming retreat prior to going to the legislature. Chair Dyer suggested at the appropriate time, Commissioners Smith and Snyder could jointly have the initial discussion with the legislature.

b. <u>Scholarship Enhancement Eligibility Review (SEER) Policy Updates</u> (for action)
Chair Dyer asked Dr. Peters to present agenda item 8.b., which was summarized, and the floor was opened for questions. Hearing none, **Chair Dyer called for a motion to approve agenda item 8.b. to go before the full Commission, which was made by Commissioner Smith and seconded by Commissioners Snyder, Bryson, and Chair Dyer.** Chair Dyer called for a vote and **the motion passed unopposed.**

Dr. Peters thanked Dr. Price for her work on SEER and for the notification summary report.

c. <u>Notification Summary Report (for information)</u>
Dr. Peters read the report of program notifications reviewed by CHE staff for the months of March and April 2025, and the floor was opened for questions. Commissioner Smith asked why the College of Charleston removed *HIS 217 African American History since 1865* from its list of approved REACH Act courses. The institution representative stated given the nature of the course and the context, it was deemed not ideal for including those components, and noted the institution offers multiple courses which satisfy the REACH Act requirement. Chair Dyer asked if the institution had decided to keep its theatre course on the list of approved REACH Act courses, which the representative confirmed.

d. <u>Updates from State Authorization and Compliance Areas</u>

i. <u>Licensing</u>
Dr. Anderson gave a brief update on the 117 nonpublic post-secondary institutions currently licensed by CHE, noting degree-granting institutions, which are licensed for five years, are reviewed by this committee and then by the full Commission. Whereas nondegree-granting institutions are reviewed at the staff level and must be renewed annually. The licensing team is working on reviewing its regulations and increasing site visits in an effort to be more intentional regarding noncompliant institutions and in protecting students. Further, the team is reviewing policies and procedures for institutional closures as the closing of Limestone University was a tremendous learning experience. In the coming months, Licensing will be asking this committee for review and approval of several items. Chair Dyer expressed appreciation to the Licensing team and asked if the changes being made by the federal government to student loans is impacting this area. Dr. Anderson stated at least eighty percent of the students are nontraditional students who need loans.

ii. <u>State Approving Agency (SAA)</u>
Crystal Standifer filled in for Frank Myers and gave a brief presentation, beginning with the history of SAA, with its purpose being to protect the integrity of the G.I. Bill to ensure veterans receive education benefits. It was noted each state has its own state approving agency, along with Washington D.C., and Washington State has two. SAA reviews and approves education and training programs, facilities, and employers offering on-the-job training and apprentice programs for veterans. In the 2025 fiscal year, SAA processed 51 approval actions, 8 new facilities in South Carolina, and withdrew 6 facilities or programs from eligibility, which could be due to closures. SAA conducts risk-based surveys and supervisory visits to ensure compliance. For the 2025-2026 year, the G.I. Bill rate will be $29, 920.95, which is the maximum amount that will be paid during the academic year for a beneficiary. Chair Dyer asked if there is an overall maximum benefit allowed, which Ms. Standifer explained there is no overall maximum, just the annual maximum for tuition and fees per academic year. Further, the benefit is based on months, with the average being thirty-six months, with a cap based on the established tuition

cap. Also, there is a Yellow Ribbon scholarship program available to those using the G.I Bill in which the school gives a scholarship, and the VA matches the amount.

iii. Academic Common Market and Regional Compact Program
Dr. Peters stated Kenita Pitts was unavailable so the presentation would be moved to the next quarter.

9. Adjournment
With no further business before the Committee, **Chair Dyer called for a motion to adjourn, which was made by Commissioner Bryson and seconded by Commissioner Snyder**. Chair Dyer called for a vote and **the motion passed unopposed**. **The meeting adjourned at 11:52 a.m.**