



Committee on Academic Affairs and Licensing (CAAL)
Meeting Minutes
April 16, 2026

Committee Members Present

Edgar Dyer, Chair
Brian Cuddy, Vice Chair
Oran Smith

Doug Snyder
Daniel Dukes
Mitchell Zais

Committee Member Excused

Jenni Bryson

Commissioner Present

Mark Masters

Commission Staff Present

Jeffrey Perez
Angela Peters
Jessica Berry
Melissa Price
Darnell Holland
Endé Clark
Diane McCree

Karen Woodfaulk
Argentini Anderson
Matthew Hartenstine
Kathryn Harris
Timothy Rees
Christopher Glenn
Tracy Solet

Guests

Aimeé Carter, South Carolina Technical College System
Al Gormus, Coastal Carolina University
Allison Steadman, Francis Marion University
Amanda Karls, University of South Carolina Upstate
Beth Bell, Clemson University
Brian Mallory, University of South Carolina Beaufort
Briana Peele, Clemson University
C.C. Bates, Clemson University
Corrine Sackett, Clemson University
Craig Cashwell, Clemson University
Deanna Sellnow, Clemson University
Erika Small, Coastal Carolina University
Erin Paysinger, Lander University
Esther Godfrey, University of South Carolina Upstate
Gibbs Knotts, Coastal Carolina University
James Colbert, Lander University
James Gilmore, Clemson University
Jeff Stinson, University of South Carolina Upstate
Jeremy King, Clemson University
Jessica McLees, South Carolina Department of Education

Joel Williams, Clemson University
Katie Smith, University of South Carolina Aiken
Kristen Cuthrell, Clemson University
Lloyd Willis, Lander University
Mark Del Mastro, College of Charleston
Michael Godfrey, Clemson University
Michael Gonzales, USAeroFlight
Michael Torres, Classic Learning Test
Michelle Cook, Clemson University
Pam Steinke, University of South Carolina Upstate
Rob Essaf, Clemson University
Robert Killins, Coastal Carolina University
Sebastain van Delden, Winthrop University
Seth Severson, USAeroFlight
Stephen Bismark, Lander University
Tanya Boone, University of South Carolina Upstate
Teresa Burns, Coastal Carolina University
Trena Houpp, University of South Carolina Columbia

All attended either in-person or via Zoom

1. **Welcome, Introduction, Quorum**

Chair Dyer convened the meeting at 2:03 p.m. and welcomed all in attendance.

2. **Introductions, Quorum, FOIA**

Ms. Solet introduced the committee members and 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 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 January 22, 2026 meeting. **Commissioner Zais motioned approval, which was seconded by Commissioner Dukes.** Chair Dyer called for a vote and **the motion passed unopposed.**

5. **Approval of Committee Charter**

Chair Dyer opened the floor for discussion regarding the proposed revisions to the charter. **Commissioner Smith** expressed appreciation for the revisions and **motioned approval, which was seconded by Commissioner Dukes.** Chair Dyer also expressed appreciation of the revisions and hearing no further comment, called for a vote. **The motion passed unopposed.**

6. **Other Business / Discussion**

a. Clemson University, Ph.D. in Communication and Media

A representative from the institution summarized agenda item 6.a., and the floor was opened for questions. **Commissioner Smith** expressed appreciation for the program and its connection to A.I. in machine learning and large language models and **motioned agenda item 6.a. go before the full Commission.** Chair Dyer asked how the institution would coordinate with the University of South Carolina. The representative noted no formal arrangement had been made but confirmed there would be collaboration between the two institutions. Chair Dyer asked for comment from Dr. Peters, who had none. Hearing nothing further, **Commissioner Zais seconded the motion** and Chair Dyer called for a vote. **The motion passed unopposed.**

b. Clemson University, Ph.D. in Counselor Education and Supervision

A representative from the institution summarized agenda item 6.b., and the floor was opened for questions. Chair Dyer asked if the program would be training people who train counselors and if it would be targeting rural areas. The representative confirmed both and noted the inclusion of advanced clinicians and those going into higher education. Chair Dyer asked for comment from Dr. Peters, who had none. Hearing nothing further, **Commissioner Zais motioned agenda item 6.b. go before the full Commission, which was seconded by Commissioner Smith.** Chair Dyer called for a vote and **the motion passed unopposed.**

