Meeting of the South Carolina Commission
on Higher Education
12:00 p.m., June 4, 2026
Medical University of South Carolina, Colcock Hall Ballroom,
19 Bee Street, Charleston, SC 29403 and Zoom Webinar

Members

Commissioner Wes Hayes, Chair
Commissioner Oran Smith, Vice Chair
Commissioner Paul Batson
Commissioner Amy Bigham
Commissioner Brian Cuddy
Commissioner Daniel Dukes
Commissioner Edgar Dyer
Commissioner Mark Masters
Commissioner Charles Schulze
Commissioner Doug Snyder
Commissioner Mick Zais

Members Excused

Commissioner Jenni Bryson
Commissioner Gene Fant
Commissioner Dino Teppara

Commission Staff Present

Jeff Perez
Carson Alexander
Argentina Anderson
Laura Belcher
Jessica Berry
Stephanie Charbonneau
Ende Clark
Shardai Figgures
Gerrick Hampton
Kathryn Harris
Matthew Hartenstine
DJ Holland
Diane McCree
Noah Perry
Angela Peters
Kinsey Phillips
Kenita Pitts
Melissa Price
Christopher Robinson
Elizabeth Robinson
Holly Robinson
Atlantis Seckal
Kara Smith
Tracy Solet
Ashley Harper-Stanley
Mark Swart
Tanya Weigold
Bryce Wilson
Karen Woodfaulk
Lishu Yin

Guests

Andrew Anderson, Medical University of South Carolina
Betty Boatwright, South Carolina State University
Teresa Burns, Coastal Carolina University
Lewis Carter, SC House of Representatives
Ronnie Chatterjee, Medical University of South Carolian
James Colbert, Lander University
David Cole, Medical University of South Carolina
Walter Collins, University of South Carolina
Michelle Cook, Clemson University
Kristen Cuthrell, Clemson University
Elizabeth Donaldson, Northeastern Technical College
Timothy Drueke, Winthrop University
Rob Essaf, Clemson University
Frederick Evans, SC State University
Marilyn Fore, Horry-Georgetown Technical College
Jessica Holdman, SC Daily Gazette
Trena Houp, University of South Carolina

Yvonne Jefferson-Barnes, Trident
Jeremy King, Clemson University
Gibbs Knotts, Coastal Carolina University
Lee Lindner, College of Charleston
Brian Mallory, University of South Carolina Beaufort
Jessica McLees, SC Department of Education
Briana Peele, Clemson University
Susan Purvis, Florence-Darlington Technical College
Jay Ragley, Advocatus USA
Allison Steadman, Francis Marion University
Pam Steinke, University of South Carolina Upstate
Rosline Sumpter, SC Technical College System
Suzanne Thomas, Medical University of South Carolina
Jaclyn Walsh, SC Department of Education
Angela Williams, Midlands Technical College
James Winebreak, Coastal Carolina University

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

Chair Hayes convened the meeting at 12:02 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 Hayes introduced the draft minutes of the May 7, 2026, CHE Business meeting and asked for any additions or corrections. Commissioner Bigham motioned to approve minutes as presented, and Commissioner Zais seconded the motion. The minutes were approved unanimously.

3. Chair's Report

Chair Hayes thanked the Medical University of South Carolina (MUSC) for hosting the Commission and Mercedes-Benz Vans (North Charleston) for providing the facility tour.

President Cole welcomed the Commission and expressed appreciation for the visit. He provided an overview of MUSC's mission and purpose.

Commissioner Schulze welcomed attendees and presented an overview of MUSC, including its academic offerings, administrative structure, funding, enrollment, and other institutional statistics.

4. President and Executive Director's Report

Chair Hayes called on President Perez to give his report.

President Perez introduced two new CHE staff members:

- Ms. Ashley Harper-Stanley, Senior Accountant/Fiscal Analyst, Office of Fiscal Affairs
- Mr. Carson Alexander, Southern Education Leadership Fellow (Intern), Office of Student Affairs

President Perez thanked MUSC and Mercedes-Benz Vans for hosting the Commission and emphasized the importance of these visits in helping the Commission better understand and respond to South Carolina's workforce needs.

He also congratulated Commissioner Smith on receiving the Order of the Palmetto, South Carolina's highest civilian honor.

President Perez reported that both the clean-up bill and the residency regulations had been signed into law. He also noted that the State budget remained in conference committee.

He announced that the Coordinating Council for Workforce Development (CCWD) had been designated to administer the Workforce Pell program in South Carolina.

President Perez provided an update on the merit scholarship funding deficit, explaining that the shortfall resulted from an increase in scholarship recipients. He emphasized that sufficient resources at the state were available to cover all eligible students and that no student had gone without funding. He further reported that CHE has established a committee to improve future scholarship funding projections.

President Perez also presented an update on the CHE's technology utilization study and summarized its findings.

Commissioner Snyder asked whether the Commission could seek legislative funding if it chose not to implement the lowest-cost technology option. Commissioner Dyer inquired whether Foundation funding might be available to offset implementation costs.

Commissioner Smith asked why legislation concerning training requirements for institutional governing boards and Commissioners had not passed during the legislative session. President responded that he did not know of any specific reason why the bills were not passed this session.

