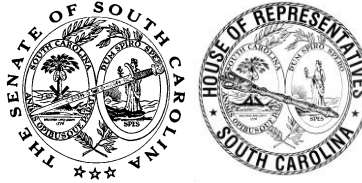


College and University Trustee Screening Commission

Senator Harvey S. Peeler, Jr.
Chairman
Senator Thomas C. Alexander
Senator John. L. Scott, Jr.
Senator Daniel B. "Danny" Verdin, III

Staff:
Martha Casto
Julie Price

Representative William R. Whitmire
Vice-Chairman
Representative John King
Representative Kirkman Finlay, III
Representative James H. "Jay" Lucas



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College and University Trustee Screening Commission Report to the General Assembly April 27, 2021

The College and University Trustee Screening Commission found the following individuals qualified and nominated for the Trustee seats to which they applied. These individuals will be released to receive commitments on Thursday, April 29, 2021 at 10:00 a.m. The concurrent resolution adopted by the General Assembly set the election for Wednesday, May 5, 2021 at 12:00 noon. A complete transcript of the hearings for these candidates will be printed in today's Senate and House Journals.

Coastal Carolina University

2nd Congressional District - seat 2 expires 2025

CANDIDATE FOUND QUALIFIED AND NOMINATED

Oran P. Smith -- West Columbia

4th Congressional District - seat 4 expires 2025

CANDIDATE FOUND QUALIFIED AND NOMINATED

Brad Poston -- Greenville

6th Congressional District - seat 6 expires 2025

CANDIDATE FOUND QUALIFIED AND NOMINATED

John H. Bartell -- Lake City

At-Large - seat 8 expires 2025

CANDIDATE FOUND QUALIFIED AND NOMINATED

Jason Repak -- Myrtle Beach

At-Large - seat 10 expires 2025

CANDIDATE FOUND QUALIFIED AND NOMINATED

*Mark S. Kelley -- Conway
Robert L. O'Brien -- Myrtle Beach*

Coastal Carolina University (continued)

At-Large - seat 12 expires 2025

CANDIDATE FOUND QUALIFIED AND NOMINATED

Brett C. Porterfield -- *Columbia*

H. Delan Stevens -- *Conway*

At-Large - seat 14 expires 2025

CANDIDATE FOUND QUALIFIED AND NOMINATED

Joe N. Jarrett, Jr. -- *Myrtle Beach*

At-Large - seat 15 expires 2025

CANDIDATE FOUND QUALIFIED AND NOMINATED

Patrick Sparks -- *Myrtle Beach*

Winthrop University

At-Large - seat 10 - expires 2027

CANDIDATES FOUND QUALIFIED AND NOMINATED

Glenn A. McCall -- *Rock Hill*

Old Exchange Commission

At-Large - expires 2027 (one seat)

CANDIDATES FOUND QUALIFIED AND NOMINATED

Greg Ohanesian -- *Bennettsville*

Wil Lou Gray Opportunity School

At-Large - expires 2025 (four seats)

CANDIDATES FOUND QUALIFIED AND NOMINATED

D. Stewart Cooner -- *West Columbia*

Cheryl H. Fralick -- *Lexington*

Michael D. Moss -- *Duncan*

Micheal J. Pryor -- *Branchville*

Gregory Vaughn -- *Pendleton*

**STATE OF SOUTH CAROLINA
COLLEGE AND UNIVERSITY TRUSTEE
SCREENING COMMISSION
SCREENING HEARINGS
MONDAY, APRIL 12, 2021**

The within hearings, reported by Kathryn B Bostrom,
Court Reporter and Notary Public in and for the State of
South Carolina; said hearings were taken at the Gressette
Building, Room 209, Columbia, South Carolina, on Monday,
the 12th day of April, 2021, commencing at the hour of
11:52 a.m.

APPEARANCES: Committee Members: Senator Harvey S. Peeler, Chairman Representative William R. Whitmire, Vice Chairman Senator Thomas C. Alexander Senator John L. Scott Senator Daniel B. Verdin Representative Kirkman Finlay Representative James H. Lucas Committee Staff Martha Casto Julie Price Court Reporter: Kathryn Bostrom, Garber Reporting

SENATOR PEELER: I'd like to call the meeting to order. This is a meeting of the College and University of Trustee Screening Commission. I pray that God continues to bless us all. I understand that Representative King is not going to make it, and I think the speaker is on the way, but if there's no objection, we'll go ahead and get started. Welcome everyone. You have an agenda before you. First of all, Winthrop University, at large, seat 10. Glenn McCall, Rock Hill. Good morning, sir.

MR. MCCALL: Good morning, Senator, everyone.

SENATOR PEELER: It's always a pleasure to see you, sir.

MR. MCCALL: Yes, sir, same here.

SENATOR PEELER: If you would, let me swear you in.

MR. MCCALL: Yes, sir. GLENN A. MCCALL having been first duly sworn, was examined and testified as follows:

SENATOR PEELER: Would you like to make a brief statement?

MR. MCCALL: Yes, sir. I'd like to thank each of you for this opportunity to come before you and to be considered once again to serve on the Winthrop University Board of Trustees. As each of you know, these are challenging times, not only for Winthrop but higher ed overall. For one, we're having fewer students that are coming to the university and just through the demographic shifts things are changing also. You probably saw last week a Gallop Poll that said parents, or 46 percent of parents would love for their students to do something other than a four year college degree as far as going to technical school, getting an education or training that would allow them to go right into the job market with an employable skill. So we're having great competition, but I think there is opportunity to continue to be prosperous and to grow over time at Winthrop University. So, thank you, sir.

SENATOR PEELER: Thank you. Any questions or comments. Mr. Scott.

SENATOR SCOTT: Yes, sir. Thank you, Mr. McCall for your willingness to serve. I see that you are now the chair?

MR. MCCALL: Yes, have been for the last three years.

SENATOR SCOTT: Yes, sir. How long have you been on the board now?

MR. MCCALL: I have been on the board since 2012, 2011.

SENATOR SCOTT: Tell me a little bit about in the last 12, this last nine years, the diversity plans since we started talking about the diversity plan. You know, when you get to be chair, you're in the hot seat.

MR. MCCALL: Yes, sir. Well, Winthrop, as you know -- we have 5,800 students. Of those, 38 percent of our student body is students of color and primarily African American. The university does a great job. As you probably already know, that of our student body close to 47 percent are Pell eligible students, so we have a mix of diverse students. And we're continuing to grow that, but what we could like also, we

want to reach out to those students and first in students, but we would like a little more diversity within that diversity. We would like students from all walks of life that can help afford to pay for some of their tuition. We've giving out quite a bit of funds each year for a scholarship to help those students, the needy student. So we're working towards that.

SENATOR SCOTT: Tell me about your out of state numbers.

MR. MCCALL: Our out of state numbers are fairly low. We were, I think, this last year -- eight percent of our student body was out of state.

SENATOR SCOTT: That's excellent. So where are you pulling your pool of students actually coming from?

MR. MCCALL: Our out of state students?

SENATOR SCOTT: No, in state students. Eight percent is good.

MR. MCCALL: Yeah, the majority of our in state students, believe it or not, are coming from the Pee Dee area, coming from Dillon County, Lee and Darlington and that area, so --

SENATOR SCOTT: So you've got a big influx that are coming from the Pee Dee area?

MR. MCCALL: We have a large influx.

SENATOR SCOTT: So what percentage would you say you think is coming out of the Pee Dee, if you know of the top of your head?

MR. MCCALL: I don't know off the top of my head exactly.

SENATOR SCOTT: Okay. One other thing. Tell me about the faculty and staff. It looks like you're doing pretty good with your students. How are you doing with faculty and staff, and I know lots of times it's hard to get immediate staff, but you've got --

MR. MCCALL: You're right.

SENATOR SCOTT: -- but you've got adjunct professors, a week promoting them. They'll be coming full time to help try to curb some of those issues. Tell me a little bit about what your plan is.

MR. MCCALL: Yes, sir. As you know from my material, I did 34 years in the corporate environment and banking and almost 20 with Bank of America --

SENATOR SCOTT: Right.

MR. MCCALL: -- and I came here from Texas because of that primary reason --

SENATOR SCOTT: Right.

MR. MCCALL: -- that Hugh McCall wanted to increase diversity in people of color --

SENATOR SCOTT: Right.

MR. MCCALL: -- and especially in the markets we serve --

SENATOR SCOTT: Right.

MR. MCCALL: -- and we're doing the same thing, since we have about 38 percent --

SENATOR SCOTT: Yeah.

MR. MCCALL: -- of students of color. We want within the administration --

SENATOR SCOTT: Right.

MR. MCCALL: -- and the faculty that they can see those that look like them.

SENATOR SCOTT: Right.

MR. MCCALL: So we're doing a good job. I would say within the administration we have two of color that serve in administration and also in the faculty. We're growing that. It's not as steep as we'd like it to be percentage wise, but as you can imagine, for faculty of color with terminal degrees, they have a lot of choices --

SENATOR SCOTT: Yeah.

MR. MCCALL: -- and we're trying to do all we can to reach out.

SENATOR SCOTT: Now the two that you do have, what are they -- are they committee chairs or vice presidents or what are they?

MR. MCCALL: Yes. We have a dean of our arts and science college that's a person of color.

SENATOR SCOTT: Yeah.

MR. MCCALL: And we also have several chairs and, of course faculty --

SENATOR SCOTT: Right.

MR. MCCALL: -- that are not only black, but we have several Muslim. We have Hispanic and so forth.

SENATOR SCOTT: Okay. Thank you so much. I remember when Bank of America built that center. I think Catherine Bessant was probably the --

MR. MCCALL: Right.

SENATOR SCOTT: -- lead VP across the country.

MR. MCCALL: Right.

SENATOR SCOTT: I remember y'all stealing our material from South Carolina and left us with virtually nothing, everything out of Charlotte, so I'm very familiar with that.

MR. MCCALL: Right.

SENATOR SCOTT: Thank you so much.

MR. MCCALL: Thank you, sir.

SENATOR PEELER: Anyone else? Vice Chairman, Whitmire.

REPRESENTATIVE WHITMIRE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. And welcome again, Mr. McCall.

MR. MCCALL: Thank you, sir.

REPRESENTATIVE WHITMIRE: Having had a daughter graduate from Winthrop, I've always kind of - - and my mother, too, so --

MR. MCCALL: Thank you.

REPRESENTATIVE WHITMIRE: -- excellent, excellent school.

MR. MCCALL: It is.

REPRESENTATIVE WHITMIRE: You listed Winthrop's biggest weakness, don't do a good job of understanding which programs are generating revenue and which are not. Can you expand on that a little bit?

MR. MCCALL: Yes, sir. I think one of the things that as a board we have been working with administration on -- understand, we provide, as you said, sir, a great education, but we also -- we're in the education of business, and we need to know the return on investments. We have 46 programs that we manage and we teach and instruct, but we don't know as of yet which of those are running a surplus or a deficit. So we're in that process of looking, and of course Covid has hastened a lot of the activities that we're doing like so many other universities to understand which programs are generating revenue and which are not. And it's just taking that focus, since the majority of the board come from the business industry, and they have business acumens, we feel that we need to understand that, to put revenue into those programs that have potential to grow. Those that are not growing, either we fix them or we discontinue those.

REPRESENTATIVE WHITMIRE: How long do you think this process will take eventually?

MR. MCCALL: I would think by the end of the year. That's our goal --

REPRESENTATIVE WHITMIRE: Okay.

MR. MCCALL: -- to have this information working with --

REPRESENTATIVE WHITMIRE: Looking forward to hearing back from whoever the next trustees are coming for us --

MR. MCCALL: Yes, sir.

REPRESENTATIVE WHITMIRE: Thank you.

MR. MCCALL: Yes, sir.

SENATOR PEELER: Representative Finlay.

REPRESENTATIVE FINLAY: Yes, sir. Good to see you again.

MR. MCCALL: Yes, sir.

REPRESENTATIVE FINLAY: Hope you're well. You know, the point you just hit on is one that I think is across all universities. Some years ago, it was at another university, one that I'm sure Harvey Peeler or Senator Peeler thinks about probably morning, noon and night, and they made the point --

SENATOR PEELER: Not as much as Senator Alexander.

REPRESENTATIVE FINLAY: -- and they made a very good point that -- perhaps this university is hypothetical -- for example, an education program and a nursing program have very different returns --

MR. MCCALL: Right.

REPRESENTATIVE FINLAY: -- and not only for the students, but for the cost. And they said one of the struggles is that at times we, the state, require universities to stay in programs that lose a lot of money, and we don't always pick up the entire bill. Is that an issue y'all are facing?

MR. MCCALL: We feel it is from a high level and talking with deans and the chairs and not having the analysis done. We have analysis looking at an academic master plan, but it doesn't take into account the financial components of our program, so -- and that's what we're trying to get to the bottom of --

REPRESENTATIVE FINLAY: I very much --

MR. MCCALL: -- to understand that.

REPRESENTATIVE FINLAY: -- look forward to seeing it, because I think if we're not careful, we're committing or creating a system where various universities in the state are competing for the same programs, and none of them achieve the economy of scale. So we're spending more, and I think what y'all are doing is to be commended, because it's going to be something that we have to do at all universities across the state to make sure we don't have a whole lot of duplication here.

MR. MCCALL: And I thank you for that, and I think you'll understand that. Most of you are -- have your own business or in business, and you understand you can't run a business if you don't know which products are generating revenue and services and which are not, so --

REPRESENTATIVE FINLAY: Mr. Chairman.

SENATOR PEELER: Senator Verdin, Senator Alexander, which one? Go ahead, Senator Verdin.

SENATOR VERDIN: Thank you both, Senators. Mr. McCall, I appreciate the fact that we want the best educated, prepared students in all our institutions as possible.

MR. MCCALL: Yes, sir.

SENATOR VERDIN: We also want the best citizens. Now what I know about you is that you are very familiar with the founding documents, the founding fathers. When a senior matriculates or when a senior graduates from Winthrop, is he better off in the understanding of our body politic civil discourse, founding fathers, founding documents, documents of covenant in the Constitution than when he arrived there as a freshman?

MR. MCCALL: I wish I could say yes, completely -- say yes to that, and that is something that the board -- we have been discussing. We have worked with several organizations. We have a -- as a matter of fact, this fall the board had insisted that we have a conservative talk course teach that would talk about a conservative, not only the opposite to that, ideology, talk about the Constitution and why -- talk about capitalism, liberalism, socialism, so --

SENATOR VERDIN: Yeah. I wouldn't restrict even my thoughts to conservatism. I'm just interested, regardless of conservative or a liberal, someone who as a citizen of this country is more inclined to help build up the constitutional republic we live in rather than hasten its demise --

MR. MCCALL: Right.

SENATOR VERDIN: -- so -- and it's encouraging to know that you and your colleagues are attuned to this matter, which I believe the days in front of us are going to go more appointed to this.

MR. MCCALL: Yes, sir. Thank you.

SENATOR VERDIN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

SENATOR PEELER: Speaker, welcome.

REPRESENTATIVE LUCAS: Thank you, Mr. President.

SENATOR PEELER: Good to see you, sir.

REPRESENTATIVE LUCAS: I'm delighted to be here, and I appreciate being a part of this.

SENATOR PEELER: Senator Alexander.

SENATOR ALEXANDER: Thank you, Mr. President. And good to see you this morning.

MR. MCCALL: Yes, sir.

SENATOR ALEXANDER: In following up on the two representatives, and then also looking under five and you talk about the biggest weakness, understanding which programs generate the revenue and whatnot, but we also go on -- I think, the other part of that equation is training an employable skill set of creating a four year program to re-engineer our course of delivery process and the brick and mortar. So are you saying

they're making sure that whatever, you're wanting to make sure that you've got degrees that they can go out and be employed and be productive citizens to kind of go along with the senator from Laurens?

MR. MCCALL: Yes.

SENATOR ALEXANDER: So how do you -- is that part of the evaluation that you're doing on the other side of the cost benefit and being -- whether it's making money, but also isn't it making sure that the students are getting a degree that they can get a job with? So how do you balance that?

MR. MCCALL: Well, a great example, Senator Alexander, that we're working with is York Tech and having a bridge program. York Tech has a great program allowing students to go into corporate America in data mining, data analytics and coding, for example. And the Charlotte market is really huge in that. As a matter of fact, Wells Fargo, Bank of America, they're hiring those students and putting them through their training, and in a couple of years they're making 70, \$80,000.00. Well, a lot of those students will likely even get deeper into that topic around data security and cyber security, and so we're offering those bridge programs that help them to be employed. We're also -- this fall, we're coming out with certificate programs in cyber security and data analytics. So you don't have a degree to be -- to help you get those skill sets to be employed. Also, and I'll say finally, what we're asking our faculty and especially the business school, come up with a program, a degree program, that would allow students to get a degree, an employable degree in four years, not six, not seven, not eight, four years, because the market is demanding that. And we think we can do that working with York Tech in their bridged program facet.

SENATOR ALEXANDER: Thank you. Thank you, Mr. President.

SENATOR PEELER: Thank you. Anyone else? What is the desire of the committee?

SENATOR SCOTT: Favorable.

SENATOR PEELER: Okay. Favorable. Seconded? All in favor, raise your right hand. Opposed, none. Unanimous. Thank you so much for your willingness to continue to serve.

MR. MCCALL: Thank you, sir. Thank everyone.

SENATOR PEELER: Next Coastal Carolina University, the Second Congressional District, Seat 2, Oran Smith. Good afternoon, sir.

MR. SMITH: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

SENATOR PEELER: For the record, give us your full name.

MR. SMITH: Yes, Oran Perry Smith.

SENATOR PEELER: Okay. Let me swear you in. ORAN PERRY SMITH, having been first duly sworn, was examined and testified as follows:

SENATOR PEELER: Would you like to make a brief statement?

MR. SMITH: The only brief statement I would like to offer is I provided the Committee with a lot of statistics as a part of my questionnaire because I wanted there to be a basis for some of the points that I made in that questionnaire, and I realize that those charts in many cases were very small, and I did not provide a magnifying glass to you. So Julie is kind enough -- Ms. Price is kind enough to be handing out larger versions of those charts with that data.

