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University of South Carolina
BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Student and System Affairs Committee

August 16, 2019

The Student and System Affairs Committee of the University of South Carolina Board of Trustees met at 12:05 p.m. on Friday, August 16, 2019, in the C. Edward Floyd Boardroom at the Pastides Alumni Center.

Members participating were: Mr. Chuck Allen, Chairman; Mr. C. Dan Adams; Mr. A.C. "Bubba" Fennell; Mr. Richard A. Jones Jr.; Ms. Leah B. Moody; Ms. Rose Buyck Newton; Dr. C. Dorn Smith III; Ms. Molly M. Spearman; Mr. John C. von Lehe Jr., Board Chairman; and Mr. Hubert F. Mobley, Board Vice Chairman.

Other Trustees participating were: Mr. J. Egerton Burroughs; Mr. Robert F. Dozier Jr.; Dr. C. Edward Floyd; Mr. William C. Hubbard; Mr. Toney J. Lister; Mr. Miles Loadholt; Mr. Eugene P. Warr Jr.; Mr. Thad H. Westbrook; and Mr. Mack I. Whittle Jr.

Also present were Strategic Advisor David Seaton; USC Columbia Faculty Senate Chair Mark Cooper; and USC Columbia Student Government President Luke Rankin.

The five student panelists were: USC Aiken Student Government Association President Q'Ladrin Qourters; USC Beaufort Student Government Association Vice President Alexis Johnson; USC Upstate Student Government Association President Sharan Ravishankar; Palmetto College Online graduate Ryan West; and USC Lancaster Student Government Association Secretary Loni Mosier.

Others present were: President Robert L. Caslen Jr.; Secretary J. Cantey Heath Jr.; General Counsel Walter "Terry" H. Parham; Interim Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs and Provost Tayloe Harding; Senior Vice President for Administration and Chief Operating Officer Edward L. Walton; Vice President for Student Affairs and Vice Provost for Academic Support Dennis A. Pruitt; Vice President for Human Resources Caroline Agardy; Vice President for Information Technology and Chief Information Officer Doug Foster; Athletics Director Ray Tanner; Interim Chief Communications Officer and Director of Public Relations Jeff Stensland; Palmetto College Chancellor Susan Elkins; USC Aiken Chancellor Sandra Jordan; USC Beaufort Chancellor Al Panu; USC Upstate Chancellor Brendan Kelly; USC Lancaster

Campus Dean Walter Collins III; USC Salkehatchie Campus Dean Chris Nesmith; University Treasurer Pat Lardner; Chief Audit Executive Pam Doran; 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; Associate Vice President for Finance Kelly Epting; University Architect and Associate Vice President of Facilities Planning, Design and Construction Derek S. Gruner; Executive Director for the Office of Economic Engagement William D. "Bill" Kirkland; Executive Director of Military Programs and Strategies James E. Smith Jr.; Executive Director for Strategic Initiatives Jack Claypoole; Chief Executive Officer My Carolina Alumni Association Wes Hickman; Director of Government Relations Derrick Meggie; Assistant to the President for System Affairs Eddie King; from USC Sumter: Interim Assistant Dean for Business & Administrative Management Hendrikus E.J.M.L Van Bulk, Enrollment Director Brad Greer, and Admissions Specialist Hanna Barrick; USC Upstate Vice Chancellor of Student Affairs Andre Fortune; USC Beaufort Alumni Affairs Coordinator Kia Stokes; Trustee Emeritus Herbert C. Adams; USC Beaufort student Shea Gantt; USC Columbia students Robert Buchanan, Sawyer McDuffie, Bryce Mobley and Zechariah Willoughby; USC Lancaster student Ryan McGee; USC Salkehatchie student Chelsea Kuelhler; USC Union students Kylie Gregory and Lauren McCarley; Cynthia Lister, wife of Trustee Lister; Ann Loadholt, wife of Trustee Loadholt; Chernoff Newman Chief Executive Officer Lee Bussell; Pensar Strategies President and CEO Mike Fernandez; University Technology Services Production Manager Matt Warthen; and Board staff members Debra Allen and Terri Saxon.

I. Call to Order

Chairman Allen called the meeting to order, welcomed everyone and invited those at the table to introduce themselves. Secretary Heath confirmed those Trustees participating by telephone. Mr. Stensland introduced Lucas Daprile with *The State* newspaper and Emily Correll with WLTX-TV. Chairman Allen said 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 provided to the committee; and a quorum was present to conduct business.

