**MINUTES**

**SOUTH CAROLINA STATE UNIVERSITY**

**BOARD OF TRUSTEES HYBRID MEETING**

**ORANGEBURG, SOUTH CAROLINA**

 **FEBRUARY 20, 2025**

**MAY 5, 2015**

**CALL TO ORDER/OPEN SESSION:**

Chair Douglas Gantt called the meeting to order at 10:10 AM. He noted that proper notice was given regarding the meeting to comply with the Freedom of Information Act. The agenda was circulated to the members (Attachment 1). Trustee Jameel Allen gave the invocation.

**Board Members Present:** Jameel Allen, Douglas Gantt, Rodney Jenkins, Darrell Johnson, William Oden, Robert Reese, Monica Scott, Wilbur Shuler, Macie Smith, and Daniel Varat. Starlee Alexander andLouvetta Dicks via Zoom. *Ex-Officio Members*: Hank Allen and Alexander Thierry. Stephen Beatty via Zoom.

**Board Members Absent:** Franklin Pressley and Lauren Fraiser.

**Administrators & Others:** *President,* Alexander Conyers; *Provost*, Frederick Evans; *CEO of Finance*, Gerald Hubbard Smalls; *Chief of Staff*, Shondra Abraham; *Outside General* *Counsel,* Nashiba Boyd*;* *Interim Athletic* *Director*, Mr. Oliver Pough; *1890 Research Administrator* Delbert Foster; *Vice President for Student Affairs,* Tamara Jeffries-Jackson; *Facilities Director*, Ken Davis*;* *VP Enrollment Management*, Dr. Manicia Finch via Zoom*; SACSCOC Liaison, Valerie Goodwin; Chief Information Officer,* Mr. Eric Ham*; Associate Provost,* Dr. David Staten*; Executive Director of 1890 Research and Extension,* Louis Whitesides;  *Administrative Coordinator*, Chrystel Rogers; *Administrative Coordinator and Recorder,* Eartha Mosley. There were many other observers in attendance via Zoom.

**Media Present:** *The T&D Reporter – Dionne Gleaton.*

**ADOPTION OF AGENDA**

Chairman Gantt asked for a motion to approve the agenda. ***Trustee William Oden made a motion to adopt the amended agenda, which was seconded by Trustee Louvetta Dicks. Motion approved.***

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES** *Attachment 2*

Chair Gantt requested approval of the minutes from January 31, 2025. ***Trustee Rodney Jenkins made a motion to approve the minutes, which Trustee Jameel Allen seconded. Motion approved***.

**CHAIRMAN’S COMMENTS**

Chairman Gantt expressed excitement about the recent positive developments at the university. He requested that committee chairs present only action items or brief highlights, as most information had been covered in the previous day's meetings. He expressed his appreciation for Angelia Jackson and Sam Watson, both of whom have been recognized for their exceptional service to the university. He highlighted their dedication, kindness, and commitment to the institution. He emphasized the importance of customer service, citing exemplary behavior. He also recognized and thanked Vice Chair Macie Smith for her $10K contribution to Honors College.

The Chair emphasized the importance of board members being invested in the growth of others rather than themselves. He expressed excitement about the board's progress and the elevation of South Carolina State University to Research II status in the Carnegie Classification of Higher Education Institutions. The Chair credited the team and the Board of Trustees for their work and expressed confidence in maintaining the required criteria for continued classification. He concluded by sharing stories from students who benefited from the university’s support, emphasizing the need for more such stories to be told and urging the board to continue their efforts to enhance the student experience.

**PRESIDENT’S UPDATES Attachment 3**

President Conyers began by introducing the new Title IX Investigator, Mr. Hayden Erwin. He went on to announce that SC State has been elevated to Research II status in the Carnegie Classification of Institutions of Higher Education. SC State joins the elite company of 139 institutions and is currently the only R2 university in SC. He went to announce a press conference for Tuesday with the Governor and other officials to recognize the university's growing role in state research.

President Conyers provided updates on various university activities and upcoming events. The President highlighted achievements in student and faculty research, including a forthcoming faculty-student research presentation and a lifetime achievement award for a faculty member. He also discussed recent engagements with state officials, extension agents, and law school preparation events.

The President continued to discuss the university's financial situation and appropriation requests totaling $ 187 million, including a request to forgive the $ 2.3 million balance on a state loan. He highlighted the need for infrastructure projects like a new convocation center, renovations to Nance Hall, and a health and wellness center. He also presented data on new first-year selected majors, emphasizing the need for change in specific underperforming programs. He encouraged faculty and staff to engage with elected officials to support the university's funding needs. He concluded by announcing upcoming speakers for Founders Day, Honors and Awards Convocation, and Spring Commencement, and requested help in communicating with elected officials involved in the budget process.

President Conyers discussed the process of proposing curriculum changes, emphasizing that the creation of new courses or programs, or the deletion of obsolete ones, is initiated by the specific academic department. However, he noted that the Provost and President can recommend program deletion if it no longer meets program productivity criteria or contributes to the university's mission. He also mentioned plans for the renovation and expansion of the student center, including the potential return of a bowling alley and barbershop. He announced his intention to fill the position of Special Assistant to the President and to combine the roles of VP of Communication and Strategic Partnerships and VP of Institutional Advancement. Lastly, the President outlined a list of quick wins for the benefit of current students, including the completion of Queens Village, renovation of Earl Hall, and improvements to Williams Hall.

