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University of South Carolina
BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Ad Hoc Committee on Strategic Planning

Called Meeting

November 15, 2019

The University of South Carolina Board of Trustees Ad Hoc Committee on Strategic Planning held a called meeting at 10:00 a.m. on Friday, November 15, 2019, in the Pastides Alumni Center's C. Edward Floyd Boardroom.

Members participating were: Mr. Thad H. Westbrook, Chairman; Mr. William C. Hubbard; Mr. Miles Loadholt; Ms. Leah B. Moody; Dr. C. Dorn Smith III; Mr. Mack I. Whittle Jr.; Mr. John C. von Lehe Jr., Board Chairman; and Mr. Hubert F. Mobley, Board Vice Chairman. Participating by telephone were Mr. Robert F. Dozier Jr. and the Board's Strategic Advisor David Seaton. Absent was Mr. A.C. "Bubba" Fennell.

Other Trustees participating were: Mr. Dan Adams; Mr. Chuck Allen; Mr. Egerton Burroughs; Mr. Richard A. Jones Jr.; Mr. Toney J. Lister; Ms. Rose Buyck Newton; Ms. Molly M. Spearman; Mr. Eugene P. Warr Jr.; and Mr. Charles H. Williams.

Also present were USC Columbia Faculty Senate Chair Mark Cooper and USC Columbia Student Government President Luke Rankin.

Others present were: President Robert L. Caslen Jr.; Secretary J. Cantey Heath Jr.; General Counsel Walter "Terry" H. Parham; Chief Operating Officer Edward L. Walton; Interim Provost Tayloe Harding; Vice President for Student Affairs Dennis A. Pruitt; Vice President for Human Resources Caroline Agardy; Vice President for Research Prakash Nagarkatti; Athletics Director Ray Tanner; Chief Information Officer Doug Foster; Chief Audit Executive Pam Doran; Chief Diversity Officer John Dozier; Interim Chief Communications Officer Jeff Stensland; Interim Chief Development Officer Will Elliott; USC Aiken Chancellor Sandra Jordan; USC Beaufort Chancellor Al Panu; USC Upstate Chancellor Brendan Kelly; USC Palmetto College Chancellor Susan Elkins; Presidential Faculty Fellow Susan C. Bon; University Architect, Associate Vice President of Facilities Planning, Design and Construction Derek S. Gruner; University Treasurer Pat Lardner; University Budget Director Joe Sobieralski; College of Arts and Sciences Dean Lacy Ford; Associate Vice President for Administration and Finance and Medical Business Affairs

Jeffrey L. Perkins III; Executive Director for the Office of Economic Engagement William D. “Bill” Kirkland; Executive Director of Military Programs and Strategies, Palmetto College, James Smith; Executive Director for Strategic Initiatives Jack Claypoole; Director of Capital Budgets and Financing Charlie FitzSimons; Director of State Government and Community Relations Derrick Meggie; Assistant to the President for System Affairs Eddie King; Kate Boetiger and Patrick Kiser with Oracle Corporation; SmithGroup Principal Tony Catchot; University Technology Services Production Manager Matt Warthen; and Board staff members Debra Allen and Ina Wilson.

I. Call to Order

Chairman Westbrook called the meeting to order and stated 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. Secretary Heath confirmed those joining the meeting by telephone.

Mr. Stensland introduced Mike Fitts with the *Post and Courier*, Chloe Barlow with *The Daily Gamecock*; and John Whittle with *The Big Spur*.

Chairman Westbrook reminded everyone the committee’s October meeting ran short on time, which necessitated this called meeting to discuss the metrics used in measuring progress toward accomplishing the University’s strategic plan objectives. In addition, he said the President would report on his strategic off-site meeting with administrative and academic leaders.

II. USC Columbia Strategic Plan Update

Chairman Westbrook called on Interim Provost Harding who said the current strategic plan, Focus Carolina 2023, was developed in 2018. It consists of five strategic priorities, each of which has a variety of strategic objectives, and each strategic objective has performance metrics.

