

A Resolution to Restore Confidence in the Presidential Selection Process

Approved by the Faculty Senate, May 14, 2021

Whereas, after selecting Robert Caslen as President of the University of South Carolina, the Board of Trustees acknowledged a need to reform its policies and procedures to address undue external influence in the presidential search; and,

Whereas, in the processes of reforming its policies and procedures, the Board developed an Oath of Office Code of Conduct and Statement of Commitment through which each Board member affirms that “my board colleagues and I are primarily accountable to the University System’s students, faculty, staff and to the general public” and commits to “a healthy culture of board governance, one that is committed to sustaining the trust and support for the University System’s stakeholders”; and,

Whereas, the Board further committed to a policy specifying the Fiduciary Duties of Trustees (BTRU 3.02) including a “Duty to act in good faith: To execute work on behalf of the institution thoroughly and in support of the institution at all times”; and,

Whereas, the Board has constructively engaged a process of self-examination and education to improve the culture and the conduct of shared governance; and,

Whereas, Section 59-117-40(5) of the Code of Laws of South Carolina, the Board Bylaws, and the policy on the Presidential Candidate Search Committee (BTRU 3.01), define the Board’s responsibility and power to appoint a president as well as the customary participation of faculty and other members of the university community in presidential selection; and,

Whereas, the Board responsibly engaged constituencies concerned with aspects of the Presidential Candidate Search Committee policy adopted in August 2020 in a process to further improve that policy, a process not yet concluded; and,

Whereas, sustained efforts of the Board, University administration, and faculty to improve shared governance as well as a unique confluence of events present an extraordinary opportunity to restore the bond of trust and confidence that should exist between the faculty, represented by the Faculty Senate, and the Board of Trustees and to unite all members of the university community in commitment to the highest ideals and aspirations of the institution, now, therefore, be it

Resolved, that the Board of Trustees should:

- foster open and clear communication regarding both the procedures and the process of the presidential search;
- take great care to ensure that search procedures are transparently followed;
- ensure that the search committee includes appropriate representation from key constituents, including faculty, staff, students, and alumni;
- ensure the search committee membership will be diverse both demographically and in its expertise;

- require that the search committee develop, approve, and make public a clear position profile related to institutional needs, “following a thoughtful discussion with the campus community” as recommended by the Association of Governing Boards of Universities and Colleges in *Presidential Search: An Overview for Board Members* (2012);
- expect that the search committee will produce a slate of diverse, high-quality candidates through a search process that reflects the University’s mission and values;
- solicit and consider the counsel of the UofSC community throughout the search process and in its deliberations regarding the final candidates; and
- exclude the reporting of departures from search procedures and processes from any confidentiality agreements members of the search committee are required to sign.