5. Committee Reports

5.01 Report of the Executive Committee **Wes Hayes**

Chair Hayes reported that there were no items for consideration.

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

Commissioner Dyer reported that the committee had met twice since the previous Commission meeting. He reported that the committee was presenting two new academic program proposals and two items for approval. He motioned for approval of the consent agenda, which the two academic programs approved, and the remaining items were considered individually.

CONSENT AGENDA

A. New Program Proposals

1. Medical University of South Carolina, M.S. in Cancer Biology

2. Winthrop University, B.S. in Health Sciences

B. Recommendation for Academic Program Productivity Report – FY 2024 and FY 2026 Review Cycles

C. New Nonpublic Institutions Licensure

1. Southeastern Esthetic Institute, LLC DBA Southeastern Health and Wellness Institute, A.A.S. in Diagnostic Medical Sonography

Commissioner Dyer summarized a new nonpublic institutional licensure application for consideration and invited representatives from Southeastern Esthetic Institute to respond to questions from the Commission.

Commissioner Bigham emphasized the importance of carefully considering the proposal despite its non-traditional nature. Commissioner Dyer asked questions regarding student value, accreditation, program costs, potential earnings, financial aid availability, student-to-instructor ratios, leadership oversight, and faculty qualifications before opening the floor for additional discussion.

Commissioner Smith motioned to approve the program contingent upon obtaining a signed agreement from Lexington Medical Center. Commissioner Zais seconded the motion. Commissioner Snyder recommended returning the agreement to the CAAL for review before final Commission approval at a future meeting.

Commissioner Smith withdrew his original motion and motioned instead to recommit the proposal to the CAAL, with the committee authorized to grant final approval on behalf of the Commission at its meeting two weeks later. Commissioner Zais seconded the motion.

Chair Hayes called for the vote, and the motion passed, with Commissioner Batson voting in opposition.

Commissioner Dyer then presented an overview of the Academic Program Productivity Report and moved for its approval.

Commissioner Smith motioned that the report be disseminated to designated stakeholders according to an established schedule and accompanied by a cover letter highlighting key findings.

Commissioner Snyder recommended following existing policy by distributing the report with a cover letter while indicating that a revised policy was under development. Commissioner Dukes opposed Commissioner Smith's motion, stating that the Commission should first finalize the policy and review processes before broadly disseminating the report. Commissioner Masters expressed support for distributing the report.

Commissioner Smith revised his motion as follows, and Commissioner Zais seconded:

Accept and widely disseminate the FY2024 and FY2026 Academic Program Productivity Reports (including institutional responses) to key stakeholders, with an addendum changing all programs currently identified as "recommended for termination" to "under review" for one year. The addendum shall also state that the Commission is considering a revised program review policy incorporating additional review factors and invites institutions to assist in developing that policy.

Commissioner Dyer called for the vote. The motion passed, with Commissioners Masters, Dukes, and Bigham voting in opposition.

President Perez clarified that the report itself would remain unchanged and that the approved amendment would be included as a one-page addendum.

5.03 Report of the Committee on Student Services **Jenni Bryson**

Chair Hayes called on Commissioner Batson on behalf of Commissioner Bryson. Commissioner Batson reported that there was one item for consideration and described the item and motioned for approval. Chair Hayes called for the vote, and the consent agenda was approved. Commissioner Batson then overviewed four items for information only.

CONSENT AGENDA

A. SC Student Loan Administrative FY2026-27 SC Teacher Loan Program Budget Request

B. SC Program for the Recruitment and Retention of Minority Teachers (SC-PRRMT) (For information, no action)

1. FY2025-26 Quarters 1 and 2 Reports

2. FY2026-27 Budget Update

C. College Application Month 2024-25 Overview (For information, no action)

D. Notice of Drafting: State Scholarships (For information, no action)

E. Connecting Service, Credit, and Collaboration to Strengthen Pathways for Military Learners in South Carolina Convening Update (For information, no action)

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

Chair Hayes called on Commissioner Batson to present the report. Commissioner Batson summarized two items for information.

FOR INFORMATION

A. Scholarship Compliance Audit Update (For information, no action)

B. CHEMIS 2.0 Update (For information, no action)

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

Chair Hayes called on Commissioner Snyder, who summarized three informational items.

Commissioner Snyder provided an update on the Commission's Strategic Plan, highlighting its values and supporting initiatives. He reported that the committee is currently continuing to develop performance metrics for the existing initiatives and that Commissioners would have an opportunity to review and provide feedback before the CHE Retreat.

Commissioner Snyder also reported that the agency remained current on all required accountability reports.

Commissioner Snyder provided an update on the external reviews being conducted by the Governmental Efficiency Legislative Oversight Committee (GELOC) and the Office of the Inspector General (IG).

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

Commissioner Dukes motioned that a letter, signed by Chair Hayes and transmitted by President Perez, be sent to South Carolina's public institutions emphasizing the state's significant need for additional engineering graduates and encouraging institutions to increase engineering program capacity. Commissioner Masters seconded the motion. Chair Hayes called for the vote, and the motion passed unanimously.

Commissioners also recommended sharing the letter with the CCWD.

7. Executive Session

There was no executive session.

8. End of Business Meeting

The business meeting adjourned at 2:20 p.m.