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University of South Carolina
BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Student-Trustee Liaison Committee

November 17, 2017

The Student-Trustee Liaison Committee of the University of South Carolina Board of Trustees met at 1:45 p.m. on Friday, November 17, 2017, in the Alumni Center's C. Edward Floyd Boardroom.

Members present were: Mr. Thomas C. Cofield, Chairman; Mr. A. C. "Bubba" Fennell; Dr. C. Edward Floyd; Ms. Leah B. Moody; Mr. Tommy Preston Jr.; Ms. Molly M. Spearman; Mr. Eugene P. Warr Jr.; and Mr. John C. von Lehe Jr., Board Chairman; with Mr. J. Egerton Burroughs joining by telephone.

Other Board members present were: Mr. William C. Hubbard; Mr. Toney J. Lister; Mr. Miles Loadholt; Mr. Hubert F. Mobley; Dr. C. Dorn Smith III; and Mr. Thad H. Westbrook.

USC Columbia Faculty Senate Chairman Marco Valtorta was also present.

Others present were: President Harris Pastides; Secretary J. Cantey Heath, Jr.; 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; Chief Communications Officer Wes Hickman; Athletics Director Ray Tanner; Vice Provost and Dean of the Graduate School Cheryl L. Addy; USC Aiken Chancellor Sandra Jordan; USC Beaufort Chancellor Al Panu; Palmetto College Chancellor Susan Elkins; USC Upstate Chancellor Brendan Kelly; Director of State Government Relations Derrick Meggie; USC Aiken Executive Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs Jeff Priest; Mrs. Cynthia Lister, wife of Trustee Lister; Mrs. Ann Loadholt, wife of Trustee Loadholt; University Technology Services Production Manager Matt Warthen; and Board staff members Terri Saxon and Ina Wilson.

Student Government Association (SGA) representatives present were: USC Aiken: President Jacob Yarbrough, Vice President Amethyst Marroquin, Secretary Daneshka Padro-Perez, and Treasurer Regis James Strauss; USC Beaufort: Senator Meghan Clifton; USC Columbia: President Ross Lordo, and Graduate Student Association President Clint Saidy; USC Upstate: President Tia Greene, Secretary Tia Freeman, Treasurer Tyvon Moore, Chief of Staff Anayeli Guerrero Pulido, and Freshman Class President Courtney Lee.

The Student Government Association advisors present included: USC Aiken – Assistant Vice Chancellor of Student Life Ahmed Samaha; USC Beaufort – Vice Chancellor of Student Development Doug Oblander; USC Columbia – Interim Associate Vice President for Student Life Anna Edwards; and USC Upstate – Vice Chancellor of Student Affairs and Dean of Students Laura Puckett-Boler and Assistant Dean of Students Khrystal Smith.

I. Call to Order

Board Chairman von Lehe 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. Mr. Hickman introduced Mike Woodel with *The Daily Gamecock*.

II. Election of Committee Chairman

Board Chairman von Lehe said the first order of business was the election of a new Student-Trustee Liaison Committee Chair to replace the former chair, Trustee Fennell, who had been elected Chairman of the Health Affairs Committee on September 15, 2017, following Trustee Loadholt's resignation from the committee to fill a vacancy on the Executive Committee. Trustee Fennell nominated Trustee Thomas C. Cofield. Trustee Warr seconded the nomination. The vote was taken and Trustee Cofield was elected Student-Trustee Liaison Committee Chair.

Trustee Cofield accepted the gavel from Board Chairman von Lehe and presided over the remainder of the meeting.

III. Report of the Graduate Student Association

Chairman Cofield called on Dr. Cheryl Addy to introduce Graduate Student Association (GSA) President Clint Saidy.

Dr. Addy said that Mr. Saidy, a second year doctoral candidate in mechanical engineering, originally from Lebanon, completed his Bachelor of Engineering in Industrial Engineering at the Lebanese American University. He currently works at the McNair Center for Aerospace Innovation and Research. His primary areas of study are process management of automated fiber placement and supply chain management of aerospace industries in South Carolina. Prior to being elected President, he was the GSA's Secretary of International Student Affairs. During his time at USC, Clint has been a graduate advisor for the Society of Manufacturing Engineers (SME) and a member of the Rotaract Club of the University of South Carolina. Clint currently serves on the Search Committee for the Center for Teaching Excellence Director.

Mr. Saily began his report by thanking the Trustees for inviting him to speak on behalf of the graduate and professional student body. He said the GSA is dedicated to the advancement and development of over 7,000 graduate students.

The GSA mission to enhance the experience of graduate students is accomplished by: providing the students a voice; fostering a professional and academic network; promoting socially responsible citizenship for a more productive society; and working closely with the Graduate School. A resolution granting GSA's authority was adopted by the Board of Trustees on December 13, 2011. Membership includes all enrolled graduate students taking at least one credit hour, members are invited to attend the bi-weekly meetings. The GSA Executive Board includes the president, vice president, treasurer and graduate council representative. Mr. Saily noted the diversity of the GSA President's Cabinet: press secretary; School of Medicine liaison; and the secretaries of alumni relations, community outreach, graduate assistantships, graduate student organizations, GSA affairs, health, international and multicultural student affairs, professional development, and veterans' affairs.

