



Committee on Academic Affairs and Licensing (CAAL)
Meeting Minutes
October 16, 2025

Committee Members Present

Edgar Dyer, Chair
Brian Cuddy, Vice Chair
Oran Smith

Jenni Bryson
Daniel Dukes

Committee Members Excused

Mitchell Zais

Doug Snyder

Commission Staff Present

Jeffrey Perez
Angela Peters
Jessica Berry
Melissa Price
Darnell Holland
Kenita Pitts
Diane McCree
Matthew Hartenstine
Endé Clark
Frank Myers
Crystal Standifer
Kevin Glears

Karen Woodfaulk
Gerrick Hampton
Kathryn Harris
Lishu Yin
Alfie Mincy
Shardai Figgures
Brett Mills
Christopher Robinson
Leslie Williams
Christoper Glenn
Tracy Solet

Guests

Allison Steadman, Francis Marion University
Andrew Hatchett, University of South Carolina Aiken
Beth Bell, Clemson University
Danny Jenkins, University of South Carolina Columbia
Gibbs Knotts, Coastal Carolina University
James Colbert, Jr., Lander University
Katie Smith, University of South Carolina Aiken
Kim Burkett, SC Technical College System
Mark Del Mastro, College of Charleston
Pam Steinke, University of South Carolina Upstate

Phillip Bridgmon, University of South Carolina Aiken
Rob Essaf, Clemson University
Suzanne Thomas, Medical University of South Carolina
Teresa Burns, Coastal Carolina 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 Commissioner Bryson.** 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 July 17, 2025 meeting. **Commissioner Bryson motioned approval, which was seconded by Commissioner Smith.** Chair Dyer called for a vote and **the motion passed unopposed.**

5. **Election of Committee Chair and Vice Chair**

Chair Dyer explained as a new committee was constituted, the election of the officers is required.

- a. Chair Dyer opened the floor to nominations for committee chair. **Commissioner Bryson nominated Commissioner Dyer, which was seconded by Commissioner Smith.** Hearing no other nominations, **Commissioner Smith motioned the closure of the nominations and the election of Commissioner Dyer as committee chair.** Chair Dyer called for a vote and **the motion passed unopposed.**
- b. Chair Dyer opened the floor to nominations for committee vice chair. **Commissioner Bryson nominated Commissioner Cuddy, which was seconded by Commissioner Smith.** **Commissioner Smith motioned the closure of the nominations and the election of Commissioner Cuddy as committee vice chair.** Chair Dyer called for a vote and **the motion passed unopposed.**

6. **New Program Proposals**

- a. University of South Carolina Aiken, M.S. in Exercise and Sports Science
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 6.a., and the floor was opened for questions. Chair Dyer received confirmed the program is on the DEW Workforce list. Commissioner Smith noted similar programs at times show up on the program productivity report as noncompliant and asked for confirmation of the viability of the program. The representative indicated confidence in the program at the graduate level given the strength of the undergraduate program and as it will be offered online. Chair Dyer questioned the online delivery of the program. The representative explained the program will focus more on the application of information and skills learned at the undergraduate level and will adhere to the National Strength and Conditioning Association's guidelines for master's and graduate degree programs. Chair Dyer asked if an undergraduate in Sports and Exercise Science will be required to be admitted into the program, which the representative stated it would, or a closely related degree such as Kinesiology. Commissioner Bryson asked if the institution has a way to notify alumni who graduated with an appropriate undergraduate degree about this program, which the representative confirmed. Commissioner Bryson further recommended using social media to highlight the program. The representative noted confidence in the enrollment management division and its coordination with the respective deans to market new programs once approved. With no further comment, **Commissioner Bryson motioned agenda item 6.a. go before the full Commission, which was seconded by Commissioner Smith.** Chair Dyer called for a vote and **the motion passed unopposed.**

- b. University of South Carolina Columbia, M.A. in Psychology
- c. University of South Carolina Columbia, Ph.D. in Psychology

Chair Dyer asked for comment from Dr. Peters, who noted both proposed programs are on the list of priority occupations. A representative from the institution summarized agenda items 6.b. and 6.c., and the floor was opened for questions. Chair Dyer noted the institution has grouped all doctoral programs in Psychology together and asked if the APA has had issue with approving the Clinical Psychology program due to more stringent regulations for a Clinical versus a generic Ph.D. program in Psychology. The representative said the accrediting body reviews the Clinical concentration as a separate program and noted some of the concentrations have different accrediting bodies. Chair Dyer asked if the institution offers Counseling, which the representative confirmed falls under Clinical. Commissioner Smith noted the projected enrollment of 91 and asked what the average completion rate is per year. The representative confirmed the program is very healthy and noted the department is a leader in external funding and grants. Chair Dyer asked if graduates of Experimental Psychology are finding jobs, which the representative confirmed. Dr. Perez stated the proposal is a CIP code change only so the current enrollment and completion numbers should be the same, stating the program has been robust. The representative stated the numbers are consistently going up. Chair Dyer noted the Clinical program takes longer, which the representative confirmed due to the clinical requirements. **Commissioner Smith** indicated the numbers looked strong and **motioned agenda items 6.b. and 6.c. go before the full Commission, which was seconded by Commissioner Bryson.** With no further comment, Chair Dyer called for a vote and **the motion passed unopposed.**