SENATOR PEELER: Thank you. Senator Finlay pointed out my age earlier, so thank you for this.

MR. SMITH: Yes, sir. I would simply say I am an original trustee of Coastal Carolina. When Coastal Carolina USC, Coastal Carolina College sought its independence and won that under the Campbell administration in 1993, a fresh board was elected from scratch, and I have been a member of the board since then. It's been my pleasure to be there and to watch this university grow.

SENATOR PEELER: Questions?

SENATOR VERDIN: Mr. Chairman, thank you. You're going to represent -- you're going to be the representative designated respondent for all your colleagues or candidates and applicants on Coastal before us today to answer that last question I asked of Mr. McCall. Of course, to me you're a known quantity. I was just counting back the years, 35 years ago we were roommates. So I know where you are as it relates to your commitment to the education of young people, because we were mighty young, but this is a matter of significance. It's a matter that's been bubbling up in the halls of the Legislature, debating the efficacy

of a renewed focus here as it relates to civics, basic civics, founding documents, founding fathers, interpretations. What's going on?

MR. SMITH: Well, this is where, as far as Coastal Carolina goes, not to sound like the mother ship, but it may be a place where we might get a little bit cocky. And the reason for that is Coastal Carolina was blessed for many years with a member of our political science faculty who served on the core curriculum committee. And that core curriculum committee, which revised the general educational requirements on a regular basis, this individual, who by the way is now a member of the Commission of Higher Education -- this individual made sure that in Coastal's core there would always be the requirement that every student that graduated from Coastal would have to complete an American history course or a political science course. Those were graduation requirements. And because of those requirements, we very easily have been able to follow the state law in regard to the federalist papers, the Constitution, the Declaration in that nature, because they are required as a portion of one of those two courses so that every student is exposed to those documents, is required to read those documents. And speaking of academic freedom, if I may, how those documents are taught are going to vary from professor to professor. So academic freedom is still present, but the requirement to know our founding documents is also present.

SENATOR PEELER: Thank you, sir. Representative Finlay.

REPRESENTATIVE FINLAY: So to be clear, in your opinion, Coastal is compliant with state law regarding the number of hours and in credits that are required on the founding documents?

MR. SMITH: Yes. I would even say uniquely compliant.

SENATOR PEELER: Representative Whitmire.

REPRESENTATIVE WHITMIRE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and welcome again, Mr. Smith.

MR. SMITH: Thank you, sir.

REPRESENTATIVE WHITMIRE: Not a question, but I just want to make a statement. I really appreciate you providing these higher ed statistics. I've never been able to compare all the schools in our state at one time, and this will be very telling for me when I start asking questions of the different schools, so thank you very much for that.

MR. SMITH: Thank you. And I think you'll see Coastal's position. You know, it is what it is, and in some of those charts -- there were nine charts I gave you -- I would say seven of those charts I'm very happy with where Coastal is. A couple of them -- Senator Scott, I'm not so happy where Coastal is, but hopefully that will be of help to you.

REPRESENTATIVE WHITMIRE: It will, thank you.

SENATOR PEELER: Anyone else?

SENATOR SCOTT: Yes, sir. Thank you again for your willingness --

SENATOR PEELER: Senator Scott.

SENATOR SCOTT: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you again for your willingness to serve. I was looking at tuition, required fees full time, and saw an increase of 43 percent. That is your page number 5. How much of the tuition or in state funding is actually funded by local government in your area?

MR. SMITH: The role of local government for Coastal is primarily through our portion that we receive of the penny sales tax --

SENATOR SCOTT: Right.

MR. SMITH: -- which is primarily on accommodation, so people who pass through Horry County are helping us pay for primarily buildings and buildings --

SENATOR SCOTT: Capital.

MR. SMITH: -- and what we have needed as our student body has grown from 4,000 when I was sworn in as a trustee to just under ten. So the ability to use penny sales tax dollars for capital expenditures has allowed us to not have to use tuition dollars to do that and allowed us for three years to have flat tuition. And to that also I would give the credit to our chairman of the board at the time, who was a CPA who went very deeply, much more than a typical trustee would do. He went very deeply into our expenses and found a way for us to freeze tuition for three years in a row, but the capital expenditures from the local citizens and then some support from the Horry County Higher Education Commission have helped us keep tuition very competitive.

SENATOR SCOTT: Okay, great. I'm looking at your page 7. You talk about your student enrollment. On your diversity side, black males, black females compared to a total of 9,760 students, roughly 1,700. The makeup of other students of color at Coastal, you have 17.76, almost 18 percent. The other makeup of minority students at Coastal, a percentage Asian are the --

MR. SMITH: This chart was a little wider originally with Asian, I think, pacific islander --

SENATOR SCOTT: Right.

MR. SMITH: -- and some other categories, but I just chose to kind of bore in on --

SENATOR SCOTT: That's okay.

MR. SMITH: -- on African American. As you can see, this is the chart that my predecessor before you would have wanted to hand out --

SENATOR SCOTT: Right.

MR. SMITH: -- because this is where Winthrop really shines and Frances Marion really shines, and this is where we've got work to do, particularly with African American population, I think, being roughly 20 --

SENATOR SCOTT: Twenty-seven percent.

MR. SMITH: We have at least 12 points. And again, one of our board members says frequently, only that which gets recorded gets done, and only that which gets tracked gets done. And part of my reason for sharing this is I hope if I come before you in the future if I should be so fortunate, that I hope this number's going to be much higher, but we know what it is. And this took some calculating, because it's not something that's readily available.

SENATOR SCOTT: What percentage of students are out of state students?

MR. SMITH: Currently undergraduate total headcount out of state students is 42 percent, so we're basically 58 in, 42 out. And that's based on the actual tuition rate that is paid by the student. So if a student is a member or part of the academic common market where we have students that may live out of state, but because that state may not have a program we have, they may be paying in state tuition. So the only footnote I would put on that is it is based on that, so 58 percent in state, 42 percent out of state.

SENATOR SCOTT: Where do most of your students come from, Coastal?

MR. SMITH: A large percentage from Horry and Georgetown Counties, which is sort of our home base.

SENATOR SCOTT: More regional.

MR. SMITH: But more regionally, primarily northeast. So out of state, not as much midwest, but more northeast, places that get really cold during the winter.

SENATOR SCOTT: Okay. They just love your beaches.

MR. SMITH: Yes, sir.

SENATOR SCOTT: Okay. Well, one other question. When you look at your in state students, which is the 58 percent, most of that 58 percent is more regional, kids who actually drive in, or most of these kids actually live on campus?

MR. SMITH: I would say generally that they are in sort of a metropolitan statistical area, from Myrtle Beach, Conway, Georgetown, not as strong north of -- well, in the 864, we're a little weak in the 864 area code, if we kind of picture that --

SENATOR SCOTT: Right.

MR. SMITH: -- we're stronger in the 843 and the 803. In fact, our new president has made it one of his goals as to expose more people in the upstate to Coastal.

SENATOR SCOTT: Pell grants, what percent of your students are on Pell grants?

MR. SMITH: You know, I have an old chart that's a few years old --

SENATOR SCOTT: That's okay.

MR. SMITH: -- and I'm reluctant to rely on it --

SENATOR SCOTT: That's all right.

MR. SMITH: -- but --

SENATOR SCOTT: We won't hold you to it.

MR. SMITH: -- these numbers show about 30 percent.

SENATOR SCOTT: Okay. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

SENATOR PEELER: Senator Alexander.

SENATOR ALEXANDER: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. And good afternoon, Dr. Smith. Always a pleasure to see you, and again, I appreciate the information that's been provided to you from that standpoint. Kind of following up, if you looked at all -- you said that the information you provided was based on the undergraduate. If you took it to the graduate level, does that change those dynamics?

MR. SMITH: It's very hard to stay ahead of Senator Alexander, but --

SENATOR PEELER: It's impossible.

MR. SMITH: These are charts that are -- the data is published by the Commission of Higher Education, and their higher education almanac and the first citation was tables 1.7. Table 1.8 is all students. So what I had before was undergraduate. All students is 51 percent in state.

SENATOR ALEXANDER: Fifty-one percent are in state. Are you using that same designation, though, of those in state that if they -- if the state that they reside does not have that program, you are counting them as an in state, that they're paying in state tuition?

MR. SMITH: You know, this chart does not --

SENATOR ALEXANDER: You can get back to me. I was just curious --

MR. SMITH: -- sorry about that.

SENATOR ALEXANDER: -- about that.

MR. SMITH: Right.

SENATOR ALEXANDER: It seems like y'all are making progress of having more in state students than out of state. That's not always been the case, right?

MR. SMITH: Right. We have been very heavily -- we have done well with out of state students, and they, of course, pay the full ride. And I think one of the charts I presented to you had in state versus out of state tuition change over time. And our out of state tuition and fees, we've made sure that that kept pace so that truly out of state students are paying the full ride.

SENATOR ALEXANDER: Thank you. One final question. Getting back, are y'all also evaluating your courses of making sure that students are having an employable job once they get that degree at Coastal?

MR. SMITH: I think we do a fair job of that, maybe not as well as some of the private institutions. From an article I read recently in the Chronicle of Higher Education, our own Furman University does probably the best job in the state, based on this article, in tracking that. And that's something I think that we can do a better job of, and actually it's something that our new president has also called for.

SENATOR ALEXANDER: I would hope all higher education would do that.

MR. SMITH: And a part of that question maybe is the whole issue of the courses and whether they are losers, money losers. We made some unpopular decisions in the past, four or five years, where we cut some majors because they just weren't paying for themselves. And it was painful and caused a great outcry, but we just felt that majors that aren't paying for themselves ultimately we just can't afford to keep.

SENATOR ALEXANDER: Thank you so much.

SENATOR PEELER: Representative Finlay. Speaker Lucas.

REPRESENTATIVE LUCAS: Yes, sir. Thank you, Mr. President. Oran, how are you?

MR. SMITH: Yes, sir, all right.

REPRESENTATIVE LUCAS: Oran, you made the statement that 43 percent of the students coming from out of state, they are paying the full ride, which is the full out of state tuition?

MR. SMITH: Right.

REPRESENTATIVE LUCAS: One of the problems that I've noticed and we've noticed in a lot of our colleges and universities across the state is the full ride that you are charging is still less than the in state tuition, say, that they would be paying in New Jersey, and I will use Rutgers as an example of that. We get students who come down to school in South Carolina, and it's cheaper for them to come here and pay the out of state tuition than stay and pay the in state tuition. Y'all having so large a number of students coming from out of state, have you been able to track that to ensure that the students who are truly coming to Coastal Carolina are actually paying more than they would than if they stayed in their original home state?

MR. SMITH: I'm both glad and not so glad that you asked that question. I'm glad because Coastal Carolina's out of state rate is 27.3, 27.4 and our in state rate is 12, 11.6, but we are keeping a constant eye, and Rutgers is one of them, but we're keeping a constant eye on those northeastern state universities and

what their tuition is, because at the point that we're not competitive anymore, it harms our business model. It just won't work anymore if they can go to school at home more cheaply. So I don't think -- unless those universities in the northeast are forced to increase their tuition, I don't know that we have a lot more wiggle room left, frankly. I think it's something that we're watching very carefully, because we definitely do not want to be noncompetitive and then lose the out of state students that kind of make our model work, yes, sir.

REPRESENTATIVE LUCAS: Thank you.

SENATOR PEELER: Mr. Finlay.

REPRESENTATIVE FINLAY: Thank you. You know, there's sort of three various interesting data which I did not understand until I visited Coastal. First, with the component of the investment in that campus that is subsidized by the county, it makes them a very different animal than most of our other schools. And so I went down asking the question about in state versus out of state, and the president at that time basically - - the way he thought about it is that county had made an investment in making sure that they go forward to have a higher percentage of in state, out of state, by using bond money to build the buildings. I'd never thought about it like that, but that was their competitive advantage. The second comment that I heard was from a gentleman who used to work in the House, who is now at a college on the coast, that the real issue becomes for a lot of people that when it's not whether they're the same price, it's when they get out of a percentage above those in state universities. An example he used was 30 years ago the University of Maryland versus this college, it was \$4,000.00 more expensive to go to this university out of state than the University of Maryland. It's now 20. So parents making those decisions out of state all of a sudden had pause. So I'm glad that you have recognized that that pause is going on, because the third point is, a lot of universities up north have decided to pause the growth of in state tuition. So when they freeze their in state tuition that is going to trickle back very quickly to y'all, because that percentage when it goes from \$4,000.00 a year to \$20,000.00 a year to send little Katie down from New Jersey to Coastal or the College of Charleston, that math changes very quickly. So I'm glad y'all are on top of it, and I think the Speaker did a good job of starting the debate or the dialogue, but that is going to be something that becomes ever more important for y'all to watch, because y'all will price yourself out of the market.

MR. SMITH: Yes, sir. And the other state that we're watching like a hawk is North Carolina. They are offering incredible deals to stay in state. And we're -- some of those students that come over the border, we've got to keep them coming over the border, but North Carolina and Georgia both, they are stiff competition, because they want to keep their in state people in state. And we're keeping an eye on them and hope that we can remain competitive.

SENATOR PEELER: Anyone else? Senator Scott.

SENATOR SCOTT: Yeah, one quick question. So I'll go back to something we started talking about years ago, using diversity and also using -- creating another model to start keeping our best and brightest at home, too. This is not a pattern that these other states started doing. They've been doing it for quite some time, but we just kind of overlooked it and got too used to getting out of state students to balance the budget and continue to grow these institutions to a point that we really can't afford to operate without those students. I want to bring your attention to chart number 6, which I think we'll talk a little bit about this case of out of state, in state staying in tuition as a percentage of state median household income. Are you saying for Coastal it has maintained the same median household income, I guess, for the last nine years?

MR. SMITH: Yes, sir. This is from an independent website --

SENATOR SCOTT: Right.

MR. SMITH: -- called how colleges spend money, and I simply downloaded the portions for South Carolina universities, and I'm not sure of the numbers in between 2010, '11 and '18, '19, but when they're compared one to one, we and College of Charleston, for some reason, are roughly almost exactly the same percentage of median household income. And the reason I supplied this to you is, again, we don't want to price ourselves out of what an average household --

SENATOR SCOTT: So when I look at a college that has lost in the trend of minus four percent household income, that means that either in the area which the normal recruiting has been taking place those folk either have relocated or just no longer come to that school. So it creates a tremendous factor on the school. That's

why I asked you about Pell grants and others. Where you had 30 percent, that school is at 80 percent, and so it doesn't have the household income to be able to pay it for these kids, actually being able to get money to go to school.

MR. SMITH: Right. One thing about that chart that I should have noted is, for instance, South Carolina State went from roughly 22 percent down to 21 percent. So over time, South Carolina State has a slightly lower -- the tuition is a slightly, very slightly, lower percentage of the average personal income. So that university sort of stands alone as the only one that's --

SENATOR SCOTT: What -- based upon the tuition that it charges and a median household income that is paying, then you had more students who went on Pell grant than students who could actually pay to go to school, because the household income just wasn't there.

MR. SMITH: Right, yes, sir.

SENATOR SCOTT: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

SENATOR PEELER: Thank you. Anyone else? What is the desire of the committee.

SENATOR ALEXANDER: Move favorable.

SENATOR PEELER: Favorable.

SENATOR VERDIN: Second.

SENATOR PEELER: Seconded. Any discussion. Hearing none, we will take the vote. All in favor, raise your right hand. Unanimous. Thank you so much, sir.

MR. SMITH: Thank you, sir. Thank you for your time.

SENATOR PEELER: Still with Coastal Carolina University, 4th Congressional District Seat 4, Brad Poston. And so for the record, if you would, give us your full name.

MR. POSTON: Sure. Bradley James Poston.

SENATOR PEELER: Swear you in. BRADLEY JAMES POSTON, having been first duly sworn, was examined and testified as follows:

SENATOR PEELER: Would you like to make a brief statement?

MR. POSTON: Just to thank you guys for allowing me the opportunity to be here.

SENATOR PEELER: I love a brief statement. Thank you.

MR. POSTON: I'll be plenty brief. I don't have near the knowledge of the last two.

SENATOR PEELER: You've done your homework. Questions. Comments? Senator Alexander.

SENATOR ALEXANDER: Just one question. I think it said that you visited the campus often. How would you define --

MR. POSTON: How would I define the campus.

SENATOR ALEXANDER: Well, no. How would you define how often is often from your standpoint?

MR. POSTON: So I just moved to the upstate about four years ago. Prior to that, I lived in Myrtle Beach for -- since the time I graduated from Coastal. So I'd say, pre Covid we went back three times a year, usually in the fall and the last year or so not as much, less.

SENATOR ALEXANDER: Thank you.

SENATOR PEELER: Representative Whitmire.

REPRESENTATIVE WHITMIRE: No, I didn't have anything.

SENATOR PEELER: Okay. Senator Scott.

SENATOR SCOTT: Mr. Poston, why do you want to serve?

MR. POSTON: Well, I have a passion for the university. I think it's a unique opportunity, something I kind of considered earlier in my life, and once the opportunity presented itself I thought about it, and it's just a unique opportunity. It's something that many of my colleagues where I work don't really have much experience in governmental type things, and that's the main reason. I just -- I love the university. It's allowed me to be here today.

SENATOR SCOTT: What do you think that you can do? What do you think you'd bring to the table and a board that's diverse as Coastal, and you just said the person before you with all the experience -- what experience do you actually bring?

MR. POSTON: I am a CPA --

SENATOR SCOTT: Okay.

MR. POSTON: -- I think I'll be able to help in the financial aspect of the board's jobs. And to be honest with you, I don't necessarily know everything that I'm going to be faced or challenged with, so I don't know that I can answer what I can help with, because I don't know necessarily what I'm going to be faced with. I do think I will be able to help in various aspects. I played sports at the university. You know, when I first arrived at Coastal it was a much smaller university than it is now, and the whole area around it for that matter, so I do think I've kind of seen how things have progressed over the last couple of decades, and I -- you know, I think that the insight will be valuable going forward.