Most of the PowerPoint slides he described as containing data for internal use while other slides compared USC data with peers and peer aspirant institutions. He reminded Trustees of the institutions to which USC compared. Peers are considered Auburn University, University of Georgia, University of Massachusetts, University of Missouri, and University of Tennessee. Peer aspirants are University of Florida, University of Illinois, University of Maryland, University of North Carolina, and University of Virginia.

The first strategic priority, the student strategic priority, he described as “educating the thinkers and leaders of tomorrow.” The performance metrics for this priority are measures of first-time, full-time freshmen, median SAT/ACT score, freshman-to-sophomore retention rate, six-year graduation rate,

Carolina Core learning achievement rate, percentage of graduates who have earned Graduation with Leadership Distinction (GLD), percentage of students participating in experiential learning, number of community engagement projects, percentage of students participating in study abroad, post-graduate employment/graduate school placement rate, total graduate enrollment, and number of doctoral degrees conferred.

Interim Provost Harding discussed the targets for the various performance metrics that included enrollment of 6,000 first-time, full-time freshmen by 2021, a goal already surpassed; and achieving higher average SAT/ACT scores than USC's peers by 2023. He noted the average SAT scores for USC Columbia surpassed those of the University's peers – an accomplishment achieved while growing enrollment.

Other performance metrics for the first strategic goal include achieving a 90% freshmen-to-sophomore retention rate by 2023; improving the six-year graduation rate to 80% by 2023; achieving 100% percent undergraduate participation in at least one experiential learning opportunity (learning outside the classroom or lab) by 2023; achieving annual increases in the number of community engagement projects; having 10% of the entire student body participate in Study Abroad by 2023; having 5% of the entire student body Graduate with Leadership Distinction; achieving a 90% post-graduate job placement/graduate school placement rate by 2023; achieving a 3% increase in total graduate/professional enrollment by 2023, which is already above USC's peers; and achieving a 3% increase in the number of doctoral degrees conferred by 2023.

Interim Provost Harding confirmed for Trustees the post-graduate job placement/graduate school placement metric could be detailed to illustrate the number of job placements versus the number of students proceeding to graduate school and salary information was collected in regard to the job placement data. He cautioned, however, this metric was dependent upon graduates responding to a survey and as such would always be suspect.

A unique performance metric in this category is for 100 percent of graduates to meet Carolina Core student-learning objectives by 2023, he said, adding there may not be 10 different learning objectives when the Carolina Core Curriculum is reviewed in conjunction with President Caslen's new strategic plan. Faculty Senate Chair Cooper noted this metric is not a measure of a student passing a class, there are learning outcomes defined for each Carolina Core area and whether a student has met the outcome is independently assessed outside the context of the course.

Trustee Whittle expressed concern about the freshmen-to-sophomore retention gap compared with peers even though the University had higher SAT scores. Interim Provost Harding said the larger class size

could be affecting this since peer institutions had smaller class sizes. Trustee Spearman noted many now believe the SAT/ACT is not an adequate indicator for success.

Trustee Whittle also addressed the six-year graduation rate performance metric, noting it was critical to help students keep their debt levels low and graduating students in six or fewer years was a way to educate more students without growing the University. In response to Trustee Moody's question about why it took longer than four years to graduate, Interim Provost Harding said graduations delayed beyond four years typically resulted from changes in a student's major course of study.

The second strategic priority is to assemble and support a world-class faculty, Interim Provost Harding said. The performance metrics for this include full-time faculty-to-student ratio; research expenditures; the Scholarly Productivity Index; and the number of faculty participating in Center for Teaching Excellence (CTE) programs.

