



Meeting of the South Carolina Commission
on Higher Education
12:00 p.m., January 5, 2024
1122 Lady Street, Suite 400, Columbia, SC, 29403
& Via Zoom Webinar

Members

Commissioner Wes Hayes, Chair
Commissioner Bettie Rose Horne, Vice Chair
Commissioner Edgar Dyer
Commissioner Paul Batson
Commissioner Jenni Bryson
Commissioner Gene Fant

Commissioner Hugh Mobley
Commissioner Terrye Seckinger
Commissioner Doug Snyder
Commissioner Dino Teppara
Commissioner Patrick White

Members Excused

Commissioner Cleveland Sellers

Commission Staff Present

Rusty Monhollon
Argentini Anderson
Jessica Berry
Laura Belcher
Kristin Brooks
Jamie Covell
Morgan Clinton
Scheri Eichelberger
Shardai Figgures
Monica Goodwin
Corey Gheesling
Gerrick Hampton
Kathryn Harris
Matthew Hartenstine
Ellan Jenkinson, PASCAL
Andrea LaTouche
Mariana Manic
Yolanda McCree
Emily McPheron, PASCAL
Frank Myers

Alfie Mincy
Yolanda Myers
Rick Moul
Kenita Pitts
Melissa Price
Christopher Robinson
Elizabeth Robinson
Christina Seale
Nia Simmons
Kara Smith
Yarley Steedly
Mark Swart
Georges Tippens
Bunnie Ward
Tanya Weigold
Leslie Williams
Bryce Wilson
Karen Woodfaulk
Lishu Yin

Guests

Donna Arnett, University of South Carolina
Beth Bell, Clemson University
Tiffany Blackwell, Tri-County College
Teresa Burns, Coastal Carolina University
James Colbert, Lander University
Walter Collins, University of South Carolina
Palmetto College
April Cone, University of South Carolina
Salkehatchie
Alexander Conyers, SC State University

MD, Columbia College
Mark Del Mastro, College of Charleston
Timothy Drueke, Winthrop University
Christen Engel, University of South Carolina
Aiken
Frederick Evans, SC State University
Dylan Gaul, SC Inspector General's Office
Bennie Harris, University of South Carolina
Upstate
Katie Harrison, SC Tuition Grants Commission

Quentin Hawkins, SC Senate
Dan Heimmermann, University of South Carolina
Aiken
Trena Houp, University of South Carolina
Columbia
Sarah Hottinger, Coastal Carolina University
Taylor Johnston, Lander University
Pamela Jones, SC Department of Employment
and Workforce
Lori Kinley, Clemson University
Maggie May, Former CHE Employee
Shannon Means, University of South Carolina
Chris Miller, Clemson University
Shannon Means, University of South Carolina
Thayer McGahee, University of South Carolina
Aiken
Chris Miller, Clemson University
Gwynth Nelson, SC Institutes of Innovation &
Information
Al Panu, University of South Carolina Beaufort
Erin Paysinger, Lander University
Jeff Perez, SC Independent Colleges and
Universities
Cam Reagin, University of South Carolina Aiken

Emma Reabold, SC Independent Colleges and
Universities
Hope Rivers, Piedmont Technical College
Jake Scoggins, SC Senate
Andie Shane, University of South Carolina
Amanda Shores, University of South Carolina
Sabrina Sims, Spartanburg Community College
Kimberly Smalls, SC Institutes of Innovation &
Information
Pamela Steinke, University of South Carolina
Upstate
Rosaline Sumpter, SC Technical College System
Adam Taylor, Lander University
Karen Taylor, SC Technical College System
Suzanne Thomas, Medical University of South
Carolina
Erica Von Nessen, SC Department of
Employment & Workforce
Terrance Trapp, SC Inspector General's Office
Bessie Watson, SC Inspector General's Office
Macey Webb, SC House of Representatives
Alan West, Coastal Carolina University
Lloyd Willis, Lander University
Tangar Young, SC State University

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

Chair Hayes convened the meeting at 12:00 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. Discuss Inspector General's Report

Chair Hayes called on President Monhollon to respond to the findings of the Inspector General's (IG) review and to provide his recommendations for pursuing recommendations as outlined in the report. Chair Hayes asked that Commissioners save questions to the end of President Monhollon's report and said that there will be an opportunity for executive session, if needed. President Monhollon gave a brief overview of the investigation process to include a timeline.

President Monhollon explained that the primary focus of the IG's initial investigation included six areas of focus: employee turnover; employee qualifications and experience; expansion of positions and organizational structure beyond authorization in statute; use of third-party entities to review courses at two-year technical colleges and four-year colleges and universities; implementation of the REACH Act; and

effectiveness and cost savings related to the agency's telework program. President Monhollon reported, CHE received notice in August that the IG's scope of work would be expanded to include a management review at the request of the House Legislative Oversight Committee.

