



**Minutes of the Council of Presidents**  
**October 5, 2022**  
**USC Alumni Center**  
**900 Senate Street**  
**Columbia, SC 29201**

**Council of Presidents Members Present:**

Dr. Michael Amiridis, University of South Carolina, Columbia (Virtual)

Dr. Michael Benson, Coastal Carolina University

Dr. Luther (Fred) Carter, Francis Marion University

Dr. Walt Collins, University of South Carolina Lancaster (Virtual)

Dr. April Cone, University of South Carolina Salkehatchie

Col. Alexander Conyers, South Carolina State University

Dr. Richard Cosentino, Lander University

Dr. Galen DeHay, Tri-County Technical College (Virtual)

Dr. Susan Elkins, University of South Carolina Palmetto College

Dr. Jermaine Ford, Florence-Darlington Technical College

Dr. Marilyn Fore, Horry-Georgetown Technical College

Dr. Richard Gough, Technical College of the Lowcountry (Virtual)

Dr. Tim Hardee, South Carolina Technical College System (Virtual)

Dr. Bennie Harris, University of South Carolina Upstate (Virtual)

Dr. Daniel Heimmermann, University of South Carolina, Aiken (Virtual)

Dr. Andrew Hsu, College of Charleston (Virtual)

Dr. Patricia Lee, Williamsburg Technical College

Dr. Randy Lowell, University of South Carolina Union

Dr. Forrest Mahan, Aiken Technical College

Dr. Michael Mikota (Virtual)

Dr. Stacey Moore, York Technical College (Virtual)

Dr. Al Panu, University of South Carolina Beaufort

Dr. Kevin Pollock, Central Carolina Technical College

Dr. Ronald Rhames, Midlands Technical College

Dr. Hope Rivers, Piedmont Technical College (Virtual)

Dr. Edward Serna, Winthrop University (Virtual)

Dr. Michael Sonntag (Virtual)

Dr. Walt Tobin, Orangeburg-Calhoun Technical College (Virtual)

Dr. Willie Todd, Denmark Technical College (Virtual)

**Other Guests Present**

Mr. Darryl L. Bridges, Francis Marion University

Mr. Bob Quinn, South Carolina Research Authority

Mr. Russell Cook, South Carolina Research Authority

**CHE Staff**

Dr. Rusty Monhollon, President & Executive Director

**I. Welcome**

**Chair Fore**

Chair Fore called the meeting to order at 11:05 am and welcomed all meeting attendees. Chair Fore acknowledged the Council's purpose to be united in one common cause to promote the value of higher education in the State of South Carolina, to share ideas and to learn from one another.



President Monhollon acknowledged and thanked the newest Council members, Presidents Amiridis and Conyers.

The meeting agenda was posted on the Commission on Higher Education (CHE) website with proper notice of the meeting. The meeting was held in accordance with the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA). There were no public guests or media present.

## **II. Approval of Minutes**

**Chair Fore**

Chair Fore introduced the draft minutes for the May 31, 2022, Council of Presidents (COP) meeting, and asked whether there was any discussion. Dr. Mahan made the motion to accept the minutes as drafted. The motion was seconded by Dr. Pollock. The minutes were unanimously approved and the motion carried.

## **III. Discussion Topics:**

### **Capital Approval Process Review Committee Report**

**Darryl L. Bridges**

Chair Fore introduced and called on Mr. Bridges, VP for Finance & Facilities, Francis Marion University & Capital Approval Process Review Committee Member to provide an overview of the committee's findings and recommendations for improvement, and answer questions posed by the Council of Presidents.

Mr. Bridges presented on behalf of Committee Chair, John Morris, who could not attend the day's meeting. A copy of the report and ppt presentation was distributed to Council members. Mr. Bridges restated the charge of the committee to review the current process for approval of capital projects over \$1 million; to identify opportunities to streamline the process without sacrificing the goals of the institutional boards, Commission on Higher Education (CHE), Executive Budget Office, Joint Bond Review Committee (JBRC) and/or State Fiscal Accountability Authority (SFAA) and the Office of the State Engineer; to identify best practices from other universities or states; and to provide recommendations to the Council of Presidents to improve the current process, and state goals for savings in time and cost within three months.

