



Committee on Academic Affairs and Licensing (CAAL)
Meeting Minutes
November 13, 2025

Committee Members Present

Edgar Dyer, Chair
Brian Cuddy, Vice Chair
Oran Smith
Doug Snyder

Jenni Bryson
Daniel Dukes
Mitchell Zais

Commission Staff Present

Jeffrey Perez
Angela Peters
Melissa Price
Darnell Holland
Kenita Pitts
Endé Clark

Matthew Hartenstine
Timothy Rees
James Thompson
Christopher Glenn
Tracy Solet

Guests

Aimeé Carter, SC Technical College System
Allison Steadman, Francis Marion University
Beth Bell, Clemson University
Brian Mallory, University of South Carolina Beaufort
Briana Peele, Clemson University
Colleen McGlone, Coastal Carolina University
Eric Richardson, Medical University of South Carolina
Erin Paysinger, Lander University
Gibbs Knotts, Coastal Carolina University
James Colbert, Lander University
Jeremy King, Clemson University
Katie Smith, University of South Carolina Aiken
Mark Del Mastro, College of Charleston
Narayanan Kuthirummal, College of Charleston

Nancy Carson, Medical University of South Carolina
Pam Steinke, University of South Carolina Upstate
Phillip Bridgmon, University of South Carolina Aiken
Steven Schreiner, College of Charleston
Suzanne Thomas, Medical University of South Carolina
Teresa Burns, Coastal Carolina University
Toni Muhammad, Allen University
Trena Houpp, 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.

3. Approval of Agenda

Chair Dyer called for a motion to approve the meeting agenda. **Commissioner Smith motioned approval, which was seconded by Commissioners Dukes and Zais.** 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 October 16, 2025 meeting.

Commissioner Dukes motioned approval, which was seconded by Commissioner Zais. Chair Dyer called for a vote and **the motion passed unopposed.**

5. New Program Proposals

a. University of South Carolina Aiken, B.S. in Cybersecurity

Chair Dyer asked for comment from Dr. Peters, who noted the proposed program is on the list of priority occupations. A representative from the institution summarized agenda item 5.a., and the floor was opened for questions. Chair Dyer received confirmation the program is a priority occupation and meets National Security Agency (NSA) requirements. In response to Chair Dyer, the representative also confirmed a positive relationship with Fort Eisenhower/Fort Gordon, which is the cyber national command, confirmed the need to hire two additional professors, and stated the program would have a hybrid modality. Commissioner Smith questioned the number of similar programs and the program's proposed start date, which the representative approximated a dozen similar programs in the state and stated the start date was pushed back to Spring 2026 to be more thorough in working with CHE. Commissioner Dukes expressed appreciation for the timeliness of the proposal and for the institution's president's work on the program. The representative also noted a positive relationship with the Savannah River Site (SRS) as well as several grants received from SRS for the build out of the pipeline. With no further comment, **Commissioner Dukes motioned agenda item 5.a. go before the full Commission, which was seconded by Commissioner Smith.** Chair Dyer called for a vote and **the motion passed unopposed.**

b. Coastal Carolina University, Doctorate in Physical Therapy (DPT)

Chair Dyer asked for comment from Dr. Peters, who noted the proposed program is on the list of priority occupations. A representative from the institution summarized agenda item 5.b., and the floor was opened for questions. Chair Dyer noted ACAP's comments regarding difficulty in hiring faculty for DPT programs and the shortage of clinical rotation sites, which the representative confirmed but noted receiving a wonderful response from many qualified candidates, named several clinical sites the program will use, and pledged to collaborate with other public institutions in the state to place students in clinical sites. A brief update was given on the status of the building. In response to Commissioner Dukes the representative explained a two plus two program in the works with Horry-Georgetown Technical College for Physical Therapist Assistant (PTA) students, which will hopefully extend to other technical colleges. Further discussion was had regarding clinical sites and the process of securing sites via a Memorandum of Agreement and how those providing the instruction at the sites will be clinical affiliates listed as instructors but will not be employed by the institution. Chair Dyer received confirmation from the representative of the institutions' willingness to work with the other institutions to meet growing needs, and from Dr. Peters that ACAP's concerns had been addressed. With no further comment, **Commissioner Smith motioned agenda item 5.b. go before the full Commission, which was seconded by Commissioners Dukes and Bryson.** Chair Dyer called for a vote and **the motion passed unopposed.**

c. College of Charleston, B.A./A.B. in General Engineering

Chair Dyer asked for comment from Dr. Peters, who noted the proposed program, as well as the one to follow as agenda item 5.d., are on the list of priority occupations. A representative from the institution summarized agenda item 5.c., and the floor was opened for questions. Questions were raised as to the types of jobs graduates would pursue with a Bachelor of Arts in Engineering and how the institution will handle students with possibly weaker math skills. The representative explained the program is designed for

