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University of South Carolina

BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Academic Affairs and Faculty Liaison Committee

September 14, 2007

The Academic Affairs and Faculty Liaison Committee of the University of South Carolina met on Friday, September 14, 2007, at 1:30 p.m. in the 1600 Hampton Street Board Room.

Members present were: Mr. John C. von Lehe, Jr., Chairman; Mr. William L. Bethea, Jr.; Mr. James Bradley; Mr. Samuel R. Foster, II; Mr. William C. Hubbard; Ms. Darla D. Moore; Mr. Mack I. Whittle, Jr.; Mr. Herbert C. Adams, Board Chairman; and Mr. Miles Loadholt, Board Vice Chairman. Mr. Mark W. Buyck, Jr. was absent. Other Trustees present were: Mr. Arthur S. Bahnmuller; Mr. William W. Jones, Jr.; Mr. Toney J. Lister; Mr. M. Wayne Staton; and Mr. Eugene P. Warr, Jr.

Faculty Liaison Committee representatives present were: Dr. Robert Best, Chair of the Faculty Senate, and Professor Elizabeth P. Bilderback, Chair of the Faculty Welfare Committee; and Dr. Constance Schulz, Chair of the Faculty Advisory Committee. Dr. Pamela Cooper, USC Beaufort, Senior Campuses Representative; and Dr. Teresa L. Smith, USC Sumter, Regional Campuses Representative, were absent.

Others present were: President Andrew A. Sorensen; Secretary Thomas L. Stepp; Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs and Provost Mark P. Becker; Vice President and Chief Financial Officer Richard W. Kelly; Vice President for Research and Health Affairs Harris Pastides; Vice President for Information Technology and Chief Information Officer William F. Hogue; Vice President for Human Resources Jane M. Jameson; Vice President for Student Affairs and Vice Provost for Academic Support Dennis A. Pruitt; Vice President for University Advancement Brad Choate; General Counsel Walter (Terry) H. Parham; Assistant Vice Provost for Academic Affairs William T. Moore; Vice Provost and Executive Dean of Regional Campuses and Continuing Education Chris P. Plyler; Dean of USC Union Hugh C. Rowland Dean of the School of Medicine Dr. Donald J. DiPette; University of South Carolina Campus Dean for the South Carolina College of Pharmacy Randall C. Rowen; Dean of the School of Nursing Dr. Peggy O. Hewlett; Vice Provost for Faculty Development Christine W. Curtis; Director of Government Affairs and Legislative Liaison John D. Gregory; Associate Director of Government Affairs and Legislative Liaison Casey Martin; Director of Governmental and Community Relations Shirley D. Mills; Coordinator for Governmental and Community Relations Tommy D. Preston;

Public Information Officer, USC Lancaster, Shana Funderburk; President of USC Columbia Student Government Association Nicholas J. Payne; Director of University Communications, University Advancement, Russ McKinney; Board staff members Terri Saxon, Vera Stone and Karen Tweedy; and a member of the media.

Chairman von Lehe called the meeting to order and invited those Board members present to introduce themselves; Mr. McKinney introduced the member of the media who was in attendance.

Chairman von Lehe stated that notice of the meeting had been posted and the press notified as required by the Freedom of Information Act; the agenda and supporting materials had been circulated to the Committee; and a quorum was present to conduct business.

Chairman von Lehe stated that there were personnel matters dealing with recommendations for honorary faculty titles and appointments with tenure which were appropriate for discussion in Executive Session.

Chairman von Lehe called for a motion to enter Executive Session. Mr. Bradley so moved. Mr. Whittle seconded the motion. The vote was taken, and the motion carried.

The following individuals were invited to remain: President Sorensen, Secretary Stepp, Dr. Becker, Dr. Pastides, Dr. Moore, Mr. Kelly, Dr. Hogue, Mr. Choate, Dr. Pruitt, Ms. Jameson, Dr. Plyler, Mr. Parham, Dr. Curtis, Mr. Gregory, Mrs. Martin, Ms. Mills, Mrs. Saxon, Ms. Stone and Ms. Tweedy.

Return to Open Session

I. Proposed Title Change for Regional Campus Deans: Chairman von Lehe called on Dr. Plyler who explained that the official title of the two-year campuses deans was "Deans of the University" which, for many years, had not accurately captured their specific responsibilities and was somewhat confusing within the greater University administrative organization (i.e., college dean, dean of students, or campus dean). It was suggested that the title "Regional Campus Dean" more accurately defined the duties of these individuals as chief administrators on the University's four regional campuses.

