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University of South Carolina
BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Student-Trustee Liaison Committee

November 20, 2015

The Student-Trustee Liaison Committee of the University of South Carolina Board of Trustees met at 11:20 p.m. Friday, November 20, 2015, in the 1600 Hampton Street Board Room.

Members present were: Mr. A. C. "Bubba" Fennell, Chairman; Mr. Chuck Allen; Mrs. Paula Harper Bethea; Mr. Thomas C. Cofield; Ms. Leah B. Moody; Mr. Eugene P. Warr, Board Chairman; and Mr. John C. von Lehe Jr., Board Vice Chairman. Mr. J. Egerton Burroughs and Dr. C. Dorn Smith III were absent.

Other Board members present were: Mr. Mark W. Buyck Jr.; Dr. C. Edward Floyd; Mr. William C. Hubbard; Mr. William W. Jones Jr.; Mr. Toney J. Lister; Mr. Miles Loadholt; Mr. Hubert F. Mobley; Mr. Thad H. Westbrook; and Mr. Charles H. Williams.

Others present were: President Harris Pastides; Secretary Amy E. Stone; General Counsel Walter "Terry" H. Parham; Provost Joan T. A. Gabel; Chief Operating Officer Edward L. Walton; Chief Financial Officer Leslie Brunelli; Vice President for Student Affairs Dennis A. Pruitt; Vice President for Human Resources Chris Byrd; Vice President for System Planning Mary Anne Fitzpatrick; Chief Communications Officer Wes Hickman; Athletics Director Ray Tanner; Palmetto College Chancellor Susan Elkins; USC Aiken Chancellor Sandra J. Jordan; USC Beaufort Chancellor Al Panu; USC Upstate Chancellor Thomas Moore; Associate Vice President for Administration and Finance and Medical Business Affairs Jeffrey L. Perkins III; Senior Vice Provost and Dean of Graduate Studies Lacy Ford; University Controller Jennifer Muir; University Treasurer Pat Lardner; Executive Director of Audit & Advisory Services Pam Doran; Executive Director for the Office of Economic Engagement William D. "Bill" Kirkland; Director of Facilities Planning and Programming and University Architect Derek S. Gruner; College of Hospitality, Retail, and Sport Management Dean Haemoon Oh; College of Arts and Sciences Interim Dean Roger Sawyer; Senior Associate Dean of The Graduate School Jessica Elfenbein; Chief Diversity Officer and Director of Community Engagement, Office of Diversity and Inclusion, John H. Dozier; Chief of Staff, President's Office, J. Cantey Heath Jr.; USC Aiken Executive Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs Jeff

Priest; Calvin Gallman, USC Law Enforcement and Safety; University Technology Services Production Manager Matt Warthen; and Board staff members Debra Allen, Terri Saxon and Ina Wilson.

Student Government Association (SGA) representatives present were: USC Aiken: President Ryan Michael Rafanan, Vice President Christian Lee Medders, and Secretary/Treasurer Ariel Avana Alston; USC Beaufort: President Pascale Rocca and Vice President Caroline Bowman; USC Columbia: President Jonathan Kaufman, Vice President Lee Goble, and Graduate Student Association President Andrew Fogner; USC Upstate: President Sandy Vang, Vice President Latia Truesdale, Treasurer Adam Zane Gray, and Chief of Staff James Parham.

The Student Government Association advisors present included: Assistant Vice Chancellor of Student Life, USC Aiken, Ahmed Samaha; Director of Student Life, USC Beaufort, Kate T. Vermilyea; Associate Vice President for Student Affairs and Academic Support, USC Columbia, Jerry Brewer; and Dean of Students, USC Upstate, Laura Puckett-Boler.

I. Call to Order

Chairman Fennell called the meeting to order, welcomed everyone and invited them to introduce themselves. He said that the agenda had been posted, the press notified as required by the Freedom of Information Act, the agenda had been circulated to committee members and a quorum was present to conduct business.

Chairman Fennell called on Mr. Hickman, who introduced the media in attendance: Cassie Cope with *The State* and Dawn Logg with WSPA-TV.

II. Report of the Graduate Student Association

Chairman Fennell called on Dr. Lacy Ford to introduce Graduate Student Association (GSA) President Andrew Fogner. Dr. Ford said that Mr. Fogner, a native of Conway, South Carolina, is a Master of Science candidate in Epidemiology at the Arnold School of Public Health. In 2014, he earned a B.S. in Chemistry and Spanish from the University of South Carolina.

