

# COLLEGE *of* CHARLESTON

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## OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT

President P. George Benson  
Presentation to the S.C. Commission on Higher Education  
11:15 a.m., Thursday, August 9, 2012

### Opening

Good morning. I appreciate the opportunity to tell you a little about the College of Charleston.

I'm joined today by George Hynd, our Provost and Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs.

I want to start by thanking all of you for your work on the commission. You serve a vital function in our public higher education system, and your efforts have a direct, positive impact on the people of South Carolina.

I also want to thank Julie Carullo for stepping in as Acting Executive Director and keeping all of us on track.

I am pleased that CHE continues to pursue the "Action Plan for Higher Education." The plan remains a viable and achievable blueprint for strengthening our state's workforce, stimulating our local and state economies, and improving our quality of life. Obviously, there is not enough money available to fully implement the plan as quickly as we would all like, but progress is being made.

Most notably, the regulatory relief bill that was passed in 2011 was a significant step. But even more must be done to ease some of the regulations that constrain our universities. Less regulation will enable our colleges and universities to more easily reduce costs, to respond more quickly to changes in the marketplace, to operate more efficiently, and to be able to acquire necessary operating funds.

Today I will briefly touch on the College's budget; I'll highlight some of the College's accomplishments and activities from the past year, and finally I will tell you a little about our plans and activities in the area of economic development.

### 1. College Budget

After multiple years of having our budget reduced, the College's base funding for the current fiscal year was left intact. Hip hip hooray! It's been a tough four years.

In addition, the College received some nonrecurring funding:

- \$1.9 million toward the build-out of our School of Sciences and Mathematics building. This is an \$11 million project to complete the second floor of the building, which is located along Calhoun Street.
- \$2 million for the development of an Interactive Digital Technology program and resource center for education, research, and economic development in South Carolina. This funding requires a 1 to 1 match from the private sector.
- We also received \$1.8 million in State Lottery funding for technology and deferred maintenance.

It is significant that the state budget also included a 3 percent salary increase for state employees. While we are thankful for that, I wish it had been merit-based, rather than across-the-board.

The College allocated an additional 1.5 percent merit increase for our permanent faculty and staff. We are losing top faculty and staff to other universities and organizations that offer far more competitive salaries. These increases are an important step in addressing this issue, but we have a long way to go to get our salaries up to market.

The College is not requesting any new funding for the next fiscal year. We would, however, ask that CHE continue to push for a Bond Bill. It's now been more than a decade since the last one.

## 2. The College

The College continues to receive national recognition and exposure through a variety of media and university rankings. In addition to the annual rankings in which we are accustomed to seeing the College listed – such as The Princeton Review and Kiplinger's – the College is frequently included in national lists that don't receive as much attention.

For example, earlier this year, the website InsideCollege.com named the College one of the Top 21 "Hottest Colleges in the Nation." Other universities on this list included Duke, Yale, Michigan, Brown, and Vanderbilt.

Another example is a database published by the Chronicle of Higher Education. The database showed that when measuring cost per student completing a degree, the College is the most efficient and lowest-cost public university in South Carolina.

The College currently ranks 6<sup>th</sup> for in-state tuition among the state's 13 four-year institutions. For the quality of our programs; for the quality of our faculty and staff; for the quality of the experience these students receive on campus and off in Charleston, our tuition is remarkably low. It's so low, that sustaining our quality is our biggest challenge.

Our student demand remains very strong. For Fall 2012, we received over 14,000 total applications and roughly 12,000 freshman applications. Based on admissions deposits to date, we expect to welcome about 2,200 new freshmen at convocation on August 20.

This past spring, the College awarded more than 1,400 undergraduate degrees in two ceremonies on the College's historic Cistern Yard. We also celebrated the largest class ever for the Graduate School of the College of Charleston -- a total of 160 students received degrees in master's programs such as marine biology, environmental studies, communication, historic preservation, and other majors.

These graduates joined the College's network of about 54,000 alumni around the world. They moved on to a wide range of pursuits - from service in the Peace Corps, to professional sports, to corporate America, to masters and doctoral programs.