Events organized in 2017 by GSA included a summer pool party at the Strom Thurmond Wellness Center on June 7, with over 50 attendees; a welcome back gathering on August 30 with over 150 attendees; and a suicide remembrance vigil on November 9.

Mr. Saily concluded his presentation by noting GSA achievements, including the increase in event attendance through social media and a monthly newsletter. Currently, the GSA is working to establish relations with the USC graduate organizations and undergraduate student government; to review graduate student eligibility for athletic tickets; and to enhance the graduate student insurance subsidy.

President Pastides said he was working to address graduate student athletic ticket eligibility; noting that undergraduate students pay a ticket eligibility fee.

Chairman Cofield thanked Mr. Saily for his informative report.

IV. Panel Discussion: Student Government Leaders

Chairman Cofield stated the presidents of the Student Government Associations (SGA) of 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.

Chairman Cofield called on Vice President for Student Affairs Dennis Pruitt to lead the panel discussion. Dr. Pruitt explained that SGA officers, working with their advisors, had been asked to submit topics for the panel discussion. He said he appreciated the overwhelming response to the request and thanked the four SGA officers for how they represent the University: USC Aiken President Jacob

Yarbrough; USC Beaufort Senator Meghan Clifton; USC Columbia President Ross Lordo; and USC Upstate President Tia Greene. He also welcomed SGA officers who were seated in the gallery.

Dr. Pruitt asked each panelist to introduce themselves by sharing the following information: the campus they represent, their hometown, major, and one thing about them that few people know and that they would like others to appreciate. Each SGA officer began by thanking the committee for the invitation to be part of the panel.

USC Columbia President Ross Lordo, a senior and a public health major, said he plans to attend the USC School of Medicine – Greenville following graduation. A fun fact he noted, was that in high school he played the character “Warner” in Legally Blonde.

USC Aiken President Jacob Yarbrough, a senior majoring in communications and minoring in criminal justice, said he will be the first member of his family to earn a college degree.

USC Beaufort Senator Meghan Clifton, a sophomore nursing major, said she was filling in for the SGA President who was at National Guard drill. She noted she is the only living female on her father’s side of the family.

USC Upstate President Tia Greene said she is a senior majoring in communications and minoring in marketing. She plans to go into marketing after graduation, hopefully with the BMW corporate office in Greer, South Carolina. She noted she is in her second term as senior body president, her first term was during her junior year.

Dr. Pruitt asked Trustee Preston, having served as a USC Columbia SGA President, to share something that most people don’t know about him. Trustee Preston said for the past several months, he participated in a program called Futures, where he learned that through technology advancements his children will not have to learn to drive. Dr. Pruitt said he thought Trustee Preston would have mentioned that on his first day as a freshmen at USC Columbia he walked up to him and said “I’m going to be the SGA President.”

Dr. Pruitt asked each panelist to share what they know now, that they wish they had known when they first started college; and how might that knowledge have altered their college experience? Ms. Greene learned the importance of the “university environment.” She said she met the SGA president at her freshman orientation, learned they were looking for a freshman class president, became the president and remained involved with the SGA her entire college career.

Ms. Clifton said she would tell herself, “it’s ok not to be ok, and it’s ok not to know exactly what you want to do,” since she had worried if she would be accepted into the nursing program, and was. As a resident assistant, she shares this advice with freshmen.

Mr. Yarbrough said he was from a small high school, which made it easy to get involved. Commuting 20 miles to attend USC Aiken, he said he did not feel part of college life until he became an orientation leader, his most rewarding college experience. As a leader, he became involved in the SGA where he was provided opportunities to make connections for his career future. Mr. Lordo said it is important to surround yourself with the right people and good peers who provide motivation.

Dr. Pruitt asked President Pastides, having served as USC’s President for 10 years, to share what he had learned. President Pastides said it was most important to be true to who you are and develop who you are.

Dr. Pruitt asked the panel to describe the part of their college day they relish and the part they dread. Mr. Lordo said he relishes the uniqueness of the student body that ranges from those who live on campus and participate in activities to those who commute and go to work when not in class. A challenge for him, he said, is trying to find the balance between academic responsibilities and enjoying college life. Mr. Yarbrough said he enjoys Tuesday afternoon SGA office hours, which allow him time to reflect and plan. He could not think of a part of his day that he dreads, he enjoys it all.

Ms. Clifton said she loves the opportunity to interact with new and old friends each day. She also struggles to find the balance between academic responsibilities and enjoying college life. Ms. Greene said she cherishes her involvement in campus organizations, which also serve as her stress release mechanism. She is however, anxious about the uncertainty of life after college.