Mr. Fogner began his report by thanking the Board for inviting him to speak on behalf of the graduate and professional student body. He said that the GSA had come a long way in the six years since the Board of Trustees approved a resolution to establish it as a representative body for all graduate students. Through the GSA's dedication to the advancement and development of graduate and professional students at the University, the association had flourished in the last few years by providing quality development and soft skills workshops to graduate students.

Mr. Fogner said that as an alumnus of Carolina and by his decision to continue to stay for graduate school, he considered himself a “Gamecock through and through.” His foremost objective this year has been to improve campus student life, because although graduate students are a relatively understated group, working against grant deadlines and persistently analyzing master and dissertation data, they make up a quarter of the student population and should be well represented in all University initiatives.

A major challenge for the GSA last year had been a lack of inclusion for graduate students on campus. However, over the past year with the support of the administration and the Board of Trustees, incredible strides had been made, such as campus offices being more responsive to graduate students and University committees including graduate students.

Mr. Fogner said that the GSA seized an opportunity for improvement with the new provost Joan Gabel. He was excited that she wasted no time in creating a Blue Ribbon Committee with a mission to generate a five-year strategic plan for The Graduate School. The objective of the plan is to thoughtfully consider trends in higher education, and to benchmark USC relative to peer institutions in the hopes of better serving USC’s 6,500 graduate students. The plan will address five areas – student life, financial support, interdisciplinary and collaborative work, master’s level education, and doctoral level education. The Blue Ribbon Committee is a great opportunity to explore graduate student concerns. A great success of the committee so far is that over one-third of the committee is composed of graduate students.

Mr. Fogner said that Dr. Ford and Dr. Jessica Elfenbein are valuable assets who provide feedback and help the GSA implement ideas. Although the GSA had made improvements, he said, there was still much work to be done.

In addition, Mr. Fogner said there needed to be better appreciation of the diversity of graduate students on campus, since the population represents parents, partners, families, and students from all areas of life. The GSA established intercultural training with International Services to improve graduate student life for the large percentage of international students in The Graduate School. The GSA cabinet consists of diversity, international, and veteran affairs liaisons to address a variety of topics on campus. Understanding the diverse population, he emphasized, was key for better inclusion for graduate students on future University initiatives.

Mr. Fogner concluded his presentation by saying that the GSA was excited about the progress it had made over the past year.

Chairman Fennell opened the floor for questions. Trustee von Lehe asked the percentage of international students enrolled in The Graduate School. Dr. Ford said that overall enrollment was approximately 15% international students, with 30% doctoral candidate students. President Pastides said that he thought the largest number of international graduate students came from China and India. Dr. Ford said that the graduate student base represented countries from all over the world.

Chairman Fennell thanked Mr. Fogner for his informative report.

III. Panel Discussion: Student Government Leaders

Chairman Fennell stated that last year the Student-Trustee Liaison Committee began operating under a different format in hopes of continuing to provide an even more meaningful experience for student government leaders. Having recognized that topics of interest varied from campus to campus, he explained that the presidents of the Student Government Associations (SGA) of the four-year campuses (USC Aiken, USC Beaufort, USC Columbia and USC Upstate) had been invited to participate in a panel discussion related to topics of interest on their campuses. He reported that based on student and Trustee feedback, the format change was successful.

Chairman Fennell invited the four SGA presidents to join the committee at the board table: Ryan Michael Rafanan, USC Aiken; Pascale Rocca, USC Beaufort; Jonathan Kaufman, USC Columbia; and Sandy Vang, USC Upstate. He also welcomed other SGA officers who were seated in the gallery.

Chairman Fennell called on Dr. Pruitt to lead the panel discussion. Dr. Pruitt explained that SGA presidents, working with their advisors, were asked to submit topics for the panel discussion. He said he appreciated the overwhelming response to the request. He began the discussion by asking each president to address the following topics.

- Where are you from, why you selected your USC campus, your major, and your plans after you earn your undergraduate degree.

Each SGA president began by thanking the committee for the invitation to be part of the discussion panel. Ms. Vang, a senior from York, South Carolina, said she is a South Carolina Teaching Fellow and hopes, upon graduation, to return to her hometown to teach.

Ms. Rocca, born in Ontario, Canada, who now lives in Bluffton, South Carolina, said that she just completed her four-year soccer career at USC Beaufort. In addition to being a member of the soccer team, she is also a freshman orientation leader and student ambassador. She is majoring in Psychology, with a minor in Communications, and hopes to earn a master's degree in Higher Education and Student Affairs.

Mr. Rafanan, from Aiken, South Carolina, is a Mathematics and Computer Science major. In addition to serving as SGA President, he also serves as a freshman orientation leader. He noted that he was accepted at USC Columbia and USC Aiken and chose Aiken to stay close to home.