students interested in engineering principals and design without the in-depth technical aspects of engineering such as archeology, manufacturing, and project managing. Further noting the program has a strong liberal arts background and is flexible enough to allow for a double major. Students will be required to take calculus, which is considered an advanced math. Commissioner Cuddy expressed concern for graduates to obtain jobs and asked if there are similar programs in the country, which the representative stated there are. Commissioner Smith noted the presentation relieved his concerns regarding job opportunities. With no further comment, **Commissioner Dukes motioned agenda item 5.c. go before the full Commission, which was seconded by Commissioners Zais and Smith.** Chair Dyer called for a vote and **the motion passed unopposed.**

d. College of Charleston, B.S./A.B. in Integrated Engineering and Business

A representative from the institution summarized agenda item 5.d., and the floor was opened for questions. Commissioners Zais and Smith expressed appreciation for the program. Commissioner Dukes asked how the institution is keeping up the rapid growth in the area. The representative explained the industrial advisory boards partner and collaborate with local industry and business partners to incorporate the growing trends of the region into the curriculum and the businesses offer internships and scholarships to the students. Further, the institution is looking beyond the local area to meet the workforce needs of the state. Commissioner Cuddy noted a certificate program may be beneficial for lead and senior engineers to gain leadership skills. The representative agreed and noted the ongoing development of various levels of leadership programs and pathways at the institution. With no further comment, **Commissioner Dukes motioned agenda item 5.d. go before the full Commission, which was seconded by Commissioner Zais.** Chair Dyer called for a vote and **the motion passed unopposed.**

e. Medical University of South Carolina, B.S. in Applied Health Intelligence and Administration

Chair Dyer asked for comment from Dr. Peters, who noted the proposed program, as well as the one to follow as agenda item 5.f., are on the list of priority occupations. A representative from the institution thanked Drs. Peters and Berry for their assistance, summarized agenda item 5.e., and the floor was opened for questions. Chair Dyer asked for clarification regarding the number of credit hours for the program, which the representative explained noting the institution would not be conferring general education credits. The student would need to enter the program already having completed those hours, which combined with the 51 program credit hours, would total at least the 120 credit hours need to earn a bachelor's degree. **Commissioner Smith** noted his competency-based concerns had been answered and **motioned agenda item 5.e. go before the full Commission, which was seconded by Commissioners Dukes and Bryson.** Chair Dyer called for a vote and **the motion passed unopposed.**

f. Medical University of South Carolina, M.S. in Healthcare Quality and Safety

Chair Dyer asked for comment from Dr. Peters, who noted the proposed program is on the list of priority occupations. A representative from the institution summarized agenda item 5.f., and the floor was opened for questions. Hearing none, **Chair Dyer called for a motion for agenda item 5.f. to go before the full Commission, which was made by Commissioner Dukes and seconded by Commissioner Bryson.** Chair Dyer called for a vote and **the motion passed unopposed.**

6. Other Business

a. AY 2024-2025 REACH Act Report (for action)

Darnell Holland gave an overview of the Act requirements, summarized the report, presented key findings, and noted the documents reviewed by CHE staff. Mr. Holland

stated there had been 100 percent compliance by the institutions over the last two academic years and reminded institutions to ensure the language on the syllabi indicates documents are read in their entirety. Institutions were reminded REACH Act resource documents are included on CHE's website, which were helpful in reducing the number of required edits during this reporting cycle, and Mr. Holland thanked the provosts and academic leaders for their diligence. Chair Dyer thanked Mr. Holland, Dr. Peters, and CHE staff for the work done in compliance with the Act, which the General Assembly considers to be extremely important. Commissioner Smith spoke on the legislative history of the Act and noted some institutions offer more REACH Act compliant courses than others.

Commissioner Smith motioned agenda item 6.a. go before the full Commission, which was seconded by Commissioner Zais. Chair Dyer called for a vote and **the motion passed unopposed.** Commissioner Cuddy asked if the African Experience document was produced after the legislative act or if it is a standard document, and, if the document is part of each of the courses or is it determined by each individual institution. Chair Dyer stated it is a standard document and credited Jameson Broggi as the driving force behind the legislation. Dr. Peters thanked Mr. Holland for his work on the report.

b. AY 2024-2025 Academic Program Approval Report (for information)

Dr. Peters thanked Dr. Berry for drafting the report and gave a summary of the new academic programs added, noting each new program averaged two to three revisions. Dr. Peters noted additions and terminations of programs by various institution types and stated over a ten-year span, 356 new programs have been added, 149 programs have been terminated, and the trend is showing growth and recovery post-COVID. Also, programs are aligning with career clusters identified by the South Carolina Unified State Plan for Education and Workforce Development. Dr. Perez thanked Drs. Peters and Berry and stated this report is important for CHE as it gives a complete picture to the Government Efficiency and Legislative Oversight Committee. Chair Dyer also expressed appreciation for the report.