7. Other Business / Discussion

- a. FY 2016-2020 Academic Program Productivity Report (for action)

Chair Dyer asked for comment from Dr. Peters, who introduced Dr. Yin, author of the report. Dr. Yin summarized the report and presented the key findings and trending data. Discussion was had regarding the length of review cycles and how often a program with Exemption or Under Review status could be renewed. Dr. Yin stated reviews are conducted biannually so the timeline is six years and explained if a program has Exemption status, it will not be reviewed again for three review cycles. Dr. Perez noted only one program is marked with Exemption status due to the rigorous standards required. Dr. Yin explained new programs are not assessed as there are not enough data to conduct a review. Commissioner Smith received confirmation from Dr. Yin the one program with Exemption status is due to lack of data and not due to some value. Regarding Termination status, Dr. Perez stated CHE may recommend the termination of a program and can require the institution submit a plan for termination, but CHE has no statutory authority to implement the termination. Commissioner Smith asked if CHE has recommended programs for termination which the institutions' authoritative boards have not implemented. Dr. Yin stated more information would be forthcoming in the presentation and mentioned institutions may self-terminate a program by submitting a Notification of Termination to CHE. Discussion was had regarding Complaint versus Non-compliant program status, completion rates, rigorousness of programs, and how Compliant status is often achieved through high enrollment versus graduation outcomes. Dr. Yin noted CHE is behind in reporting. Commissioner Dyer asked if FY 2018-2022 would be completed since it was due in 2024. Dr. Perez stated CHE would keep the cohorts separate and would do the report next, followed by FY 2020-2024. Dr. Perez further stated in-depth reporting on new programs will not be conducted until CHE has caught up on the general reviews as outlined. Dr. Perez clarified any program currently in Under Review status will not have to submit a mitigation plan to CHE until CHE has caught up on the general review cycles, which Chair Dyer agreed was fair. Based on Commissioner Smith's comments, discussion was had regarding headcount, how students with minors and those with double majors are counted, and how REACH Act courses are not considered for this report as the Office of

Academic Affairs does a throughout REACH Act report annually. Dr. Yin completed the presentation by thanking the provosts for collaborating and assisting CHE in collecting the data for the report.

Chair Dyer stated the University of South Carolina Columbia requested amendments to the report and since CHE currently has no policy or procedure in place for appealing the report's findings, the committee will hear the comments prior to acting on the report. The institution's representative requested the committee consider amending the status of three programs as follows: (1) M.A. in International Studies (listed on the report as International Relations and Affairs): change from Termination to Under Review; (2) Ph.D. in Music Teacher Education: change from Under Review to Exemption; and (3) D.M.A. in Music Theory and Composition: change from Termination to Exemption. The representative explained in detail the reasoning for the requests. Chair Dyer called for comment from CHE staff. Dr. Perez expressed appreciation for the reasoning and stated CHE must base the findings on experience and on the numbers, and therefore CHE stands behind the recommendations in the report but defers to the Commissioners.

Commissioner Smith expressed a need to define the word Exemption, to know if it is quantitative versus qualitative, and asked if it is defined in statute or policy. Dr. Perez stated it is defined in the policy. Discussion was had regarding a previous draft of policy revisions made by an ACAP working group which would have allowed some smaller programs meeting a statewide need to meet the Exemption requirement without being singled out every six years. Dr. Perez noted value in the Commissioners possibly looking at the definition of Exemption moving forward but again stated the report contains the recommendations as they were made. Commissioner Smith noted concern regarding institutions with overarching completion problems and the possibility of finding so many programs with Under Review status during every review cycle that it would call curriculum into question. Chair Dyer reminded the committee CHE is only making recommendations and cannot force an institution to terminate a program. The institution's representative noted if a program is listed with Termination status, the institution is expected to submit a compliance plan to CHE.

Chair Dyer called for any further comment or a motion. Commissioner Smith asked if it would be possible to carry this over to the next CAAL meeting. Chair Dyer asked if there were a deadline via policy or statute. Dr. Peters noted the next CAAL meeting is November 13. Dr. Perez stated there is no statutory or policy deadline, but as his intention was to have had this report completed in May, he does not want to delay any longer than necessary. Discussion was had regarding the outcome of voting on the report excepting the three programs requested by the University of South Carolina Columbia, which would open the report to amendment requests by all institutions. Dr. Perez suggested moving forward with the approval of the report and considering the definition of Exemption in November for future reports and again noted the reports are two cohorts behind.