Expanding on these metrics, he said the goal is to maintain an 18:1 student-to-faculty ratio, which dropped to only 17:1 with the recent enrollment growth; to increase research expenditures to \$225 million by 2023, which has been met and exceeds that of USC's peers; to improve the scholarly productivity index for faculty to 0.15 by 2023, which places USC closer to its peer aspirants as it already rates above its peers; and to achieve annual increases in the number of faculty participating in CTE programs.

The third strategic priority is to spur innovation, creative expression, and community engagement. The performance metrics for this include annual increases in the number of new businesses, partnerships, or commercializations; increases in the number of community engagements in arts projects, which he said needs to be redefined to better track the actual level of involvement; and increases in the number of service-learning sections offered; and to achieve a 90% post-graduate job placement/graduate school placement rate by 2023, which is part of the first strategic priority.

Interim Provost Harding said the fourth strategic priority is to build inclusive and inspiring communities, which has five performance metrics: average under-represented student freshman-to-sophomore retention rates; average under-represented student six-year graduation rates; a campus climate survey; under-represented students in the freshman class; and number of under-represented, full-time faculty.

The performance target is for the average under-represented student freshman-to-sophomore retention rate and the average under-represented student six-year graduation rate to both equal the average rate for all students by 2023, he said. In response to a question from Trustee Moody about what resources

were in place to aid under-represented students, Dr. Pruitt said the President would address this in his strategic plan, especially need-based aid.

Need-based aid is a huge factor for these students, Dr. Pruitt said, noting the Commission on Higher Education recently submitted a proposal for the state to fund more need-based aid. For USC Columbia, the CHE formula indicated there were 2,200 students with a \$2,000+ need for a total of \$4.4 million a year in funding.

Trustee Moody discussed the need to examine an available app that would help students find funding. Dr. Pruitt said the University has looked at this app and others that do the same thing for free. President Caslen said in the previous year, USC accepted for admission 1,200 African American students who opted not to attend, the principal reason for which was affordability. “This goes to the heart of the issue (of diversity),” he said. “It is something we collectively have to address.”

As for the campus climate survey, Interim Provost Harding said efforts would address improving key results identified in the survey. Other performance targets include annual increases in the number of under-represented students in the freshman class and the number of under-represented, full-time faculty.

The fifth strategic priority is to demand institutional excellence, Interim Provost Harding said. The performance metrics for this strategy are U.S. News and World Report rankings; South Carolina brand perception of academic excellence, research strength and state impact; and the number of alumni donors.

The performance target is to be ranked in U.S. News and World Report’s top 100 overall, as well as its top 100 public institutions by 2023, he said. The target for brand perception is to improve performance results in both the 2020 and 2023 surveys. As for the number of alumni donors, the goal is to reverse a four-year decline that followed the end of a major fund-raising campaign and increase alumni donors to 20,000 by 2023.

In response to Trustee Whittle’s question of whether USC had improved in the rankings as far as academic reputation, Interim Provost Harding said USC had improved as indicated by brand perception and illustrated in his PowerPoint slide showing improvement from 2011 to 2014. He confirmed plans were in place to continue this improvement.

Chairman Westbrook thanked Interim Provost Harding for his report, observing some metrics had been achieved quickly after adoption of the Focus Carolina Plan, which indicated the “stretch goals” could have been more difficult to achieve. This should be considered as the President prepares the next strategic plan. Trustee Whittle added, “We need to make sure our budget model feeds the areas that support the strategic plan.”

III. President's Strategic Off-Site Report

Chairman Westbrook called on President Caslen who said he held an off-site strategic plan meeting November 4-5 with senior administrators and deans. "I was told this was the first time these individuals had come together in the same room to talk about our University and where our University is going in the next two to five years," he said.

President Caslen presented his vision statement, mission statement and five strategic priorities. He emphasized what Trustees had heard from Interim Provost Harding would be nested into these five strategic priorities.

The preliminary vision statement had received input from the off-site participants, he said. It states: "The University of South Carolina is the preeminent flagship University in the Nation."

