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University of South Carolina
BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Ad Hoc Committee on Strategic Planning

November 21, 2014

The Ad Hoc Committee on Strategic Planning of the University of South Carolina Board of Trustees met at 2:20 p.m. Friday, November 21, 2014, in the 1600 Hampton Street Board Room.

Members present were: Mr. Mack I. Whittle, Jr., Chairman; Mr. Thomas C. Cofield; Mr. A.C. "Bubba" Fennell; Mr. William W. Jones, Jr.; Mr. Miles Loadholt; Ms. Leah B. Moody; Mr. John C. von Lehe, Jr.; and Mr. Thad H. Westbrook. Mr. Chuck Allen and Mr. William C. Hubbard were absent.

Other Trustees present were: Mr. Eugene P. Warr, Jr., Board Chairman; Mrs. Paula Harper Bethea; Mr. J. Egerton Burroughs; Dr. C. Dorn Smith; and Dr. Mitchell M. Zais.

Also present were faculty representative Dr. James H. Knapp and student representative Lindsay Richardson.

Others present were: President Harris Pastides; Secretary Amy E. Stone; General Counsel Walter "Terry" H. Parham; Provost Michael D. Amiridis; Chief Operating Officer Edward L. Walton; Chief Financial Officer Leslie Brunelli; Vice President for Student Affairs Dennis A. Pruitt; Chief Communications Officer Wes Hickman; Athletics Director Ray Tanner; Palmetto College Chancellor Susan Elkins; Executive Director of Audit & Advisory Services Pam Doran; Senior Vice Provost and Dean for Undergraduate Studies Helen Doerpinghaus; Senior Vice Provost and Dean for Graduate Studies Lacy Ford; Senior Associate Dean, Associate Director of Strategic Planning and Assessment Cameron Howell; College of Arts & Sciences, Anne Bezuidenhout; Chief of Staff, President's Office, J. Cantey Heath, Jr.; University Technology Services Production Manager Matt Warthen; and Board staff members Debra Allen and Terri Saxon.

I. Call to Order

Chairman Whittle called the meeting to order and welcomed everyone. There were no members of the news media in attendance.

Chairman Whittle 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; and a quorum was present to conduct business.

II. Academic Dashboard, USC Columbia Update

Chairman Whittle said that once the strategic plan was set for a five-year period, the Provost is asked to periodically present how the University is performing based on the metrics with which academic success is measured. He then called on the Provost to discuss the results of the past year.

From an academic viewpoint, Provost Amiridis said the top two priorities, which are equally important, are continuing to enhance the quality of the University's academic programs and the student experience, and continuing to improve the University's research/scholarly productivity and its academic reputation.

The Provost noted how positive student comments were during the Student-Trustee Liaison Committee meeting, which is the result of the student experience at USC. While the University's students have concerns, the comments earlier in the day illustrate that USC students are happy and satisfied with what they are getting at the University. This is not the case at other universities that generate news reports of angry students confronting trustees. As for the University's reputation and its research and scholarly productivity, Provost Amiridis noted that USC is the only Carnegie I institution in South Carolina. It is important to remember these priorities when talking about goals and targets, he said.

The University continues to operate in a difficult environment that has not changed for several years. Pressures include state and federal funding challenges and the public's demand for affordability and accountability. The popular press, he said, reports higher education as being ground zero for disruption because the product doesn't work, the cost is ridiculous, and the business model is antiquated.

Notwithstanding this environment, he said that the administration remains highly optimistic about the future of the University of South Carolina. The reasons for such optimism include the University's embracing of transparency and accountability and the academic dashboard that was introduced five years ago is an example of this. "We're telling you where we are and we're setting targets that you should hold me accountable for delivering. And, we have a great story to tell. This is why I'm excited because our story, a story that you can see in the numbers, tells about the accomplishment of this University over the past decade and how well we have done."

Other reasons for optimism include new technology applications that will help reach a new generation of students who want a different way of being taught. The University also is at the leading edge of public-private partnerships as exemplified earlier in the day with the approval of the agreement with IBM. There also is excitement about the emphasis on outcomes and employability, as well as about

globalization and student mobility. Provost Amiridis said the University has unique opportunities to move abroad, and to create revenue in doing so that will help fund the University's core education mission.

With that introduction, the Provost stressed that innovation is the key to the University's success. The numbers, he said, show that the University has thrived during the past five years.

Eight metrics are followed as part of the academic dashboard, with comparisons against two groups: The peer group of Rutgers University, University of Connecticut, University of Georgia, University of Kentucky and University of Tennessee; and the peer-aspirant group of Indiana University, University of Maryland, University of Missouri, University of North Carolina, and University of Virginia.

