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University of South Carolina
BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Ad Hoc Committee on Legislative Relations

October 29, 2010

The inaugural meeting of the Ad Hoc Committee on Legislative Relations was held on Friday, October 29, 2010, at 11:10 a.m. in Osborne Building Room 206B.

Members present were: Mr. W. Lee Bussell Sr.; Mr. Greg Gregory; Mr. William C. Hubbard; Ms. Leah B. Moody; Dr. C. Dorn Smith III; Mr. Thad H. Westbrook; and Mr. Miles Loadholt, Board Chairman. Mr. J. Egerton Burroughs and Mr. William W. Jones Jr. were absent.

Others present were: President Harris Pastides; Secretary Thomas L. Stepp; Vice President for Communications Luanne M. Lawrence; Vice President of Development and Alumni Relations Michelle Dodenhoff; Special Assistant to the President J. Cantey Heath, Jr.; Director of Governmental and Community Relations and Legislative Liaison Shirley D. Mills; Associate Director of Governmental Affairs and Legislative Liaison Casey Martin; and Director of the Office of Media Relations Margaret Lamb.

Board Chairman Loadholt called the meeting to order and invited those present to introduce themselves. Mrs. Lamb indicated that no members of the media were in attendance.

Board Chairman Loadholt 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.

There were personnel matters which were appropriate for discussion in Executive Session. He called for a motion to enter Executive Session. Mr. Westbrook so moved and Mr. Gregory seconded the motion. The vote was taken, and the motion carried.

The following individuals were invited to remain: Dr. Pastides, Secretary Stepp, Ms. Lawrence, Ms. Dodenhoff, Mr. Heath, Ms. Mills, Mrs. Martin and Mrs. Lamb.

Return to Open Session

I. Appointment of a Chair: Board Chairman Loadholt encouraged everyone to "spread the word around" to other trustees that they were welcome to serve on this committee. He appointed the Honorable Thad Westbrook as chair and asked him to preside over the remainder of the meeting.

II. Better Use of Board Relationships in Legislative Relations:

Chairman Westbrook thanked Board Chairman Loadholt and commented that he was looking forward to working with everyone on the committee. "I think it is a real opportunity for the Board to provide guidance on legislative relations and also to be active participants in the advocacy process."

He called on Vice President Lawrence who requested an open-ended conversation about developing legislative relationships.

Mr. Gregory suggested inviting each delegation from a trustee's district (6-15 legislators) to a luncheon on campus with the trustee and perhaps Honors College students from that district. He characterized such an event as an opportunity to showcase the University.

Chairman Westbrook further suggested the possibility of hosting a delegation event in their home district or county and inviting the trustees in that area to attend. He noted that they would have the entire year to reach out to the different delegations.

President Pastides recommended an electronic communication plan such as a Friday letter or a monthly letter from the Alumni Association or from the University to every elected official.

Mr. Gregory commented that the University should continually explore opportunities to keep all of the good news constantly in front of legislators.

Ms. Mills suggested the possibility of having various board members attend the weekly caucus meetings of the Republican and Democratic caucuses. "I think that would be very helpful to have some visibility and wave the USC flag."

Chairman Westbrook proposed the idea of sponsoring a lunch for the caucuses. Ms. Mills indicated that each of the caucuses gathered for lunch every Tuesday hosted by various sponsors.

President Pastides remarked that there had been interest on the part of the Board to consider the deployment of the Board of Visitors more productively. "We have a wonderful group of loyal, hardworking and in most cases, well-connected people." He asked that a plan be put in place to consider the maximum utilization of the Board of Visitors.

Secondly, relative to the Gamecock Caucus, President Pastides asked that the staff consider the possibility of developing a plan to maximize the effectiveness of this very powerful "identify affinity group."

Also discussed was the possibility of disbursing Carolina school color items in an appropriate manner.

President Pastides recommended that they try different possibilities this year and evaluate the effectiveness.

Mr. Bussell noted that of key importance was the fact that "it gives us the ability to listen and it helps us understand what information they need to be provided with and the actual messaging of how we do that."

Mr. Hubbard requested a facts sheet which outlined the University's message to legislators be distributed to the trustees as soon as possible.

III. Advancing Legislative Priorities: Chairman Westbrook called on Vice President Lawrence who briefly reviewed the most significant legislative priorities for the University during the upcoming year.

Chairman Westbrook indicated that Board members will get more information later as part of the facts sheet and talking points.

IV. Formalizing an Advocacy Program: Chairman Westbrook called on Mr. Bussell who summarized the various levels of an advocacy program. "If you have a positive brand, you have a positive reputation, your positioning is good, that does more to create an environment that you can be successful getting public policy passed or keeping public policy from being passed."

At the top level was President Pastides as the most powerful spokesperson for the University. Also at the same level was the Board of Trustees.

The next level Mr. Bussell characterized as the "grass tops" individuals who had the ability to influence legislators.

The third level was the "grass roots." "And, that's probably what you hear more of today when people start talking about an advocacy program." He stressed the importance of including not only alumni, but also faculty, staff and students.

Mr. Bussell further characterized the University's legislative liaisons, Shirley Mills and Casey Martin, as "our primary ears to be able to come back and help us to develop the message."

Mr. Bussell stressed the importance of having an adequate data base system to manage the information received and to supply a consistent message. "It is really about all of those pieces working together."

V. Key Elections and How to Have Immediate Impact: Chairman Westbrook called on Mrs. Martin who reviewed the various upcoming elections scheduled for the following week. It was anticipated that a number of new legislators would take office. She asked committee members to identify these individuals in order to determine quickly how they would best "fit into the Gamecock family."

It was decided to schedule the next meeting later in November. In anticipation of the legislative session, Chairman Westbrook stressed the importance of regrouping in the

near future. "This is the time when you really have the ability to make an impact. We hope to be able to talk with key legislators in December."

Chairman Westbrook also suggested the possibility of this committee meeting at one of the regional campuses in conjunction with a legislative delegation event. Mr. von Lehe believed that getting together with them locally had a bigger impact. "They know we have taken the trouble to go where they are, or at least to entertain them in their own area."

President Pastides reminded everyone of several hundred other people who were "in our domain." This potential list of advocates included members of the foundations; numerous partnership boards at the regional campuses; advisory boards in the colleges and departments; athletics groups beyond the Gamecock Club; and sub groups within the Alumni Association. "They are not just the Carolina Action Network. They are people who can be deployed with more precision and whom you would expect would want to help. I think if we get all of this operating effectively in the near future, we will have a better year."

Since there were no other matters to come before the Committee, Chairman Westbrook declared the meeting adjourned at 12:15 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Thomas L. Stepp
Secretary