

July 8, 2004

**MEMORANDUM**

**To:** Mr. Dalton B. Floyd, Jr., Chairman, and Members, Commission on Higher Education

**From:** Dr. Vermelle J. Johnson, Chair, and Members, Committee on Academic Affairs and Licensing

**Consideration of By-Laws of  
Lowcountry Graduate Education Center**

**Background**

The Lowcountry Graduate Center (LGC) is a non-profit consortium of higher education institutions with the purpose of “increasing access to graduate educational opportunities for the citizens of the tri-county Charleston metropolitan area of South Carolina.” The tri-county area includes Charleston, Berkeley, and Dorchester Counties. The three institutions represented by LGC are The Citadel, the College of Charleston, and the Medical University of South Carolina (MUSC). The proposed bylaws outline an administrative and governance structure for the operation of LGC.

LGC is modeled after the highly successful University Center of Greenville, which is a consortium of seven senior institutions (Clemson University, Furman University, Medical University of South Carolina, South Carolina State University, University of South Carolina, and the University of South Carolina - Spartanburg), and one technical college (Greenville Technical College). The Greenville Center offers more than 600 courses in fifty-three graduate and undergraduate degree programs.

LGC was created in response to concerns expressed by the Charleston Legislative Delegation as well as by members of the local business community that the lack of a full range of graduate school opportunities in the Lowcountry was serving as an obstacle to economic development. Needs-analysis research

completed by LGC in 2002 reported a significant demand for graduate school offerings in business, education, computer science, and engineering. Currently, LGC is offering coursework in several degree programs, with spring 2004 enrollment estimated at 150.

LGC is jointly operated by the three member institutions. One institution is designated by the Board of Directors as the “host” institution, and thus bears responsibility for providing instructional, administrative, and student services facilities for the consortium. The host institution will receive compensation for fulfilling this function. Currently, the College of Charleston serves as the host institution. The consortium also may eventually include affiliate member institutions.

The Board of Directors will be composed of the LGC Executive Director, as well as the President, the Provost, and two members of the Board of Trustees of each of the three member institutions. Affiliate member institutions may serve on the Board as ex-officio non-voting members.

An Advisory Council of community leaders, including appointees made by the Charleston, Berkeley, and Dorchester County Legislative Delegations, will serve the Executive Director and Board of Directors in an advisory capacity.

Approval of programs to be offered at the LGC is determined by the Executive Committee; approval of the Board of Directors is not required.

The Board of Directors will appoint a fiduciary agent from among the member institutions, and that agent will serve all functions of treasurer and comptroller for LGC. The agent will be entitled to receive a percentage of the approved annual budget, the amount of which will be determined by the Board.

The Bylaws were enacted by the Board of Directors on January 22, 2004, and were submitted to the Commission in the late spring of 2004.

On October 2, 2004, the Commission approved a LGC below-the-line funding request of \$435,000 for FY 2004-05, contingent upon receipt, review, and approval by the Commission of a comprehensive operating plan, bylaws, and a detailed budget. The 2003-04 Budget Bill from the General Assembly includes an appropriation for \$465,000 for FY 2004-05. The proposed LGC budget includes: \$150,000 for program support; \$110,000 for facilities; \$94,000 for administrative support; \$60,000 for marketing of new programs; \$26,000 for fringe benefits; and \$25,000 for operating expenses.

**Staff Recommendation**

The staff suggests that the Committee on Academic Affairs and Licensing commend favorably to the Commission the *Lowcountry Graduate Center Bylaws*.

**Committee Recommendation**

The Committee on Academic Affairs will meet on July 7, 2004, and will present its recommendation at the CHE meeting.

Enclosure: Lowcountry Graduate Center Bylaws