President Monhollon shared all findings and recommendations as included within the IG's report related to: lottery audits and report submission; surplus lottery funds; College Transition Scholarship program; deemphasized accountability of academic program review; incomplete Educator Preparation Report Card; employee turnover and mismanagement of full-time employee vacancies; employee relations; state transfer and articulation plan; African-American loan program; GEAR Up program; internal organization and operations; telework, file storage, and space utilization; REACH Act implementation; and updates to Commissioners on pertinent information. President Monhollon outlined various actions that the CHE has taken in response to the findings within the report. Chair Hayes opened the floor to questions. Chair Hayes asked why the preliminary six areas being investigated by the IG were not included in the report, to which President Monhollon explained that most of the initial areas of inquiry were incorporated in different areas within the report. Commissioner Batson inquired regarding how the agency will monitor progress in implementing recommendations, to which Chair Hayes said that a list of measurable action items will be drafted, and President Monhollon will report back to the Commission on progress ahead of his review in August. Commissioner Mobley asked whether the proposed external auditor had experience within higher education, to which President Monhollon said that the auditors being considered are already conducting audits for other institutions of higher education.

Commissioner Teppara asked, regarding finding two, when CHE provided recommendations to the General Assembly regarding utilization of the excess lottery funds, to which President Monhollon responded early December. Commissioner Teppara followed up by asking why the Commissioners were not included in developing the recommendations, to which President Monhollon responded that he wanted to provide a timely response to the General Assembly. Commissioners engaged in extended conversation regarding the surplus of lottery funds and Commissioner Mobley suggested a regular report on the projection methodology. President Monhollon reiterated that a new projection model has been implemented and will be evaluated yearly. Chair Hayes asked Commissioners whether they have additional recommendations on how to use the excess scholarship funds, to which Commissioner Teppara suggested using the funds for the K-12 system, and Commissioner Bryson recommended allowing students who graduate in less than four years the ability to use excess funds towards a SC master's program.

Chair Hayes asked Commission Dyer to comment regarding finding four, to which Commissioner Dyer said that the consideration of academic programs has not been deemphasized, but it also has not been prioritized. He requested that during the next CAAL meeting that staff are available to discuss what they are working on to help determine if there is capacity to fully review programs.

Regarding finding 16, Chair Hayes said that President Monhollon has regularly provided a report to the Commission and asked President Monhollon if there are any additional recommendations to address the finding. President Monhollon recommended providing a regular memo to the Commission and focusing more into certain issues. Commissioners asked questions about staffing the agency and Commissioner Seckinger asked for a copy of the active postings for the agency. Commissioner Teppara asked if a link to active vacancies within the agency can be posted to the CHE website, to which President Monhollon confirmed that it could be done. Commissioner Snyder asked for a regular report on agency vacancies. Chair Hayes proposed that the agency draft a list of measurables for President Monhollon to include: complete audits as mandated by law; reduce the backlog of missed audits; substantially reduce carryforward funds; complete educator preparation report card; implement the six recommendations by the state transfer taskforce; migrate data to a new data warehouse; provide a monthly memo to Commissioners including an update on employment vacancies; work with the new Academic Affairs Director to prioritize program productivity; provide a quarterly report to the Committee on Finance and Facilities on the number of audits conducted and an update on carryforward balances; and evaluate staffing and employment concerns.

Commissioner Teppara asked how the other findings will be addressed that are not outlined in the measurables, to which Chair Hayes said that an overall report should be provided at the time of evaluation. Commissioner Snyder said that by February, he would like the CHE's responses to be more direct, avoiding vague language. Commissioner Bryson requested that an updated version of the response be given to Commissioners after edits, prior to submission. Commissioner Seckinger asked for a draft of the budget report before it is distributed to the House Ways and Means. Commissioner Seckinger asked for a copy of the CHE's response to the HLOC's September letter, to which President Monhollon confirmed is listed on the HLOC's website. Commissioner Seckinger requested that copies be sent to the Board as opposed to searching the website. Chair Hayes will distribute the list of metrics to Commissioners for their revisions. Commissioner Teppara made comments regarding HR functions; agency separations; and rebuilding trust amongst staff and management.

3. Executive Session

Commissioner Snyder motioned and Commissioner Seckinger seconded to go into executive session to discuss personnel. Chair Hayes called for the vote and the motion carried. Commissioners returned from executive session and Chair Hayes confirmed that no action was taken.

4. Other Business

Chair Hayes asked whether there was any other business. There was no other business to consider.

5. Public Comment

Chair Hayes asked whether there was any public comment. There was no public comment.

6. End of Business Meeting

Chair Hayes reiterated that he would provide the list of metrics to Commissioners for feedback. He said that the date to evaluate would be changed from August to June 30. The business meeting adjourned at 5:00 p.m.