More than 100 of our May graduates were accepted into medical, dental, veterinary, pharmacy, and nursing schools. Of those, 41 were accepted to medical schools, including programs at Harvard, Mayo, UC Davis, Pittsburgh, Virginia, Stanford, and Georgetown. Many will attend medical school right here in South Carolina -- at MUSC or USC.

### Student-Athletes

Our student-athletes are excelling both in the classroom and in their respective sports.

Many of our student-athletes were named to the 2012 Southern Conference Spring Academic All-Conference Team. Three student-athletes on that list, all members of our Women's Tennis Team and members of our Honors College, had perfect 4.0 GPAs.

*[Senior Caroline Newman and junior Christin Newman of Greensboro, N.C.; and sophomore Kelly Kambourelis of Melbourne, Fla.]*

A number of our teams competed for Southern Conference and National Championships last year.

Our softball team made it to the finals of the Southern Conference Tournament. Our Men's and Women's Tennis Teams both won Southern Conference Championships and moved on to the NCAA Tournament.

In June, our Sailing Team won the national championship, and we hope to get them to the White House this fall. And in its first year of competition, the College's Beach Volleyball Team was selected to play in the sport's equivalent of the Final Four.

By the way, two College of Charleston student-athletes are competing in the Olympic Games in London. Andrew Lawrence, a native of London and a point guard on our Men's Basketball team, is a member of Great Britain's National Basketball Team. Juan Maegli, a member of our sailing team who is originally from Guatemala, placed ninth overall. This was his second Olympics. He competed in Beijing in 2008. In the opening ceremony, he carried the national flag for Guatemala.

In addition to the exposure we receive through our academic and athletic programs, the College continues to build on its national reputation by showcasing our beautiful campus.

For several days in January, our campus served as a national stage for candidates in the South Carolina Republican Presidential Primary. Every major Republican Presidential candidate made appearances on our campus and nearly all the national news and cable networks broadcast reports and programs from the College.

But it was Charleston native Stephen Colbert's campus rally in his run for the Presidency of the "United States of South Carolina" that drew the largest crowd and the most media attention. More than 5,000 people packed into the Cistern Yard, including 150 media representatives. According to estimates from our media monitoring service, media coverage of the event exposed the College to more than 170 million television viewers worldwide. If we were to pay to reach that many viewers, it would cost the College more than \$19 million dollars!

### Strategic Plan

The College is making progress on the implementation of our 10-year Strategic Plan. I have discussed the plan in past presentations here, so I won't get into the details today.

As part of our Strategic Plan, we recently completed a new Campus Master Plan. The plan lays out guidelines and options for addressing our space needs, including the improvement of our existing facilities and the creation of new living, learning, and administrative spaces.

Some of the projects identified in the plan include the completion of our School of Sciences and Mathematics Building, which I mentioned earlier; the renovation of the Hollings Science Center on Coming Street; and the renovation of the Simons Center for the Arts on St. Philip Street.

The plan identifies needed new facilities: the addition of a new residence hall; a student fitness center; an active-learning, high-tech classroom building; an alumni center; and an additional building for our business school.

As we discussed in the past, the Strategic Plan also calls on us to become more entrepreneurial and less dependent on state funding. To that end, over the past few years, we have made significant investments in our Division of Institutional Advancement.

As a result, the College set a new fundraising record in the last fiscal year. In fact, philanthropic support for the College has risen for four consecutive years despite the recession.

Just within the past few weeks, we announced two leadership gifts for our national comprehensive fundraising campaign:

Sam and Gina Shapiro of Atlanta have pledged \$2 million in support of Jewish Student Life and Scholarships at the College.

And College of Charleston alumni Steve and Emily Swanson of Charleston and New York City have provided a gift of \$2.25 million to establish and endow merit scholarships in our Honors College.

These and other recent gifts give the College significant momentum as we move toward the public phase of our fundraising campaign.

### **3. Economic Development**

The last topic I want to address is economic development.

In my presentation to you last year, I mentioned that the College was in the process of ramping up its efforts in this area. To that end, last fall we established the Office of Economic Development. This office works to promote economic development in the Lowcountry and throughout South Carolina by providing educational and other service activities in support of new and existing businesses.