SENATOR SCOTT: Are you related to Roger?

MR. POSTON: I don't believe so, but I have a lot of kin that I'm not so sure. It's possible.

SENATOR SCOTT: Well, he's okay. You can claim him. He's not a bad fellow.

MR. POSTON: Okay. I'll claim him then. You can't have enough good ones.

SENATOR SCOTT: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

SENATOR PEELER: Speaker Lucas.

REPRESENTATIVE LUCAS: Mr. Poston, good afternoon.

MR. POSTON: Good afternoon.

REPRESENTATIVE LUCAS: Thank you for being here today. You're a CPA; did I hear that correctly?

MR. POSTON: Yes, sir.

REPRESENTATIVE LUCAS: Price Waterhouse?

MR. POSTON: Yes, sir.

REPRESENTATIVE LUCAS: I couldn't help but note a comment by Mr. Smith before you talked about, you know, cutting certain majors at a school. Having a background as a CPA, how do you feel about going in and looking at the program and majors that can't produce the type of graduate that could, say, go in and go out in the work force and get a job sufficient enough to pay back a student loan? I know many of the colleges are looking at where the trend was many years ago when you could get as many people in school as possible. Now it's sort of a trend that we need to look and see if certain majors are not only beneficial but can, in fact, you know, sustain a loan to pay back after the student has gotten out of school. How do you feel about that, being a CPA?

MR. POSTON: I mean, I see the point. I --

REPRESENTATIVE LUCAS: Would you be willing to go in and make a hard decision to cut a major?

MR. POSTON: With all of the facts present, yes. Currently, I can't say that I would be happy to do so or would do so or would not do so, because I don't necessarily know everything that comes with making that decision. I'm sure I'll learn that quite quickly, but in terms of analyzing the financial data, I think I could do that, and that's pretty black and white without taking anything else into account. I think I'll be able to help with that type of --

REPRESENTATIVE LUCAS: You should definitely have that ability. That would be a good -- yeah.

SENATOR PEELER: Anyone else? I notice you're a former district manager for Waffle House.

MR. POSTON: Yes, sir.

SENATOR PEELER: What was your responsibility? Would you ever have to cook?

MR. POSTON: Oh, yeah. All Waffle House management starts as a cook. All managers have to cook.

SENATOR PEELER: I've told my children that has to be the toughest job being an HR manager at Waffle House.

MR. POSTON: Actually the HR people kind of stay out of the restaurants. The operations managers is the -- it's a tough career.

SENATOR PEELER: You played ball at Carolina, Coastal Carolina?

MR. POSTON: Coastal Carolina, yes, sir.

SENATOR PEELER: What did you play?

MR. POSTON: I played right tackle mostly, offensive line.

SENATOR PEELER: Did you have a mullet back then?

MR. POSTON: For a brief time before it started fading on me, and I had a mohawk, too. That's not happening these days.

SENATOR PEELER: Any other questions or comments. What's the desire?

SENATOR VERDIN: Favorable.

REPRESENTATIVE FINLAY: Favorable.

SENATOR PEELER: The motion is favorable. There being no more discussion, we'll take it to a vote. All in favor, raise your right hand. Unanimous. Thank you for your willingness to serve.

MR. POSTON: Thank you for your time.

SENATOR PEELER: Now Sixth Congressional District, Seat 6, Coastal Carolina University, John Bartell. Good afternoon, sir.

MR. BARTELL: Good afternoon.

SENATOR PEELER: For the record, if you would, give us your full name.

MR. BARTELL: John H. Bartell, Jr.

SENATOR PEELER: Let me swear you in. JOHN H. BARTELL, having been first duly sworn, was examined and testified as follows:

SENATOR PEELER: Would you like to make a brief statement?

MR. BARTELL: I have been on the board for four years, and I have thoroughly enjoyed my time on the board, and I look forward to continuing.

SENATOR PEELER: Questions or comments? Senator Scott.

SENATOR SCOTT: Tell me about your experience on the board for the last four years. What were you able to achieve? What did you see that Coastal needed to do to improve? Just kind of your overview of Coastal and things like the previous members running for the board or back to the board talked about.

MR. BARTELL: Well, the tuition is always a big thing when it comes to college, and we have managed the last two years to hold out the tuition at the same level that it started at. And we're trying to recruit more Afro American students, in state students and Spanish students to grow our enrollment. And right now we're at 18 percent Afro American, 66 percent Caucasian and six percent Spanish and the other ten percent are Native American, Asians and one that didn't fill out anything on their application.

SENATOR SCOTT: What do you think about the growth? Do you think y'all are big enough, or you think you need to grow some more? Do you think you need to concentrate more on what's going on in South Carolina compared to these other states?

MR. BARTELL: Well, I think we should grow more. We're down to just under 10,000 now, and for the last three years that I've been on the board we were around 10,500 or 10,600. We've lost a little bit. Of course, the Covid had a lot to do with that. And I think with Coastal giving the opportunity for any in state student that is eligible for college, Coastal will accept them, which I think is a great thing.

SENATOR SCOTT: Now you said you think you should grow. You mean you want to grow back to the 10,000, or do you want to get to be a much larger school?

MR. BARTELL: I would like to get up -- I think we should be much larger.

SENATOR SCOTT: So if that happens, and we continue to see the trend like the other senator from Richland -- other House member from Richland talked about -- what's going on across this country, especially you being adjacent to North Carolina, right on the oceanfront, because that's going up the coast, and all of a sudden these kids aren't coming over here, how do we balance our budget when we're slow in recruiting students coming in, out of state students slow down, and you're not getting enough in state students, I mean to say, at what point do you balance all that out?

MR. BARTELL: Well, most of our out of state students are from Maryland, surprisingly.

SENATOR SCOTT: Okay.

MR. BARTELL: You have to have a -- you also have to have a number of out of state students, and the tuition they pay has to be in line with what they can't get an education for in their own home state. And ours right now is in the neighborhood of 27.4 for out of state students. And our in state students are around 11.9 now.

SENATOR SCOTT: Well, in knowing the particulars, I just want to make sure you pay close attention as a board member any event, the Covid pandemic or because of economics, just in case this trend were to stop, and to spend a little bit more attention on trying to recruit more in state students if you're going to grow.

MR. BARTELL: Yes, sir.

SENATOR SCOTT: At least that's a group you can keep. How do you feel the diversity at your school?

MR. BARTELL: I think we have a better opportunity to see more diversity in our school with the percent of Afro American students and Spanish students, but right now, like I say, we're sitting at about 18 percent Afro American and six percent. And I'm not saying that couldn't grow, and I think it should grow.

SENATOR SCOTT: We hope you are able to continue to recruit African Americans, not Afro, but African American student, and they'll have an interest in coming to Coastal to get a good education. Also, normally when you recruit those students, whatever schools you come from, it becomes just a pattern, trend, based on the relationships and how students would come. Thank you.

SENATOR PEELER: Senator Alexander.

SENATOR ALEXANDER: Two brief questions, if I could. One is, your attendance as a board member, how would you describe that? Have you had 100 percent, 90 percent, since being on the board?

MR. BARTELL: When I first went on the board I had to have open heart surgery in July.

SENATOR ALEXANDER: Okay.

MR. BARTELL: So I missed the first July, August and November. Then I've had 100 percent attendance.

SENATOR ALEXANDER: Thank you, sir. The other thing you say here says, as the board member setting policy and approve decisions made by the president. So you setting policy is the role of the board and not going into different departments and not trying to run the university. Is that --

MR. BARTELL: Yes, sir.

SENATOR ALEXANDER: -- my understanding of what you're saying, or do you need to elaborate?

MR. BARTELL: That's my thought on it, yes, sir.

SENATOR ALEXANDER: Thank you, sir.

SENATOR PEELER: Representative Whitmire.

REPRESENTATIVE WHITMIRE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. And welcome, Mr. Bartell.

MR. BARTELL: Thank you.

REPRESENTATIVE WHITMIRE: I see that most of your adult life has been in law enforcement, and thank you for your service to our state. This has bothered me a good bit. You know, every time I wake up in the morning, it seems like there's some issue here in Columbia with students being attacked, some even being murdered. Since Coastal is right there at the beach, and you have so many people coming in and out, do you feel like your campus is safe, and if not, would you recommend anything to provide a safer environment for your students?

MR. BARTELL: I think our campus is safe. We get a lot bad press, sometimes in the Sun News and maybe the News and Courier saying at the university apartments such and such happened, and actually the university apartments are not on campus. They're elsewhere, but we have a great police department, and that's one battle we kind of -- we are up against when we had -- through the rift and all, wanted the program, which I was totally against, but like you say, I'm a 40 year veteran of law enforcement, and when you send -- when families their children to any university, they want to be sure they have a safe environment. And that's imperative anywhere and especially at Coastal.

REPRESENTATIVE WHITMIRE: All right. Well, just like here in Columbia, it's such a large city, and a lot of the incidents that happen with students here seem like they are off campus, whether at Five Points or some of the apartments that aren't part of the university system. I imagine that's an issue that, you know, a lot of the schools face. Clemson faces it also up where I live, so I thank you for your service in law enforcement, and I hope you'll keep an eye on that.

MR. BARTELL: Thank you sir. I appreciate it.

SENATOR PEELER: Anyone else? Representative Lucas.

REPRESENTATIVE LUCAS: Mr. Bartell, thank you for being here today. Did I note that you are a Clemson grad?

MR. BARTELL: No, sir. I attended Clemson University. I didn't graduate. I lacked three credits from being a junior, and I was born and raised on -- I'll explain why I didn't graduate if you'd like to know.

REPRESENTATIVE LUCAS: No, sir. I just noted that degree --

MR. BARTELL: Yes, sir.

REPRESENTATIVE LUCAS: And I know around the university there probably isn't much need for agronomy, but as you go up into Loris and all those great areas in Aynor, we do grow a lot of South Carolina's greatest products. So I would hope that you would look at agronomy education at Coastal also, because there is a need for that in Horry County.

MR. BARTELL: Yes, sir. And we just last year implemented and put in a degree in criminal justice, which a lot of people were looking for at Coastal.

REPRESENTATIVE LUCAS: Thank you, sir.

SENATOR PEELER: For the record, Senator Senn vouches for you.

MR. BARTELL: Thank you, sir. We are great friends.

SENATOR SCOTT: Favorable.

SENATOR PEELER: The motion is favorable. Any other discussion? If not, we'll take it to a vote. All in favor, raise your right hand. Thank you, sir.

MR. BARTELL: Thank you.

SENATOR PEELER: Next at large, Seat 8, Jason Repak. Good afternoon, sir.

MR. REPAK: Good afternoon.

SENATOR PEELER: On the record, if you would give us your full name.

MR. REPAK: Jason Michael Repak.

SENATOR PEELER: I'm going to swear you in. JASON MICHAEL REPAK, having been first duly sworn, was examined and testified as follows:

SENATOR PEELER: Would you like to make a brief statement?

MR. REPAK: Yes. Thank you so much for having me out. You know, I've only been on the board now a year filling an unfilled term, but it's been the highlight of a long history of service I've had at Coastal. And then also, I apologize for my tardiness before the session started. I had to make a stop in Florence to my daughter's orthopedist. She broke her arm a couple of weeks ago.

SENATOR PEELER: Questions, comments? Senator Verdin?

SENATOR VERDIN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Repak, what -- do you know what the percentage of in-classroom rather than virtual education has taken place today?

MR. REPAK: Today at Coastal?

SENATOR VERDIN: Yes, sir.

MR. REPAK: So, I believe we put in place to want every class to have an in-person requirement for our faculty, for our teaching faculty, unless there were an actual health concern to the faculty member and then they were allowed to stay in place through a virtual education system, you know, through all of our different online modes of delivery now. I don't know the number -- the percentage, but I can get it back to you that -- more students that are actually taking advantage of that. I have talked to a number of the faculty that said, even when they did start their in-person classes, at first, they were still having a lot of their students take those classes online just out of convenience.

SENATOR VERDIN: Well, and that -- we've discussed, certainly, in financial terms of recruiting student body in the years to come, what we should anticipate and I would -- and I should've predicated my question with the fact that health is of -- health concerns are of paramount importance. But I do think that the administrations and the boards are going to have to very closely monitor this question as it relates to all those matters of student recruitment and retention. You know, a lot of traditional education has changed and is changing more rapidly than even we can sometimes quantify or measure. But I think this is one critical key component of the traditional classical means and methods of educating. Every time we talk about the future and how radically different and changed things can be, I personally have lived long enough and I'm -- haven't served in your capacity, but I think all of us, as interested in public policy, especially the future -- the pendulum -- I'm never seen a pendulum not come back and find its place or water find its level. And I've got -- and I'm measuring this against a couple of soon-to-be-in-laws that I'm adding to my family this year, both of them in graduate school. And it's a little different there with that type of -- it's more intimate in their particular degree programs, but just how it's affecting students psychologically, their plans for the future, their first desire to be in-classroom. If they're not, they're going back home. Just those

factors. So, yeah, I am interested -- I've probably asked it of all universities here going forward, not necessarily in the context of this screening, but I do appreciate you relating it back to me for Coastal.

MR. REPAK: Yes, sir, it's my pleasure. And I will tell you I agree wholeheartedly. I think you're going to see some pretty significant transformation in educational delivery, specifically higher education delivery, but even through your grade school system. Because of this pandemic, so many dollars have had to be invested in creating new modes of delivery for education that the reality is that, now that they're there, even though my personal preference would be to have all in-person classes, say, for health concerns, now that the infrastructure is there, we're all going to have to take a good hard look at what is the best way to deliver our education to our students, both economically and effectively.

SENATOR PEELER: Senator Scott.

SENATOR SCOTT: Thank you, Mr. Repak, for your willingness to serve. I was just looking at your resume. How do you go from selling Silver Spurs and Corniches, to doing building and construction? That's a tremendous leap. And the reason I'm saying that is because I do real estate and construction and now, I'm building cars, too. So, tell me -- tell me about that experience. That should've -

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MR. REPAK: Sure.

SENATOR SCOTT: -- been some kind of experience.

MR. REPAK: Yes, sir. So, I think you're referring to my time with Rolls-Royce?

SENATOR SCOTT: Yeah.

MR. REPAK: Yeah. So, well, I worked for the Rolls Royce that was a jet manufacturer. So, the --

SENATOR SCOTT: Okay.

MR. REPAK: -- the company went bankrupt back in the '70s and violated their financial statements that may not be in great shape going forward either. But they went bankrupt back in the '70s and they sold the car business off to raise capital to BMW. I worked for Rolls-Royce, the remaining company, which is primarily defense and civil applications of jet engines.

SENATOR SCOTT: Out of Indianapolis, I think.

MR. REPAK: Big plant in Indianapolis, and so --

SENATOR SCOTT: Uh-huh.

MR. REPAK: -- a lot of people don't realize this, but the -- the vice president of finance of that Indianapolis plant for about 15 years, and one that saved the current -- at that time -- the CEO's job, because of cash delivery back from Indianapolis to the parent, was a Coastal Carolina graduate.

SENATOR SCOTT: Oh.

MR. REPAK: He grew up in Loris and went on to work several different areas and became the vice president of finance at that factory and took it from a \$100 million loan that they borrowed from the parent to a billion-dollar cash return within about four years because of how he changed the financial effectiveness and in some of the weirdest ways, too. He -- one of his first projects, he tore down a million square feet of the factory.

SENATOR SCOTT: Tore it down.

MR. REPAK: Didn't need it. And so, he spent money putting a new computer on every desk and saved the company money in the ninth month. It just -- it was incredible. So, anyway, he gave back to Coastal and is still passionate about getting back to Coastal today. He serves as a chairman of one of our honor program boards there. And he recruited me out of school and I went to work for them for about seven years, I believe. I got my graduate degree from University of Richmond, and we've been in buildings and real estate for years, and that's where I'm at now. And so, when I grew up in Horry County, in Socastee, we all grew up in the same neighborhood that we developed and so I wanted my children to experience that same -- that same experience of growing up around family, so we moved back.

SENATOR SCOTT: So, I'm pretty sure, with a broad array of experience from the corporate side and the financial side, in time to come, a lot of experience on Coastal, you'll be able to make some things happen. Tell me about -- a little bit about your thought pattern of trying to keep more South Carolina students in at Coastal and also getting more African-American students to come to Coastal.

MR. REPAK: Yeah, absolutely. So, I'm thrilled for the change to see that we are trending more towards in-state students. Obviously, we love our out-of-state students, both as enrollment and students at our university, and want nothing but success for them. But for any state, for me, I look at economic development opportunity in the state and what is the future of the state's economy and our, more importantly, for Horry County, what does our area's financial future look like. And so, attracting in-state students, ones that are going to come and stay --

SENATOR SCOTT: Right.

MR. REPAK: -- is very, very important. So, to see that shift from about 50/50, which was just a few years ago --

SENATOR SCOTT: Right.

MR. REPAK: -- to where it is now -- it's closer to 60 percent -- is a very, very favorable shift, in my opinion, and I'd like to see that get even a little better into the 70/30 territory just because that gives our workforce, our state workforce in South Carolina, the ability to compete. Because, ultimately, when new companies are looking for a place to park their new factories or their new distribution centers, they're looking for infrastructure and ability to deliver, they're looking for infrastructure and education for workforce development, and they're looking for people. And we've got them by the thousands of -- roughly, the number is about a thousand families moving to Horry County every month. And so, I'd love to see that number continue to rise and I would love to see our diversity numbers come up as well. I think, overall, if you look at -- there's a website, College Factual, that ranks -- has a diversity score ranking across all twenty-four hundred institutions that it's -- that it monitors in the U.S., and they have us at about their top ten percent for diversity ranking. But that doesn't mean the work's done.

SENATOR SCOTT: Right.

MR. REPAK: I'd love to see our diversity numbers continue to increase.

SENATOR SCOTT: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

SENATOR PEELER: Mr. Finlay.

REPRESENTATIVE FINLAY: So, you really think that for universities, especially state universities, it is exceedingly important that they attempt to achieve at least two-thirds, one-third in-state versus out-of-state?