II. Organizational Assessment of System Affairs

Chairman Allen called on USC Upstate Chancellor Kelly, who said Trustees had recently asked him to conduct an organizational assessment and at the request of President Caslen, he was providing a status report on his efforts. Chancellor Kelly gave a brief summary of a proposed USC System organizational assessment which will focus on strategies and outcomes to create a path toward continuous

improvement. He reported, he had met with colleagues across the University System and with Chairman Allen to discuss system organization.

Chancellor Kelly discussed use of the Coca-Cola model, explaining that “Coke is a distributed corporate model that allows its sub-brands to compete in the open marketplace, stay focused on their unique market sectors, and strategically nurture their brand success without impediment.” It is a model that might be applied to the USC System in as much as it represents many student bodies and distinct institutional missions (products).

Chancellor Kelly said a system assessment can help ensure the University System is meeting the needs of a diverse state and providing additional opportunities for the Comprehensive Universities to coordinate and collaborate. A sample area of the assessment includes refining University governance, he added.

Chancellor Kelly said each campus in the University System brings unique opportunities for higher education in South Carolina; and as the University moves through an era of change, it is important for each institution to focus on its mission in order to meet the needs and expectations of the state in the advancement of knowledge and understanding, talent and workforce development, and educational attainment.

Trustee Whittle asked when the full report would be ready. Chancellor Kelly responded he planned to present it to the Board, after he circulated it among his colleagues for feedback.

Chairman Allen thanked Chancellor Kelly and said the presentation was received as information.

III. Student Panel: Student Accomplishments Across the System

Chairman Allen called on Mr. Rankin, who said the five-member panel included representation from across the University System. Each panelist thanked the Board of Trustees and President Caslen for the opportunity to participate in the meeting.

USC Aiken junior, majoring in biology with a pre-med concentration, and newly elected Student Government Association (SGA) President Q'Ladrin Qourters, said Aiken is “the place I call home.” During the summer, fellow student-leaders called Pacesetters welcomed new freshmen at orientation, and student leaders joined together for the annual leadership retreat earlier in the week

She reported USC Aiken offers undergraduate and graduate degrees as well as certificates within its five colleges: Arts, Humanities, and Social Sciences; Nursing; Education; Business Administration; and Sciences and Engineering. Historically, public comprehensive colleges and state universities have been viewed as significant and important social investments, founded on the belief that higher education is not a

luxury but a necessity, and an education should be made available to all, including women and minorities, she said.

Ms. Qourters said comprehensive universities are key to regional economic development. USC Aiken continues to fulfill the original purpose and is in the perfect position to address the changing demographics in South Carolina because of the emphasis on teaching and learning. Its support systems are built to help all students succeed, especially those who may have been previously excluded from educational opportunity.

The diversity of the USC Aiken student body supports its mission of providing opportunity and access in an accepting and inclusive educational environment, all at a reasonable cost. Currently, 86% of the 3,700 member student body is from the state of South Carolina; 40% are first-generation students, and 41% non-white students. Also, with a reasonable tuition, 30% of the students graduate without any debt at all. Of those who do need to borrow money to attend college, the average debt is \$20,000 – which is less than the average cost of a used car, Ms. Qourters said.

Ms. Qourters said USC Aiken has done much to provide opportunities for students to graduate “on their timeline” including the addition of more online course options, which now total 500. This sensitivity to student needs is one of the reasons USC Aiken’s full-time student success rate is 82%. USC Aiken keeps its student-to-faculty ratio very low, 15:1, so faculty can – and do – personally engage students.

Ms. Qourters said USC Aiken Pacers are engaged in service learning, undergraduate research, international study abroad opportunities, internships, and other innovative activities that promote critical thinking and problem solving. USC Aiken is South Carolina’s only institution that is a member of the Council of Public Liberal Arts Colleges (COPLAC), a very special designation, since it is typically awarded to only one institution within a state; and it was selected for that designation in 2012 and maintains it still today. Some of the numerous honors USC Aiken has received include:

- *U.S. News and World Report*: #1 Regional Comprehensive Public College in the South 14 times, out of a competitive pool of more than 500 institutions and more often than any other institution in South Carolina
- Designation as one of America’s Colleges of Distinction twice in the past two years
- *The Chronicle of Higher Education* – “A Great College to Work For” rating twice in the past five years
- High rankings for work with veterans and military students – #1 in the South by *U.S. News and World Report*, a Military Friendly institution, “Best for Vets,” “Military Spouse Friendly,” in addition to accolades from five other independent entities.