Dr. Pruitt asked each panelist to name their “go-to” person on campus and what makes them so special. Ms. Greene named USC Upstate Assistant Dean of Students Khrystal Smith, who serves as the SGA advisor, because she is so helpful. Ms. Clifton named Assistant Resident Director Jayln Washington because she makes herself available to students.

Mr. Yarbrough named Assistant Vice Chancellor of Student Life Ahmed Samaha, who he said was his academic, freshman orientation, and SGA advisor. Dr. Samaha allows students to vent when necessary, but also provides “tough” love by serving as a voice of reason. Mr. Lordo named Interim Associate Vice President for Student Life Anna Edwards, since she serves as an outlet to voice concerns and provides guidance.

Dr. Pruitt said there is a new emphasis in college outcomes for “workplace readiness.” He asked the panelists if they felt their campus was preparing students to be ready to start work following graduation, and to share any specific aspects of their college experiences that help prepare them. Mr. Lordo said his leadership roles in the SGA and as a university ambassador and tour guide taught him how to communicate effectively with a variety of people, which will be helpful to him in his career.

Mr. Yarbrough said USC Aiken does a wonderful job preparing students for the workplace. An example is the Organizational Communications class taught by Dr. Wilson. USC Beaufort does a great job preparing students for the workplace, Ms. Clifton said, with campus organizations like the SGA, providing students leadership opportunities.

Ms. Greene said there is only so much faculty and staff can do to prepare students to become workplace ready. Career success, she noted, depends on how much students want to be prepared and whether they utilize campus services and organizations to reach their goals.

Related to freedom of expression on college campuses, Dr. Pruitt said studies indicate most students support the concept of freedom of speech. Some students feel speech should be regulated to protect students from hateful or mean speech. Others feel when a speaker is presenting a view with which they do not agree, they can practice the “heckler approach” –that is –shouting over the presenter/speaker’s presentation so they cannot be heard. He asked the panelists how they believe students on their campus would react to a speaker with an opposing viewpoint.

Ms. Greene said reactions depend on the individual speakers, but she thinks the “heckler” approach is very disrespectful. She feels USC Upstate students would handle themselves in a mature manner, when listening and being heard. Ms. Clifton agreed with Ms. Greene’s comments and added she felt students at USC Beaufort would be respectful of a speaker, even if they did not agree with his/her view.

Mr. Yarbrough said this topic was discussed in a recent USC Aiken SGA executive meeting. He applauded Chancellor Jordan for addressing a recent social media incident on campus through an open forum, and encouraging diversity.

Mr. Lordo said it is important for students to engage in civil discourse to hear different viewpoints. Listening to opposing opinions, while respecting those who express them, is an educational tool.

Dr. Pruitt stated a recent report indicates that 46% of Americans know a person or family member who has an alcohol or drug addiction. He asked if students are aware and sensitive to the devastating effects of addiction and if higher education institutions are doing enough to address this crisis. Mr. Lordo said he did not think students understood the depth of addiction devastation. Although USC Columbia

has educational and counseling addiction services, students don't always seek help. The University needs to continue its efforts to communicate the dangers of and assistance for addiction.

Mr. Yarbrough said although USC Aiken covers addiction in freshman orientation, he would like to see additional education provided.

Ms. Clifton said all students know someone with an addiction problem. She encouraged having former addicts talk with students about their experiences. Ms. Greene said addiction education is available to students beginning in elementary school. She encouraged the University to continue the student addiction education and assistance programs.

Dr. Pruitt asked each panelist what they would say to convince a high school senior to enroll at their campus. Ms. Greene responded that USC Upstate is a "home away from home" for students. Ms. Clifton said USC Beaufort promotes its family environment, and it is, with the Chancellor knowing students on a first name basis. Mr. Yarbrough responded USC Aiken was ranked as the #1 Public Regional College in the South in *U.S. News and World Report's* annual "America's Best Colleges" guide for the 13th time. Additionally, the student/faculty ratio of 17/1 provides an excellent learning opportunity and one-on-one access to professors.

Mr. Lordo said academics, campus culture and opportunities are all selling points for USC Columbia. Academically, USC boasts the country's #1 Honor's College and Darla Moore School of Business with over 47 nationally ranked programs. USC also offers a culture where every student can be successful and where opportunities inside and outside the classroom experiences are at students' fingertips.

Dr. Pruitt thanked the panel for its insightful discussion and the Trustees gave them a round of applause.

Trustee Fennell commended Dr. Pruitt and the Chancellors for their outstanding work with students. He asked that at a future meeting, the committee receive a briefing on the Gamecock Recovery Program and the other student programs.

Chairman Cofield thanked the panel for its excellent participation. He also thanked Dr. Pruitt for moderating the discussion.

V. Other Matters and Adjournment

Chairman Cofield called for any other matters to come before the committee. There being no other business to come before the committee, he declared the meeting adjourned at 2:53 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

J. Cantey Heath, Jr.

Secretary