The preliminary mission statement states: "As the state's flagship institution, the University of South Carolina transforms the lives of the people of South Carolina, the nation and the world through empowering education, innovative research, impactful economic development, and selfless service within an inclusive and diverse environment."

A mission statement should have task and purpose. The task is the verb and the key verb in this statement is "transforms," he said. The purpose explains the why, it brings everybody together, so they internalize why the University is moving forward to accomplish and be the "preeminent flagship university," which is to transform lives.

President Caslen discussed the following eight strategic priorities:

1. Inspire and challenge students to become innovative thinkers and transformative leaders.

This priority stresses helping students become thinkers and leaders, he emphasized.

2. Assemble and cultivate a world-class faculty and staff.

Unlike Focus Carolina, this priority includes the addition of staff, he noted.

3. Create new pathways to research excellence to become AAU eligible.

Unlike Focus Carolina, the third priority places specific emphasis on research and references being AAU eligible since the University is unlikely to receive an invitation to join AAU anytime soon, President Caslen said. "Yet there is no reason we should not aspire to move in that direction," he added.

4. Build a diverse, inclusive, supporting, and inspiring campus culture with the highest ethics and integrity in accordance with the Carolinian Creed.

This priority addresses creation of a campus culture of diversity and inclusiveness, not just talking about it. He encouraged the reading of the Carolinian Creed often, "It captures the values of our institution, who we are, what we will internalize, how will we drive our behavior, and how will we move

forward as a group and as an institution. It just embraces the ethic of diversity and inclusivity, and creating that into a culture.”

5. Harness the power, attributes, and regional diversity of an integrated and interoperative USC system that enhances access and affordability for every South Carolina eligible student.

The fifth priority addresses about the system, because the University’s campuses are integrated. President Caslen stressed the use of “integrated and interoperative.” The statement’s reference to access and affordability are vital because USC’s comprehensive and regional campuses create greater access and greater affordability for South Carolina students, he said.

6. Spur innovation and development through community economic engagement partnerships. Build community capacity and spur economic development through impactful and strategic partnerships.

Interim Provost Harding referenced the elements of the sixth priority in his description of Focus Carolina’s performance metrics, President Caslen said, noting the important element here is “spur.”

7. Construct a physical and virtual campus infrastructure that ensures preeminent student life and academic excellence.

The seventh priority addresses infrastructure – the brick and mortar infrastructure as well as the virtual infrastructure, he said. The technology in the classroom and the virtual capacity of academe is becoming increasingly important in how people learn and it must be addressed.

8. Build winning teams that win the right way with character and integrity.

The final priority is not just about athletics; everybody wants to be a winner and part of a winning team, President Caslen said. To win, one must have the attributes of discipline, teamwork, laying it on the line for each other, dedication, commitment, perseverance through adversity. “All those attributes create winning teams in academe and in life. It is important to build winning teams that win in the right way, with character and integrity,” he repeated.

President Caslen said the strategic priorities would be finalized over the weekend and distributed to everyone who participated in the off-site meeting. Ownership of each priority will be assigned to an administrative or academic unit or the provost to develop goals, objectives, and metrics. Everyone will come together in March or April to approve goals, objectives, and metrics for each of the eight priorities.

All materials will be posted on a website with plans to be as collaborative and transparent as possible. The entire faculty will be asked for input and feedback on the priorities, as well as the vision and mission statements. Finally, the hardest step will be aligning programs and resources to accomplish the strategic plan.

In developing the vision and mission statements and the strategic priorities, President Caslen said considerable thought went into defining a flagship university. As a flagship university, he said, USC is the preeminent university in the state that draws the best students, draws the best faculty, draws the best research programs. It is the university with which everyone wants to be affiliated, he said.