MR. REPAK: I think, to help and deliver -- to help to deliver education to the students is, obviously, job one, right. But the state's interest in those universities is for the economic future of the state, because the state is spending public monies to invest in those universities and to create a future workforce. And so, for me, I think it's important for us to have a workforce that are being educated at the institutions that will stay there in the state when they're done.

REPRESENTATIVE FINLAY: I think that Senator Scott and I and some others might agree how important that is, because I think it's two things. Number one, the state is investing the resources of the citizens and it would be nice for them to get a return. And I think, number two, that as the state draws -- or its universities draw more students from the state, naturally, it becomes more representative of the state. I think that is an important factor that it's one I'm glad to hear you represent -- I mean, recognize and continue to work for, although I continue to applaud Horry County their willingness to invest in education and producing buildings and helping subsidize -- because, just like we want for the state, they are doing it for their city and I take away from it that it is an investment, they think, in their future in producing a workforce for our growing communities and I think it's a wonderful idea.

MR. REPAK: Thank you so much. I agree wholeheartedly and just hope that when it comes to -- for renewal -- I believe it's two or three years that we're up for renewal -- that citizens of Horry County still feel that way, because I certainly do. I think it's a huge investment in our future, especially when you consider the population growth we're having. I mean, we're forecasted -- I'll tell you that my personal belief is that the forecast is wrong. It is far undershooting the number. They're forecasting our metropolitan area to grow from about 300,000 to about 640,000 by 2040. I think it'll be closer to mid-2030s by the time it happens, especially if you see the rate that people are moving to the area now. And not all of them that are coming are what we'll call a more mature retiree. A lot of those are 40s, 50-year-old civil servants retiring out of the northeast and they're bringing their family and their family's going to have to have a place to work and a place to go to school.

SENATOR SCOTT: Favorable report.

SENATOR PEELER: Motion is favorable report. Seconded?

REPRESENTATIVE FINLAY: Yes, sir.

SENATOR PEELER: Anybody have a discussion? If none, we'll take a vote on it. In favor, raise your right hand. Appreciate your willingness to serve.

MR. REPAK: Thank you so much.

SENATOR PEELER: At large, Seat 10, Mark Kelley. Good afternoon, sir. For our record, if you would, give us your full name.

MR. KELLEY: Good afternoon, Mr. President. Mark Stephan Kelley. MARK STEPHAN KELLEY, having been first duly sworn, was examined and testified as follows:

SENATOR PEELER: Would you like to make a brief statement?

MR. KELLEY: I am ready, willing and able if y'all will allow me to serve on the board of Coastal Carolina. I think I bring some things to the board that other people don't have; my experience -- my 26 years experience working and being up here, as long as my 16 years of representing Coastal Carolina University. With that, I'll be glad to answer any questions.

SENATOR PEELER: How much does that penny bring in off the top of your head, now?

MR. KELLEY: It depends, it fluctuates, depending on, certainly, last year, because of COVID; and that is down some. But it's -- I could get those numbers for you. I don't know them off the bat.

SENATOR PEELER: I know you've been following it for a long time. I thought you'd --

MR. KELLEY: Yeah. I should -- well, I've been retired for a couple of years, but I'll get that for you.

SENATOR PEELER: Just curious. Questions? Senator Alexander?

SENATOR ALEXANDER: Thank you. Good to see you today.

MR. KELLEY: Thank you, Senator.

SENATOR ALEXANDER: Thank you for your willingness to serve. You say ways to improve university's retention and graduation rate. What is that current landscape and what do you -- how would you have the retention and what -- of those students, and what is that --

MR. KELLEY: I think -- I think it's -- if you got students that are 1400 SAT students, anybody and everybody can educate those. I think, when you get down to the 900s and that, those students need -- a lot of those students need some help to bring them along to get them from the time that they enter till the time that they leave the institution. And I think we could do a better -- we do some of that and we do -- but I think we can do a better job at retaining those students, not losing them in the first year, and being able to bring up through to be able to see them graduate in four years, five years. Thank you.

SENATOR ALEXANDER: Thank you.

MR. KELLEY: Thank you, Mr. President.

SENATOR PEELER: Senator Scott?

SENATOR SCOTT: Good to see you, my friend.

MR. KELLEY: Thank you, Senator.

SENATOR SCOTT: Do you know what's the average SAT that Coastal requires since you --

MR. KELLEY: The minimum SAT, I don't have that. It's nine-something, I believe. I'm not sure.

SENATOR SCOTT: So, how many -- how many lottery -- lottery students would normally be taken in over there annually? Do you have any idea? Because that would give us some kind of range to how well we're doing on SAT scores, too.

MR. KELLEY: Yeah. I don't have those numbers --

SENATOR SCOTT: Okay.

MR. KELLEY: -- off the bat.

SENATOR SCOTT: Okay. Tell me a little bit -- your thought pattern on diversity and also trying to -- deciding to open the state and trying to get South Carolina students to come. And I know a number of kids who recently -- at least a couple of them from my church are going to Coastal now.

MR. KELLEY: I think -- in fact, one thing I do know is I think right now, we're graduating more African-American students than we are white male students at Coastal Carolina.

SENATOR SCOTT: Okay.

MR. KELLEY: So, I think it's diverse and that all areas of education need to be looked at, all different races need to be looked at, and what can we do as a better -- as a board to set policy in that to do things better to see that these people stay in school and get through college. We have grown our African-American population at Coastal. I think we've got some awards for that. I think, you know, we have to balance being fiscally responsible with the ability to pay, and I think that -- by bringing some students in that maybe are below the line that we have right now, but could get through to make it to graduation in four or five years, I think we owe it to those in-state students to do a little better job maybe in trying to get them into the school and retain them in the school.

SENATOR SCOTT: Well, you guys got some scholarship money? Are you raising money annually for those kids --

MR. KELLEY: They have. The president has some discretionary funds that they use, yes, sir.

SENATOR SCOTT: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

SENATOR PEELER: Mr. Whitmire.

REPRESENTATIVE WHITMIRE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Welcome, Mr. Kelley.

MR. KELLEY: Thank you, Representative.

REPRESENTATIVE WHITMIRE: I see you mention Coastal's biggest weakness is declining enrollment. Do you have any numbers on that?

MR. KELLEY: I think -- I don't have numbers, but I think, nationally, it's a problem that we're looking at throughout with online tuition or online educations around this country with the cost of education in the country. I think it's a problem that all institutions are facing right now. I think Coastal has somewhat of an advantage in that we have local support, we have state support. And I think if we keep, you know, a bit high on the fiscal responsibilities of the school, I think we can weather this. I think we'll improve -- as you heard, the population in our area is growing. As that population grows, those children come up through our system and, I think, will end up in our school. So, I think we will increase, but I think we -- again, I say everybody can educate a 1400 SAT student.

REPRESENTATIVE WHITMIRE: What is Coastal's enrollment now; do you know?

MR. KELLEY: Right at -- I think, right at 10,000.

REPRESENTATIVE WHITMIRE: Okay. Has that kind of been the norm the last few years?

MR. KELLEY: Yeah. It's slipped a little bit. I mean, I think we're up close to 11,000. It depends how you measure those by FTEs and by head counts and that, so it changes. But, you know, I think that's the level that we're at now. I think that probably somewhere around 12 might be a good number, good settling-in point for Coastal, at lease, in this year.

REPRESENTATIVE WHITMIRE: And, by the way, congratulations on Coastal's football success last year. That was quite a run you guys had.

MR. KELLEY: Thank you. It was great exposure for the campus and for the State of South Carolina.

REPRESENTATIVE WHITMIRE: Is Coastal going to get to play USC this year? I just wonder.

MR. KELLEY: Well, you know, we were supposed to play them last year, but --

REPRESENTATIVE WHITMIRE: That's what I thought. I thought they might want to make that game up. I just didn't know.

MR. KELLEY: Well, Coastal does.

REPRESENTATIVE FINLAY: That's my fear.

REPRESENTATIVE WHITMIRE: Thank you.

SENATOR PEELER: They'd chicken out. No pun intended. Mr. Finlay?

REPRESENTATIVE FINLAY: No, sir. I think USC might be willing to swap Coastal out for Clemson right now. And by the way, I just want to make an editorial comment. Fourteen hundred SAT students may be easier to teach, but they are just as stubborn. Do not be confused.

SENATOR PEELER: Anyone else? What's the desire of the committee?

REPRESENTATIVE WHITMIRE: Favorable.

SENATOR SCOTT: Second.

SENATOR PEELER: Favorable and seconded. Any other discussion? All in favor, raise your right hand. Unanimous. Thank you, sir.

MR. KELLEY: Thank you.

SENATOR PEELER: Next, at large seat 10, Robert O'Brien. For the record, sir, if you would give us your full name, sir.

MR. O'BRIEN: Sure. Robert Louis O'Brien.

SENATOR PEELER: Let me swear you in. ROBERT LOUIS O'BRIEN, having been first duly sworn, was examined and testified as follows:

SENATOR PEELER: Do you have a statement?

MR. O'BRIEN: I just appreciate the opportunity to run for a seat on the board because living down in Myrtle Beach, I know a number of people that have no idea how this process works, and it's all new to me, too. So, I'm looking forward to the opportunity.

SENATOR PEELER: Questions or comments? Mr. Scott?

SENATOR SCOTT: Thank you, Mr. O'Brien, for your willingness to serve. I see you have a heck of an employment record, RES, CID special agent, tell me about how we can transfer some of that experience that you have even to curriculum specifics or some things you think you can begin to make some changes at Coastal; and also, a wide variety of different schools, Wofford, Maryland, xin xEurope, City College of Chicago, about this college at Charleston, a lot of different experiences with colleges and universities and a lot of different experience as is relates to employment history.

MR. O'BRIEN: Yes, sir.

SENATOR SCOTT: So, tell me how we take those experiences and looking at some of the -- well, you've had the opportunity to hear some of the questions this morning.

MR. O'BRIEN: Yes.

SENATOR SCOTT: So, kind of fill in the blanks where you think that those experiences can become --

MR. O'BRIEN: Well, I went to Summerville High School, so I started there and then I went into the military; and that's when I got the opportunity to see some different schools --

SENATOR SCOTT: Right.

MR. O'BRIEN: -- when I went to school there; and then came back on scholarship at Wofford.

SENATOR SCOTT: Right.

MR. O'BRIEN: Moved -- and I was married and had a young daughter --

SENATOR SCOTT: Right.

MR. O'BRIEN: -- and came back there. And my experience at Wofford getting an accounting degree taught me a lot and -- but I wanted to have a degree that I could use, not necessarily to be a CPA, but --

SENATOR SCOTT: Right.

MR. O'BRIEN: -- I wanted to understand how money moved and how to read these voluminous reports --

SENATOR SCOTT: Certainly.

MR. O'BRIEN: -- and see where things are going. And that experience over the years, I've had a number of white-collar crime and healthcare fraud and different types of investigations I've been a part of. And then, I eventually went into forensics, having to be involved in the undercover operation where the state lost all their tax returns --

SENATOR SCOTT: Right.

MR. O'BRIEN: -- on the dark web.

SENATOR SCOTT: Right.

MR. O'BRIEN: I actually was part of that when we reported it to SLED when it happened back in -- back in the day. And computer forensics has always been a big interest. But CCU, I've gotten the opportunity, because I've lived there so long, now, and my daughter went to school there, my son went to the scholars academy there, which is a joint program --

SENATOR SCOTT: Right.

MR. O'BRIEN: -- with CCU where they take the kids from the high school area and allow them to take college courses at the campus. So, I was on campus all the time, especially since we couldn't drive when we first started.

SENATOR SCOTT: Right.

MR. O'BRIEN: So, just being able to understand the fiduciary responsibilities, I see a board as being, you know, critical that people that are there and have been a part of the university and understand how that money flows and that responsibility the board has not to just be a rubber stamp to budgets and taking care of that money --

SENATOR SCOTT: Right.

MR. O'BRIEN: -- but also providing a -- I mean, CCU is one of the biggest and best resources that that area has. I mean, the university is great and they're right there with HGTC and it's just a great, great place.

SENATOR SCOTT: So, in terms of your experience, cyber security, any form of computer fraud --

MR. O'BRIEN: Yes, sir.

SENATOR SCOTT: -- and looking at the -- looking at some of the curriculum, could need to improve some of the curriculum, tell me a little bit about your thoughts on a more diverse school and some of the things you think the board needs to be moving in that direction, policy-wise, with the president. See, you got a new president. Now, you're going to have --

MR. O'BRIEN: Yes, sir.

SENATOR SCOTT: -- a bunch of new board members, too, in trying to meet the challenges we're facing, because it's going to happen as this pandemic -- which I think will be a long time before it just goes all away. We're going to see more and more of our students have to stay at home as it relates to just being able to afford a college education. So, just give me your thoughts on what you --

MR. O'BRIEN: Yes, sir.

SENATOR SCOTT: -- think we need to be doing and how we --

MR. O'BRIEN: Well, from the diversity standpoint, CCU's done a great job in the diversity area. I mean, there's always room for improvement. And the one area that probably, diversity-wise, that they're weakest at is probably in the Hispanic population.

SENATOR SCOTT: Okay.

MR. O'BRIEN: The African-American population there has done a great job and it's a very popular school there for the African-American population. And we did the Adrian project there where we recruited -- we did it in Orangeburg, too, at South Carolina State where we do this thing where you get to be a special agent for two days and you learn what the job is. And it was a very popular there. But to address your question, those three offices that are already there at Coastal are doing a great job and the board is supportive of that; and I would continue to support that as well. But there is room for improvement, like I said, in the Hispanic area. We have a large Hispanic population that is very under-represented at CCU probably right now.

SENATOR SCOTT: Okay. So, you're comfortable with 17, 18 and the overall population of the African-American community is 27. So, you're comfortable with -- comfortable number or are you comfortable because that's where the school is right now?

MR. O'BRIEN: Well, no, I would say I'm comfortable in that opportunities are available there --

SENATOR SCOTT: Okay.

MR. O'BRIEN: -- for that population.

SENATOR SCOTT: Right.

MR. O'BRIEN: And they're doing a great job in trying to --

SENATOR SCOTT: Move in a direction.

MR. O'BRIEN: -- increase that.

SENATOR SCOTT: Okay.

MR. O'BRIEN: I don't see, you know, within the Hispanic population, it's not nearly as well known --

SENATOR SCOTT: Right.

MR. O'BRIEN: -- that the type of degree and opportunities that are available there, that's all. And it's just a -- something I noticed being on campus all the time, that that's the case.

SENATOR SCOTT: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

SENATOR PEELER: Okay. Speaker Lucas?

REPRESENTATIVE LUCAS: Yes. Thank you for being here today. Students who receive or having been receiving their education through online classes as opposed to face-to-face classes, do you think those students deserve some kind of discount for not being there full time?

MR. O'BRIEN: Well, my son's doing that right now and not a fan. He's a senior in high school at Myrtle Beach, so --

REPRESENTATIVE LUCAS: I'm not saying I'm disagreeing with you -- MR. O'BRIEN: But a discount --

REPRESENTATIVE LUCAS: -- I'm just looking for your response. MR. O'BRIEN: Sure. Sure. It's difficult, because the fixed cost of the university is still going to be the same. You still have to have all those costs related. And sometimes, I think it's an informational thing as well. But to answer your question, maybe some discount, but maybe not nearly what some might believe it should be. But I think a lot of that's informational. If parents were aware of why the tuition has to be what it is, I mean, a lot of parents that I know are like, "Man, you know, we hit the lottery and tuition just keeps going up and up and up." You know, it seems to incrementally keep going up. And in talking to the parents of the kids that I know -- I coach softball at Socastee High School, too, and that's a constant thing that they talk about is, you know, "My kid's at home doing computer work and I'm still paying the same tuition that I had to pay when I sent him off to school." And so, I think there is some -- there needs to be some give-back there, because the costs are low. I mean, these universities, though, weren't set up to be online universities and they had to do it on the fly. And so, the bills still come due. And the board has a responsibility, fiduciarily, to, I think, most importantly, give the parents and the people that are paying the bills that information, and as to why it's not a 50 percent discount, let's say, or whatever they think it might should be. You follow me?

REPRESENTATIVE LUCAS: Yes, sir.

MR. O'BRIEN: I mean, that's my thought process on it. I think there should be, because it is less expensive to do, but when my son enrolled at CCU, he didn't enroll to be an online victim of circumstances of a -- of the pandemic required them to shift gears. I mean, I don't know how you balance the two, but I think there has to be some balance. I don't think you just put your head in the sand and just say, "Well, that's what the tuition is, and this is what we're going to do." I think, ultimately, that runs people away.

REPRESENTATIVE LUCAS: I appreciate your answer. Thank you.

SENATOR PEELER: Mr. Finlay?

REPRESENTATIVE FINLAY: As the parent of two soon-to- be three students, I think there's part of the issue on the tuition is not just that the costs are lower. It's what the children are receiving is significantly less. MR. O'BRIEN: Yeah.

REPRESENTATIVE FINLAY: And I think universities have been very slow to acknowledge that the courses, the experience, the long-term takeaway has been significantly less. And to say, "Oh, you're sort of a victim of circumstance," is nice. But when faculty are receiving the same pay you sort of go, "Well, where the victim of circumstance there?" That is a lead-in to say that I think there are going to be a lot more victims of circumstances coming along, many of those financial. So, in other words, I don't think every school that has a certain program is going to be able to maintain them for the future. I think the economy as a scale, the internet, other things are going to start pushing those. Are you willing to make those hard decisions as it comes time to cut and push -- and push through to do what they need to do?

MR. O'BRIEN: Oh, absolutely. I mean, and I think that's the board's responsibility. I mean, Coastal has some great things going on with -- you mentioned athletics -- that they could capitalize on. It doesn't matter that -- and it doesn't seem to correlate, but Clemson wins the national championship and their admissions go up 200 percent. You know, Coastal has some -- they win a baseball national championship and I think the athletic football program last year, with all the success they had, you know, that's an area we can capitalize on. And I think the board should focus on to get that initial -- I mean, additional interest in the school. And, I mean, to me, CCU's got -- we got to keep building that reputation that's -- getting those 1400 SAT score kids that want to come to Coastal, you know. I think it's important and it's critical. And for the university to continue to grow and become more -- continue to be successful, they have to do those things.