c. Clemson University, B.S in Athletic Leadership

A representative from the institution summarized agenda item 6.c., and the floor was opened for questions. Chair Dyer asked how this program differs from Sports Management. The representative explained this program is focused on performance development, interaction, communication and understanding versus finances and facilities. Commissioner Smith thanked the Academic Affairs staff for the thorough review which

noted 48 similar programs in the state. Commissioner Smith mentioned he is frequently asked about preventing duplication, and therefore, should not the Commission be very intense about preventing duplication of degrees? The representative agreed this program is an example of duplication and stated students often choose the institution not based on the program but on institutional features. Commissioner Zais stated he would like to see employment records for students with majors in sports leadership or sports management as tracking employment and compensation is required by the federal government. The representative confirmed it would provide the information and stated the importance of accountability. Commissioner Dukes noted the degree is very general and asked if graduate school would be the likely path. The representative acknowledged graduate school is an option but stated it is a booming industry which is growing. Hearing nothing further, **Commissioner Smith motioned agenda item 6.c. go before the full Commission.** Chair Dyer asked for comment from Dr. Peters, who stated staff had asked numerous clarifying questions. **Commissioner Dukes seconded the motion.** Chair Dyer called for a vote and **the motion passed unopposed.**

d. Coastal Carolina University, M.S. in Finance

A representative from the institution summarized agenda item 6.d., and the floor was opened for questions. Chair Dyer asked if this program would complement the AACSB, which the representative confirmed stating it would be included in the 2028-2029 accreditation cycle. Chair Dyer asked for comment from Dr. Peters, who stated the institution had responded to all requests from staff. Hearing nothing further, Chair Dyer called for **a motion for agenda item 6.d. to go before the full Commission, which was made by Commissioner Dukes and seconded by Commissioner Zais.** Chair Dyer called for a vote and the **motion passed unopposed.**

e. Francis Marion University, M.Ed. in Educational Leadership

A representative from the institution summarized agenda item 6.e., and the floor was opened for questions. Discussion was had regarding the Praxis exam and if it a prerequisite for the program. The institution explained the Praxis is a requirement for anyone to be a certified principal, administrator, or superintendent and it is not a requirement to graduate from the program as it is not an initial certification program. The Praxis is not explicitly listed as a requirement as students are already teachers and will have already taken it. Commissioner Dukes thanked the institution for listening to the local community and supporting its workforce, business, educational, and healthcare needs. And for responding with programs to service the area and the state. **Commissioner Dukes motioned agenda item 6.e. go before the full Commission, which was seconded.** Chair Dyer asked for comment from Dr. Peters, who stated the institution had responded to all requests from staff and ACAP. Chair Dyer called for a vote and **the motion passed unopposed.**

f. University of South Carolina Columbia, M.S.L. in Environmental Law and Sustainability

A representative from the institution summarized agenda item 6.f., and the floor was opened for questions. Chair Dyer asked if any courses would be taught through the School of Law, which was confirmed. Chair Dyer asked for comment from Dr. Peters, who stated the institution had responded to all requests from staff. Hearing nothing further, Chair Dyer called for **a motion for agenda item 6.f. to go before the full Commission, which was made by Commissioner Smith and seconded by Commissioner Dukes.** Chair Dyer called for a vote and **the motion passed unopposed.**

g. University of South Carolina Upstate, B.S.B.A. in Hospitality and Tourism Management

A representative from the institution summarized agenda item 6.g., and the floor was opened for questions. Commissioner Smith commented on the program's support from George Dean Johnson who has done so much for Spartanburg. Commissioner Dukes asked if the institution has a culinary school. The representative stated they are looking at

pathways with Spartanburg Community College for this as well as with the community college's hospitality certificate program. Chair Dyer asked for comment from Dr. Peters, who stated the institution had responded to all requests from staff. Hearing nothing further, Chair Dyer called for **a motion for agenda item 6.g. to go before the full Commission, which was made by Commissioner Zais and seconded by Commissioner Smith.** Chair Dyer called for a vote and **the motion passed unopposed.**