Mr. Kaufman, from Fredricksburg, Maryland, is majoring in Spanish and Political Science. He hopes to attend law school after working a year in Washington, D. C.

- The impact of social media on college students

The SGA presidents agreed that if used productively, social media could be a helpful tool for students to stay informed and communicate. Mr. Kaufman said that although social media was a positive tool it does have a downside, in that the rapid global connectivity creates an environment whereby peoples' reactions to everything are instant. The result of which, is that people hear others opinions on issues, prior to forming their own.

Mr. Rafanan said that social media was the easiest way to promote student events. The USC Aiken's strong family atmosphere resulted in very few negative Yik Yak posts. Ms. Rocca said that since the USC Beaufort was a smaller community, getting rid of occasional negative anonymous posts was slower. Ms. Vang discussed USC Upstate's efforts to educate students on the use of social media.

Dr. Pruitt said that all campuses try to educate students on the fact that their digital identities stay with them forever; and that 70% of prospective employers look at them in consideration of employment offerings. He asked the panel to comment on whether they had experienced the use of social media in the academic setting. Ms. Vang relayed her positive experience, whereby a professor had her class use Twitter for instant feedback.

- Ways to better coordinate lobbying efforts by students from different campuses

Ms. Vang said former Columbia SGA President Chase Mizzell organized and led a SGA lobbying trip to Washington, D. C. She understood it have been very beneficial, and hoped to participate in one, if another was organized. In addition, she said, the annual Carolina Day provided students an opportunity to lobby on the state level.

Mr. Rafanan said that last night, he had the pleasure of joining Trustee Fennell at a USC Aiken meeting, with the Aiken Legislative Delegation, the Aiken Partnership Board, and student leaders. He recommended campuses communicate with their local legislative delegations.

Dr. Pruitt noted that, annually, a group of USC Columbia students are selected to identify topics of student interest, write a position paper on those topics and present them to the legislative delegation offices in Washington D. C.

- Ways to promote civic engagement within local communities

Ms. Rocca said she was very proud that this year, her campus had provided over 50,000 hours of community service, especially in light of the size and location of the campus.

Ms. Vang said that USC Upstate created the Office of Service-Learning and Community Engagement in early 2015. One effort of the office thus far, was to provide water to the Columbia community effected by October's historic flood.

Mr. Rafanan said that USC Aiken created a relationship with the Aiken Downtown Development Association that enables the campus to organize events.

Dr. Pruitt thanked the campus leaders for the water donated to the Columbia flood victims.

- How to conduct joint leadership training with student leaders

Ms. Vang reported that the USC Upstate SGA officers recommended a system-wide summer retreat for SGA officers. She noted that a summer retreat would allow more SGA members an opportunity to participate.

Ms. Rocca was in agreement with Ms. Vang's recommendation. She said the officers could take their training back to their campuses. Mr. Rafanan also agreed with the recommendation for a SGA summer retreat.

Dr. Pruitt announced that the Leadership and Service Center at USC Columbia was scheduled to host its 30th annual Leadership and Diversity Conference on February 6, 2016. He said he looked forward to this opportunity for student leaders to come together from across the system.

- Effective mentor programs

Mr. Kaufman said that mentor programs were a great opportunity for students to get involved with community leaders. The programs provide students a chance to experience what it is like to be a professional in their areas of study.

Ms. Vang said she is involved in several campus mentor programs, most of which are student-to – student based. Most important, she said, was the sense of belonging that mentorships provided students.

Chairman Fennell noted that he recently ran into former USC Columbia SGA President Lindsay Richardson. She and five students were having lunch with a retired judge while discussing everything from

career opportunities to problems in law school. Trustee Moody noted that Ms. Lindsay is a member of her mentor group from York County.

Dr. Pruitt added that in a Board of Visitors meeting held the day before, members discussed how to work with the Carolina Alumni Association in their mentor efforts to pair students with alumni according to their career track. He said it was very encouraging conversation.

- Ways to increase campus safety

Ms. Vang said overall she felt safe on campus, but thought there was a need for more lighting and speed bumps.

Ms. Rocca gave a “Shout-Out” to the USC Beaufort Department of Public Safety that she said does an outstanding job. She said that in addition to keeping the campus safe, officers were very personable and involved with the students. In addition, USC Beaufort had created a student “safety app” that provides immediate contact with Public Safety in emergency situations.