Mr. Bethea moved approval of the proposed title change from "Dean of the University" to "Regional Campus Dean" as described in the materials distributed for the meeting. Mr. Bradley seconded the motion. The vote was taken, and the motion carried.

II. Division Name Change: Chairman von Lehe called on Dr. Plyler who stated that in collaboration with the senior staff in the Division of System Affairs and Continuing Education, he was recommending a name change to reflect better its external service mission within the University. The proposed name change "System Affairs and Extended University" would encompass regional campuses support, credit and noncredit continuing education, and Extended Campus (graduate offerings).

Mr. Foster moved approval of the division name change from "Division of System Affairs and Continuing Education" to "Division of System Affairs and Extended University" as described in the materials distributed for the meeting. Mr. Bethea seconded the motion. The vote was taken, and the motion carried.

III. Discussion of National Rankings: Chairman von Lehe called on Provost Becker who made the following comments:

You have requested a report on the most recent edition of the *U.S. News and World Report* college rankings; therefore, I will review our data for this year, compare the statistics with the preceding year, provide comparisons with those SEC institutions which are immediately ahead of us in the rankings, summarize the presentation with a few brief points and, of course, respond to your questions along the way.

I will break down the data into three areas about which you have expressed interest in the past; these are key elements which are reported in the magazine when the rankings are published. I will present the categories in which our information basically is unchanged from one year ago, those items in which we improved from one year ago, and those items which have experienced a slight slippage.

Unchanged from one year ago is the percent of faculty who are full-time. We have had 32 faculty retirements during the past 3 magazine editions of college rankings which means that we are in a state of demographic transition with retirements.

In addition, the alumni giving number is roughly stable from the year before.

Mr. Whittle questioned whether the University was positioned behind the top 50 public universities in the three categories. Provost Becker responded that specific comparisons will be made with Alabama, Auburn and Tennessee, the three SEC

schools which were listed before Carolina. Of the eleven public SEC schools, Carolina was positioned in the middle. Three of the schools were not in the top tier: Mississippi State, Mississippi, LSU; behind Carolina in the top tier were Kentucky and Arkansas. Immediately ahead of Carolina were Tennessee, Auburn and Arkansas. Further ahead by a wider margin were Georgia and Florida.

Ms. Moore asked why the comparison only involved the SEC schools; Dr. Becker indicated that he wanted to compare data with schools which were regionally and statistically aligned closely to Carolina.

Mr. Whittle hoped that the University would closely consider Georgia's performance during the past several years and would emulate those achievements in order to improve Carolina's standing.

Provost Becker continued:

In the following variables as measured by *U.S. News and World Report* Carolina has improved: Average Freshmen Retention; Percent of Classes under 20; Percent of Classes over 50; Student:Faculty Ratio; Percent of Freshmen in Top 10 percent of High School Class; Acceptance Rate; and Mean SAT Score.

Mr. Whittle asked whether Carolina's improvements had been offset by the fact that other schools had experienced even greater improvements implying that the University's standing had actually slipped. He further asked whether there was a better method to determine the University's ranking. Provost Becker responded that targets had been established for these particular data one year ago. He noted that the University was "on target or ahead of schedule" for most of the variables and the targets were established by "what was considered the best among the public institutions."

We have targets we are heading toward; we have made progress and that progress is at least as good as what we were expecting by this point.

The real story and concern is that our peer perception decreased slightly. Last year the score was 3.0 and 2.9 this year. Had we been able to stay at 3.0, we probably would have increased substantially because that is 25 percent of the score.

On top of that, the Six Year Graduation Rate is another 16 percent of the score. Therefore, these two measures total 41 percent of the score. For the Six Year Graduation Rate, *U.S. News and World Report* uses a 3 year moving average. Therefore, Carolina will slip slightly next year because approximately 5 or 6 years ago a decision was made very late in the year to increase the class size for financial reasons during a period of financial difficulties and we are living with that cohort's moving through the system. These late admissions perhaps would not have been the students we would have accepted by the current admission standards. And, we know from tracking that cohort that it has struggled. As the Institutional Research Office has assured me, we will take off in a positive direction because subsequent cohorts, and particularly in the last 3 to 4 years, are having much higher retention rates and progress than the cohorts admitted 5 or 6 years ago.

In response to Mr. Whittle's inquiry about the quality of recent freshman classes and the concomitant effect on the graduation rate, Provost Becker noted that the average freshman retention rate had improved; introduction of the Student Success Programs for incoming undergraduates had certainly addressed this issue.

