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University of South Carolina

BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Academic Affairs and Faculty Liaison Committee

September 14, 2006

The Academic Affairs and Faculty Liaison Committee of the University of South Carolina Board of Trustees met on Thursday, September 14, 2006, at 1:40 p.m. in the 1600 Hampton Street Board Room.

Members present were: Mr. John C. von Lehe, Jr., Chairman; Mr. James Bradley; Mr. John W. Fields; Mr. Samuel R. Foster, II; Mr. Othniel H. Wienges, Jr.; Mr. Herbert C. Adams, Board Chairman; and Mr. Miles Loadholt, Board Vice Chairman. Members absent were: Mr. William C. Hubbard; Ms. Darla D. Moore; and Mr. Mack I. Whittle, Jr. Other Trustees present were: Mr. William L. Bethea, Jr.; Mr. Arthur S. Bahnmuller; Mr. William W. Jones, Jr.; Mr. Toney J. Lister; and Mr. M. Wayne Staton.

Faculty Liaison Committee members present were: Dr. C. Eugene Reeder, Chair of the Faculty Senate; Dr. Andrew D. Gowan, Chair of the Faculty Advisory Committee; Dr. Marja Warhime, Chair of the Faculty Welfare Committee; Dr. Pamela Cooper, USC Beaufort, Senior Campuses Representative; and Dr. Noni Bohonak, USC Lancaster, Regional Campuses Representative.

Others present were: President Andrew A. Sorensen; 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 Research and Health Sciences Harris Pastides; 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 Dennis A. Pruitt; General Counsel Walter (Terry) H. Parham; Associate Provost for Budget and Operations William T. Moore; Vice Provost and Executive Dean of Regional Campuses and Continuing Education Chris P. Plyler; Dean of USC Lancaster John Catalano; Dean of the College of Nursing Peggy O. Hewlett; Dean of Nursing, USC Upstate, Marsha Dowell; Head of Nursing, USC Aiken, L. Julia Ball; Interim Program Director for Nursing, USC Beaufort, Susan C. Williams; Executive Dean of the South Carolina College of Pharmacy Joseph T. DiPiro; Director of the Budget Office Leslie Brunelli; Public Information Officer, Office of Media Relations, Karen Petit; Director of University Communications, Division of University Advancement, Russ

McKinney, Jr.; Board staff members Terri Saxon, Vera Stone and Karen Tweedy; and a member of the media.

Chairman von Lehe called the meeting to order and invited those Board members present to introduce themselves. Mr. McKinney introduced a member of the media who was in attendance.

Chairman von Lehe 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 von Lehe recognized President Sorensen who stated that according to the recently published edition of *U.S. News and World Report* regarding college rankings, the University had moved from 52nd to 54th among public universities during the past year. In response, he had created a task force comprised of Vice Presidents Becker; Kelly; Pastides; and Pruitt who will develop with him a proposal to address those particular issues which had affected the change; a report will be presented at the October Board of Trustees meeting.

Chairman von Lehe stated that there were personnel matters dealing with recommendations for honorary faculty titles and an appointment with tenure which were appropriate for discussion in Executive Session.

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

Chairman von Lehe invited the following individuals to remain: President Sorensen, Secretary Stepp, Dr. Becker, Mr. Kelly, Dr. Pastides, Dr. Hogue; Dr. Pruitt; Ms. Jameson; Dr. Plyler; Mr. Parham; Mr. McKinney; Mrs. Saxon, Ms. Stone and Ms. Tweedy.

Return to Open Session

I. Committee Report on Honorary Degree Nominating Process: Chairman von Lehe recognized Mr. Loadholt who stated that several months ago, Chairman Adams had asked him to chair an ad hoc committee to review the University's policy regarding the process for awarding honorary degrees, the Bylaws and other matters. The Committee had subsequently met on several occasions; had drafted a document which refined the current policy; and had established a nomination process and a form to be used when submitting a name for consideration.

Mr. Loadholt noted that the document had been circulated to members of the Academic Affairs and Faculty Liaison Committee prior to the meeting today. He was asking for their consideration of the proposed process as outlined. Mr. von Lehe called for a motion to accept the recommendations of the Ad Hoc Committee on Bylaws and Policies to refine the honorary degree process. Mr. Fields so moved and Mr. Foster seconded the motion.