The current capital approval process is a statutory requirement which requires projects to go through two phases of review and approval from each of the CHE, JBRC, and SFAA, which includes the completion of budget documents for each entity that are repetitive and to submit architectural drawings, all of which can take up to 12 months to complete. Mr. Bridges explained in detail the project lifecycle and other actions that may occur to lengthen the approval process.

Mr. Bridges explained the new legislation as of FY22 (revised FY23) Proviso 117.153 (117.140), for a project cost of at least \$1 million but not greater than \$5 million for public research universities has proven to decrease the approval timeline for qualifying projects; however, it is a temporary measure. The committee researched capital project approval processes in neighboring states to find the majority only needed approval by the institutional governing board and submittal of a capital plan to the state.

The committee submitted six recommendations noting the largest improvement in the project timeline could be achieved by modernizing the approval and reporting thresholds based on current inflation and escalation of costs.

Chair Fore thanked Mr. Bridges and the committee for their thorough report and thoughtful recommendations and opened the floor for discussion.

After discussion led by President Carter, the Council agreed to form two subcommittees to ascertain the feasibility of streamlining the capital project approval process by:

1. Administratively, connect with the Office of the State Engineer and give them a copy of the report. Upon review, determine which of the recommendations for improvement could be initiated, such as the consolidation of documentation.
2. Legislatively, connect with liaisons to discuss Proviso 117.153.

Council members will contact either Chair Fore or President Carter to self-nominate for each subcommittee. Dr. Monhollon requested the inclusion of technical college presidents and stated CHE is willing to join in the conversations.

### **South Carolina Research Authority (SCRA)**

**Bob Quinn, Executive Director**  
**Russell Cook, SC Academic Innovations Director**

Chair Fore introduced and called on Mr. Quinn and Mr. Cook to present on the South Carolina Research Authority to educate the Council on their mission, projects and impact across the state, following the Council's previous discussion acknowledging knowledge-based economies in neighboring states.

Mr. Quinn stated the SCRA was established by the SC General Assembly in 1983 to fuel South Carolina's innovation economy by accelerating technology enabled growth of academia, entrepreneurship and industry. It's 11 member Executive Committee includes five college presidents. The SCRA supports four programs: SC Academic Innovations promotes funding opportunities, both federal and state, for early-stage startups and academic research; SC Facilities offers laboratory and administrative workspaces for tech-based startups and academic institutions; SC Industry Solutions facilitates partnerships between startups, industry and academia; and SC Launch provides mentoring and monetary investment for startups not academically based.

Mr. Cook relayed many Council of Presidents' members do not have a relationship with the SCRA and will send a survey soon for more information. He mentioned within the next 2-3 weeks, information will be sent regarding funding opportunities such as the Academic Matching Grant, up to \$15,000 in matching funds awarded to institutions of higher education to expand funding for commercially relevant technology development and SCRA-Academia Collaboration Team (SACT), \$6.7 million over three years funding for multi-institutional research to develop innovation for industry in South Carolina. The SCRA and SACT would like to see more collaboration among the state's colleges.

During the course of the presentation, Mr. Quinn expanded on the functions and impact of SCRA's programs, SACT success stories related to Industry 4.0, SC Launch successful exit stories including Proterra's IPO and Green River Spirits' acquisition/merger, and the six innovation centers across the state that currently house 37 companies.

Mr. Quinn presented on the SC EPSCoR Committee's Science and Technology Plan: Vision 2030 which outlines the state's strategy over the next 5-7 years to realize long-term economic competitiveness through STEM related growth. To sustain economic growth and create higher wage jobs, the Plan contains goals, actions and metrics for four areas: high-tech industry growth; innovation and entrepreneurship; research competitiveness; and K-20 STEM education. Currently, South Carolina lags behind national averages for share of high-tech private sector employment, venture capital investment, research and development expenditures, K-12 testing scores and teacher salaries, and share of women and people of color with postsecondary STEM degrees. With focus on the S&T Plan, efforts will be made to gain legislative support to drive the growth of high-tech industry in the same way the state targeted manufacturing to drive recent economic growth. A copy of the report will be sent to the Council following the meeting, along with today's ppt.