Improving the SAT scores, improving the percentage of students admitted from the top ten percent of their high school graduating class, and improving the student support services we are providing all are leading to better retentions which ultimately should lead to better graduation rates. It does take time, however, to see those effects in *U.S. News and World Report* because they report six year rates and those rates are an average of three cohorts. Therefore, data reported this year was based on the class admitted in Fall 2000.

Mr. Whittle expressed interest in the correlation between the freshman retention rate and the size of the class. President Sorensen responded that the average freshman retention rate had increased every year. He further noted that the best graduation predictor was the attrition rate between the freshman and sophomore years; therefore, if a student successfully completed the first two years, the probability of graduation significantly increased. Another important indicator was high school performance.

President Sorensen again noted that the University had consistently increased the admission criteria for grade point average and SAT scores since that timeframe. He stressed that the average SAT score had increased simultaneously with the growth of the freshman class which was considered a highly unusual phenomenon.

Provost Becker congratulated Dr. Dennis Pruitt and the admissions staff for recruiting a freshman class which had earned higher SAT scores than the previous year; for this past year, the national and state mean score had decreased. That score at Carolina had increased 6 points while the rest of the nation and the state had experienced a several point decrease; therefore, as he declared, the net effect was more substantial.

Provost Becker continued:

We do anticipate a slight dip again next year in those two categories. After that, however, based on the experience we are having with the classes recruited in the last four to five years, we actually start seeing the graduation rate improve substantially going forward.

For the category Actual Minus Expected Graduation Rate, they take a statistical model and predict the outcome based on information about SAT scores and class standing (what percentage would graduate in six years based on a model calibrated on national data and compared to your actual).

In addition to these measures, other areas needing improvement are faculty salaries, expenditures per student, etc. They create a composite score on faculty resources and student resources. We know that we have serious wage pressures and we need to find ways to try to increase faculty salaries.

This is actually specifically to the point you were raising earlier, Mr. Whittle. When the state increases three percent, nationally that was on the low end of what is being done. It is one of the areas we have put as a priority for next year. It doesn't mean that we will be able to identify the money. If we can find additional resources to put toward faculty salaries and expenditures per student, that will have a positive impact on our scores in *U.S. News and World Report*.

The following are some comparisons to give you an idea of various small differences which lead up to these differences in ranking. Alabama, for example, in the category of Public Rank was 42nd; Auburn and Tennessee were tied at 45; and we were at 54. On the Peer measure, Alabama was at 3.0; Auburn and Tennessee were 3.1; and we were at 2.9.

With respect to Freshman Retention for benchmarking purposes, any percentage in the 80's is typical for a public institution; we have set a goal to try to reach 90 percent, which would be at the very highest end of the public ranking. We are now up to 85 percent in Freshman Retention. Our number is comparable with Alabama and Auburn (85 percent) and ahead of Tennessee (80 percent).

The Over/Under heading compares the actual graduation with the expected graduation. Alabama graduated 5 percent more than was expected from that particular year; Auburn had a 1 percent better graduation than was expected as did we; Tennessee did not do as well and is graduating fewer than expected.

For Percentage of Classes Under 20, we are the same as Alabama (43 percent) and significantly better than Auburn and Tennessee (27 percent and 33 percent respectively).

Percentage of Classes Over 50 should be a small number. Tennessee did well here (8 percent); we are certainly close to them (10 percent) and better than Alabama (15 percent) and Auburn (14 percent).

Carolina's Student:Faculty Ratio is 17:1; not as low as Tennessee (15:1) but lower than Auburn (18:1) and Alabama (19:1).

And, Carolina's SAT Scores are as good as or better than any of them. The first number (990 in the case of Alabama) means that one quarter of their students had that SAT composite or less; the second number (1220 in the case of Alabama) means that one quarter of students had that score or higher. Therefore, half of the class scored between those two numbers. Carolina is at the high end on SATs in the upper quartile (1260) and certainly better than Alabama and Auburn (1030) on the lower ends.

For Alumni Giving we are not the highest (23 percent), but we are certainly doing well.

In summary, Alabama, Auburn, and Tennessee are all ranked ahead of us; however, as you can see on basic academic indicators, we do well. But with Peer Perception carrying one quarter of the weight and the Six Year Graduation Rate carrying 16 percent, we 'took it on the chin.' We stood still even though academically we have improved just about everywhere we could improve.