Ms. Qourters said whether through one-on-one undergraduate research, traditional classroom interactions, experiential learning opportunities or any one of the high-impact practices employed at USC Aiken, students are the #1 priority. The faculty, staff and administrators are committed to each student's intellectual, emotional, social, and professional development. One of the unique ways USC Aiken provides an exceptional education is through the Leadership Certificate Program, which is tailored to each student's interests and allows students opportunities to work closely with community, business, and elected leaders and to provide critical soft skills training, career readiness, and leadership development.

Studies show that those engaged outside the classroom, perform better academically and have a greater sense of belonging. USC Aiken has more than 95 clubs and organizations, including 13 national fraternities and sororities and 10 NCAA Division II sports teams. USC Aiken works hard to build strong ties in its region and community, including the Savannah River Site, the Savannah River National Lab, and the City of Aiken. She noted the mayor of Aiken is also a graduate and continues to be a tremendous supporter of USC Aiken; and student leaders meet regularly with elected and administrative leaders in Aiken to explore ways to strengthen the relationship.

Due to the transforming life experiences and education Ms. Qourters and her twin sister, who is the SGA Vice President, are receiving at USC Aiken, they both feel well prepared to enter into the medical field upon graduation.

USC Beaufort SGA Vice President and sophomore, Alexis Johnson said enrollment was growing with over 2,100 students across three campuses. She said the faculty and staff use the Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP) which focuses on improving students' learning through experiential education rooted in community issues. The QEP is closely tied with the University's values and mission as well as goals set forth in USC Beaufort's Strategic Plan for broadening experiential opportunities for students, growing partnerships with community organizations, and providing for students' success.

Ms. Johnson introduced USC Beaufort student Shea Gantt, who talked about her opportunity to conduct undergraduate research with a professor since her freshman year, which led to her presenting her work at a national conference in Indianapolis, Indiana, last year and at Harvard University this year.

Ms. Johnson also called on former SGA President Kia Stokes, who said through QEP she was able to intern in three different departments. After graduation in May, USC Beaufort hired her as an Alumni Affairs Coordinator.

USC Upstate SGA President Sharan Ravishankar said he was honored to represent the nearly 6,200 students, including more than 900 new freshmen and 900 new transfer students, who represent every county in South Carolina. Also, among this fall class are nine valedictorians and 30 Palmetto Fellows.

Mr. Ravishankar said USC Upstate is the fifth largest university in the state, and uniquely positioned to leverage the rapid growth the Upstate region is experiencing. In direct response to industry need, The George Dean Johnson College of Business and Economics welcomed its first class of master's degree students. USC Upstate was recognized by *The Chronicle of Higher Education* as one of the fastest-growing, baccalaureate-granting universities in the country, and was ranked 7th nationally for its percentage of women graduating from the Computer Science Program.

More than 80% of USC Upstate alumni remain and work in South Carolina, many in the Upstate, where they serve as doctors, lawyers, industry leaders, and business owners invested in the success of the region. Mr. Ravishankar said USC Upstate graduates are the foundation of the healthcare and education labor force in the Upstate, with approximately 70% of the nurses at Spartanburg Regional Medical Center being USC Upstate graduates. Many Upstate alumni are administrators in area schools – as superintendents, principals and vice principals. USC Upstate graduated 153 new teachers in May. He said the new Master's in Education online program “hit home” for him, in that his mother now has the opportunity to earn her master of education degree. Also, USC Upstate is committed to making the student experience truly distinctive through opportunities to engage in research and service learning, and to become involved on campus by participating in more than 90 organizations and clubs, Mr. Ravishankar said.

Following a national search, USC Upstate hired Vice Chancellor of Student Affairs Dr. Andre Fortune in July. Mr. Ravishankar recognized Dr. Fortune who was in attendance, and said he most recently served as Assistant Vice President of Student Affairs at the University of Texas at Arlington. Dr. Fortune is responsible for an array of campus life initiatives and providing oversight of numerous departments. “I know I speak for the entire student body when I say we look forward to working closely with him to develop even more opportunities for our students,” Mr. Ravishankar said.

