Members Present:
Laura Aboyan, Office of Assessment
Katie Barber, Richland District 2 Principal
Dennis Dotterer, SC Department of Education
Panayiotis Doutis, PEAT Representative
Fred Greer, EDST representative and Chair
Allison Jacques, Assistant Dean for Assessment
Zach Kelehear, Associate Dean for Academic Affairs
Malai Pressley, Richland District 2 representative

Program Representatives:
Tom Hudson, Interim Executive Director SC School Improvement Council
Diane Monrad, SC Educational Policy Center
Tammiee Dickenson, Office of Program Evaluation

I. Call Meeting to order

Dr. Greer called the meeting to order at 12:33 p.m.

II. Review of the SC School Improvement Council, SC Educational Policy Center, and the Office of Program Evaluation

Mr. Hudson gave a brief overview of the SC School Improvement Council (SIC) and his experience with SC-SIC. The organization has over 14,000 members across South Carolina. SICs can serve as a great resource for parent and community input into local schools. There are 1100 SICs in South Carolina. Mr. Hudson's office provides local councils with accountability in terms of reporting and also provides them with tools, training, and resources to help them function at their best.

The office has a very small staff. There are two full-time employees and one part-time employee. Earlier this year, the office also hired three regional council specialists to work with SICs in specific areas of the state. Currently, the office is piloting a project called "Engagement for Outcomes," which is meant to help local SICs strategize, prioritize, and evaluate their efforts to reach their desired outcomes. Karen Utter is providing the local SICs with research and helping to design steps to reach their goals and outcomes.

The office does trainings with districts yearly, but only go where they are asked to go. The number of trainings has increased this year. Training is provided on the district level to work with council members, especially new ones, to show what tools are at their disposal. New evaluation piece has been added into the basic training sessions. The evaluation is now a two-part tool, assessing the members' knowledge pre- and post-training. Specifically, the office is interested in knowing what knowledge is brought into

training, what participants want to get out of the training, and how each members' capacity has grown since participating in the training.

Parental involvement and civic engagement is the biggest piece of the SC-SIC. South Carolina is the only state whose state SIC office is located within a higher education institution. This location provides another vehicle for USC to build partnerships with the community, and also gives the office some degree of autonomy from the state.

Dr. Kelehear suggested that having USC's teacher candidates work with the SIC would be a great way to connect students and prepare them for their future roles within a district. Mr. Hudson agreed that this might be a smart avenue to pursue.

Dr. Monrad gave an overview of the Educational Policy Center. The office works very closely with Dr. Dickenson and the Office of Program Evaluation (OPE). The Educational Policy Center has a small staff, though there are several graduate students who work with them. They are in need of additional full-time staff, and are investigating ways to create a new position. The Center is known for the high-level and quality of their work and research. It works with the state legislature to provide non-partisan, research-based data to help inform state policy decisions. The Center is proud of the quality and impact of the work, and also the impact they have on current USC students. Since the Center is staffed primarily by graduate students, they are able to use a mentoring program where the more experienced graduate assistants help train and mentor the new graduate students. Usually the students who work with the Center graduate with publications and presentation experience. The Center plays a crucial role in the success of PhD candidates in the College of Education.

Dr. Dickenson gave an overview of the OPE. The office started as an off-shoot of the Department of Educational Studies, and was run mostly by graduate students until Dr. Dickenson joined the staff in 2005. Since then, the office has been restructured and now only Dr. Dickenson and one half-time person staff the office. She is working with Dean Watson to create a research associate position. The office receives minimal funding from the College. Most of the funding comes from indirect costs associated with grants and contracts. The office has several contracts with the SC Department of Education, specifically working on several federal grants and the SC Arts Assessment program. The OPE is alwo working with the department to revise the existing educator evaluation system. The office also works with local school districts, the Richland County Public Library System, and the Department of Social Services. They are able to serve as an external evaluator of federally funded programs within the state.

The staff comprises four research associates and six research/graduate assistants. All are grant funded positions, but usually are renewed annually. Most come from the Educational Research and Measurement program, though some come from the Department of Statistics or other areas across campus. Recruitment of graduate students is a challenge because of the instability of funding. Sometimes funds are not available until the last minute, so it is challenging to get graduate students to commit to positions with the OPE.

Dr. Monrad mentioned that all administrative costs for both her and Dr. Dickenson's offices come out of the projects they run and not from the College. If the College could offset some administrative costs, the two offices would be able to support more graduate students.

Dr. Kelehear asked about the number of graduate students they support who attend the AERA conference. Dr. Dickenson said there are usually two or three each year who are listed as co-authors on papers. Dr. Monrad said all of her students except one are listed as authors on papers this year. Everything the graduate students do is collaborative within the office. Students are encouraged to present in conjunction with other client projects. Dr. Monrad believes that this allows students form a very tightly knit cohort and creates a strong system for help and support.

Dr. Jacques asked about areas of concern for each office. Mr. Hudson said the bulk of the SC-SIC's work is developed through relationships, so they need to grow their capacity. Funding is down, and they need to determine how to best combat that. The office is growing in terms of more direct research, particularly with Ms. Utter's work. More communication between the SC-SIC and the College would create partnerships and relationships across the college. Mr. Hudson would like to place a greater focus on integrating the two worlds.