- h. University of South Carolina Upstate, B.A. in Applied Languages and Global Studies
A representative from the institution summarized agenda item 6.h., and the floor was opened for questions. In response to questions the representative confirmed the institution has a French minor and believes the German-speaking K-12 school does still exist in Spartanburg. Commissioner Smith expressed appreciation for the institution working with business leaders to craft the program. Discussion was had regarding the institution's work to reduce its general education credits and to ensure all students have the same general education which will make transfers between majors easier. It was confirmed REACH Act requirements would be separate. Chair Dyer asked for comment from Dr. Peters, who stated the institution had responded to all requests from staff and ACAP. Hearing nothing further, Chair Dyer called for **a motion for agenda item 6.h. to go before the full Commission, which was made by Commissioner Zais and seconded by Commissioner Dukes.** Chair Dyer called for a vote and **the motion passed unopposed.**
- i. Lander University, M.A.T. in Early Childhood Education
A representative from the institution summarized agenda item 6.i., and the floor was opened for questions. Discussion was had regarding the teacher shortage in the area and the institution's response to a need, specifically for certified teachers in Early Childhood Education, as well as Math and Science. Commissioner Zais stated the need for Special Education teachers. It was noted the Praxis is required for teacher certification, which the students in this program would already have. Chair Dyer asked for comment from Dr. Peters, who stated the institution had responded to all requests from staff. Chair Dyer called for **a motion for agenda item 6.i. to go before the full Commission, which was made and seconded.** Chair Dyer called for a vote and **the motion passed unopposed.**
- j. Lander University, B.A. in Secondary Education, English
- k. Lander University, B.S. in Secondary Education, Chemistry
- l. Lander University, B.S. in Secondary Education, Mathematics
- m. Lander University, B.S. in Secondary Education, Social Studies
A representative from the institution requested to present agenda items 6.j. through 6.m. concurrently, to which there was no objection. The programs were summarized, and the floor was opened for questions. Commissioner Zais expressed appreciation for the programs' focus on content versus process. In response to a question, the representative confirmed all programs are over and above state requirements. Commissioner Smith questioned if moving the degrees out of their respective disciplines and into the College of Education may lessen the content focus. The representative stated faculty members in those disciplines will be responsible for content for each discipline, which will help ensure better alignment with the content standards for the Praxis tests. Chair Dyer asked for comment from Dr. Peters, who stated the institution had responded to all requests from staff. Chair Dyer called for **a motion for agenda items 6.j. through 6.m. to go before the full Commission, which was made and seconded.** Chair Dyer called for a vote and **the motion passed unopposed.**
- n. Lander University, B.S. in Accounting
- o. Lander University, B.S. in Financial Services
A representative from the institution requested to present agenda items 6.n. and 6.o. concurrently, to which there was no objection. The programs were summarized, and the

floor was opened for questions. Commissioner Cuddy asked how many students would likely go on to become certified CPAs. The representative stated 150 credit hours are needed to sit for the ACPA exam so graduates would not be eligible but could move into a master's program, stating the gap in time makes it difficult to track those students. Further, there are other career paths available, and the institution is identifying industry credentials which can be incorporated into classes. **Commissioner Snyder** expressed support and **motioned approval, which was seconded**. Chair Dyer asked for comment from Dr. Peters, who stated the institution had responded to all requests from staff. Chair Dyer called for a vote and clarified **the motion was for both agenda items 6.n. and 6.o. to go before the full Commission. The motion passed unopposed.**

7. Other Business / Discussion

a. Annual Reports on the National Council for State Authorization Reciprocity Agreements (NC-SARA) and South Carolina Activities

Diane McCree gave a brief presentation for informational purposes, with an overview of the reciprocity agreement and a summary of the NC-SARA Annual Reports for the following five years: 2020, 2021, 2022, 2023, and 2024. In response to a question regarding participation, Ms. McCree explained all of the 4-year institutions participate but not all of the colleges within the Technical College System participate. Dr. Perez noted this is a function of CHE which has a tremendous impact on the state.

b. 2024-2025 Annual Report on Licensing Activities

Endé Clark presented the report for informational purposes, noting CHE is the sole licensing authority for nonpublic postsecondary education institutions in South Carolina, excepting independent colleges and universities, schools with religious exemption, or those for purely recreational or personal development purposes. Additional exclusions are listed in S.C. Code Section 59-58-30. At the conclusion of the presentation, Ms. Clark introduced Michael Gonzales of USAeroFlight, who spoke about the vocational pilot training program, which is licensed by CHE. Commissioner Zais asked if they had any foreign students from Saudi Arabia in the program, which Ms. Gonzales stated they had one, as well as one from Africa, all of whom are vetted by DHS. And, since there is not a lot of training access in other countries, the majority of flight training happens in Europe and the United States. Also, the program serves veterans. Commissioner Zais asked about air traffic controller programs, which the institution does not offer. Further discussion was had in response to Commissioner Zais' comments regarding the need for controllers.

