Meeting of the South Carolina Commission
on Higher Education
12:30 p.m., May 7, 2026
1122 Lady Street, Suite 400, Columbia, SC 29201
and Zoom Webinar

Members

Commissioner Paul Batson
Commissioner Amy Bigham
Commissioner Jenni Bryson
Commissioner Brian Cuddy
Commissioner Daniel Dukes
Commissioner Edgar Dyer
Commissioner Gene Fant
Commissioner Mark Masters
Commissioner Charles Schulze
Commissioner Doug Snyder
Commissioner Dino Teppara
Commissioner Mick Zais

Members Excused

Commissioner Wes Hayes, Chair
Commissioner Oran Smith, Vice Chair

Commission Staff Present

Jeff Perez
Laura Belcher
Stephanie Charbonneau
Shardai Figgures
Chris Glenn
Gerrick Hampton
Kathryn Harris
Matthew Hartenstine
DJ Holland
Marianna Manic
Diane McCree
Noah Perry
Angela Peters
Kinsey Phillips
Kenita Pitts
Melissa Price
Christopher Robinson
Elizabeth Robinson
Holly Robinson
Kara Smith
Tracy Solet
Chariti Spann
Crystal Standifer
Mark Swart
Tanya Weigold
Bryce Wilson
Karen Woodfaulk
Lishu Yin

Guests

C.C. Bates, Clemson University
Beth Bell, Clemson University
Stephen Bismarck, Lander University
Tiffany Blackwell, Tri-County Technical College
Betty Boatwright, South Carolina State University
Tanya Boone, University of South Carolina Upstate
Teresa Burns, Coastal Carolina University
Darryl Bridges, Francis Marion University
Will Carswell, Francis Marion University
Lewis Carter, SC House of Representatives
Craig Cashwell, Clemson University
James Colbert, Lander University
Walter Collins, University of South Carolina
Michelle Cook, Clemson University
Myron Davis, Vorhees University
Mark Del Mastro, College of Charleston
Rob Essaf, Clemson University
Kelli Fookes, Coastal Carolina University
Eric Garris, Francis Marion University
Esther Godfrey, University of South Carolina Upstate
Michael Godfrey, Clemson University
Alper Gormus, Coastal Carolina University
Kenntrail Grooms, Voorhees University
Daniel Heimmermann, University of South Carolina Aiken
Edward Hill, Voorhees University

Boone Hopkins, Converse University
Jessica Holdman, SC Daily Gazette
Trena Houp, University of South Carolina
Bonnie Jackson, Private Citizen
Robert, Killins, Coastal Carolina University
Jeremy King, Clemson University
Sean Lafferty, Private Citizen
Blythe Littlefield, Agency Head Salary Commission
Robert Lloyd, SC Independent Colleges and Universities
Erik Lowry, Francis Marion University
Brian Mallory, University of South Carolina Beaufort
Erin Paysinger, Lander University
Briana Peele, Clemson University
Jay Ragley, Advocatus USA
Bert Schewel, College of Charleston
Deanne Sellnow, Clemson University
Erika Small, Coastal Carolina University
Allison Steadman, Francis Marion University
Pam Steinke, University of South Carolina Upstate
Katie Stevens, SC Higher Education Tuition Grants Commission
Jeffrey Stinson, University of South Carolina Upstate
Tangar Young, South Carolina State University
Alissa Warters, Francis Marion University
Macey Webb, SC House of Representatives
Llyod Willis, Lander University
Craig Wilson, University of South Carolina Palmetto College

All Attended either In-Person, by Phone, or via Video Conference

Chair Hayes convened the meeting at 12:34 p.m. and welcomed all in attendance.

I. 1. Introductions and Roll Call to Establish Quorum

Ms. Belcher introduced the Commissioners. She confirmed a quorum of the Commission and announced that the meeting was being held in accordance with the Freedom of Information Act.

2. Approval of Minutes

Chair Dyer introduced the draft minutes of the March 5, 2026, CHE Business meeting and asked for any additions or corrections. Commissioner Bigham motioned to approve minutes as presented, and Commissioner Batson seconded the motion. The minutes were approved unanimously.

3. Chair's Report

Chair Dyer announced that he would chair the meeting on behalf of Chair Hayes in his absence. He then introduced Ms. Blythe Littlefield of the Agency Head Salary Commission, who provided annual training for the Commissioners.

4. President and Executive Director's Report

Chair Dyer called on President Perez to give his report.

President Perez introduced a new CHE staff member, Kinsey Phillips, Office Operations Coordinator, in the Office of Student Affairs.

President Perez reported on CHE activities including: the convening of SC-SARA institutions and non-public postsecondary licensed institutions; Connecting Services Credit, and Collaboration to Strengthen Pathways for Military Learners in SC event; College and Career Decision Day; and Higher Education Day at the State House.

President Perez then gave a legislative update to include an update on the state budget, clean-up bill; residency regulations, CHE member training, campus safety, campus mapping, privacy act legislation, and post-tenure review. He reviewed the status of each bill.