The first metric is undergraduate enrollment, which has continued to grow. By increasing the retention rate, the University also increases the number of students on campus. The University also has continued to increase its second metric, SAT scores. The average SAT scores are now above those of the University's peer group, having increased by 25 to 26 points over the past five years. This has been done as the state's flagship institution in support of the Board of Trustees desire to admit all South Carolinians who have the ability to successfully complete a course of study. Provost Amiridis noted that SAT scores have improved as a result of South Carolina Honors College students, the Capstone Scholars program, the strategic use of scholarships and need-based aid, and the reputation of different degree programs.

Specifically citing the success of the South Carolina Honors College (SCHC), Provost Amiridis provided the following statistics. Although the ranking process has changed, he described SCHC as remaining as the top ranked program among public honors programs based on the strength of its curriculum, which offers more than 440 honors courses per year with an average class size of 14. The freshman to sophomore retention rate is 97.4%. The retention rates for its peers are 99% for Columbia, University of Pennsylvania and Yale; while Brown, Cal Tech, Harvard, Princeton, Stanford and six other schools have a retention rate of 98%. There were 430 students in SCHC's incoming class, which was the largest and most accomplished in history with an average SAT of 1435.

In response to questions, he said that the incoming freshman class on the Columbia campus was approximately 50% in-state, increasing to 65% when transfer students were included in the number, and increasing to 77% when considering the entire University system.

When the academic dashboard was initiated, the University was showing a decrease in its freshman to sophomore retention rate. Since 2009 the retention rate has consistently shown an upward trend, having reached a record-breaking 88% last year. Fall 2014 numbers were unavailable for the meeting due to the computer system being switched over. The higher rates result from USC's student support services, a

modern and attractive curriculum, University 101, USC Connect and Leadership Initiative, thematic living-learning communities, and improvement in advising. Provost Amiridis emphasized the focus on stronger advising systems and the importance of cross-college collaboration to improve coordination for students changing majors and to strengthen support for transfer students.

The fourth metric of six-year graduation rates also has shown improvement. This year's numbers will be available in January. But from where the University was less than 10 years ago, which was in the 50s, Provost Amiridis projected that this rate would reach over 75%. The six-year graduation rate is the national standard that is compared because if students don't graduate in six years, they don't graduate.

The fifth metric, the student to tenure-track faculty ratio, has become more competitive with the University's peer-aspirant group. Provost Amiridis described this as one of the most impactful measures of the institution. The Board's support of a very aggressive hiring plan to replace tenure-track faculty helped the administration drop the ratio faster than expected. The numbers are lower at non-research institutions where more classroom faculty are available. Where this ratio should level out is a discussion for the future, he said. Another issue facing this metric will be salary compression and the effect on retention.

President Pastides noted that the hiring of junior faculty over the past few years would prove in the next 20 years to be the single thing that will have advanced the quality of the University more than any other single factor. It is a game changer that will become apparent in five to 10 years as these individuals reach their tenure years.

The sixth metric is research expenditures, which jumped one year due to federal stimulus funding. While it continues to track at a higher level than in the past, the target numbers have been adjusted as a result of changes in federal funding of research. The number represented, he said, was the expenditure not the award that can be distributed over several years or across partners. In response to a question about the size of the gap between the University and its peer-aspirant group, the Provost explained that the size of the faculty was one factor and that significantly more National Institutes of Health funding also would be a factor as well as critical mass, which he described as the presence of big research centers and training grants.

The seventh metric is the faculty scholar productivity index. The University contracted with Academic Analytics 18 months ago to track this data for research universities. At this time, there is only a single year of data that shows USC in the middle of its peer and peer-aspirant groups, with only one peer institution (Rutgers) ranking higher and one peer-aspirant (Missouri) ranking at the same level of USC. He summarized the University as being described as a very good Carnegie I research institution, but not yet an

Association of American Universities (AAU) institution. This type of data, he said, will allow more strategic decisions to be made on where to invest, who to support further and where to build research centers.

The eighth metric is doctoral degrees awarded, which has exceeded projected targets. The University had been around 250 when the strategic planning process was initiated and a target of stabilizing over 300 that has been reached – a significant change over five years. The Presidential Doctoral Fellows is a unique program that was created five years ago to bring high quality doctoral students to campus. This cohort has now reached 90 students and is producing faculty members, which is another entrance into the AAU – having the competition hire your graduates as professors. A similar program has been developed that combines teaching components where highly supported, outstanding students in the humanities and social sciences come to teach in the Carolina Core program.