SENATOR PEELER: Senator Alexander?

SENATOR ALEXANDER: Thank you, Mr. President, briefly; and good to have you here this afternoon. You mentioned a way to attract students and develop a cooperation ranging with MUSC or Grand Strand Hospital, kind of like a bridge program.

MR. O'BRIEN: Yes, sir.

SENATOR ALEXANDER: Are you aware, does Coastal Carolina have any of those type of programs now in that arena or any other disciplines? MR. O'BRIEN: Not specifically that I'm aware of. At Grand Strand, I know they've tied -- Grand Strand Regional Medical Center has started taking medical students and they're teaching there. I mention that because Horry Georgetown Tech does nursing programs and they're right adjacent to CCU. And the biggest reason I put it in there is my son, who's looking at colleges, and my brother-in-law both went to College of Charleston -- or, my son is looking at College of Charleston because of that relationship that MUSC has with College of Charleston.

SENATOR ALEXANDER: That's a great idea.

MR. O'BRIEN: It's critical. To me, I mean, having been there quite a bit to MUSC, he went on and became an anesthesiologist after going to C of C and went -- and used some of those programs in close proximity. They work together quite a bit. And he's now in Greenville as a pain anesthesiologist, pain specialist. And --

SENATOR ALEXANDER: I think that's a great suggestion. If I could, I just want to recognize for the record, too, is you talk about your membership in civic organizations, certified to represent the taxpayers before the Internal Revenue Service. I think that's -- with your background, that's an interesting association to be with. And then finally, to the -- you're a TurboTax expert part time, and then you're the official scorekeeper for the Pelicans and so what kind of season do they -- you looking for them to have?

MR. O'BRIEN: Well, we're hoping they get to come play. You know, Major League Baseball is taking over all the minor league baseball teams, so they're supposed to start in May, but I don't know if they actually will. But Myrtle Beach Pelicans have now become a low A affiliate and they've played Charleston and Columbia and -- where they used to be in the South -- they're not in the South Atlantic League. Before, they were in the Carolina League.

SENATOR ALEXANDER: And if I could finish up, Mr. President, with your different duties and part-time things, would there be any -- would there be any problem with you serving on the board and being available to attend all the meetings?

MR. O'BRIEN: Oh, not at all. No, that's one of the -- it's been the hardest thing about getting used to being retired, but I got to retire at a relatively young age because of the federal law enforcement, so --

SENATOR ALEXANDER: Well, we appreciate --

MR. O'BRIEN: -- it's been interesting.

SENATOR ALEXANDER: We appreciate your service and what you do --

MR. O'BRIEN: Thank you.

SENATOR ALEXANDER: -- and your willingness to serve in this capacity.

MR. O'BRIEN: Appreciate the opportunity. I just wish that you didn't have to, like, it wasn't a political thing where you have to run against somebody to be able to serve. So, thank you.

SENATOR PEELER: Good point. We have excellent candidates. Hunter Renfrow, any contact with him?

MR. O'BRIEN: I coached his sister in softball and --

SENATOR PEELER: Is she as good as he is?

MR. O'BRIEN: -- I actually saw Hunter last week. He's at home -- he came home and watched some baseball. He's just been married and has a little baby and his dad's the athletic director where I coach softball -- or was the athletic director. Now, he's retired as well. But Hunter's a great young man.

SENATOR PEELER: He sure is.

SENATOR SCOTT: Favorable report.

SENATOR PEELER: Motion for favorable.

SENATOR ALEXANDER: I second it.

SENATOR PEELER: Seconded. Any other discussion? Hearing none, Those in favor, raise your right hand? Unanimous. Thank you, sir.

MR. O'BRIEN: Thank you.

SENATOR PEELER: Now we move to at large Seat 12. Okay, Mr. Porterfield. Afternoon, sir.

MR. PORTERFIELD: Good afternoon.

SENATOR PEELER: For the record, give us your full name, sir.

MR. PORTERFIELD: Brett Charles Porterfield.

SENATOR PEELER: Let me swear you in. BRETT CHARLES PORTERFIELD, having been first duly sworn, was examined and testified as follows:

SENATOR PEELER: Would you like to make a brief statement?

MR. PORTERFIELD: Yeah, just a very brief statement. Good afternoon to the members of the General Assembly. My name is Brett Porterfield. I am a candidate for Seat 12 on the Board of Trustees at Coastal Carolina University. I consider it an honor and a privilege to potentially serve in this capacity. I am an alumnus of Coastal Carolina, having graduated in 2007. Having graduated, I've remained a financial supporter of the college and currently serve as a member on several alumni associations. Serving on the Board of Trustees is the highest form of service an alumnus can render to an institution. I thank the Commission for its consideration and I welcome any questions the Commission may have.

SENATOR PEELER: Thank you. Questions or comment? Senator Alexander?

SENATOR ALEXANDER: Thank you for your willingness to serve. Your present employer is who?

MR. PORTERFIELD: Blue Cross/Blue Shield, Senator Alexander.

SENATOR ALEXANDER: Okay. And would your ability, if elected to the Board, would there be any problem with having the ability to serve and go -- attend meetings?

MR. PORTERFIELD: No, sir, it wouldn't be any problems.

SENATOR ALEXANDER: And you say here, ways to improve Coastal Carolina is to improve its profile. Would you tell me what that means?

MR. PORTERFIELD: Well, yes, I noticed as we've been having these screenings today, there's been an increased intention in the profile of Coastal Carolina within the State of South Carolina. And I feel that South -- Coastal Carolina is working to be the third institution behind the University of South Carolina and Clemson. I feel that, right now, the school's reputation is that when you say Coastal Carolina, one of the first things you think of is athletics. We talked about the baseball team, we talked about the football team. And I feel that, along with those things, the academic aspect of the institution should also follow along. That way, that when you go to school, say, in the 864 or in the 803, you go to the schools in upstate and you market the institution, it has that academic weight behind it. You know, currently, here in the State of South Carolina, when you say you're an alumni of Clemson University or alumni of University of South Carolina, that holds weight. When you say you're an alumni of Coastal Carolina University, you should hold weight as well.

SENATOR ALEXANDER: Thank you. Thank you, Mr. President.

SENATOR PEELER: Anyone else? Mr. Scott?

SENATOR SCOTT: Thank you for your willingness to serve. I see you're a member of Zion Pilgrim.

MR. PORTERFIELD: Yes, sir, I am.

SENATOR SCOTT: Good church, good church.

MR. PORTERFIELD: Yes, sir.

SENATOR SCOTT: You seem to be very, very excited about this appointment. What do you think that you need to do for Coastal to be able to recruit more African-American students so the percentage looks like South Carolina --

MR. PORTERFIELD: Well, I think it's --

SENATOR SCOTT: -- and have a more diverse population. And there's a lot of good students out there -
-

MR. PORTERFIELD: Yes.

SENATOR SCOTT: -- too if we recruit them.

MR. PORTERFIELD: I agree. I agree that Coastal Carolina should do more in regards to increasing its diversity especially African-American males. Right now, they have a program called Call Me Mister, which trains African-American males to become teachers.

SENATOR SCOTT: Right.

MR. PORTERFIELD: Programs such as that, I think, are of benefit to the institution as well. Also, I think Coastal Carolina should market directly to that particular demographic within the State of South Carolina. I feel that a diverse institution is representative of a diverse state. And I feel that Coastal Carolina should do

more in regards to diversifying their student profile so that there are, when alumni graduate from the institution, they are prepared for a diverse workplace.

SENATOR PEELER: Anyone else? Desire of the committee?

SENATOR SCOTT: Favorable report.

REPRESENTATIVE WHITMIRE: Favorable.

SENATOR PEELER: Favorable and second. Any other discussion? We'll take it to a vote. All in favor, raise your right hand. Unanimous. Thank you for your willingness to serve. Thank you, sir.

MR. PORTERFIELD: Thank you for your time this afternoon.

SENATOR PEELER: Next, Delan Stevens. Good afternoon, sir.

MR. STEVENS: Good afternoon.

SENATOR PEELER: For the record, if you would, give us your full name.

MR. STEVENS: Hal Delan Stevens.

SENATOR PEELER: Please raise your hand. HAL DELAN STEVENS, having been first duly sworn, was examined and testified as follows:

SENATOR PEELER: Would you like to make a brief statement?

MR. STEVENS: Yes, sir. I'd just like to thank you for the time to be here and I'd just like to say it's been an honor and a privilege to serve the six years that I've been able to serve on the Board.

SENATOR PEELER: Questions or comments? Senator Alexander?

SENATOR ALEXANDER: Thank you. Good to see you today.

MR. STEVENS: Thank you, sir.

SENATOR ALEXANDER: Thank you. You talk here about the biggest strength -- I think it's interesting -- the biggest strength of the university is its economic impact.

MR. STEVENS: Yes, sir.

SENATOR ALEXANDER: Does that outweigh the academic success of the students?

MR. STEVENS: No, sir. But I think the economic impact has an impact on the students directly.

SENATOR ALEXANDER: And so, when you talk about the economic impact, are you talking about on just the Horry -- Greater Horry County area or are you talking about the economic impact of the students once they get out into the workforce?

MR. STEVENS: I'm talking about the economic impact that it has as far as preparing students to contribute.

SENATOR ALEXANDER: Okay. Then you say the biggest weakness is the endowment. So, what kind of endowment --

MR. STEVENS: Well, like --

SENATOR ALEXANDER: -- is there, and have y'all done work? Is there a focus on endowment?

MR. STEVENS: Yes, sir, we're working on it. We're now approximately, I think -- when I did this, it was about 40 -- well, maybe about a \$60 million endowment. When you consider Clemson as probably a \$750 million endowment, and you look at what the economic numbers are for the University now, it is a vital source of continuing to provide income, to provide what students need. The most important thing I think for a university -- or at least to me -- is the safety and well-being of the students and the education they receive when they get there. And this is a daunting task to do it sometimes with the budgets that you have to do it with. So, I think, to increase the endowment to have a better fund -- a better source of income fund coming in would be a great, great help.

SENATOR ALEXANDER: Thank you for your answers.

SENATOR PEELER: Senator Scott?

SENATOR SCOTT: Thank you, again, for your willingness to serve. Tell me a little bit about your strategy as a board member to make Coastal a more diverse institution to bring more African- American students to the campus along with faculty, too. The number of faculty numbers weren't that great either. So, as a board member, what plan would you recommend or what would you recommend to the board to be able to address those kinds of issues at Coastal?

MR. STEVENS: Yes, sir. We -- one of the things we haven't addressed and done is we have a lot of -- formed a diversity department, which I think Dr. Stokes-Brown has done a good job there. And I think it helps students, when they're looking at universities to attend --

SENATOR SCOTT: Right.

MR. STEVENS: -- to know that we have addressed those issues and that that's something that has been done. I think another thing is sometimes, on your approach, as far as when you're trying to promote your school, I think you need to do direct promotion of what we can offer as far as our diversity, what we have, what's our strengths. And that -- sometimes, I think you market your school as an overall and you don't target some areas. So, I think that's very important, as we progress with our marketing, that we look at how do we -- exactly how do we promote our school to show people that we are.

SENATOR SCOTT: So, in looking at where Coastal was a 55/45 school, in terms of out-of-state students -- and it's just a matter of time it's going to happen with more states figuring out how to keep their students at home and always trying to take our students, what kind of plan do you think Coastal needs to do to prepare itself in the event the out-of-state shortage begins to stop. Now, you're in a specialized area of engineering, medical and those kinds of areas, you're going to always have kids transferring, veterinary sciences, you're going to have kids transferring. What do you think Coastal needs to do to protect itself -- and I see it's moving in that direction bringing those numbers down just in case that ends up happening faster than we can -- you know, that we anticipate?

MR. STEVENS: Yes, sir. Well, two things, first off, I would think our marine class department is probably one of the top in the country.

SENATOR SCOTT: Right.

MR. STEVENS: So, I think, when you have something that is one of the best in the country, you really need to showcase that --

SENATOR SCOTT: Right.

MR. STEVENS: -- students from all over, not just United States, but the country -- the world will say this is the best marine science department in the country.

SENATOR SCOTT: Right.

MR. STEVENS: And you need to highlight that. And our Wall School of Business is also one of the best. So, sometimes, I think you need to highlight what is your strengths --

SENATOR SCOTT: Right.

MR. STEVENS: -- and promote that to your out-of-state students.

SENATOR SCOTT: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

SENATOR PEELER: Any other questions or comments? What's the desire of the committee?

SENATOR SCOTT: Favorable report.

SENATOR ALEXANDER: Second.

SENATOR PEELER: Favor and seconded. Any other discussion? Hearing none? Raise your right hands. It's unanimous. Thank you, sir.

MR. STEVENS: Thank you all.

SENATOR PEELER: Appreciate your willingness to continue to serve.

MR. STEVENS: Thank you very much for your time.

SENATOR PEELER: At large Seat 14, Joe Jarrett. For the record, if you would give us your full name, sir.

MR. JARRETT: Joe Nelson Jarrett, Jr.

SENATOR PEELER: I'll swear you in. JOE NELSON JARRETT, JR., having been first duly sworn, was examined and testified as follows:

SENATOR PEELER: Would you like to make a brief statement?

MR. JARRETT: I would. I would like to thank all of the commission for the work they do for the colleges and the universities of our state and I would also like to thank the staff of Senator Peeler's office, who have been so kind and helpful, Julie Price and Martha Casto.

SENATOR PEELER: Questions or comments for Mr. Jarrett. Speaker Lucas?

REPRESENTATIVE LUCAS: Thank you, and thank you for your time today for coming in. There has been a question that was raised to the prior candidate, and I want to raise it to you and give you a chance to comment, because I had wondered about it through all of the candidates who have come through. The endowment at Coastal is extremely low in comparison to many other public schools. What do you think

causes that and do you believe one of the root causes of that is the percentage of out-of-state students we allow to come to Coastal Carolina?

MR. JARRETT: I really don't know the answer to your question other than to say that our endowment, I think, is \$45 million right now, which is low. And to put that on the back of out-of-state students, I wouldn't consider that to be the case. We're fairly new in terms of having an endowment. We're relatively new, as a university, on our own. It takes time to get those monies up to get people to donate after they've finished college. Most of the time, by the time you can make a significant gift to the college, you would be in your 40s, 50s or 60s. We're probably going to have to wait a little longer and continue trying to improve our endowment. We do need to pay a lot of attention to our philanthropic department which helps in raising these funds.

REPRESENTATIVE LUCAS: And that was one of the points you raised and I wanted to give you a chance to comment; so, thank you.

MR. JARRETT: Yes, sir.

SENATOR PEELER: Mr. Finlay, did you have a question?

REPRESENTATIVE FINLAY: Yes, sir. I was just going to -- thank you. I was going to make a point. I don't know that -- if I understand correctly, Coastal was rolled out of the USC system in '93?

MR. JARRETT: Yes, that's correct.

REPRESENTATIVE FINLAY: So that's 28 years. That was going to be my one question. I don't understand if they were allowed to carry any forward from USC. But I will say this. It is a systemic problem within our colleges and universities in this state and one that all of them, especially our flagship universities are going to have to deal with, because that is one of the best ways to address rising student costs, is through the endowment. Right here, y'all bringing it up, I hope y'all have a plan to move on it, because I think it matters and it matters intensely.

SENATOR PEELER: Senator Alexander?

SENATOR ALEXANDER: Thank you, Mr. President. And, good afternoon. Thank you for being here. You mention here that ways to improve Coastal Carolina is a better arts center. Is there a -- is there a curriculum in the arts?

MR. JARRETT: Oh, yes.

SENATOR ALEXANDER: Okay. So, what -- is the arts failing? Is it not a prominent part, as far as the arts center goes, from that standpoint? Has there not been a -- I mean, you get the one percent money. I'm just wondering --

MR. JARRETT: Well, it has been kind of a neglected thing since a great contribution was made by a family, the Robin Edwards School of the Arts. But the facility is beautiful; it's just small and it needs to be enlarged. So, our new president has moved forward with this and downtown Myrtle Beach they are renovating an old theater and Coastal will run and manage that facility. So, that's going to be one new outlet for more performances and more exposure of the arts department, which is fantastic in the productions that they do put on. But, again, it's limited seating and just needs a boost.

SENATOR ALEXANDER: Thank you. I was just -- was not aware. The other question I would have, in your current -- well, says you visit the campus often. Can you define for me what "often" is?

MR. JARRETT: I think I could probably say I'm out there 50 times a year, at least.

SENATOR ALEXANDER: Okay.

MR. JARRETT: For one reason, my wife works there. She's the director of the Coastal Housing Foundation, which is not really a part of Coastal University -- Coastal Carolina University. Secondly, I used to be in a -- the team physician for them for 36-some years.

SENATOR ALEXANDER: Okay.

MR. JARRETT: And spent a lot of time with the teams and traveling, and so on.

SENATOR ALEXANDER: So, you're very familiar with it.

MR. JARRETT: I'm really familiar with it.

SENATOR ALEXANDER: So, if I could, one follow up. You mentioned Housing Foundation is separate and distinct from the university?

MR. JARRETT: It's not under the university auspices. I don't know the exact legal definition of that separation.

SENATOR ALEXANDER: Thank you.

MR. JARRETT: Thank you.

SENATOR PEELER: Mr. Finlay?

REPRESENTATIVE FINLAY: Senator Alexander, we put forward a proviso, I believe, that reaches to that, that at the beginning of the discussion of these sort of off-balance sheet items that these universities have, it's not just them. USC, Clemson, everybody has them. And it's going to become one of the most important issues, and I'm very glad to hear you've hit on it, or what is off-balance sheet financing that is depending on, for example, students being allocated to those dorms. The second issue is this off-balance sheet housing, you have a lease-back where you purchase 25 years out, what is the dorm worth if it's been beat up by kids for 25 years, in my guess, is negative equity. So, I think this is going to be a really interesting question for us to go forward.