c. South Carolina Exam-Based Credit Awards Policy

Dr. Tim Rees presented the policy for action, and the floor was opened for questions. Commissioner Zais expressed confusion regarding what the policy is and what CHE's role is regarding the policy. Dr. Rees stated the original policy was intended to address Advanced Placement (AP) exams students take to receive college credit and has expanded to include similar testing such as Cambridge and International Baccalaureate (IB). The new policy would also grant credit for College-Level Examination Program (CLEP) and DANTES Subject Standardized Tests (DSST). In response to off-microphone questions by Commissioner Zais, Dr. Rees stated the investigation showed additional tests were being authorized for credit and score values varied which were being utilized differently than directed in policy. The policy has been rewritten to help the institutions and to help students get the credit they have earned without it counting as an elective or not counting toward a degree program. Additional conversation was had between Commissioner Zais and the representative from the University of South Carolina Columbia regarding state law, AP credits, and military transfer credits. Dr. Perez commented on the military transfer credit and then clarified Dr. Rees' presentation noting CHE periodically conducts surveys and updates policies to reflect what is happening in the field. **Commissioner Smith expressed appreciation for the changes and motioned**

acceptance of the policy, which was seconded. Chair Dyer asked for comment from Dr. Peters, who had none. Chair Dyer called for a vote and **the motion passed unopposed.**

d. South Carolina College Preparatory Course Prerequisite Policy

Dr. Peters presented the policy for action, and in response to Dr. Perez, explained the purpose of the policy is to provide the minimum standards for colleges to use when admitting students. CHE has aligned its policy to match South Carolina high school standards, with robust guidance, including pointing students toward honor, AP, IB, Cambridge, and dual enrollment options. The biggest change to the policy is the alignment to the South Carolina Department of Education's math standards. Commissioner Dukes asked if CHE has statutory authority to establish entrance requirements, which Dr. Peters confirmed. Commissioner Dukes asked why these are recommendations if the institutions have to comply with CHE's entrance requirements. Dr. Peters stated all of the senior four-year public institutions are utilizing the minimum requirements pursuant to the forthcoming Admissions Standards Report. Commissioner Zais stated he did not believe this based on open enrollment with students admitted who score 50 on the SAT. Off-microphone comments were made by the University of South Carolina Columbia representative, to which Commissioner Zais stated he was sure the University of South Carolina meets state standards while others do not. Commissioner Dukes asked if rural areas have qualified teachers in math and science, especially at higher levels. Dr. Peters deferred to Commissioner Zais who stated it was a huge problem. Chair Dyer asked if any discussions were had among the task force recommending institutions require the SAT for admission. Dr. Peters stated there were none. Commissioner Zais stated not requiring the ACT or SAT, which are not perfect but are very good measures, allows unqualified students to be admitted. **Commissioner Smith moved approval of the policy.**

Commissioner Zais stated in response to the motion, only if it is clear this is a recommendation and not a requirement as it would be a requirement no institutions other than the University of South Carolina and Clemson could meet. Chair Dyer asked Dr. Peters if CHE is asking them to meet these minimum requirements because CHE does not have the authority to require it, which Dr. Peters confirmed and noted the senior public institutions have been using the requested minimums for resident and non-resident students. Chair Dyer asked when the committee could expect the Admissions Standards Report, which Dr. Peters stated could possibly be presented at the May meeting. **Chair Dyer stated there was a motion on the floor, which had been seconded and called for a vote. The motion passed unopposed.**

e. Notification Summary Report

Dr. Peters noted the report was available online for review and, in response to Chair Dyer, explained the types of academic program changes encompassed in program notifications. Commissioner Smith noted the number of notifications processed in response to the older productivity report as a step in the right direction.

8. New Business

a. Classic Learning Test (CLT) Overview

Dr. Rees introduced Michael Torres, CLT's Director of Legislative Strategy, noting he would be presenting instead of Jeremy Tate. Chair Dyer asked Commissioner Zais to confirm this presentation was being made at his request. Commissioner Zais stated at some point he was going to recommend to the committee that CHE make a recommendation for the institutions of higher learning in South Carolina to accept the CLT has an alternative to the ACT and SAT, and the presentation would be an orientation to CLT. Mr. Torres gave a brief overview of the history CLT, which was founded in 2015, and is the first new college admissions exam since the ACT was created in 1959. In the first year there were fewer than 100 students and two colleges accepting the exam, which has risen to over 200,000 exams and 340 colleges and universities across the county. Mr.