c. AY 2024-2025 Southern Regional Education Board (SREB) Academic Common Market Report (for information)

Ms. Kenita Pitts provided a brief background of the Academic Common Market (ACM) program, which is a partnership among 15 states in the Southern region allowing students to attend out-of-state institutions at in-state tuition rates, for degree programs not offered in the student's home state. South Carolina students had access to 348 programs during the reporting period, with 102 South Carolina residents certified and a migration of 327 students. Ms. Pitts went over the top programs at the various schools and identified programs and institutions which are no longer included in the ACM program. To qualify for certification, students must be able to prove South Carolina residency for at least 12 consecutive months and then must be accepted into an eligible program. Discussion was had regarding Clemson University no longer offering undergraduate programs as part of the ACM but still offering master's and doctorate level programs.

d. AY 2024-2025 Southern Regional Education Board (SREB) Regional Contract Plan Report (for information)

Ms. Pitts explained the Regional Contract Plan (RCP) allows South Carolina students to enroll in veterinary medicine and optometry programs offered outside of state at lower tuition rates because the state of South Carolina pays half of the tuition costs. Ms. Pitts explained there are currently students in the 2025-2026 cohort for veterinary medicine programs out-of-state, which will be covered until 2029, but with Clemson University opening a new veterinary school, no more applications will be accepted. However, optometry applications will continue to be accepted and hopefully, the number of optometry seats available will increase using the carryover funding. To meet residency requirements for RCP, students must provide proof of 24 consecutive months of

residency in South Carolina, which is a statutory requirement. Ms. Pitts went over the numbers of students in these programs at the various institutions and Chair Dyer commented Clemson's veterinary program appears to be saving the state \$6.3 million. Ms. Pitts noted there will be additional savings after 2029 when the tuition for the current veterinary cohort has been paid and explained the costs per student for each program. Chair Dyer thanked Ms. Pitts for the comprehensive report.

e. FY 2024-2025 Nursing Educator Initiative Report (for information)

Dr. Thompson gave a brief overview of the report and explained Florence-Darlington Technical College (FDTC) reported an institutional enrollment coding error, which led to FDTC receiving \$657,781.81 in surplus, which has been remitted and reallocated for the current fiscal year. Dr. Thompson noted 607 faculty received salary enhancements, leading to the retention of 89 percent of fulltime faculty and 80 percent of parttime faculty during the reporting year. Additionally, institutions are grateful to the General Assembly for providing these funds which enabled them to keep highly effective faculty members. Chair Dyer stated the numbers were impressive and appreciated the General Assembly's effort in retaining nursing educators. Commissioner Cuddy asked for clarification as to the FDTC error and if it originated from CHE. Dr. Thompson explained the surplus of money allocated to FDTC was due to pre-nursing students having been counted in the total population of enrolled nursing students. Dr. Perez stated the error did not come from CHE. Commissioner Cuddy noted a slippery slope as many nurses work in hospitals who are spending time teaching nursing students, as well as those in clinics such as physical therapy, occupational therapy, audiology, etc., who are supplying additional education. Chair Dyer thanked Dr. Thompson for the report.

Dr. Peters thanked Mr. Holland, Ms. Pitts, Dr. Thompson, and Ms. Spann for their work in compiling the reports, and thanked the CHE Academic Affairs and Licensing staff.

7. Discussion

a. Program Productivity Report: Exemption status criteria

Dr. Peters stated an internal team is working diligently to get the 2020-2024 report completed in anticipation of the April CAAL meeting and advised any institution representatives in attendance data requests from CHE would be forthcoming.

b. Appeal process for institutions

Chair Dyer noted Commissioner Smith previously questioned how CHE is defining the term Exemption as applied to the Program Productive Reports and stated the need for an appeal process should an institution disagree with the information contained in the report. Dr. Perez stated there will be a process for timely appeals as well as standards for appeals. Dr. Peters stated a committee of ACAP members is working on reviewing CHE's Academic Affairs policies and the program productivity policy will now be part of the review. Dr. Perez explained CHE is looking at the program life cycle and for a more coherent approach for Commissioners to hold the institutions accountable, as is their responsibility. Chair Dyer agreed noting the legislature is not keen on the continuation of nonproductive or low participation programs. In response, Dr. Perez expressed appreciation for the support of the General Assembly and stated CHE takes its responsibility very seriously, which includes accountability as part of CHE's three strategic goals.

c. Committee Charter

Chair Dyer asked the committee members to review the proposed updated charter prior to the next committee meeting, noting the update contains the new committee members.

8. **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 Zais. Chair Dyer called for a vote and the motion passed unopposed. The meeting adjourned at 11:37 a.m.