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University of South Carolina

BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Academic Affairs and Faculty Liaison Committee

September 12, 2008

The Academic Affairs and Faculty Liaison Committee of the University of South Carolina Board of Trustees met on Friday, September 12, 2008, at 1:35 p.m. in the 1600 Hampton Street Board Room.

Members present were: Mr. William W. Jones, Jr., Chairman; Mr. Herbert C. Adams; Mr. James Bradley; Mr. Mark W. Buyck, Jr.; Mr. William C. Hubbard; Mr. Mack I. Whittle, Jr.; Mr. Othniel H. Wienges, Jr.; Mr. Miles Loadholt, Board Chairman; and Mr. Samuel R. Foster II, Board Vice Chairman. Mr. John C. von Lehe, Jr. was absent.

Other Trustees present were: Mr. Chuck Allen; Mr. J. Egerton Burroughs; Dr. C. Edward Floyd; Mr. Toney J. Lister; Mr. Michael J. Mungo; and Mrs. Amy E. Stone.

Dr. Robert Best, Chair of the Faculty Senate was present. The following Faculty Liaison Committee representatives were absent: Dr. Charley Adams, Chair of the Faculty Welfare Committee; Dr. Mathieu Deflem, Chair of the Faculty Advisory Committee; Dr. Carl Eby, USC Beaufort, Senior Campuses Representative; and Dr. Danny Faulkner, USC Lancaster.

Others present were: President Harris Pastides; 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 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 Provost and Executive Dean for System Affairs and Extended University Chris P. Plyler; Dean of USC Lancaster John Catalano; Interim Vice President for Advancement Michelle D. Dodenhoff; General Counsel Walter (Terry) H. Parham; University Treasurer Susan D. Hanna; Assistant Vice Provost for Academic Affairs William T. Moore; Executive Director of the Foundations Office Jerome D. Odom; Director of the Budget Office, Division of Business and Finance, Leslie Brunelli; Associate Vice President for Student Development Gene Luna; Assistant to the President and Athletics Director John D. Gregory; Director of Governmental and Community Relations and Legislative Liaison Shirley D. Mills; Director of University Communications, University Advancement, Russ McKinney; President of the Student Government Association Andrew T. Gaeckle; President of the Carolina Judicial Council, Student Government Association, Cassidy Evans; Director of the Academic Integrity Office, Student Government Association,

Kelly Eifert; Son of Trustee Chuck Allen, John Allen; University Technology Services Production Manager, Justin Johnson; Board staff members Terri Saxon, Vera Stone, and Karen Tweedy.

Chairman Jones called the meeting to order and invited those Board members present to introduce themselves. Mr. McKinney indicated that no members of the press were in attendance.

Chairman Jones 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 Jones stated that there were personnel matters dealing with recommendations for honorary faculty titles and honorary degree nominations which were appropriate for discussion in Executive Session.

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

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

Open Session

I. Update on University Honor Code: Chairman Jones called on Dr. Pruitt who initially commented that academic integrity at both the high school and college levels had received nationwide attention since 1964 when the first comprehensive report was completed. He introduced Cassidy Evans, President of the Carolina Judicial Council; Kelly Eifert, Director of the Academic Integrity Office; and Gene Luna, Associate Vice President for Student Development.

Within the last 10 years incidences of academic cheating had increased. The highest level had occurred at those colleges and universities where students and faculty had not been engaged in active intervention dialogue.

Dr. Pruitt noted that this topic had been closely studied in the mid 1980s and again in the mid 1990s; in 2005 the University decided to establish an honor code. In response to the proposal, Trustee William Hubbard commented that he was very pleased to read that Carolina was working through the issues to establish an honor code. "It is essential we make a strong institutional statement about integrity and the consequences of cheating. We have to do our part to inculcate essential values of honesty, integrity and personal responsibility. To do anything less would be a disservice to our students as we prepare them to make meaningful contributions to their communities upon graduation."

Utilizing accepted methods from the Center for Academic Integrity, an extensive task force was formed to define the parameters of academic integrity. In addition, an international expert in that field had visited the campus.

Dr. Pruitt reviewed the various reasons which precipitated cheating including: (1) pressure to succeed; (2) increased academic pressure among peers; (3) increased pressure to maintain a grade point average for scholarships; (4) weakened character education both in K-12 and in higher education; (5) susceptibility of that behavior in large classes; (6) culture of international students' countries; (7) current technology which easily provided access to plagiaristic activities (i.e., purchase of pre-written term paper; "cut and paste" technology). The most compelling reason was the fact that there existed a "condoning attitude" in the peer environment ("everybody does it; no one gets caught; if you do get caught, there are no consequences or the consequences are so small, it is worth the risk").

He explained that the Honor Code was intended to prohibit all forms of academic dishonesty and, more importantly, to create a predominant culture "where it is not acceptable to cheat." It will provide an opportunity to create a culture of prevention as well as facilitate discussion, interventions and opportunities to learn about academic integrity. The process to report violations was clearly and easily defined. In

addition, a central reporting depository had been established to determine the breadth of such activities.

Dr. Pruitt emphasized that an honor code not only encouraged students, but also faculty, to set high ethical standards and solicited faculty partnerships in preventing and adjudicating violations.

He reviewed various honor code violations including (1) giving or receiving unauthorized assistance; (2) use of another's work (plagiarism); and, (3) misuse of collaborative assignment system.

Carolina's honor code system was based on severity, frequency and attitude of the individual and utilized multiple sanctions for various violations. Such a model allowed the University to present a "teachable moment" (an opportunity for students to understand the egregious nature of such actions). Dr. Pruitt advised that an "X" displayed on an individual's transcript before a grade denoted an honor code violation; this designation would always remain on the transcript.