President Sorensen thanked Mr. Adams for creating the ad hoc committee and Mr. Loadholt for chairing it. He further explained that Secretary Stepp and he had received many "expressions of interest" regarding honorary degrees from a variety of sources. They both believed that it was important to have clearly understood criteria *a priori* so that a determination could be rendered expeditiously about the appropriateness of candidates. The proposed process will assist them enormously.

The vote was taken, and the motion carried. Secretary Stepp noted that this recommendation as approved by the Academic Affairs and Faculty Liaison Committee will be carried forward to the full Board for consideration.

II. Report on System Undergraduate Progression and Retention: Chairman von Lehe called on Provost Becker who noted that the Board had requested this report during an earlier Executive Committee meeting while Chancellor Hallman was discussing a student success program at USC Aiken. A question had been directed to him regarding progression standards and what the University was doing to ensure student academic success.

Provost Becker initially thanked Dr. Dennis Pruitt, Vice President for Student Affairs and, under a new organizational structure in the Provost's Office, Vice Provost for Academic Support, and Dr. Chrissy Coley, Director of Retention and Planning, for their leadership in this area.

Last year, two very specific goals were established for student success at the University: (1) Freshman and Sophomore Retention Rate and, (2) Six Year Graduation Rate. These two items, he noted, were important factors in the yearly college ranking edition of *U.S. News and World Report*.

At Carolina, the freshman and sophomore retention rate was currently 83 percent; the goal had been set at 90 percent. For the six year graduation rate, that figure was 64 percent and the goal was 70 percent. Provost Becker noted that the two specific goals had been selected because premiere research universities attained these percentages. "If we get to 90 and 70 percent - and we will - this will put us right there where we need to be with our peer institutions and the 'best of the best' public research universities."

Provost Becker explained that any student whose yearly or cumulative GPA fell below 2.0 was considered to be scholastically deficient. Currently, the University was transitioning from merely treating the problem to actually preventing the problem; therefore, intervention procedures were being developed to improve student academic success.

Presumed, of course, was the fact that every student admitted to the University had the ability to succeed; questioned was whether they had the necessary habits. The various programs, therefore, had been designed to develop characteristics which demonstrated commitment and the formation of successful habits. It had been determined through research that 70 percent of high school seniors spent 5 or fewer hours per week studying. As Provost Becker stressed, achieving a successful university experience would require a considerably greater time commitment than 5 hours per week. "We also know that those who graduate and those who do not are not academically differentiated. In other words, you cannot look at a student's high school GPA; you cannot look at a student's SAT score and determine which one is going to graduate and which one is not. It is not about ability; it is about habits and about commitment."

Provost Becker noted that a University Retention Committee, composed of faculty, staff and students, had determined focus areas to improve student performance. During the 2004-2005 academic year, four areas of emphasis had been identified: (1) academic advising; (2) academic deficiency; (3) transfer students and, (4) customer service.

Provost Becker also discussed several Student Success Center initiatives. One of the initiatives, which was pilot tested last year, was the Early Intervention for Excessive Class Absences. He explained that the best predictor of future academic problems was not attending class. "It is like that saying 'eighty percent of life is just showing up.' Well, it is true."

Supplemental instruction was another example of a Student Success Center initiative. Provost Becker explained that certain courses were more challenging to students than others (i.e., high risk gateway courses such as the first semester of chemistry). For those classes, this past year, the University had developed

supplemental instruction programs using peer student leaders in an effort to improve retention in the courses. Dropout rates had been lowered and students were able to maintain higher grade point averages.

Interventions for Academically Deficient Students involved the ability to identify at an earlier stage students who were experiencing problems and to intervene with programs and counseling. Also available were initiatives for special student populations (i.e., providing freshmen and sophomores informational materials about the college experience).

There were also special programs at the University for first generation higher education students (first in their family to attend college). They faced a different set of academic challenges and barriers than those students from families who had the history, culture and, most importantly, the experience of attending college.