Mr. Kaufman said that USC Columbia did a great job promoting campus safety. He thanked Dr. Pruitt and Mr. Jerry Brewer for their effort to make a section of Greene Street in the heart of campus, a gated pedestrian-safe area. He said that as the campus continues to expand west it would be essential to promote pedestrian use of the underground tunnel across Assembly Street at the Darla Moore School of Business, and to increase lighting and shuttle service where needed.

Mr. Rafanan also gave a “Shout-Out” to the USC Aiken Police, who he said were always available to escort students safely around campus when needed. In addition the police had installed approximately 20 emergency call-boxes at key locations around campus.

Dr. Pruitt asked Mr. Kaufman to briefly discuss the “Rave Guardian Safety App” now available on the Columbia campus. Mr. Kaufman said Rave turns any cell phone into a personalized protection network to connect to the University Police. Students establish a profile to make it easier for campus police to find and help them in an emergency. Features also include the ability to establish safety networks, whereby students set safety timers to notify people on their “trusted” list of their whereabouts.

- Campus sustainability

Mr. Kaufman said he planned to work with President Pastides, Mr. Walton and Ms. Brunelli on an optional \$5 per semester sustainability fee. Students could apply for the Student Sustainability Funds for environmental or sustainable campus projects.

Most exciting, Ms. Vang noted, was the student created and managed community garden at USC Upstate. In addition, she was proud that her campus was tree-friendly and tobacco-free.

- Mental health on a college campus

Mr. Kaufman said that although the University does a great job working with mental health issues on campus, he was aware of the negative effect anonymous Yik Yak posts could have on individuals who were dealing with mental health issues. He said the University's Counselling Center did a great job helping students by offering up to 10 free counseling sessions per year. Mr. Kaufman briefly discussed programs he was trying to implement with the center, such as a peer-listening program.

Ms. Vang noted several mental health programs available for students at USC Upstate.

Dr. Pruitt asked the panel to share how they cope with stress.

Ms. Rocca said her best stress reliever is her family, friends, and fellow athletes who provide her unconditional support. She noted that, yesterday, the SGA held a stress reliever event at USC Beaufort, where they brought puppies to campus for students to enjoy.

Dr. Pruitt mentioned that following the October historic flood in Columbia, Student Affairs sponsored an "Adult Art" day at the Russell House as a stress reliever. He explained the activities provided.

Mr. Rafanan said that being more of an active person, working out and playing sports relieved his stress. The USC Aiken SGA sponsors a stress reliever event prior to semester exams called the "Stress-Blowout Breakfast." The breakfast is served in the evening following a day of studying.

Dr. Pruitt concluded the discussion by asking the panel to share their best college experience.

Mr. Rafanan said he loved the fact that he was able to attend college in his hometown, Aiken. He praised the faculty and staff, especially Mr. Ahmed Samaha. He said the fact that they made the effort to learn all the students' names, gave USC Aiken a sense of family.

Ms. Vang said the leadership lessons she had learned through participation in the SGA had been invaluable.

Ms. Rocca said she came to USC Beaufort for soccer, but stayed for the people. Her goal as a freshman was to play soccer, get an education and move on. However, she soon found herself involved in campus programs, which eventually led to her leadership experience as SGA president. She was very thankful for the support provided her in her educational journey.

Mr. Kaufman said that his SGA experience had prepared him for post-graduate life. Most valuable to him in his four years at USC Columbia was sense of community and the constant support of faculty, staff, and fellow students.

At this point in the meeting Dr. Pruitt invited the SGA officers in the gallery to introduce themselves, by stating where they were from and their major.

Dr. Pruitt thanked panel members for their insightful discussion.

Trustee Buyck noted the importance of the lifelong friendships that are made in college.

Trustee Bethea told the SGA members not to underestimate the importance of their advocacy efforts. As President of the Carolina Alumni Association, she said she was looking forward to the SGA officers becoming members of the association. She said their experience of and passion for the University of South Carolina was invaluable.

Chairman Fennell thanked the SGA presidents for their participation in an excellent panel discussion. He also thanked Dr. Pruitt for moderating the discussion.

Chairman Fennell stated that the SGA presidents of the two-year campuses (Lancaster, Salkehatchie, Sumter and Union) would be invited to participate in a panel discussion at the next Student-Trustee Liaison Committee meeting scheduled for Friday, April 22, 2016.

IV. Other Matters

Chairman Fennell noted that updated SGA officer contact information was available to the Trustees on the Board Portal. He called for any other matters to come before the committee. Secretary Stone reminded the students that they were invited to join Trustees for lunch immediately following the meeting.

V. Adjournment

There being no other business to come before the committee, Chairman Fennell declared the meeting adjourned at 2:12 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Amy E. Stone
Secretary