



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

May 31, 2019

Commission on Higher Education Announces New President and Executive Director

COLUMBIA – Dr. Rusty L. Monhollon has been named president and executive director of the South Carolina Commission on Higher Education (CHE). Monhollon’s appointment was confirmed by a unanimous vote of the Commissioners at a called meeting on May 31. Monhollon, who serves as assistant commissioner for academic affairs at the Missouri Department of Higher Education, is expected to begin work in mid-July.

On behalf of the Search Committee, Committee Chair Charles Dalton (Greenville) recommended Monhollon’s appointment from an excellent pool of candidates “only after careful study and deliberation including the consideration of comments from public colleges and universities, CHE staff and the general public.” Commission Chair and former State Senator Wes Hayes (Rock Hill) said that “Rusty Monhollon has the academic and management experience and a post-secondary vision that will serve South Carolina’s colleges and universities, student and families, and business and industry through the challenging years ahead.”

Monhollon earned M.A. and Ph.D. degrees in history from the University of Kansas while working as a fulltime welder and machinist to support his family. He has taught at the University of Kansas, Washburn University (Kansas), Rockhurst University (Missouri), the University of Missouri-Columbia, and Hood College (Maryland).

The extensive experience that Monhollon gained in the classroom prepared him for a move into higher education administration with the Missouri Department of Higher Education (MDHE), the state’s coordinating body for 13 public universities and 14 community and technical colleges. As the Assistant Commissioner for Academic Affairs at MDHE, Monhollon is a key member of the Missouri Commissioner’s senior staff and is involved in all department functions, including budgeting, performance funding, personnel policies and decisions, financial aid, and government relations. He also provides leadership for statewide policymaking, strategic planning, and institutional mission review.

The author of ‘This is America?’: The Sixties in Lawrence, Kansas, Monhollon is a frequent contributor to professional journals, book chapters and book reviews. He is a member of the Association of American Colleges and Universities and the State Higher Education Executive Officers organization.

Mike LeFever, former president and CEO of South Carolina Independent Colleges and Universities until his retirement in 2018, has served as CHE’s interim president and executive director since January. Chairman Hayes observed that “Mike stepped in at a crucial time to steer the transition to new Commission leadership and improved relations with lawmakers and the higher education community. His dedication to higher education and the citizens of South Carolina is an inspiration as the Commission moves forward. We are grateful that Mike helped pave the way for Dr. Monhollon’s appointment, and therefore, the Commission’s future success.” LeFever will continue to serve the Commission until Dr. Monhollon assumes his position on July 15, 2019.

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The South Carolina Commission on Higher Education (CHE), established in 1967, serves as the coordinating board for South Carolina’s 33 public institutions of higher learning. It acts both as an oversight agency on behalf of the General Assembly and as an advocate for higher education. The Commission is responsible for assuring a balance between student and taxpayer interests and institutional policies, aspirations, and needs. CHE is committed to access, affordability, and quality in the state system of higher education through coordination, regulation, advocacy and oversight, as directed by the General Assembly.