Regarding the Merit Scholarship Expenditure update, President Perez explained that there has been growth in the number of scholarship recipients and provided an overview of the budget. He reported that a funding deficit currently exists and that he is working with the House and Senate to identify a path forward. He also indicated that discussions would continue with the Executive Budget Office and the Governor's Office regarding next steps.

President Perez further explained the actions taken to address the issue, including the formation of a working group that will meet regularly. He noted that a commissioner would serve on the working group, and Commissioner Batson agreed to serve in that capacity. President Perez stated that the group will work to refine the forecasting methodology to better anticipate future growth.

Commissioner Zais asked whether reserve funds were available to cover the shortfall. President Perez responded that if lottery funding is insufficient, funding would need to come from the General Fund.

5. Committee Reports

5.01 Report of the Executive Committee

Chair Dyer reported that there were no items for consideration.

5.02 Report of the Committee on Academic Affairs and Licensing — Edgar Dyer

Chair Dyer reported that there are 15 new program proposals and three additional items for action. He and staff overviewed the items. Chair Dyer then motioned for the approval of the consent agenda. Chair Dyer called for the vote and the consent agenda passed unanimously.

FOR ACTION

A. New Program Proposals
   1. Clemson University, Ph.D. in Communication and Media
   2. Clemson University, Ph.D. in Counselor Education and Supervision

3. Clemson University, B.S. in Athletic Leadership
4. Coastal Carolina University, M.S. in Finance
5. Francis Marion University, M.Ed. in Educational Leadership
6. University of South Carolina Columbia, M.S.L. in Environmental Law and Sustainability
7. University of South Carolina Upstate, B.S.B.A. in Hospitality and Tourism Management
8. University of South Carolina Upstate, B.A. in Applied Languages and Global Studies
9. Lander University, M.A.T. in Early Childhood Education
10. Lander University, B.A. in Secondary Education, English
11. Lander University, B.S. in Secondary Education, Chemistry
12. Lander University, B.S. in Secondary Education, Mathematics
13. Lander University, B.S. in Secondary Education, Social Studies
14. Lander University, B.S. in Accounting
15. Lander University, B.S. in Financial Services

B. Committee on Academic Affairs and Licensing Charter Revisions
C. Policies on Exam-based Credit
D. SC College Preparatory Course Prerequisite Policy

Chair Dyer reported that the Committee also reviewed the following: SC SARA presentation; Notification Summary Report, Annual Report on Licensing Activities; and classics learning test overview.

Chair Dyer noted that the Committee met on April 30 to discuss program productivity with representatives from 12 institutions of higher education. He announced that the Committee would meet again on May 14 to continue those discussions.

Commissioner Bigham asked for clarification regarding the timeline for terminating a program. President Perez explained that institutions have 90 days to submit a closeout plan and that the institution's board and president ultimately determine how to proceed.

Chair Dyer recommended expanding reviews to include athletics and student services, in addition to academic programs, to identify opportunities for greater financial efficiency.

Commissioner Masters encouraged all Commissioners to attend the May 14 CAAL meeting regarding program productivity. Chair Dyer indicated that additional agenda items would also be discussed. President Perez clarified that the meeting was intended for CAAL members, although other Commissioners were welcome to observe.

5.03 Report of the Committee on Student Services — Jenni Bryson

Chair Dyer called on Commissioner Bryson, who reported that there were two items for information only and described the items. She also announced that a student representative from Francis Marion University gave a presentation during their committee meeting.

FOR INFORMATION

A. SC Program for the Recruitment and Retention of Minority Teachers (SC-PRRMT) 2024-25 Quarter 4 and Annual Report (For information, no action)
B. African American Teacher Loan Program Report (For information, no action)
C. College Access Updates (For information, no action)
D. SCNGCAP and Veterans Outreach (For information, no action)

5.04 Report of the Committee on Finance and Administration (CFA) Paul Batson

Chair Dyer called on Commissioner Batson to present the report. Commissioner Batson summarized four items for information. Commissioner Batson commended President Perez for his efforts in addressing the Merit Scholarship funding deficit and reiterated that the working group would focus on improving forecasting methods going forward.

He also announced that the CHEMIS presentation would be provided during the June meeting.

FOR INFORMATION

A. Francis Marion University Financial Report (For information, no action)
B. Merit Scholarship Expenditure Update (For Information, no action)
C. Quarter 3 Budget Report (For Information, no action)
D. CHEMIS 2.0 Update (For information, no action)

5.05 Report of the Committee on Strategic Planning and Accountability (CSPA) Doug Snyder

Chair Dyer called on Commissioner Snyder, who summarized three informational items. He reported that the Committee is continuing to develop measurable initiatives aligned with the agency's values. He provided an update on actions items from the Inspector General (IG) and the House Government Efficiency and Legislative Oversight Committee (GELOC) reports.

He emphasized the importance of aligning the Accountability Report with the agency' Strategic Plan.

Commissioner Dukes encouraged the Commission to remain mindful of the volume of reports completed beyond those required by the General Assembly.

FOR INFORMATION

A. Strategic Plan Update (For information, no action)
B. Accountability (For information, no action)
C. External Studies Update (For information, no action)

6. Other Business

There was no other business to consider.

7. Executive Session

There was no executive session.

8. End of Business Meeting

The business meeting adjourned at 2:05 p.m.