MR. JARRETT: And the fact that you ask that, it -- I was concerned, when I made the application, that there may be an appearance of conflict of interest in that, and I would certainly like that to be resolved.

SENATOR PEELER: Thank you. Senator Scott.

SENATOR SCOTT: Thank you, Mr. Chairmen. Thank you, Mr. Jarrett, for your willingness to serve. I want to go back to -- and I'm sorry, I had to leave the room for a minute. Duty calls, as the old saying. Tell me a little bit about the Fine Arts Center and, because, you were in a community where the arts and entertainment is really big, especially in the season, since the season is moved, that -- and maybe an off-campus location where they're trying to build a fine art center on campus, that way you can partner with the city and some other foundations to try to build a fantastic fine arts center knowing what your competition is going to be, but I don't think you want to bring all that traffic onto the campus.

MR. JARRETT: Well, you know, that's a great question. And Coastal is -- to expound on it a little more, which I had discussed maybe in your absence --

SENATOR SCOTT: I'm sorry.

MR. JARRETT: -- is that there's a theater in the downtown section of Myrtle Beach --

SENATOR SCOTT: Right.

MR. JARRETT: -- called the Reveille Theater, and that's an old beautiful building. It's going to be completely renovated and Coastal's fine arts program will be managing that, basically.

SENATOR SCOTT: Okay.

MR. JARRETT: And that's all part of the downtown revitalization plan for Myrtle Beach, for those of you who may or may not be aware of this. And the old buildings, which are beautiful to look at, but have been fairly run down, is a common problem in a lot of towns. But the university and the city council have really been working well together on this project.

SENATOR SCOTT: That may be the answer to that fine arts center.

MR. JARRETT: It may be.

SENATOR SCOTT: I mean, because it -- you would have a lot more exposure. And if the it -- if the partnership is set up right, you share a lot more of the debt, along with possible gains and losses, as you bring different acts and entertainment, because not all of you will make money, some of it you will actually lose money until you get that group who will come from all over everywhere to see it.

MR. JARRETT: It's tough and competitive environment.

SENATOR SCOTT: No question. Wish you well with that.

SENATOR PEELER: Anyone else? Desire of the committee?

SENATOR SCOTT: Favorable.

SENATOR PEELER: Favorable.

REPRESENTATIVE FINLAY: Second.

SENATOR PEELER: Seconded. Any other discussion? Hearing none, we'll take it to a vote. All in favor, raise your right hand. Unanimous. Thank you, sir. Still on Coastal Carolina University, at large, Seat 15. Coastal Carolina University, at large, seat 15, Patrick Sparks. Good afternoon, sir.

MR. SPARKS: Hello.

SENATOR PEELER: For the record, give us your full name, sir.

MR. SPARKS: Patrick Stephen Sparks.

SENATOR PEELER: Let me swear you in. PATRICK STEPHEN SPARKS, having been first duly sworn, was examined and testified as follows:

SENATOR PEELER: Would you like to make a brief statement?

MR. SPARKS: Well, I'd appreciate the opportunity to get to take my mask off. This, if granted, will be my second term on the board. And I'm a graduate, former Alumni of the Year and donor. And Coastal has done a lot for me. It certainly has done a lot for our area, as a local business owner. So, I appreciate the opportunity to sit here and give you some reasons why I hope I should be elected again.

SENATOR PEELER: Questions or comments? Senator Scott.

SENATOR SCOTT: Thank you for your willingness to continue to serve, and I know, in the Toyota business right now, that's probably what you need to be most of the time. But we appreciate your service.

MR. SPARKS: Thank you, yes.

SENATOR SCOTT: Tell me what you've learned over the year of being on the board and some things that you may want to recommend for changes or, given some of the questions we've asked out here, diversity, making sure we sealed ourselves in case if more students decide to stay home, listening to some of the special programs that you do have to attract students, not knowing what percentage of those out-of-state students will actually come to your business department and others that we've talked at, please share your experience of what you saw and what you think we need to do; and if you get another term, how -- some things you could do to improve what you saw.

MR. SPARKS: Certainly. And to address your first thought about being on the board as first term, it's a lot like trying to jump on a train that's doing 80. When you're an incoming board member and you've been elected, however, the board has been there, it's continuing to move along, it takes a certain amount of time to get up to speed on everything --

SENATOR SCOTT: Sure.

MR. SPARKS: -- why we do things the way we do them, why have they been done this way in the past, what obstacles, roadblocks are there from trying to change things. Higher education is changing. We know the stats are out there. Not as many people may choose to attend to go to a four-year college or even a two-year college, for that matter. So, I think it's extremely important that universities, institutions recognize that and change with those times. But, fortunately, we do have a good partnership with Horry Georgetown Tech. We have a bridge program where we take in-state, in-area young men and young women who may not have the qualifications or, quite honestly, the ability to come in to Coastal as a freshman and succeed. They would go to Horry Georgetown Tech. They would attend that campus for classes. They would come over in the afternoons and attend certain classes on campus with Coastal. And the term "bridge" is aptly named. We have several opportunities like that. I know our admissions department has done a fantastic job in determining at-risk students, the students that, by the time that first semester rolls around, we've identified students that may not be adapting to college life quite like we would like them to in terms of their academics. So, they're stepping in quickly. There's almost like a neutral program with their academic advisor where that advisor goes and looks and says, "Hey, listen, we may have an issue here. How do we help?" Those things are helping with our retention -- our freshman retention rate this past year. It was a 73 percent. That's the highest since I've been there. It has been as low as the high 50s. When I started, it was 63 percent. So, we're making grounds in going out and recruiting students and keeping those students, which is really important.

SENATOR SCOTT: Right. Tell me about diversity, what have you seen --

MR. SPARKS: Absolutely. And I think one of the previous applicants mentioned Dr. Stokes-Brown with their Office of Diversity and Inclusion. I like the title. I like "diversity" and I like "inclusion." I think sometimes "diversity" just by itself, if somebody didn't know any better, might think that that would divide us. The "inclusion" aspect in that title really sums it up for me in terms of we have a department and we have a young lady solely dedicated, with her staff, to -- helping to onboard students in our university. We recruit through them. We were able to use that in terms of being able to go out and explain why us and

why not somebody else, for students. Perhaps, Senator Scott, your next follow up might be do I think that our ratios are where they need to be, and I do not.

SENATOR SCOTT: Okay.

MR. SPARKS: I think that we need to do a better job all the way around with all ethnicities that may be willing to represent -- I think that's Hispanic. I think our Asian population, from what our demographic is, is woefully small, and I believe that we can do a better job. And quite honestly, Diversity and Inclusion Office is going to help us there. And I think our new president -- I was on the search committee for Dr. Benson. I think he is a -- will be a -- will turn out to be a great leader for us, a lot of energy and a lot of really good ideas. And open-door policy is a cliché, but when this gentleman says it, he means it. He's out in the classrooms teaching. He has asked all of his executive level counsel to teach a class each semester as well, so he wants his folks out there, the staff, being in front of people and making a difference in terms of "if I need to talk to you, it's there, it's available."

SENATOR SCOTT: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

SENATOR PEELER: Mr. Alexander.

SENATOR ALEXANDER: Thank you, Mr. President. And thank you for being here and for your service on the board. It says here ways to improve this is to communicate a clear vision. Is there a lack of that now? Have y'all put a focus on a vision for the university.

MR. SPARKS: Senator, yes, thank you for the question. Every university has a strategic plan. And that talks about how big our footprint can be or how many students we want to have, and what our maximum growth is. When we transitioned from Dr. DeCenzo to Dr. Benson, I personally felt as though that left us with an opportunity to be able to go back and rededicate ourselves and our message to our incoming students and to our existing students about what it is we're trying to do and where we're trying to go. And understandably so, we have an Office of Philanthropy and Giving and Advancement. It's part of our endowment, and we've spoken about our endowment, unfortunately, way too much in this meeting, but this is -- of where it is and what it is. But that department has been taken down. We, literally, under the previous president, did not have a staff in place waiting for the new president to come in and name his own staff. We've partnered with a third-party company to come in and try and help give us some ideas on how this department needs to be structured, what it needs to look like, who needs it. My assumption, it's somebody coming from outside the university to help us get back up in running in terms of that. So, in my mind, a clear vision meant how we move forward in certain areas that we know are strategic issues.

SENATOR ALEXANDER: Thank you. Just a couple of other questions.

MR. SPARKS: Certainly.

SENATOR ALEXANDER: You know, as a local business owner -- and I will agree with the senator, I'm trusting that the business is extremely going well these days, the car business --

MR. SPARKS: If I had more, we'd be doing better; but I'm satisfied, thank you.

SENATOR ALEXANDER: I'm certain it is. Do you have -- I'm just curious, but you were in that area. Is Coastal Carolina -- is it embraced by the local business community? Is there a good network there of support for Coastal in -- I mean, with the whole beach -- greater Myrtle Beach area?

MR. SPARKS: Senator, I appreciate the question, and that's an area that I actively try and work towards. I, as a graduate, grew up there. I know what Coastal is. We have a lot of transient folks. Jason Repak, one of the other board members, mentioned how many people are coming in. And I personally think that it's our job, as board members and citizens of the community to educate these folks that are moving in about Coastal Carolina University. It's part of our issue with our transient -- transients are one of our -- part of these folks that are moving in to our area, they bring --

SENATOR ALEXANDER: New residents?

MR. SPARKS: -- allegiances, yeah, allegiances from different universities, different areas. You know, our -- we've actually started a -- kind of an opportunity to say, listen, I know you're from West Virginia and you're a West Virginia fan; but you list here now, adopt us." You know, root for West Virginia on TV and come to the Coastal games, as it were.

SENATOR ALEXANDER: Thank you. And just following up to your point there of folks moving in. Now, you were born in Charlotte. Did you grow up and move to the beach at an early age or were you in Charlotte and then went to Coastal as a student?

MR. SPARKS: I moved in seventh grade. So, I attended North Myrtle Beach Middle School and North Myrtle Beach High School, and then Coastal.

SENATOR ALEXANDER: Only reason I was asking, I was just curious if you came there and went to school and then stayed.

MR. SPARKS: Right --

SENATOR ALEXANDER: So, you had already been --

MR. SPARKS: -- I understand.

SENATOR ALEXANDER: Thank you. Thank you, Mr. President.

SENATOR PEELER: Mr. Finlay?

REPRESENTATIVE FINLAY: Yes, sir. This is a bit of sort of an oddball question but one I think deserves consideration. Do you think Senator Verdin could pull off that same haircut that you have going?

MR. SPARKS: I think the Senator can probably do a lot of things.

SENATOR VERDIN: Hey, I appreciate the --

REPRESENTATIVE FINLAY: Thank you for responding.

SENATOR VERDIN: I appreciate the spirit that was offered. He can twist that any way he wants to. I need a haircut. I understand. I'm trying to figure -- I got a wedding on June the 5th and no one in my family is happy about things on my face or my head. I can't believe you'd go there.

REPRESENTATIVE FINLAY: I just didn't want you to come too much of a burden.

SENATOR VERDIN: Why don't you tell Mr. Sparks what a good-looking man he is.

REPRESENTATIVE LUCAS: Well, as an orthopedic surgeon, could you help Mr. Findlay with his foot?

SENATOR VERDIN: Yeah, it's stuck somewhere right now.

SENATOR PEELER: Mr. Speaker, can you clean this up.

SENATOR LUCAS: No, I'm ready to vote.

SENATOR ALEXANDER: I move for favorable.

REPRESENTATIVE FINLAY: Second.

SENATOR PEELER: Move for favorable and seconded. Do you have any further discussion? Hearing none, we'll take it to a vote. All in favor, raise your right hand. Unanimous. Thank you, sir. Appreciate it.

MR. SPARKS: Thank you.

SENATOR SCOTT: Appreciate your service.

SENATOR PEELER: That completes Coastal Carolina University. And if you all will promise to be back in five minutes, we'll take a five-minute stretch break and be right back here. We still have the Old Exchange Building Commissioner and Wil Lou Gray. (off the record)

SENATOR PEELER: Call us back to order. This is the College and University Trustee Screening Commission. Next we have Old Exchange Building Commission at large. Greg Ohanesian.

MR. OHANESIAN: Ohanesian.

SENATOR PEELER: Ohanesian.

MR. OHANESIAN: Ohanesian.

SENATOR PEELER: Is that close enough?

MR. OHANESIAN: Yes, sir.

SENATOR PEELER: For the record, give us the real way to pronounce it.

MR. OHANESIAN: Ohanesian.

SENATOR PEELER: Let me swear you in.

MR. OHANESIAN: Yes, sir. GREG OHANESIAN, having been first duly sworn, was examined and testified as follows:

SENATOR PEELER: Would you like to make a brief statement, sir.

MR. OHANESIAN: I've been on the Old Exchange Commission overseeing Building Commission for about nine years now, and during that time we have not had to come before the General Assembly for funding. We have been able to provide our own funding through admission prices. I know that was one of

the questions that was on one of the senator's minds the last time I came. The most important -- well, one of the most important facts about the Old Exchange Building that I consider is that there are three public buildings still standing in the United States where the Declaration of Independence was read in July of 1776. Everyone knows the Independence Hall in Philadelphia. And New Englanders know Faneuil Hall in Boston. But very few people seem to know that the Old Exchange Building in Charleston, South Carolina, is the third building, and that's a really important fact. Not just for the South, but for Charleston. It's one of the unknown facts. And, of course, the others are related to George Washington, when he was president, made a southern tour, came to Charleston for about five days. There were a couple of balls in the great ballroom of the old exchange building in his honor as well as other balls throughout the city. I could go on but I'm sure that members of the House and members of the Senate have questions and I'd be glad to entertain those.

SENATOR PEELER: Time's running. Questions or comments? Senator Scott.

SENATOR SCOTT: So why? So why folks don't know about this -- this well kept -- kept secret?

MR. OHANESIAN: Well, that's --

SENATOR SCOTT: What's going on? Are we not doing a well enough job in order to getting that information out to attract people who now comes to the aquarium and all these others things we have in Charleston. But the Old Exchanges is not being looked at.

MR. OHANESIAN: Well --

SENATOR SCOTT: What's going -- how can we improve it?

MR. OHANESIAN: Well, actually, it is, sir. We have between -- in not a Covid year -- between 45 to 48 thousand people coming through on an annual basis. Last year we were about half of that. We're online and we get over a million hits a year, so someone is paying attention.

SENATOR SCOTT: Okay.

MR. OHANESIAN: We solicit interest from teachers, public school teachers throughout the state to bring their classes to the Old Exchange Building. Several do. I did myself bringing a couple of classes from Marlboro County --

SENATOR SCOTT: Okay.

MR. OHANESIAN: -- down to Charleston. But there's a fair amount of traffic in the building. We have a -- what's known as the great hall upstairs and that hall is used for very special events. Sometimes weddings, sometimes corporate meetings, such like that. There's great use of the building but it's in terms of facts about the building, you're right, sir, not that well known. But that's also a function of the History of the American Revolution in South Carolina. Not very many people know about the battles that took place here in this state.

SENATOR SCOTT: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

SENATOR PEELER: Senator Alexander.

SENATOR ALEXANDER: Thank you, Mr. President. And just to follow-up on that -- you're last comments with the commission being formed for the 250th anniversary found that and certainly that -- that's already in place, that would be a great partnership if y'all would get involved with that. Telling that story and as we try to educate young and old and some of us to be reminded of the significance of South Carolina and our Revolution success.

MR. OHANESIAN: Yes, sir. Plans are already in place and more being --

SENATOR ALEXANDER: To work with that commission?

MR. OHANESIAN: Yes, sir.

SENATOR ALEXANDER: Okay, good. Because there's no reason to --

MR. OHANESIAN: We're on track.

SENATOR ALEXANDER: Okay.

MR. OHANESIAN: We recognize that the building is extremely important in the history of South Carolina.

SENATOR ALEXANDER: And the country too.

MR. OHANESIAN: And across the country, absolutely. We get more visitors from outside of South Carolina than we do from South Carolina.

SENATOR ALEXANDER: We need to work on that as well as part of our history. Thank you.

SENATOR PEELER: Senator Verdin.

SENATOR VERDIN: Oh, just, not -- the chorus. I'll just join the chorus with a comment. You know, 13 colonies can directly refer their students to the Declaration of Independence, to the Constitution. We're one of those 13. There's 37 that can't. They might be able to direct their students to the Virginia and Kentucky Resolutions, add a couple of more states.

MR. OHANESIAN: Yes, sir.

SENATOR VERDIN: But anyway and you have close proximity to all of those young people that are in the low country for the visits but what -- what a great thing it would be if just one percent of our college graduates of our state institutions could reference the 1776 reading or two percent of our college graduates could reference the 1776 and the 1788 readings. What -- just two percent of the population. I'd like to start somewhere and I don't know if you were here earlier but we had college trustees and we've been having this conversation about getting back to the basics. Now, it was great putting men on the moon and have genome centers and everything else we've done in the last 50 years and one of the things we've done is neglected some really foundational fundamental points of education as it relates to how we interact with each other.

MR. OHANESIAN: Yes, sir. I --

SENATOR VERDIN: And I'd sure like to help you. I'm going -- I'm going to do my part by bringing my new grandchildren -- I've got grandchildren now that can walk and if I can keep -- if I can keep them out of the -- out of the gutter and up on the sidewalk, I'm going to try to get them to the foot of Broad this summer.

MR. OHANESIAN: They will be fascinated with the dungeon. The dungeon has been prepared for children. There are images of patriots that are hung up, fake, obviously mannequins to show what it was like during the American Revolution, when the British had control of Charleston and arrested patriots and put them down there. The other comment that I'd like to make coming off of that -- and I was astounded to read it last year in the Wall Street Journal. A significant number of colleges and universities in this country, including Ivy League schools, don't require of history majors a course on American Revolution. That's the place to start. The universities are not fulfilling, in my opinion, their role in educating our young adults. That's just an opinion, sir.