Dr. Pruitt commented that the Office of Academic Integrity had been functioning for one year. Educational presentations had been given to generate dialogue and to create an awareness of the system throughout the Carolina community. As a result, the caseload had doubled this past year. A total of 180 students from 14 different colleges were charged with violating the honor code; of that number, 135 were found guilty. To date, 12 students had been suspended and one had been expelled from the University.

Dr. Pruitt cited a comment from a faculty member: "I had not had any reason to use the old system, but I felt overall the new process was clear, streamlined and the staff was helpful."

Another faculty member stated: "I was quite satisfied with the process as I think the involvement of the Office of Academic Integrity convinces the student that the University takes honor code violations seriously."

Ninety-two percent of students indicated that the process had been clearly explained; 81 percent stated that the hearing officer treated them fairly and with respect; 88 percent agreed that they were allowed to explain their understanding of the incident. The users, Dr. Pruitt concluded, declared that the system was helpful.

Initiatives for 2008-2009 included the continued formalization of the honor code. Planned was the inclusion of the statement in faculty syllabi; discussion in every class; continued faculty and student presentations; online tutorial; decreasing the time from referral to resolution; sharing the outcomes without identifying individuals to raise public awareness; administering an in depth summative evaluation of the system; and, most importantly, ensuring that the students assumed ownership so that "they promote it and live it every day in and out of the classroom."

Mr. Buyck commended Dr. Pruitt for the excellent report. He requested that an annual update be presented to this committee about the status of violations.

Chairman Jones noted that as the culture and mores of this country seemed to change, it was important to "stand firm against character change." The Honor Code, he believed, was "one of the most important things that we can do."

II. Academic Program Review Processes: Chairman Jones called on Provost Becker to report on this agenda item. He explained that during a previous committee meeting Trustees Moore and Buyck had requested a review of academic programs.

Dr. Becker made the following remarks:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I would like to discuss the four different layers which academic programs are or will be reviewed at the University.

Beginning in 2003, the Commission on Higher Education (CHE) developed a biennial academic degree program productivity standard. Every other year for every degree program at all four year, or higher, institutions in the state of South Carolina, the CHE looks at the number of students enrolled and the number of students graduating with bachelor degrees, masters degrees or doctoral degrees. These standards for review depend upon the degree level as well as enrollment and graduation figures.

If a program falls below the CHE established minimums (five year averages), the institution must either close the program or provide a justification for its continuation.

In addition, a large number of our programs are externally accredited and undergo cyclic reviews every seven to ten years. Included are the Moore School of Business, the College of Engineering and Computing, the Law School, the Medical School, the School of Public Health. All of those schools have separate accreditations as do all of our Health Science areas. Specific programs as well, for example, the public administration program and the College of Arts and Sciences Department of Political Science or the Theater and Dance Department, are also externally reviewed.

In those cases, the program must prepare a self-study document in response to a set of standards from the external body and submit that response to the external body. Following submission, the external body brings a team of reviewers on campus. Those reviews typically take place over a number of days. For example, the ABA (American Bar Association) will be on campus soon to review the Law School.

Therefore, CHE is looking at the number of students and graduates; the external accrediting bodies are looking very much at professional standards for the programs they review.

Systematically, within the University of South Carolina at this time, in our College of Arts and Sciences, we review all the programs in Arts and Sciences on a regular schedule. So, the University conducts self-study reviews, brings in a set of external reviewers who generate a report and a series of recommendations to the dean and to the department.

So, those are the three levels of program review that exist today: review of all programs in Arts and Sciences on a rotating cycle; review of all professional programs by external bodies; review by the CHE of minimum enrollment and graduation numbers.

This year, we are in the process of expanding the Arts and Sciences model to include the whole University. Eventually, therefore, there will be a systematic internal program review of the whole institution. It will be a system that will reflect the different nature of education in the varied units, but will also answer basic questions about faculty quality and productivity, student quality and productivity and program quality and productivity.

In response to Dr. Best's inquiry regarding whether this process will be utilized on the other campuses, Provost Becker indicated that conversations will be held about that possibility. Chairman Jones asked about cost benefit analysis procedures; Provost Becker explained that productivity numbers were analyzed ("are we getting out of this what we put into it") by reviewing faculty scholarly and educational program activities.

III. Appointment of Honorary Degree Candidate Review Committee: Chairman Jones advised that under former Chairman von Lehe's leadership, a review of the honorary degree nomination process had been conducted. As a result, it had been decided to appoint a subcommittee to consider these nominations.

The revised policy stated that:

"There shall be a Subcommittee of the Academic Affairs and Faculty Liaison Committee composed of the Chair of the Academic Affairs and Faculty Liaison Committee and two other members of the committee appointed by the Chair, and the Secretary of the Board of Trustees as an ex officio, non-voting member. The Subcommittee shall meet, receive directly information regarding, and discuss all potential nominees as collected by the Secretary of the Board of Trustees from all potential sources. After thorough review, the Subcommittee shall forward to the Academic Affairs and Faculty Liaison Committee those names considered worthy of receipt of the University's highest honor."

Chairman Jones appointed Mr. Hubbard and Mr. von Lehe to serve with him and Secretary Stepp on the new subcommittee. In the future, therefore, all honorary degree nominations will be processed through this subcommittee.

Since there were no other matters to come before the Committee, Chairman Jones declared the meeting adjourned at 2:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Thomas L. Stepp
Secretary