Chair Dyer suggested extending the definition of Exemption to apply to all programs with Exemption status. Dr. Perez stated this would require repolling each institution and recollecting data which has already been collected for this report. Dr. Yin mentioned provosts had been informed any changes made to a program holding Exemption status would result in the loss of Exemption status and reiterated new programs are marked with Exemption status due to lack of data, not based on value. Dr. Yin further stated Exemption status is detailed in the policy so any revision to the report would necessitate a revision of the policy, which would require full-Commission approval.

The institution's representative requested the report be considered for information, not action, and requested the committee act only on the most recent report once CHE gets

caught up completing the two outstanding reports. Commissioner Smith recommended changing the status of the M.A. in International Relations and Affairs from Termination to Under Review, keeping the status of the Ph.D. in Music Teacher Education as Under Review, and changing the status of the D.M.A. in Music Theory and Composition from Termination to Under Review. And further, have CHE staff do an in-depth dive into what is meant by the term Exemption for discussion at the next CAAL meeting in November to eliminate this issue with the next two reports. Chair Dyer asked for comment from Dr. Perez, who was not opposed.

Chair Dyer noted **Commissioner Smith's motion to amend the FY 2016-2020 Academic Program Productivity Report by changing the status of two of the University of South Carolina Columbia's programs, the M.A. in International Relations and Affairs and the D.M.A. in Music Theory Composition, from Termination to Under Review, while keeping the status of the Ph.D. in Music Teacher Education as Under Review, which Commissioner Bryson seconded.** With no further comment, Chair Dyer called for a vote to move agenda item 7.a., as amended, to the full Commission. The motion passed unopposed.

Dr. Perez noted CHE staff will add the discussion of the definition of the term Exemption to the next CAAL meeting agenda. Chair Dyer also requested the development of a process for contesting data in reports, stating notice must be made in writing no later than 10 days prior to a committee or commission meeting.

b. GI Bill Education Program: VA School Certification and Reapproval Process (for information)

Mr. Myers thanked all veterans present for their service, as well as their family members, and went on to provide a brief history of the State Approving Agency (SAA) and stated one of the biggest challenges for SAA is the 36-month full reapproval process of eligible programs. CHE licenses the educational institutions, which then come to SAA for approval of the GI Bill. And while an institution may be licensed by CHE to operate in the state, this does not mean it has met the federal criteria for approval. Mr. Myers explained the steps SAA must take to ensure ongoing compliance by the institutions and explained Veteran Affairs (VA) has changed the full reapproval process from 24 months to 36 months. Further, SAA currently has approximately 65-70 approved programs and works with 242 institutions statewide, several of which are well outside of the 36-month full reapproval timeline, many of which are nonresponsive to the requests for required information. Mr. Myers stated if the institution does not respond to the certifying official's request for more than four months, the institution will be suspended for a period not to exceed 60 days. If still unresolved after the 60-day suspension, by law, the program must be removed from eligibility. SAA needs support and timely responses from the institutions to ensure the programs remain compliant. Mr. Myers concluded his presentation by listing several ways in which the institutions may help provide the information to SAA. The floor was opened for questions. Chair Dyer asked how much money the VA provides annually to the 33 institutions, which Mr. Myers said would be provided as soon as possible. Chair Dyer stated the amount is likely a large number and we need to make sure we are doing everything right. Dr. Perez thanked Mr. Myers and his staff for all the work being done to ensure the institutions are compliant and noted Mr. Myers' group is consistently one of the top performing SAAs in the country. In response to Commissioners' questions, Mr. Myers confirmed SAA is fully staffed and stated he would present this information to nonpublic and 2-year institutions in the state.

c. 2025 Transfer Excellence Convening Update

Dr. Berry gave a summary of the convening, which took place on October 8, 2025, with a focus on the power of partnership, advancing transfer through collaboration. Eight sessions were offered, including a presentation from Ithaca S+R with a demonstration of

the new Transfer Explorer Portal. Several South Carolina institutions are using the portal while others are waiting for their live launches. The portal may be viewed at <https://transferexplorer.org>. CHE presented information on SC military credit mobility for prior learning and gave a CCWD pathways update. Dr. Perez thanked Dr. Berry and her team for their work on the convening, noting transfer is a statewide initiative with a lot of regional activity between campuses, and is an example of CHE fulfilling its role in promoting success across the state.

d. Notification Summary Report (for information)

Dr. Peters gave a brief description of the report noting 31 program notifications had been received and processed by CHE staff and stated the report has been provided and is on the CHE website. Chair Dyer thanked Dr. Peters and her staff, as well as Dr. Perez, in supporting the committee and the Commission.

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 Smith.** Chair Dyer called for a vote and **the motion passed unopposed. The meeting adjourned at 11:47 a.m.**