There are approximately 250 student-athletes at USC Upstate. This past summer, the Upstate Spartans began competing in the Big South Conference. Four rival schools are now within 65 miles of the campus, which simply means athletes are able to spend more time in the classroom, which is reflected in their cumulative Grade Point Average of over 3.0. The coaches, including men's basketball coach Dave

Dickerson, emphasize success on and off the field with more than 70% of student-athletes on the Honor Roll, Mr. Ravishankar said.

Mr. Ravishankar said USC Upstate is very beautiful and one of the greenest campuses in South Carolina. He invited everyone to visit.

In closing Mr. Ravishankar said when welcoming freshmen, he tells them they will “get a USC degree and a wonderful family in the System, in addition to an Upstate experience,” which entails three things: family, mentorship and tradition. He said he experienced all three, especially mentorship.

USC Lancaster SGA Secretary Loni Mosier, a rising sophomore majoring in Organizational Leadership, said it was a privilege to be one of the 5,000 students from Palmetto College with numerous opportunities to be involved, to volunteer, and to accomplish great things as they earn degrees. She said Palmetto College students pay some of the lowest tuition rates in the state, yet are a part of the flagship University in South Carolina.

Ms. Mosier introduced attendees from the Palmetto Colleges, beginning with Chancellor Susan Elkins, and from each campus: USC Lancaster – Campus Dean Walter Collins and SGA Vice President Ryan McGee; USC Salkehatchie – Campus Dean Chris Nesmith, adult student and Magellan Scholar Chelsea Kuehler, and former USC Salkehatchie SGA President, USC Columbia graduate and Palmetto College IT Employee Bryce Mobley; USC Sumter – Interim Assistant Dean for Business & Administrative Management Hennie Van Bulck and Palmetto College Online student Hanna McKenzie Barrick; USC Union – Enrollment Director and student advisor Brad Greer, SGA President Abby McCarley and SGA Vice President Kylie Gregory.

Ms. Mosier said USC Lancaster enables her to give back to her community and to receive an affordable education. As SGA Secretary, she assists in planning campus activities and improving student life on campus. She also serves as a Peer Advisor at Lancaster (PAL), which allows her to mentor new students during orientation and throughout their first year and to assist continuing students during late advisement, provide campus tours, and assist in marketing events around campus. Through PAL, she receives extensive leadership training each spring in the form of a three-credit-hour class and attends an annual conference with other student leaders from approximately 200 universities.

USC Lancaster students are able to present scholarly work at state, regional, national, and international conferences, earn Graduation with Leadership Distinction credentials, study abroad, and take part in National Junior College Athletic Association (NJCAA) athletics with some earning positions to play

at four-year campuses afterwards. Some students participate in meaningful internships to learn more about professional positions in their majors and take their learning beyond the classroom.

Ms. Mosier told USC Sumter student Brandon Franklin's success story. Mr. Franklin and his mother immigrated to the United States from Guyana when he was a teenager. While at USC Sumter he worked as a peer coach for Opportunity Scholars Program (OSP), mentoring first-year students. He also worked as a tutor for Adult Education in Sumter and established his own auto detailing business; while an active member of TriO's OSP program. Mr. Franklin was awarded his Associate of Science degree in May 2019, as a Graduate with Leadership Distinction, earning a 3.5 GPA. Following graduation, he transferred to the Columbia campus to pursue his BS in Exercise Science, with a goal to become a physician. Ms. Mosier said that Mr. Franklin's work ethic and ability to recognize, appreciate, and take advantage of opportunities available to him, make him an outstanding student and member of the larger USC community.

USC Salkehatchie has had two Magellan Scholars, Chelsea Kuehler (working with Dr. Sarah Miller) and Michaela Sexton (working with Dr. David Hatch). The campus has also seen 26 students complete Graduation with Leadership Distinction over the past five years. Athletically, USC Salkehatchie had seven NJCAA Academic All-Americans for 2018-19; the softball team recently won the Region X championship, the first athletic team to win a region championship; Vince Cole, with men's basketball, was recently selected as the Region X Player of the Year and a NJCAA All-American.

USC Union students have been awarded grants and have helped create more opportunities for student accomplishment. Former SGA President Brianna Vaughn was the recipient of the Magellan Scholars Grant, received from Palmetto College a Bachelor of Arts Degree in Organizational Leadership (BOL) and a Bachelor of Arts Degree in Liberal Studies, and started the USC Union Research Club. Two USC Union students, Kelsey Granger and Katy Self, were credited as co-authors, with Dr. Maggie Aziz, in an article that was published in the Journal of Islamic and Muslim Studies. Both were Palmetto BOL graduates.