Torres went on to explain the specifics and rigor of the exam as compared to the ACT and SAT, noting only one student has earned a perfect score on the CLT. The Classical Baccalaureate, which is an alternative to AP and IB programs, is set to launch this Fall. Commissioner Smith noted he is a fan of CLT and is friends with Mr. Torres, and suggested ways CLT could gain support such as introducing a bill to the General Assembly, acquiring an endorsement from the South Carolina Department of Education, and action by CHE to recommend the test. Commissioner Smith asked what strategy would be used if CLT gained support from CHE. Mr. Torres stated he liked all of the ideas suggested and state policy structure would need to be considered. In response to questions, Mr. Torres said the SAT/ACT/CLT equivalent score is roughly 89%, and the major criticism of the CLT is concordance and test security, which he explained. Further discussion was had regarding service academies' use of the CLT and the data sharing agreement for tracking students' scores for those submitting applications to service academies. Chair Dyer asked if there were any objections to placing an action item on a future agenda at Commissioner Zais' request. Dr. Perez stated CHE has to perform due diligence regarding regulatory policy and statutory requirements and Commissioner Zais noted the importance of understanding the equivalence or concordance aspect before going to the General Assembly. Chair Dyer suggested this be formalized at some point after the meeting in Charleston.

b. Special Called CAAL Meeting – April 30, 2026

Chair Dyer asked for discussion on how the upcoming meeting should be structured, assured everyone the meeting would not be punitive, and stated CHE is doing as instructed by the General Assembly. Dr. Perez referenced packets of documents for the Commissioners to review in advance of the meeting, as distributed by Dr. Peters, which contained a total of 81 requests for revision to the Program Productivity Report for the 2024 and 2026 review cycles. Commissioner Smith stated concern regarding the meeting date as he had responded he would not be available. Chair Dyer indicated Commissioner Smith could inform him in advance of anything he wanted to put forward. Further discussion was had regarding the manner and format in which institutions may be allowed to present requests for revision. Chair Dyer stressed the information is quantitative, not qualitative, and would be presented to the General Assembly as required. Dr. Perez noted the report has not yet been finalized as he is still working on his input, but stated the individual campuses are familiar with their portions, which is what they are responding to with the requests. Commissioner Masters stated action plans had been submitted by the institutions which should be based on a root cause analysis of the failure. And, CHE is continuing to approve new programs based on current policy and procedures, so is the problem being perpetuated by continuing to approve new programs when all of the data has not been seen. Participation and completion numbers are not meeting the state required minimum, which is a foundational piece of CHE's Strategic Plan. Chair Dyer stated the new programs approved by the committee today were all related to workforce need, which is what the General Assembly wants to see. Commissioner Masters stressed the importance of knowing the root causes of program failures. Further discussion was had regarding the upcoming revisions to policy, including the new program submission process, as well as possible reasons for non-compliant programs and CHE's ability to recommend programs for termination but lack of authority to terminate programs. Chair Dyer reiterated the information is quantitative and provides recommendations based on the data, but ultimately the Boards of Trustees at the institutions are responsible for their curricula and are the ones who will make decisions whether to cut programs in the state. Commissioner Smith noted the numerous previous discussions regarding the current policy and the interpretation of the meaning of the word exempt and stated the Commissioners need to agree on what the term means. Chair Dyer inquired as to next steps, to which Dr. Perez stated the committee accepted the previous report on the record and made a few revisions so he believes the obligation would be accept the report with

revisions. But to be clear, staff provide the quantification work for the Commissioners who make broader policy decisions. Further discussion was had regarding informing Boards of Trustees with the program information, both quantitative from CHE and qualitative from their administrations. Dr. Perez explained that is what is happening as the Commissioners approve the report, which has recommendations, and the campuses decide how to move forward. Commissioner Dukes asked for confirmation CHE is following statutory authority, which Dr. Perez confirmed. Chair Dyer stated the policy allows five minutes for public input and requested institutional responses be added to the upcoming meeting agenda with no more than ten minutes each, noting the controversial and emotional nature of the topic.

9. **Adjournment**

With no further business before the committee, **Chair Dyer called for a motion to adjourn, which was made by Commissioner Smith and seconded.** Chair Dyer called for a vote and **the motion passed unopposed. The meeting adjourned at 4:57 p.m.**