Dr. Monrad said that the Educational Policy Center needs a good web presence, but it has been a struggle to get it accomplished. She would like to know who, within the College, she needs to work with to get this updated quickly. Both Dr. Monrad and Dr. Dickenson are concerned about graduate student support. Currently there are widely varying amounts given to graduate students for their support. It would be helpful to develop consistent guidelines for hiring for graduate students, and for the pay rate and tuition stipend to be comparable to other institutions. Dr. Dickenson is also concerned about administrative support. The OPE doesn't have the funding to accomplish this because it is difficult to justify administrative support funding as part of a grant. Support from the College would be welcome.

Dr. Doutis asked how many members are in the SICs in the state. Mr. Hudson said there are approximately 14,500. Dr. Doutis asked if SC-SIC is the only organization providing oversight for the individual SICs. Mr. Hudson said yes, the SC-SIC is written into state statute to oversee all other SICs. Dr. Doutis asked how the SC-SIC addresses and trains other SIC members, and whether or not it is systemic and regular. Mr. Hudson said yes, it is intended to be. There is a continuous need for training because there is a set term length for those serving on the SIC. Training sessions generally take place in the fall. A handbook is provided to each SIC member annually. Additional resources are continually available on the SC-SIC website, including training schedules and materials. The website provides a greater reach since the office staff is so small. The new regional specialists are helping to determine each SICs needs, which is something the office has never been able to do before. Dr. Doutis asked how the SC-SIC measures the effect of training. Mr. Hudson said they have just started it this year, with the implementation of pre-training and post-training surveys. The ultimate goal is to add a third component to evaluate participants again one year after the training.

Dr. Doutis asked whether or not the Educational Policy Center and OPE take on projects that are not funded. Dr. Monrad said yes. Those projects mostly involve students who want to look at something that is not included in a contracted project, and usually use existing data. Both offices are also involved in pro

bono work, including the Lexington 4 summer reading program evaluation. They try to do as much pro bono work as possible. Dr. Doutis asked if they ever write workshops into their grant proposals. Dr. Monrad said they do, as appropriate, because the schools need to be able to analyze their own data The Educational Policy Center and OPE help prepare districts to do that. Dr. Doutis asked if their findings ever reach the students in the schools. Dr. Monrad said yes. Her office advises districts to take their data back to the school and students to discuss what changes they think should be made.

III. Committee Consensus on Programs

SC – School Improvement Council
The committee discussed the assessment materials for the SC – School Improvement Council and came to the consensus that the office is performing at the "Meets Expectations" level. The committee further notes that the mission of the office is disproportionate to the available staff needed to effectively carry out the mission.

Strengths of the office were noted and include:
- Creation of evaluation methods to assess pre and post training ability
- Excellent resources for those who are already interested or invested
- High quality of existing SICs; the committee suggests the office build off of these relationships to establish a network

Areas for Improvement were noted and include:
- Develop a strategic plan to determine which schools, regions, and/or districts have the most needs
- Develop a specific plan of attack for increasing communication and addressing training sessions; the committee suggests starting with district level members and establish one point of contact for each district to streamline the delivery of information. The committee further suggests that training sessions could be developed by cycles to break up the areas of the state. Such a system could also help to notify those who are out of compliance in terms of training.

The Committee Further Encourages:
- Developing a system to increase audience to all SICs, rather than only those who seek out the SC-SIC
- Identify areas of need who may not otherwise volunteer to participate in training
- Continue to investigate those who aren't already invested in the SC-SIC.
- Further investigate staffing solutions. – creation of experts in the field to help disseminate information (honor council to help provide training, etc.) Runners up to the Riley Award?
- Create of a network of council members to help disseminate information. The committee suggests that SIC develop a database of experts in the field to serve as professional development specialists who could offer on-going and developmental training. A good starting point for identifying such a specialized team may be to use the runners-up to the Riley Award.

<u>**SC Educational Policy Center**</u>

The committee discussed the assessment materials for the SC Educational Policy Center and came to the consensus that the office is performing at the "Exceeds Expectations" level.

Strengths of the office were noted and include:
- Multiple levels of people working collaboratively on projects, i.e. students, faculty, district level, and state level
- Objectivity in reporting by committing to not making recommendations, but by providing high quality research
- Dr. Monrad's background, expertise, commitment, and leadership within the office
- Fostering student development through co-authorship and presentation opportunities
- Collaboration across the College of Education and USC
- Impact on state policy and work with the state legislature

Areas for Improvement were noted and include:
- Stability of graduate student funding
- Marketing efforts, particularly in the creation of a functional and informational website

<u>**Office of Program Evaluation**</u>

The committee discussed the assessment materials for the SC Educational Policy Center and came to the consensus that the office is performing at the "Exceeds Expectations" level.

Strengths of the office were noted and include:
- Sources of external funding
- Fostering student development through co-authorship and presentation opportunities
- Impact on state policy and work with the state legislature

Areas for Improvement were noted and include:
- Stability of graduate student funding
- Consistent funding for administrative support and overhead costs
- Reevaluation and strategic review of structuring and funding of the office

Although the identified areas for improvement are beyond your control, the committee affirms that a regular and systematic review of baseline internal funding practices would be helpful.

The Committee Further Encourages:
- Explanation of how projects are accepted and prioritized

IV. Schedule for Future Meetings
  Programs to Review Spring 2013
- SC Geographic Alliance, SC Middle School Initiative, and Writing Improvement Network – April 24, 2014
- SUPCE, Grants & Contract, and Conferences – May 8, 2014

Programs to Reschedule
- *Office of Assessment*
- *Office of Instructional Support & Information Technology*

V. Other Business
Dr. Greer adjourned the meeting at 2:30 p.m.