This office is headed by Bobby Marlowe. Many of you know Bobby through his past service as chair of the College's Board of Trustees and as a member of CHE's Action Plan Study Committee. One of Bobby's jobs is to go door-to-door across South Carolina's business community asking simply: How can we help you? And then listening. We did that at Boeing two plus years ago and they talked nonstop for 2 ½ hours.

As a result, we have a number of Boeing-related initiatives and programs underway or in development. I won't list all of them today, but I would like to share a couple.

Since November 2010, the College has hosted and helped conduct an orientation program for new and existing Boeing employees who have come to work at Boeing's North Charleston facility. To date, about 3,300 Boeing employees have gone thru the orientation. The orientation includes lectures on the aerospace industry, Boeing's role in the aerospace industry, and the history and culture of Charleston. It also includes walking and bus tours of the Charleston peninsula. The employees represent all levels of the organization --from executives to maintenance staff.

The College's North Campus in North Charleston abuts Boeing's property. This proximity has created the potential for all sorts of partnerships and collaborations with Boeing.

One example is the College's proposed new Bachelor of Professional Studies program, which we expect to bring to you this fall. If approved, this program would begin in January 2013. It would enable adult learners (24 or older) with prior college work to complete a bachelor's degree. All required courses for this program would be offered at our North Campus, and we expect that this program would be attractive to many employees of Boeing.

Another development at our North Campus is the appointment of a Dean. Godfrey Gibbison joins us from his position as Director of the School of Economic Development at Georgia Southern. One of his main responsibilities is academic program development aimed at meeting the educational needs of non-traditional students, including those interested in the Bachelor of Professional Studies.

Previously, the North Campus and the Lowcountry Graduate Center shared the same leader. For day-to-day operations, the Executive Director of the LGC will now report to Dean Gibbison. This new organizational structure was established thru a new consortium agreement developed last spring by the three LGC partners: MUSC, The Citadel, and the College.

Dean Gibbison will lead the development of a new Strategic Plan for both the North Campus and the Lowcountry Graduate Center.

With this new organizational structure and new leadership in place, I am expecting great progress at both the North Campus and the LGC in the next two or three years.

I want to emphasize how excited I am by our state's growing recognition of the connection between higher education and economic development. CHE has long recognized this link and worked to explain this connection to our state's leadership.

I believe our legislature and our Governor are beginning to understand and appreciate the fact that every two- and four-year institution – not just the designated research universities – are doing their part to support South Carolina's pro-growth, pro-business agenda. South Carolina must be a state where any prospective employer can find an educated workforce, highly skilled faculty experts, a system that can quickly train and retrain workers to meet the needs of the marketplace, and an intellectual climate that generates and embraces new ideas and new technology. All of this is fostered or delivered by our universities. All of this supports economic growth.

For well over two hundred years our work at the College focused solely on educating 18 to 22 year olds in the liberal arts and sciences. Today that is not enough. Today we are also committed to our professional schools and graduate programs.

And increasingly, we will be committed to conducting more funded research. These programs and activities are badly needed by all sectors of our state economy.

In the future, we expect to develop more such programs. Some of our emerging programs will be for adults. Some will be graduate programs done in partnership with other state universities.

Similar program development is taking place at several other comprehensive universities, as all of us work to meet the needs of our local communities and our state.

The opportunity for CHE and the legislature will be to recognize that, for some comprehensive universities, this new focus on economic development should include targeted doctoral programs in areas that do not compete with our research universities and where the comprehensive universities have the necessary expertise. And these doctoral programs may have a very specific professional orientation. That is, they may be targeted at producing practitioners rather than academics.

These new programs will not be evidence of ego, or so-called mission creep. They will be established because South Carolina needs them to remain competitive and to meet the escalating needs of our business community.

The legislature took the first steps toward recognizing the economic value of such targeted doctoral programs this past session. I am convinced that more growth in graduate programs will be good for South Carolina. And I am convinced that the business community will help us support these programs so that the costs to our taxpayers will be minimized.

I appreciate your attention. I would now be happy to answer any questions.