SENATOR VERDIN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

SENATOR PEELER: Mr. Whitmire.

REPRESENTATIVE WHITMIRE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Is there admission to the Old Exchange?

MR. OHANESIAN: Yes, there is. It's the only way we survive.

REPRESENTATIVE WHITMIRE: How much?

MR. OHANESIAN: It's 15 for adults, 5 for children except when they come in class groups and then the price is reduced to 2 per child.

REPRESENTATIVE WHITMIRE: Okay. I used to teach social studies, South Carolina history, and I would bring them down to the state museum and they didn't charge anything for school groups. I would think that would be one way you could probably encourage more school groups, if you didn't have to charge for them. I can understand for adults and so forth. That's just something I would consider.

MR. OHANESIAN: Sure. We --

REPRESENTATIVE WHITMIRE: Go ahead.

MR. OHANESIAN: We were reminded many years ago before I got on the commission that coming to the state legislature for funding was not an event that any of the members of the commission looked forward to so we have tried to find a way where we can be self-sustained --

REPRESENTATIVE WHITMIRE: Right.

MR. OHANESIAN: -- without having to come to the --

REPRESENTATIVE WHITMIRE: I understand that. Without having to come to us for money.

MR. OHANESIAN: Yes, sir.

REPRESENTATIVE WHITMIRE: I've got personal interest in this. My -- one of my ancestors was heavily involved during the Revolution, John Rutledge. I know you're familiar with him.

MR. OHANESIAN: Yes, sir.

REPRESENTATIVE WHITMIRE: Yeah, so it's -- I've always had a fascinations for that part of Charleston. Thank you.

MR. OHANESIAN: Well, if I can come off of that, sir, John Rutledge is kind of an unsung hero. It was he who really directed the four delegates to the Continental Congress to pass the Declaration of Independence. He was behind the scenes and his brother, Edward, who was on the committee was waiting for word from his brother, John, in Charleston which way to vote to approve or not approve the Declaration of Independence. I commend you, sir. I wish I had such patriot -- although I have patriots myself, past president of the South Carolina society, Sons of the American Revolution.

REPRESENTATIVE WHITMIRE: Yeah. I'm a member of that. Unfortunately, I got left out of his will somewhere along the way.

SENATOR ALEXANDER: What's your relationship with Parks, Recreation, and Tourism?

MR. OHANESIAN: We have a -- we're supposed to have the Director of Parks and Recreation to serve as an ex officio member of our Commission but I -- I don't know want to call names or anything but I can't remember ever seeing a representative of Parks and Recreation attending our Commission meeting.

SENATOR ALEXANDER: We need to improve on that.

SENATOR PEELER: Any other questions or comments?

SENATOR VERDIN: Yes, sir. I might not get an opportunity. Your surname, would that be the son on Ohan?

MR. OHANESIAN: Ohanes.

SENATOR VERDIN: Okay, the son of Ohanes.

MR. OHANESIAN: And it's actually son of St. John, that's n-e-s saint. Yes, sir. I commend you, sir.

SENATOR VERDIN: Well, just something that flew in my mind from way back.

MR. OHANESIAN: Not very many people would get that -- not very many people would get that far sir.

SENATOR SCOTT: Move favorable.

SENATOR ALEXANDER: Second.

SENATOR PEELER: Second. Any other discussion? Hearing none, take it to a vote. All in favor, raise your right hand. Appreciate all you do.

MR. OHANESIAN: Thank you. And thank you, gentlemen.

SENATOR PEELER: Now, we move to Wil Lou Gray Opportunity School. Four at large candidates today. Stewart Cooner?

MR. COONER: Yes, sir.

SENATOR PEELER: Just for the record, give us your full name. Give us your full name.

MR. COONER: Douglas Stewart Cooner. DOUGLAS STEWART COONER, having been first duly sworn, was examined and testified as follows:

SENATOR PEELER: Like to make a brief statement?

MR. COONER: I'd like to make a statement, sir. I apologize I'm usually not brief but I will endeavor to be so. Mr. Chairman --

SENATOR PEELER: I deal with senators every day.

MR. COONER: Thank you, sir. Mr. Chairman, distinguished members of this Commission from both the South Carolina Senate and the South Carolina House of Representatives and to your colleagues and the South Carolina General Assembly, I say thank you. Thank you for the opportunity to sit here before you today, to discuss my candidacy for the Wil Lou Gray Opportunity School Board of Trustees. Thank you for the 16 years that I've already served on this excellent board and thank you for trusting me to serve as a representative, a voice, for the students who walk through those halls, who excel in those classroom, who build confidence, display leadership, and who prove that they can and will be successful. All they need is an opportunity. With the 6.5 million dollars in the general funds you provide, almost 85 percent of the school's budget, you, the members of the South Carolina General Assembly, have built the foundation for their opportunity to succeed. What does success look like? To date, 80 GEDs have been earned. 80 GEDs towards the goal of 100. Since the 2011 school year, the school has met this goal of 201 earning their GED in the 2017 school year alone. Even with the unexpected events of Covid 19, the 2020 school year produced 124 GEDs. This year, Wil Lou Gray Opportunity School student won the David S. Stout award for the

highest GED score in the state. Over the years, three Opportunity School students have earned this honor with one runner up. So success looks like the 26 percent of students who transition to college and into employment, 34 percent who transition directly to employment, 24 percent who return to school, the 6 percent who enter the military, and the 10 percent who transition to other situations. Before Wil Lou Gray Opportunity School, these students age 16 to 19, were at risk of academic progression but now they fill 4 dormitories of 35 students each across three 14 week sessions. They meet teachers in ratios of 14 to 1 or less. Teachers who maintain 100 percent of their required certification. They meet employees who's average tenure reach almost a decade, some who have taught, retired, and returned to tutor over a 50 year career. From the upstate to the midlands, to the Pee Dee, and the low country, these students may study for a GED, earn a works key card, pass the ASVAB, and learn a vocational skill, and they prove themselves successful. And they learn the meaning of Dr. Wil Lou Gray's motto why stop learning because for one young man, had he decided to ignore the meaning of that motto, he would have missed out on accomplishing a five grade level advancement in his education and would have missed out on proving to himself that he is a success. In 1921, Dr. Gray posed that question why stop learning? I invite you to the campus on Boston Avenue at any time but especially this year. As you enter the campus's single drive, you will find fastened to the lamp posts banners proclaiming 100 years, since 1921, Wil Lou Gray Opportunity School. This is our 100 year celebration. I hope Dr. Gray would be proud of what she planted first in Tamasee, South Carolina, and what others have grown. I believe she would. I am proud of this school. I hope that is apparent. I'm thankful for the dedication and determination of the faculty, staff, cadre, and administration of Wil Lou Gray Opportunity School. Please believe that the successes that I have share with you today would not be possible without the extraordinary efforts and compassion and caring of each one, past and present. The students are successful because they are taught to believe in themselves, taught by those who believe in them even more. We, as a Board of Trustees of Wil Lou Gray Opportunity School, have been granted an awesome opportunity to be a small part of what's accomplished. Through our diverse backgrounds, experiences, skills, and representation, we 12 members are privileged to work alongside a remarkable group of people carrying a lifelong banner. Thank you. Here I've arrived at the end of my comments but the work remains and I am dedicated to it. As it states on the Wil Lou Gray Opportunity School website "together we will." I believe that every child deserves a future filled with opportunities and possibilities. I believe that every child deserves a future filled with hope. For 100 years, Wil Lou Gray Opportunity School has provided hope. I want to continue to be a part of that work that promises such hope and as described here today, delivers on that promise. Together we will. Thank you for allowing this time to share with you the distinct honor that has been to serve on the Wil Lou Board of Trustees and to share with you the reasons I want to continue to serve. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

SENATOR PEELER: Thank you. Questions or comments. Senator Scott.

SENATOR SCOTT: What is the key to that success? To remove the students from their present environment? To move the extra interference with the other kids being -- interacting with this child to get their child more focused? What is the -- what is the key to that success? I know there is a youth challenge program also.

MR. COONER: There is, sir.

SENATOR SCOTT: We'll hear -- hear about that, I know.

MR. COONER: I believe the key is, as you said, sir, is to take them out of the environment that is not necessarily conducive to their learning achievement. I believe it's bringing them into the Wil Lou Gray Opportunity School where they're assessed, where they're given an individualized guidance plan, where they're required to take the work keys program, where they're required to take the ASVAB. They live in a quasi military environment and they're given structure. And I believe those are the keys to help them to succeed. That not only do they succeed while they're at the school but they also succeed when they transition back into their communities.

SENATOR SCOTT: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

SENATOR PEELER: Okay. Anyone else? Mr. Whitmire.

REPRESENTATIVE WHITMIRE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I just want to say Wil Lou Gray is part of my subcommittee on budgeting every year. We are just astounded at the success that you have at your school.

MR. COONER: Thank you, sir.

REPRESENTATIVE WHITMIRE: When we have them over for a luncheon, just how they act, how polite they are. It's yes, sir and no, sir, yes, ma'am, no ma'am. You've just done a wonderful job with some -- some young people who probably would fall through the cracks otherwise. So I have no problem trying to fund them, what they need every year because they've been a true success story. So I just want to thank you for what you do.

MR. COONER: Thank you, sir.

SENATOR PEELER: Senator Verdin.

SENATOR VERDIN: Female admissions are a challenge. Are they a challenge once they get there or just finding a -- is the pool of candidates the challenging aspect of it?

MR. COONER: It's the pool, sir.

SENATOR VERDIN: Okay.

MR. COONER: It is. We -- we actually have five dormitories. Two of them are dedicated to female. Three of them are dedicated to male. The admissions rate for females was low so what we actually decided to do was partner with vocational rehab and bring them on campus and reduce the number of dormitories available for females to accommodate the number of applications that we were receiving. But it is a population that we'd like to address. The school has -- has tried to understand what it is that -- that attracts the males to the program but not necessarily females and we continue to study that. We -- we promote the school through billboards, through radio announcements, through participating on news programs, different things of that sort. It would be helpful if we could get additional support from the school districts as they recognize that children are at risk and provide us with that information. Obviously, with the parents consent. And we believe that we could address that. But yes, sir, it is -- the female population is one that we'd like to see an increase in enrollment.

SENATOR PEELER: Anybody else?

SENATOR SCOTT: Favorable report.

SENATOR ALEXANDER: Second.

SENATOR PEELER: Motion is favorable report. Seconded. Any other discussion. If none, take it a vote. All in favor, raise your right hand. Unanimous. Thank you, sir.

MR. COONER: Thank you.

SENATOR PEELER: Next Michael Pryor. Good afternoon, sir.

MR. PRYOR: Good afternoon.

SENATOR PEELER: For the record, if you would give us your full name.

MR. PRYOR: Michael Tyrone Pryor.

SENATOR PEELER: Let me swear you in. MICHAEL TYRONE PRYOR, having been first duly sworn, was examined and testified as follows:

SENATOR PEELER: Would you like to make a brief statement?

MR. PRYOR: Yes, sir. May I sit?

SENATOR PEELER: Please do. Make yourself comfortable.

MR. PRYOR: I am a counselor. I am a native of South Carolina. I hail from the small town within Orangeburg County called Branchville, South Carolina. I received both my degrees from South Carolina State University and I'm currently working on my third degree in educational administration at that university as well. I am currently a certified school counselor and I'm passionate about advocating for our students. I believe my educational and professional experience along with my integrity will allow me to become a good fit for board member at Wil Lou Gray. I'm committed to bringing strategic and innovative ideas and helping progress our students within South Carolina.

SENATOR PEELER: Thank you, sir. Questions? Comments? Senator Scott?

SENATOR SCOTT: Thank you for your willingness to serve.

MR. PRYOR: Thank you.

SENATOR SCOTT: I'm excited to come out of a small county and especially even a smaller community.

MR. PRYOR: Yes, sir.

SENATOR SCOTT: And some of the things that we've been talking about, at least this year, that's been top priority is those children who are struggling in those communities, especially those trying to go to a four year school and we have enough difficulty just getting them out of high school because they don't have all the resources and material. Tell me what you think based upon your training, experience, and a South Carolina State College graduate too, so congratulations on that as well. The training, experience, especially your -- what you've seen in your own environment in those communities that you'll be looking for -- looking for when you see these students who are struggling trying to figure all this out, first just trying to make an adjustment being in a small community and then trying to -- to try to put themselves together so they begin to achieve. Give me your thought pattern on -- on what your thought pattern might be on that.

MR. PRYOR: Well, I think the number one thing is resources. Within the small town environment, we don't have a lot of resources. We don't have a lot of clubs and organizations, so the communication as well as the conversation within the schools is not necessarily there when it comes to success and post-secondary opportunities. So I think that's one of the main things that we can work on. Even within my experience as a school counselor, a lot of students they -- when they struggle academically or within the school setting, they don't know about the opportunities at Wil Lou Gray. I did have a few students that I did recommend and have gone to Wil Lou Gray and have become successful. But a lot of students, over all, they just stop coming without seeking advice of what to do next.

SENATOR SCOTT: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

SENATOR PEELER: Senator Alexander.

SENATOR ALEXANDER: Thank you, Mr. President. Briefly. Good afternoon. Thank you for being here and your willingness to serve.

MR. PRYOR: Thank you.

SENATOR ALEXANDER: You're current employer, you're -- what is your current employer?

MR. PRYOR: I'm currently employed as a head counselor at Dekalb Alternative School in Stone Mountain, Georgia.

SENATOR ALEXANDER: Stone Mountain, Georgia. So you live -- is your residence in Georgia or South Carolina?

MR. PRYOR: South Carolina.

SENATOR ALEXANDER: Okay. Would -- how often does the Wil Lou Gray board meet?

MR. PRYOR: It meets three times a year.

SENATOR ALEXANDER: So would there be any issue with you having the ability to attend those meetings?

MR. PRYOR: No, sir.

SENATOR ALEXANDER: Okay. And finally, it says here under the biggest weakness, you have reputation. Is there -- is there --

MR. PRYOR: As far as my biggest weakness?

SENATOR ALEXANDER: No, no, not yours but Wil Lou Gray's. I mean, is that -- is that a perception or is that something you're aware of?

MR. PRYOR: Yes, I think that's just a perception of the students. They -- they see it as -- or the parents as well, they see it as an alternative school setting as a bad thing. As if all students that attend Wil Lou Gray have behavior issues and that's not necessarily the case. Some students go to Wil Lou Gray because they want a way of finishing their high school -- their secondary education, not necessarily for behavior issues.

SENATOR ALEXANDER: So that's something they could work on?

MR. PRYOR: Yes.

SENATOR ALEXANDER: And have you -- have you been to the campus?

MR. PRYOR: I have not been to the campus but that's something that I look forward to doing if I'm afforded the opportunity to tour the campus and speak with board members about, you know, ways we can make it better.

SENATOR ALEXANDER: Okay. Thank you. It's good to see you.

SENATOR PEELER: Mr. Whitmire.

REPRESENTATIVE WHITMIRE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. You have a South Carolina driver's license?

MR. PRYOR: Yes, sir.

REPRESENTATIVE WHITMIRE: You got any points left on it?

MR. PRYOR: I do have a few left.

REPRESENTATIVE WHITMIRE: Well, you better be careful. You're about to go out.

SENATOR VERDIN: Mr. Chairman. Are you finished there, Mr. Whitmire?

REPRESENTATIVE WHITMIRE: Yeah.

SENATOR VERDIN: Because I've got the same love for Mr. Pryor as you do. Because I experienced a lot of the things you experienced and I believe like sometimes having a stiff neck and not being able to look over my right hand shoulder when I'm on I-20 trying to get back to South Carolina.

MR. PRYOR: I know.

SENATOR VERDIN: You get -- if you can't look back over on the entrance ramp to the interstate, you don't know who's over there lurking. Honest to goodness, when I was young like you, I had fast cars and now I've got slow trucks. But I'm with the representative there, we all need to be careful.

MR. PRYOR: That's true.

SENATOR PEELER: Anyone else?

SENATOR SCOTT: Favorable report.

SENATOR ALEXANDER: Second.

SENATOR PEELER: Second. Any discussion? Hearing none, take it to the vote. All in favor raise your right hand. I think it's unanimous. Thank you for your willingness to serve, sir.

MR. PRYOR: Thank you.

SENATOR PEELER: Next Gregory Vaughn.

SENATOR VERDIN: Mr. Chairman.

SENATOR PEELER: Yes, sir?

SENATOR VERDIN: You'll have to forgive me. Not only did I eat my whole cup full of chocolate, I ate Mr. Finlay's as well. So --

REPRESENTATIVE FINLAY: Not that Mr. Finlay is going to miss it.

SENATOR VERDIN: He said I was going to have a sugar rush at some point.

SENATOR PEELER: Gregory Vaughn, for the record, if you would, please give us your full name.

MR. VAUGHN: Gregory Martin Vaughn.

SENATOR PEELER: Let me swear you in. GREGORY MARTIN VAUGHN, having been first duly sworn, was examined and testified as follows:

SENATOR PEELER: Would you like to make a brief statement?

MR. VAUGHN: I am in the incumbent coming in. Haven't been very long. I have actually attended one face-to-face board meeting before we had to start going to teleconferencing. I filled a partial seat, the end of a seat so I came before this committee just over a year ago. So, of course, I have been involved in the teleconference board meetings that we've had since. I still have a lot to learn about the school but I'm totally, absolutely convinced that the school and what it stands for and how it operates is very, very needed in this state, not this state but any state but it is, of course, in the state so I think it serves a great purpose and I think it always will because youth will always have problems that don't always work themselves out and they need a little help so, I think Wil Lou Gray's a good opportunity for those kids to have a chance to fulfill their -- their potential.

SENATOR PEELER: Questions or comments?

SENATOR SCOTT: Favorable.

SENATOR PEELER: Motion is favorable. Second? Any other discussion? Hearing none, we'll take a vote. All in favor, raise your right hand. Unanimous. Thank you, sir. We appreciate your willingness to continue serving. That's our agenda. If there's nothing else, we'll stand adjourned.