One of the challenges of a flagship university is the creation of high standards and obtaining people who can meet those high standards, which raises another question about a flagship university, he said. “Our client, our students, come from the State of South Carolina and how are we meeting their educational needs. We have the responsibility to meet the needs and develop the relationship with the people of South Carolina. Ultimately, it comes to the issue of access. How accessible is the University of South Carolina system and the Columbia campus to the K-12 students in the State of South Carolina?” The other issue, he said, is affordability. “If someone is interested in attending this University and meets the entrance requirements, can they afford to come here?”

The consultant at the strategic off-site provided data showing the mean per capita income of the residents of the 50 states compared to tuition rates of flagship universities. That data shows USC ranks 50 out of 50. “In other words, to the families of South Carolina, our flagship University is the most expensive of any university in the nation. We do have affordability challenges and issues, which is a conversation we need to have with the Legislature and ourselves, particularly in how we look at need-based scholarships.”

This also leads to the question of in-state and out-of-state enrollment, President Caslen said. It looks good for the preeminent flagship to attract the best students, many of whom will come from out-of-state. An out-of-state student brings \$9,000 more in tuition and helps pay the bills. “With low state appropriations, an extra \$9,000 for every out-of-state student really is attractive. But what does that do to our diversity demographic, which is twisted around significantly, when most of these out-of-state students who can afford high tuition are middle class, principally white students.”

“We must find the right balance of meeting the needs of the people of South Carolina and also being a preeminent flagship university,” he said. A strategy of outreach and service needs to be embraced, President Caslen added. “Our strategy should not be to take a bigger piece of the pie, but to make the pie bigger. What we want to do through outreach and service is to take our students and equip them to go into high schools throughout the state to help ninth and tenth graders get excited about engineering, for example, and about what you can do in higher education. The intent is to inspire them to seek higher education as an option.”

President Caslen told Trustees the high school project would get underway in early 2020, beginning in Fairfield County on recommendation of College of Education Dean Jon Pederson. He then offered Trustees an update on progress in research, particularly with the Department of Defense and Department of Energy.

President Caslen talked about a visit to Fort Gordon in Georgia, which houses the Department of Defense Center for Cybersecurity. There are three cyber commands there, he said, including the Army Cyber of Excellence. In addition to a cyber education, all their students want a bachelor's degree or a graduate degree. So, USC Aiken and USC Columbia will make courses available. The Army Operational Command, moving from Fort Mead to Fort Gordon, also has research requirements including a cyber laboratory that partners with universities. So, USC will make the case for how its researchers can assist. Finally, he said, National Security Agency (NSA) has a unit that conducts classified, top secret cyber operations that does research with universities, and they are glad to work with USC.

President Caslen also discussed meeting Lt. Gen. Jim Richardson who graduated from USC in the 1980s and is now deputy commander of the U.S. Army's Futures Command, which has oversight of all the Army's laboratories and acquisition programs. He and his chief scientist spent four days touring USC facilities and are excited about setting up the University as a center to partner with the Futures Command.

In conclusion, he said he would begin a tour next week across the state to meet with business and civic leaders, school district superintendents, high school students, and the editorial boards of local news media. He started with a very successful visit to Greenville, where he visited the BMW plant. There he learned from the CEO that BMW needs engineers, supply chain managers, business managers, and interns. "These are untapped resources that can give us potential in our academic and experiential learning programs," he said. The visit in Greenville also included a meeting with alumni who responded favorably to the strategic priorities.

Following a new, promotional video President Caslen unveiled for Trustees, Trustee Spearman said it was an honor for her to serve on the Board of Trustees and this meeting was a real example of that.

"For you to realize the relationship that must exist between the University system and the K-12 system in South Carolina will move us forward," she told President Caslen. "I'm so excited about the work you are doing visiting our schools," she said, adding it would take many partners to succeed and no partner was more important than the University of South Carolina. "Through your leadership, we have the potential to move all of South Carolina forward."

IV. Adjournment

There being no other matters on the called meeting agenda, Chairman Westbrook declared the meeting adjourned at 11:37 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

J. Cantey Heath, Jr.
Secretary