Academic Centers of Excellence, located in three different buildings on campus, offered math tutoring, writing consulting and learning and study skills inventory. Referrals were made to various services and counseling on campus for students who had identified challenges or needs for help. Time management assistance was also available.

Provost Becker highlighted other areas in which there were examples of significant efforts. Under the Residential Programs initiative, learning communities in which students who shared an intellectual or focus interest had been established. Examples included the South Carolina Honors College, the Capstone Scholars Program, and the Spanish and French Houses. In these houses, students spoke the particular language. Provost Becker noted that 13 different learning communities in Carolina's residence hall system had been created.

Also in place was the Academic Interventions Program in which residence hall advisors and other staff "on site" were trained to provide assistance if needed.

The Student Coaching for Success initiative in the residence halls required all first year students to engage in a minimum of two "guided conversations" per semester with appropriate staff in order to actively involve them in a discussion about developing the right habits for success in the environment, rather than waiting for the problem to materialize.

And, lastly, Provost Becker referenced the website www.sc.edu/academicsuccess which linked with a number of online resources to help students. The various links included:

MyGamePlan helped students create a plan to make the most out of their time at Carolina.

MyAcademicAdvising provided students with insights on academic advising which included links to requirements for academic majors, frequently asked questions and tips for a successful advising appointment

MyFinancialAid helped students understand financial aid as well as provided some basic information on managing personal finances.

MyStudySkills provided handouts and other resources on a variety of topics from time management to learning styles to test preparation.

MyTutoring highlighted the various tutoring resources available emphasizing the academic centers of excellence as well as other resources.

MyGPA helped students understand how a grade point average was calculated and what to do to improve this important number.

FAQs offered answers to common questions from USC students about academics.

Provost Becker closed the presentation with this final remark:

I wanted to give you a 'big overview' of what we are doing to help our students be successful while recognizing that they all have the ability, but they may not have the skills they need or they may not understand the commitment they need to make. Through the leadership of Dr. Pruitt and Dr. Coley and all the people in the residential and support programs, we want our students to make the most of the opportunity they have while they are here.

Mr. Staton expressed amazement at the volume of programs available to incoming students. When he entered the University in 1965, students were expected "to deal with or overcome problems on their own." Mr. Staton commended Provost Becker and the team of individuals involved in these programs for their efforts.

Mr. von Lehe asked about the retention rate for those students who transferred from the University. Provost Becker indicated that a transfer from the University to another institution was considered a "dropout" nationally. He further explained that one of the issues reviewed by the Spellings Commission on the Future of Higher Education was the possibility of creating a national student database, because this country did not track these individuals.

President Sorensen indicated that these individuals were treated as failures by the institutions from which they leave; it was assumed, therefore, that they had left higher education rather than, in actuality quite frequently, transferred to another institution. Their graduation from another institution did not affect the initial institution's graduation percentage rate.

Mr. Fields commented that under the leadership of President Sorensen, his staff and Chairman Adams, a portion of this fiscal year's tuition increase had been designated for the development of intervention and retention programs. "That's a

benefit for the student, a benefit to our University and a tremendous benefit to their parents." Provost Becker noted that the various programs he had described in his report were the result of the Board's support of the budget request to develop such initiatives.

Secretary Stepp reminded the Board that Provost Becker's report had been requested by the Board during a previous Executive Committee meeting which, with the approval of Mr. von Lehe, was considering timely Academic Affairs matters.

Echoing Mr. Staton's comments, President Sorensen noted that when they were undergraduate students, it was assumed that learning only occurred in the classroom and in the laboratory. He further remarked that the University was increasingly sensitive to the fact that the entire undergraduate experience occurred in a learning environment. He would also argue that for many students more learning occurred outside of the classroom than in formal settings. The University was therefore refocusing efforts to help students become more effective beyond the boundaries of the classroom. President Sorensen was pleased with the many initiatives Provost Becker had highlighted during his earlier presentation. "I believe we will reap rich dividends in the near term and I thank the Board for their support of the additional revenues to make these programs possible.

Since there were no other matters to come before the Committee, Chairman von Lehe declared the meeting adjourned at 2:10 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Thomas L. Stepp
Secretary