The floor was opened for questions and comments. Dr. Benson mentioned the North Carolina research triangle and Utah's UStar initiative. Dr. Carter suggested all Council members should invite Russell Cook to meet their faculty to promote SCRA's academic grants and collaboration opportunities. Chair Fore stated she would like to be more involved with SCRA and opportunities for industry.

### **CHE Report: Transfer Task Force Status**

**President Monhollon**

President Monhollon reported Proviso 117.139, directed CHE to work with the technical colleges and public institutions of higher learning to develop policies to guarantee students who have earned an AA or AS degree from a public two-year institution receive at least 60 transfer credits and are given junior status at a public four-year college or university. The effective date for implementation is June 1, 2022.

This past spring, CHE's Academic Affairs requested and reviewed copies of transfer policies and asked four-year institutions to comply with Proviso 117.139. CHE reported to the House Ways and Means Committee and as of June, the proviso order has been fulfilled and guarantees any student with 60 credits may transfer and attain junior status.

President Monhollon stated there is no oversight or guidelines for mediation currently. CHE proposes to develop a statewide comprehensive transfer system. As a first step, CHE has hired a full-time staff member responsible for transfer and articulation, Dr. Michael Igbonagwam. For the past year, CHE has worked with the State Higher Education Executive Officers Association (SHEEO) and the John N. Gardner Institute in North Carolina in regard to transfer policy standards, as part of a 30 person taskforce culled from all sectors, including independents in higher education. The taskforce's action plan is to be completed in January 2023.

For South Carolina, CHE's larger objectives for a statewide comprehensive transfer system include:

- Develop a set of principles/best practices for transfer where all public institutions are in agreement
- Prepare a general agreement on transfer for all CEOs to sign
- Include lower division and general education credits in the 60 credits
- All courses listed on SCTRAC are equivalent
- Establish an advisory committee on transfer/articulation to provide CHE with advice on issues and to develop a process for mediation or appeals
- Host a transfer conference in the Spring for registrars and advisors
- Create a reverse transfer policy for all credits to transfer

The goal is to benefit students by decreasing the amount of time to graduation and to decrease the cost of education.

The floor was opened for discussion. President Hsu, while positive about the need for a successful transfer, questioned whether CHE has the authority to override faculty decisions in regard to course equivalency. President Monhollon stated students are the priority and recommended faculty are included in development of the process. President Carter stated the transfer bill passed in the House this year but stalled in the Senate. He felt if the colleges are in full support, the legislature will reconsider. President Carter also asked for clarification on the appeal process. President Monhollon stated a representative group within CHE will be created to review student transfer appeals and verify whether the institutions followed the established guidelines. It would be an opportunity for CHE to better understand issues related to AP credit and dual enrollment. Chair Fore stated that years ago, 86 courses were approved for transfer and stated it is not necessary to throw out the work done in the past. After much discussion with comments made by Presidents Panu, Benson, Hsu, Hardee, Rivers and Carter, the consensus is the transfer issue should move forward to include input from provosts and registrars, and is a priority for the state legislature to pass. Presidents Benson, Hsu and Panu offered their sites for the spring conference.

### **Schedule Date for Next Meeting**

**Chair Fore**

Chair Fore asked to schedule the next Council of Presidents meeting either the week of February 20 or February 27, 2023. At the time, she asked the Council to forward their choice of date to Stephanie Danesie via email.

#### **IV. Old Business**

Chair Fore asked if there was any old business to discuss. President Monhollon thanked the Council for their contributions paid to the Foundation to pay for meeting space and expenses for the Council of Presidents this academic year.

#### **V. New Business**

##### **Announcements:**

President Monhollon will report on Ascend 60X30 at the next meeting due to time constraints.

#### **VI. Adjournment**

The Council of Presidents meeting adjourned at 1:56 p.m.