To summarize his report, Provost Amiridis discussed the innovative steps taken since 2009. Looking at the quality of undergraduate education, the core curriculum was successfully changed and is now more modernized. USC Connect, a quality enhancement plan combining experiences inside and outside the classroom with the President's Graduation with Leadership Distinction initiative, was successfully implemented. There are 400 students registered for leadership with distinction – it is a niche, it is an employability factor, it is a differentiating factor when they go out into the job market.

Continuing, he noted better utilization of the academic calendar and On Your Time Graduation, stronger advising and the new bridge programs – all innovations that have recently taken place. It was only three and a half years ago that the University went from Back to Carolina to Palmetto College, which has been one of the most legislatively successful efforts the University has had. There are now full online master and certificate programs entering international markets. He cited the faculty replenishment initiative, the Smart State Program, and the faculty retention efforts – all of which will have long-lasting effects on the University.

The University continues to support scholarship activities and continues to receive the highest classification of the Carnegie Foundation in terms of community engagement. “The University has remained embedded in the community and engaged in supporting the community at the same time that we have continued to improve the academic quality of the institution,” he said. Then there are the public-private partnerships, especially in terms of the University's professional schools – the creation of the Greenville campus of the School of Medicine and the clinical integration of the Columbia School of Medicine campus with Palmetto Health – that are aided through the centralized budget model.

In conclusion, Provost Amiridis said that Trustees would be hearing more about the use of technology, specifically a concept called “flipped classrooms.” This is an initiative in which students will prepare ahead of time for class by listening to lectures online so that students can come to class to have a meaningful interaction with faculty to solve problems. There also will be future discussions about research engagement collaboratives and Global Carolina, the University’s international efforts that could include an important public-private partnership that would involve a bridge program for international students.

“These concepts are what will keep us innovative. The institutions that will thrive are the institutions that will continue to innovate,” he said, citing the University’s successful past innovative efforts with University 101, S.C. Honors College, international business, and the use of regional recruiters.

In response, Mr. Jones expressed an interest in further exploring how to better assist the regional and comprehensive campuses gain more of their identity and help with their enrollment. Dr. Knapp indicated that he had been discussing with Chancellor Elkins how to initiate a dialogue between the Columbia campus faculty and faculty on the system campuses that might result in more recognition that the University is a system.

Mr. Fennell cited part of the IBM agreement approved earlier in the day that involved the University participating with IBM in a pilot with the Watson Foundation for Education and asked for more information about this project. Provost Amiridis said that participation in the Watson Foundation could make academic analytics a reality in terms of identifying information about a student’s academic career that would provide better advisement opportunities. It also is a system that could allow students to be tracked in terms of scholarships and transfers on a statewide basis.

Mr. Fennell then asked about assessments such as the Collegiate Learning Assessment of Academic Proficiency, the ETS Efficiency Profiles and whether the University participates in these and if so how the University is doing on them. Provost Amiridis said that the eight metrics included in the Academic Dashboard are included in these assessments. There are other parameters in these assessments that can be monitored; however, he said, it is not beneficial to attempt to monitor too many parameters. To include other parameters is a discussion and decision for future planning. One parameter that the Provost said he would like to find a way to track is placement, but numbers are difficult to obtain since there is no national database with verifiable standards.

Mr. Whittle asked about the results on the National Survey of Student Engagement and what it shows about the University. The survey, he said, was referenced in an article in the same magazine referenced by Mr. Fennell, the American Council of Trustees and Alumni. Dr. Pruitt indicated that the

University participated in the survey every other year. The University was reconsidering using it because it is losing favor nationally because institutions are preparing their students to take the survey, telling them how to best portray the institution.

III. Other Matters

Secretary Stone reminded Trustees that the Board Retreat was scheduled for Jan. 22-23, 2015, at Hobcaw Barony in Georgetown. She thanked Mr. Buyck, Dr. Floyd and Mr. Whittle for donating the use of their homes for housing Trustees for the retreat. She also thanked Mr. Heath and Dr. Howell for offering their homes to house some of the staff.

She also noted that the Association of Governing Boards had released its College and University Governance Report, which had been placed on the Board Portal. There will be a panel discussion in Charlotte, N.C., on January 7, 2015, to which Trustees were invited to attend. She asked that if any Trustee wanted to attend, they should contact the Board Office to handle registration. Mrs. Stone also announced that Ms. Moody had been invited to be a participant on the panel.

IV. Adjournment

There being no other matters to come before the committee, Chairman Whittle declared the meeting adjourned at 3:43 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Amy E. Stone
Secretary