Ms. Mosier said without the dedication and sacrifice of the Palmetto College faculty and staff, students could not accomplish all that they do. She thanked the Trustees and President Caslen, for their unwavering support of education for all South Carolinians through the campuses of USC Palmetto College, which offers affordable options to start higher education and, for a growing number, the flexibility for four-year degree programs through Palmetto College Online.

Mr. Ryan West who earned his Bachelor's degree Cum Laude in Organizational Leadership through Palmetto College Online in 2016, said it was privilege to represent his fellow students and graduates who also earned degrees through Palmetto College Online, while struggling to juggle the many roles of adulthood such as working a job or two, balancing family responsibilities, and serving their communities, state, and country.

Since the creation of Palmetto College in 2013, over 1,550 South Carolinians have earned bachelor's degrees offered through Palmetto College at USC Aiken, USC Beaufort, USC Columbia, and USC Upstate, including one graduate who turned 90 years old the week after he graduated, Mr. West said. The accessible, affordable, and flexible options make going back to school a possibility, "not just anywhere, but to USC." Like many of the near 4,000 students enrolled in Palmetto College Online, Mr. West said he returned to school as a non-traditional adult student, after serving in the military for over 18 years, traveling the world, and serving in the South Carolina National Guard. He said he was inspired by his pre-teen son, who challenged him to finish his degree before he did. With his degree in hand (before his son graduated from high school), and in addition to serving in the Guard, he now works part-time as an Admissions Counselor for Palmetto College, helping others gain the same opportunity that Palmetto College gave him.

Mr. West said the accomplishments and successes of online students are somewhat different than those already discussed. While online students often experience achievements through some of the same opportunities such as Graduation with Leadership Distinction, undergraduate research, and the adult honor society Alpha Sigma Lambda; Mr. West said online students' primary accomplishments often relate to improvements in employment status following degree completion – either through a promotion, a new job, or a better salary, as he experienced.

Palmetto College's new television commercials feature four students who exemplify student successes and accomplishments, Mr. West said. First, Nicole Ramsey earned a BA in Elementary Education through USC Columbia while working 50-plus hours managing retail – all while raising a son. Completing her degree allowed her to achieve her dream of being a teacher and she was recently named "Rookie Teacher of the Year" at Berkeley County Intermediate where she teaches fifth grade. Second, Dirk Bron Jr. who attended USC Salkehatchie and USC Union, completed an associate degree online while working as a State Trooper. Through Palmetto College, he earned a BS in Criminal Justice from USC Upstate and now has a job that requires a bachelor's degree – associate magistrate judge in Laurens County. Third, Chan Samreth was a registered nurse in Spartanburg who needed a bachelor's degree to

advance in her profession. While juggling a busy work schedule and family responsibilities, she earned her BS in Nursing from USC Upstate through Palmetto College. The degree opens doors for her future. Fourth, Andrew Verma who worked in banking in Columbia for a decade but needed a bachelor's degree to take the next leap in his finance career, earned a BS in Business Administration from USC Aiken through Palmetto College, which allowed him to make a big transition – managing a large team for Wells Fargo in Charlotte.

Mr. West said Palmetto College is excited about Adam Everett's graduation. He is a first former Gamecock baseball star who, drafted before he could graduate, played eleven years in the major leagues before working for the Atlanta Braves. Mr. Everett finished his degree this summer and will walk across the stage in December 2019. Mr. Everett, a proud father of four who also earned his bachelor's degree before his children earned theirs, said he could never have completed his USC degree without Palmetto College Online, Mr. West said.

Mr. West thanked the Board of Trustees and President Caslen for recognizing the transformative power of a college education in general, and the worth of degrees granted by the University of South Carolina institutions and Regional Palmetto Colleges. He also thanked them for their unwavering support of the accessible, affordable, flexible education for all South Carolinians through Palmetto College Online and for recognizing the military's need for educational options, by lowering the tuition rate through the tuition assistance program.

Chairman Allen thanked the students for their insightful presentations.

IV. Other Matters

Chairman Allen called for any other matters to come before the committee.

V. Adjournment

There being no other business to come before the committee, Chairman Allen declared the meeting adjourned at 12:43 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

J. Cantey Heath, Jr.
Secretary