**STANDING COMMITTEES WITH ACTION ITEMS**

**Academic Affairs**

The Committee Chair, Dr. Louvetta, shared that the committee had heard from the 7 Deans of colleges and academies. She stated there were no action Items from Academic Affairs.

**Finance and Administration/Operations Committee**

Committee Chair Monica Scott deferred to the VP of Finance, Dr. Gerald Smalls, for a summary and to conclude with one resolution for approval.

Dr. Gerald Smalls discussed the university's financial situation and the need for additional housing and wellness facilities. He mentioned that the university has retired all previous debt and is now seeking to finance new construction and equip a student housing facility and a Health and Wellness Center. He also highlighted the university's participation in the Higher Education Revenue Bond Act and the Historical Black College and University Capital finance program. He emphasized the importance of the board's commitment to the university's capital campaign, which has a goal of $22.1 million and has so far raised $7.4 million. He encouraged the board to be "all in" and to give at a leadership level based on conviction. He also mentioned the Thomas E. Miller Society, which recognizes donors who have given over $100K and encouraged continued participation. Dr. Smalls presented the attached resolution to the Board of Trustees for approval.

*The Bond Resolution*

***The resolution above was approved by the Board of Trustees.***

**Public Relations/Institutional Advancement and Alumni Relations Committee**

The Committee Chair, Jameel Allen, shared a review from the committee. He acknowledged the significant increase in Miller Society inductees since President Conyers took office. He noted that this year’s class was the biggest. He also expressed gratitude to the three distinguished individuals present - the chair of the Board, the National Alumni Association President, and the university president. He highlighted their achievements and the support they had given to the university. Furthermore, he highlighted the university's community events and stressed the importance of serving others.

**Public Service and Agriculture Committee**

The Committee Chair, Starlee Alexander, deferred to Dr. Louis Whitesides for an overview of the committee's work. Dr. Whitesides presented the state of cancer and diabetes cooking classes offered by South Carolina State University, highlighting their statewide reach and the positive impact they are having across South Carolina. The classes aim to educate participants on healthier eating and preparation methods post-diagnosis. He also noted the alarming prevalence of Alzheimer's disease in Orangeburg County and suggested preventative measures through diet. He displayed the university's statewide presence through its programs in 46 counties, reaching over 1 million people through workshops, webinars, and social media.

**Sponsored Research and Information Technology Committee**

The Committee Chair, William Oden, provided a summary of the committee's findings. He shared that Mr. Elbert Malone gave significant updates on all funds that are coming into research, and Mr. Eric Ham gave an update on IT across the campus.

**Student Affairs and Athletics Committee**

The Committee Chair, Hank Allen, provided a short synopsis from the committee. The Student Affairs and Athletics Committee received presentations from student affairs and the SGA president, as well as updates on enrollment efforts. The committee mentioned a resolution to opt into the NCAA House settlement starting in the 2025-26 academic year. The chair praised Coach Pugh's coaching abilities and success, noting his effectiveness with limited plays. Coach Pough presented the attached resolution to the Board of Trustees for approval.

*The NCAA House Settlement Resolution*

***The resolution was approved by the Board of Trustees.***

Chairman Gantt asked National Alumni President Hank Allen to deliver some remarks as his term comes to an end in July. Trustee Allen expressed his gratitude and was privileged to serve on the Board and as the President of the National Alumni Association. He emphasized the importance of thinking big and providing positive attention to elevating the university, its students, and faculty.

The Chair highlighted the impact of President Allen's approach in nurturing individuals with the right soft skills, rather than dismissing them as not ready. He shared that Pfizer Pharmaceuticals created a leadership award in Hank Allen’s honor because of his commitment, engagement, and dedication while an employee.

**OTHER MATTERS**

The faculty senate President, Alexander Thierry, acknowledged the loss of a faculty member, Dr. Jade Robinson. He expressed his desire for the Faculty Senate President to have a designated place to present their report within the committees, as he believes it is an appropriate location according to the bylaws of the Board of Trustees. The Chair stated that there are protocols in place and that everyone must follow the chain of command; changes are also occurring. The General Counsel, Nashiba Boyd, went on to clarify that the Faculty Senate President's report is not mandatory, as per the bylaws, but rather at the discretion of the Board Chair.

**PUBLIC COMMENTS**

None

**EXECUTIVE SESSION**

***Chairman Gantt requested a motion to enter into Executive Session.***  ***Trustee Rodney Jenkins made the motion to go into Executive Session. Trustee Jameel Allen seconded it. Motion approved.*** The following were asked to attend the Executive Session: Hank Allen.

**OPEN SESSION RECONVENED**

***Chairman Gantt requested a motion to exit the Executive Session. Trustee Rodney Jenkins made the motion to go into Executive Session. Trustee Monica Scott seconded it. Motion approved.***  There were no votes or actions taken while in Executive Session, per the Chairman.

***Trustee Macie Smith made a motion to approve the extension of President Alexander Conyer's Contract dated January 1, 2025, to June 30, 2031. Trustee Wilbur Shuler seconded the motion. Motion Approved.***

**ADJOURNMENT**

With no other matters to discuss, the Chair asked for a motion to adjourn. ***Trustee William Oden moved to adjourn the meeting. Trustee Daniel Varat seconded it. Motion Approved.***

The meeting adjourned at 1:55 PM.

Submitted by,



Eartha Mosley

Recorder

Attachments

1 – Agenda

2 – Minutes

3 – President’s Update

4 – Finance Resolution - The Bond Resolution

5 – Athletic Resolution – NCAA House Settlement Resolution