Mr. Bahnmuller asked the positions of the other eight public schools in the

SEC. Provost Becker noted that five schools ranked behind Carolina and five were ahead; Vanderbilt was a private institution.

We continue to improve on things we have the most direct control over: the academic measures, the quality of the class. Peer Perception continues to be a challenge and I think, going forward, it is important to stay focused on improving student quality measures, which, of course, we do. We also have more work to do on the Peer Perception issue and our resource issues. Faculty recruitment and salaries will be issues driving numbers like Percentage of Full-time Faculty, Percentage of Highest Degree and the Faculty Resource Numbers.

We know what happened and we know what we are doing and we know that what we are doing will continue to improve on many of these measures.

Mr. Whittle questioned whether a plan was in place to improve these measures; he cited extensive Board discussion of goals to improve Carolina's standing several years ago. Provost Becker respectfully noted that Peer Perception was a measure over which the University had no direct control. The Six Year Graduation Rate, he further commented, could not have been dramatically changed in the last three years; in another three years that percentage will be substantially better based on the University's efforts to improve the retention rate. "Yes, we have a plan, but there are some things that are not as easily controlled and Peer Perception is one of those areas."

Ms. Moore asked the manner in which peer perception can be changed. Provost Becker explained that in April of each year he and President Sorensen, as well as all of the other institutional heads included in the *U.S. News and World Report*

collegiate ranking, received a packet of information. "It is literally just pages of little circles to "color in" with five being the best and one being the worst."

In response to Mr. Whittle's concern, President Sorensen noted that he had presented to the Board several five-year congruent and integrated plans in the Fall of 2005. Every February he carefully reviewed these plans (i.e., enrollment management, fiscal, giving) to ascertain whether the University was on track with the established goals for the particular timeframe.

President Sorensen addressed the matter of institutional reputation. He advised Board members that 30 percent of the national research universities had experienced a one-tenth of a percentage point decline in that area; other institutions included on the list were Duke University, Dartmouth College, Georgetown University and Vanderbilt University.

President Sorensen had contacted 6 presidents of the 38 institutions which had experienced a decline and asked whether they had perceived that their institutional reputation had declined. Responses indicated that they sincerely believed their particular institutional quality had improved from the previous year; further, they believed that institutional ranking based on perceived reputation "doesn't mean that much." As Dr. Becker had explained, President Sorensen was also expected to assign a number from one to five regarding the quality of education at more than 500 higher educational institutions.

Responding to Mssrs. Whittle's and Hubbard's inquiries about steps to improve, President Sorensen believed that the University needed to upgrade marketing and branding efforts. He cited Gary Snyder's recent presentation of an organized and strategic plan to improve Carolina's branding and reputation on a national scale. In addition, of the 190 new faculty hired as assistant professors this past year, many heralded from nationally recognized institutions. "We are recruiting extraordinary faculty, have increased dramatically our external research support, have more faculty giving papers at scholarly meetings, going to scientific conferences - all of those things are happening."

Invited by President Sorensen to speak, Nick Payne, President of the USC Columbia Student Government Association, commented that students from his high school alma mater understood that Carolina was becoming "a legitimate force in the realm of academics." Mr. Payne also believed that many variables determined an individual's decision to attend the University. "I think it is really hard to grab a concrete idea and say 'this is why students are coming here or this is why students aren't coming here.'" Overall, Mr. Payne believed that the University was definitely "up and coming."

Responding to a question from Chairman von Lehe about the Six Year Graduation Rate, Provost Becker advised that "they don't just look at the last six-year cohort. They will weight the average of the last three six-year cohorts. So, if you had a really bad cohort, it is going to hang with you not for one year but for three years."

Mr. Jones suggested that the University launch a marketing campaign presented from an "out of the box" perspective since he reasoned that other institutions which had experienced a peer perception decline would also do the same. "I think that it is incumbent upon us, if this is 25 percent of the score, to concentrate on that area." In response, Provost Becker cited the half-time spot during the Georgia game announcing that Carolina's exercise science and international business programs were ranked #1 in the country; it was an example of an effort to get the message out to as wide a range of audiences as possible. "Whenever you have the opportunity to talk about the University of South Carolina, it is important to talk about our preeminence, whether it is in front of football fans or presidents and provosts."

Mr. Whittle asked that all future Carolina advertising incorporate a clear, crisp message directed to the appropriate audience.

Since there were no other matters to come before the Committee, Chairman von Lehe declared the meeting adjourned at 2:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Thomas L. Stepp
Secretary