STATE OF SOUTH CAROLINA

**COLLEGE AND UNIVERSITY TRUSTEE
SCREENING COMMISSION
SCREENING HEARINGS
THURSDAY, APRIL 22, 2021**

The within hearings, reported by Kathryn B Bostrom,
Court Reporter and Notary Public in and for the State of
South Carolina; said hearings were taken at the South
Carolina State House, Columbia, South Carolina, on
Thursday, the 22nd day of April, 2021, commencing at the
hour of 12:26 p.m.

APPEARANCES: Committee Members: Representative William R. Whitmire, Chairman Senator Thomas C. Alexander Senator John L. Scott Senator Daniel B. Verdin Representative Kirkman Finlay Representative James H. Lucas Committee Staff Martha Casto Julie Price Court Reporter: Kathryn Bostrom, Garber Reporting

CONTENTS: (Hearings) PAGE Exhibit Index 3 Proceedings
. 4 Certification of Reporter 24 Word Index EXHIBITS There were no exhibits
marked during these screenings. Court Reporter's Legend: dashes [--] Intentional or purposeful
interruption [ph] Denotes phonetically written [sic] Written as said P-R-O-C-E-E-D-I-N-G-S

CHAIRMAN WHITMIRE: Today we're going to hear two candidates for a board at large seat from Wil Lou Gray Opportunity School. First I would ask for Cheryl Fralick from Lexington to come up, please. And as soon as you sit down, if you'll just raise your right hand, I'll swear you in. All right. CHERYL FRALICK, having been first duly sworn, was examined and testified as follows:

CHAIRMAN WHITMIRE: And if you'll tell me your name and what are your plans to run for Wil Lou Gray seat.

MS. FRALICK: Well, my name is Cheryl Howard Fralick. I've grown up in South Carolina. I was born and raised here. I went through the public school setting here at USC, early childhood masters, administration degree. I'm recently retired after 36 years of service in education. I served as principal the last 15 years in Lexington School District One. And so basically at church one day, a friend just said, hey, what are you doing in retirement. I said I'm trying to figure out who I am, trying to figure out what's the next step. And he started talking about you should think about something like a board of education. I don't think that I'm done helping children, and I don't think I'm done helping families and teachers. And this was an opportunity that just kind of came at the last minute, the 11th hour putting this application in, but since then I've really done some deep dives and some research, and I just think the children I've served as principal -- especially my emotionally disabled students, Wil Lou Gray gives me an opportunity to continue helping students and teachers and faculty and administration, and my work with children is just not done.

CHAIRMAN WHITMIRE: Okay. Questions? Speaker Lucas.

REPRESENTATIVE LUCAS: Ms. Fralick, you have an outstanding resume. Thank you for your desire to serve. One of the things you list is a desire to see an increase in the number of students passing the GED. How would you do that?

MS. FRALICK: Well, you know, like I said, when I first answered these questions, it was kind of off the cuff to be quite honest with you, because I didn't know this is a direction that I was really interested in doing, but in the course of going, you know, what, I can make a difference. You know, I can work with people there. So I kind of changed my answers a little bit on that. Basically increasing GED -- what I have found with results is one size does not fit all, especially when you get into children that have some issues and some mental, behavior, social, whatever, but what I have found is by increasing their self worth, right, the character of who they are, the desire to want to do better, to work hard, when you combine the character piece, when you combine the mastery, the knowledge and skills, and when you expect high quality work, children will perform. And so -- but they have to first understand who they are as a person, and just to me increasing scores is showing individuals who they are, what they're capable of doing. And that you are capable of going beyond what you think you have potential to do. It's really pushing them to know they can do it, that they absolutely can do it.

REPRESENTATIVE LUCAS: Thank you.

CHAIRMAN WHITMIRE: Senator Scott.

SENATOR SCOTT: I agree with the Speaker. I'm really impressed with your resume. The other part that I'm impressed with is not only just the regular student who comes to school, but also the special needs students. And there are so many kids, that we are now dealing with these young people, who have special needs and some may be even balance because of parents who use drugs --

MS. FRALICK: Uh-huh.

SENATOR SCOTT: -- and kids who are having an addiction, just all kinds of issues. I think your experience would play a major role. Tell me about the last couple of years. Thirty-six years is a long time --

MS. FRALICK: It's a long time --

SENATOR SCOTT: -- but you're still a young teacher --

MS. FRALICK: Thank you, thank you.

SENATOR SCOTT: -- and a principal.

MS. FRALICK: Yes.

SENATOR SCOTT: Tell me about the last two years and what you began to see, because things when you began 36 years ago, it's a lot different now than it was then. Tell me about those last couple of years.

MS. FRALICK: Oh, and to be quite honest, I've really noticed a change in the -- when I was there --

SENATOR SCOTT: Right.

MS. FRALICK: -- I retired June of 2019, so I'm not that far away from it yet.

SENATOR SCOTT: Right.

MS. FRALICK: But within the last two or three years from when we opened the school in 2011 --

SENATOR SCOTT: Right.

MS. FRALICK: -- I'm already seeing a difference in -- and I'm going to tell you, the social aspect even for children that are in stable homes, with social media and all the things that are thrown at them, we have to approach them differently, but the bottom line's still --

SENATOR SCOTT: Right.

MS. FRALICK: -- the bottom line for everybody is what their self worth is on the inside. Being able to identify themselves as, I am Cheryl Fralick. Here's what I'm capable of doing, and this is what I continue to work on. And so they -- and through this pandemic, I can foresee there are going to be a lot more mental --

--

SENATOR SCOTT: Right.

MS. FRALICK: -- breakdowns and things like that, but the last two years I was there, my emotionally disabled classroom consisted of probably about eight boys and about two girls, but their behaviors were so violent and their mental health was so severe and for a lot of reasons, some of the families that are intact and some that are not. And we're just faced with a lot of variables being thrown at these children. And they just don't have that stability within themselves to work through these things, because they're so concerned about what's going on around them, who's doing what to me and who's not doing what to me, that they lose sight of, I need to focus on myself. And so really the last two years my faculty and I, we really focused on the why.

SENATOR SCOTT: Uh-huh.

MS. FRALICK: You know, why are we here, what is it that's the issue and how are going to fix this.

SENATOR SCOTT: Right.

MS. FRALICK: And when we met around a table like this, we always put the student name in the center of the table and said, this is why we're here, what's going on in this child's life and how are we going to work to help him meet the target, whatever that target is, and it may be just growth one percent --

SENATOR SCOTT: Right.

MS. FRALICK: -- it may be growth two percent, but are we moving that child forward instead of flat lining or dropping off a cliff.

SENATOR SCOTT: Well, I wish you well. I do know we sometimes think because these kids have programs that they don't have capability to really learn.

MS. FRALICK: That's right.

SENATOR SCOTT: Some of these kids -- they're bright kids, but because of outside influence, they just refuse to participate for one reason or another. I wish you well.

MS. FRALICK: Thank you.

CHAIRMAN WHITMIRE: Senator Verdin.

SENATOR VERDIN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. That all translates to Wil Lou Gray, that approach.

MS. FRALICK: Yes.

SENATOR VERDIN: Inner person.

MS. FRALICK: Yes.

SENATOR VERDIN: The focal point right here. So the biggest weakness identified is just the turnover. I take it the students at Wil Lou Gray, if you were directing those comments directly is, would you say they have a decrease in the number of students leaving school due to disciplinary issues? What's the term, what's the normal term, 12 weeks, ten weeks, 12 weeks, or if it prescribed in different modules or --

MS. FRALICK: Well, can I -- do I have the privilege to say -- I want to tell you a different answer to that. Like I said, when I was trying to figure out whether I was going to apply to this, it was kind of a quick response. Let me look at everything, because I do dive deep in the data, right, but I didn't do a whole lot. So I've looked at Wil Lou Gray's data. I would change my answer to that --

SENATOR VERDIN: Okay.

MS. FRALICK: -- a little bit, because things are changing, going back to you. The last two years of my stay at Meadow Glen Elementary things were changing very rapidly, and we would lose students for this or that, and so it's really hard to pinpoint, but what I am seeing, though, is all schools, not just Wil Lou Gray, but just the mental health, the safety, right, true professional development for staff, students and families, a deep dive into the rise, the recruitment of solid faculty to help these students work through so that they don't want to leave.

SENATOR VERDIN: Okay. So that response to the questionnaire was not specific to -- because I'm not familiar with the retention rate. I've always thought it was real high.

MS. FRALICK: His retention rate is very high, probably food services is probably a tough one, and probably those that have to watch them at night. I would think that that is a really --

SENATOR VERDIN: Oh, but that's employees, though.

MS. FRALICK: -- hard to recruit for that.

SENATOR VERDIN: Okay. Well, Wil Lou Gray's biggest weakness, "the need to increase the number of students passing the GED," good and "needs to increase the number of students leaving that school due to disciplinary issues."

MS. FRALICK: Right. Well --

SENATOR VERDIN: But that's what I view as the whole concept of the school.

MS. FRALICK: Right.

SENATOR VERDIN: Okay. I'm going to subject myself to this rigorous discipline because I haven't had it before and I knowingly, willingly am subjecting myself to it. And then they get there and don't pan out.

MS. FRALICK: Right. Well, since I've -- if you notice on question 5 it says, have you ever visited the campus, and I said, no. Well, as soon as this application went in, I called Director Smith and said, can I come by your school.

SENATOR VERDIN: Yeah.

MS. FRALICK: I want to feel what your heart is. I want to see the school. I want to see what's going on. We talked about that, and so I would have changed that answer as well, because people leave for different reasons. And with the way the world is now, people are changing their minds on anything. A student can all of a sudden just feel overwhelmed by that military style, 14 week structure, because they haven't had structure in their life. And so it's not like a prison where you hold them down. They do have the freedom to leave. So a lot of different things that Director Smith and I talked about -- it's a variety of things. They might call mom and dad and say, please, come pick me up. I can't handle this. And sometimes parents don't let children fail in order to become somebody strong, and they're bailing them out a lot. So that was a lot of the reason that he told me, and sometimes there are discipline issues. In my

emotionally disabled class at Meadow Glen Elementary, we had two such severe children that the public school setting is not equipped to handle that, and it's the same thing. If there is a student with discipline issues and they've gone through the process of everything that -- their protocols and everything like that. Sometimes there is a need for something a little more even stringent than a 14 week program. Does that make sense?

SENATOR VERDIN: Yes.

SENATOR SCOTT: Yeah, it does. Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN WHITMIRE: Senator.

SENATOR SCOTT: Two programs that I always highly respect, Wil Lou Gray is one and Youth Challenge is the other one. And I spent many years working with the Youth Challenge program, and it is really military driven. And even with that, what we discovered, there's a lot of these kids that don't make it simply because they never had discipline in their life.

MS. FRALICK: Right.

SENATOR SCOTT: And that's a hard thing for a child who has been able to go and come as they please, and then take them out of a setting where they can't get their own way, they act out. And some come around and some don't. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN WHITMIRE: I want to welcome Representative Finlay. Thank you for coming.

REPRESENTATIVE FINLAY: Three elevators.

CHAIRMAN WHITMIRE: That's real dedication. First, I'm a former educator, so I really want to thank you for your service to our state in education.

MS. FRALICK: It's been a privilege.

REPRESENTATIVE FINLAY: I can tell you when I first started, it's not like it is now.

MS. FRALICK: It's not.

CHAIRMAN WHITMIRE: It is totally different. My wife also has been an elementary principal at three different schools, and she keeps me informed, and she says the same thing. When she started in the early '90s, it's not the way it is now. So --

MS. FRALICK: It is. And I would add to that. When you have to be careful with every word that comes out of your mouth now --

CHAIRMAN WHITMIRE: Yeah.

MS. FRALICK: -- you want to be truthful, and you want to be -- we call it being lovingly blunt when we had to talk to parents about their students and their discipline, but it's so important that families work together in order to say no to a child every now and again and let them fail so that they pick themselves up, and they see how strong they actually are when they can go through some hardship. And the students that they serve at Wil Lou Gray -- I mean, that's what this school was built for, right, to help those that don't feel that they're a part of something, to build them up so that they walk out of there and say, I am somebody.

CHAIRMAN WHITMIRE: Well, I'll say this about Wil Lou Gray. I also serve on Public Education Ways and Means. They come before us every year. It is an outstanding school. They -- I can't say enough about the success there.

MS. FRALICK: Right. And just the tour and just how beautiful it is, first of all --

CHAIRMAN WHITMIRE: Right.

MS. FRALICK: -- it feels good to be there, and the things that they're doing, and I just -- it opened my eyes, and I'm going, yeah, these were my kids in elementary school who you've served and the kids that I've served for a very long time.

CHAIRMAN WHITMIRE: Any other questions?

SENATOR SCOTT: Favorable report.

CHAIRMAN WHITMIRE: All right. There is a motion for favorable report. All those in favor, please signify by raising your right hand. Opposed, like sign. Thank you very much.

MS. FRALICK: You're welcome. Thank you for the opportunity.

CHAIRMAN WHITMIRE: Good luck to you. Thank you.

MS. FRALICK: Thank you.

CHAIRMAN WHITMIRE: All right. Next up is Michael Moss from Duncan. Have a seat, and I'll swear you in. MICHAEL MOSS, having been first duly sworn, was examined and testified as follows:

CHAIRMAN WHITMIRE: If you'll state your name and tell us why you're running for Wil Lou Gray.

MR. MOSS: My name is Mike Moss, and I was asked a few years ago -- there was a partial term that needed to be filled, and I was contacted and asked about Wil Lou Gray, and I learned more about Wil Lou Gray. I have educators in my family. My wife is retired school teacher. My son is now band director, and I have two daughter-in-laws who both teach, one at Clemson University, the other one at an elementary school. I was a former admissions director at Spartanburg Methodist College so education has been a part of out life. And it's been such a privilege to serve. And I would like to continue to serve at Wil Lou Gray.

CHAIRMAN WHITMIRE: Questions? Senator Scott.

SENATOR SCOTT: Yes, sir. Thank you so much for your willingness to serve. Understanding what the needs are going to be and the role as a mission, how do you think that can transfer over to the young people at Wil Lou Gray, getting them prepared? Some of these kids will probably end up at the technical schools, in the military or even into a four-year institution. So with the broad knowledge coming from a southern Methodist college doing intake, what do you think that you would share with those young people to make a transition?

MR. MOSS: Well, I think that there is a transition here, and I think getting -- I've met with the admissions person at Wil Lou Gray. I went over, and they kind of shared with me what they've done before in admissions. And I think the students -- you've got to prepare them for life. And I think they have to see that need, and if that referral comes in, it's what that student needs at that time, Wil Lou Gray is either going to take it or they're not. And so I think if you -- you know, admissions -- same way at the college. We didn't know if the student -- we would look at their background. We looked at their grades. We looked at what they did while they were at those high schools and would they make it at college. And you have to make that determination. And I think that's the same with Wil Lou Gray.

SENATOR SCOTT: So sharing that as knowledge, as a member of the board, what would you like to see the board do on the policy side because you instruct administration what needs to be accomplished so these kids are able to achieve and be able to get into college, although it's expensive, college is now?

MR. MOSS: Right. I think as far as the staff and all, I think they do an excellent job getting the students prepared for college. Everything that I've seen from the board -- from our board perspective in getting ideas and listening to the principal of the school and what is going on and Director Smith, I feel like that they are achieving those goals. There's always going to be some fallout, but there's fallout everywhere.

SENATOR SCOTT: Right.

MR. MOSS: There's fallout in public schools. There's fallout no matter what you do, but I think they're on target. Everything looks good to me, and enrollment shows us that, that we continue to enroll. The only thing that's crippled enrollment this year, of course, if the virus, and there is just nothing we can do about that.

CHAIRMAN WHITMIRE: Any other questions? Senator.

SENATOR VERDIN: I'm just curious. Did you ever have any interaction with Bull Cagle, Mavis Bull Cagle?

MR. MOSS: Yes, from Lyman. Yes.

SENATOR VERDIN: I've been thinking. He kind of ran his own little Wil Lou Gray format over there, didn't he?

MR. MOSS: He did. He'd run more like a recreation program, getting them involved. His nephew was a good friend of mine, and they -- Byron, I don't know if you knew him, but And Ms. Cagle also was the secretary to my doctor, so --

SENATOR VERDIN: Yeah. Over in Greer?

MR. MOSS: Over in Greer.

SENATOR VERDIN: Yeah.

MR. MOSS: But, Bull, yeah, he kind of run a program and keeping kids off the street.

SENATOR VERDIN: Tough love.

MR. MOSS: Yes.

SENATOR VERDIN: Discipline, but a lot of love.

MR. MOSS: Absolutely.

REPRESENTATIVE FINLAY: Well, I know how Byron Everett experienced him, because Byron Everett and I both called him Uncle Bull. Byron and I are first cousins.

MR. MOSS: I think we've met before. I don't know --

SENATOR VERDIN: Well, hey, I appreciate the focus up from both the nominees. Mr. Chairman. It's a personal relationship, really, the focal point of impact there at Wil Lou Gray. And I was again, just reading that book you gave me, ten, 12 or 14 years ago about the mission. You know, Wil Lou Gray came to Gray Court or out in the country there at Youngs Community and poured life and soul into a bunch of underprivileged folks that were bound and determined to lift themselves up with a little help, and you know, we have to be mindful of continuing to enable people to identify and then embrace the ideals that are so instrumental in keeping the society together. So Mr. Chairman, I move favorable.

CHAIRMAN WHITMIRE: All right. First, let me welcome Senator Alexander from his busy schedule down on the floor.

SENATOR ALEXANDER: We broke so we could come up here.

CHAIRMAN WHITMIRE: Well, we appreciate that. Any other questions for Mr. Moss, or move to favorable report? Hearing none, there's a motion for favorable report. All those in favor, please raise your right hand. Those opposed, like sign. So reported out. And before you two leave --

SENATOR SCOTT: Proxy open.

CHAIRMAN WHITMIRE: Oh, yeah. We got the -- Representative King -- Senator Scott had his proxy, and he also votes favorable.

SENATOR SCOTT: And favorable report on the previous as well.

CHAIRMAN WHITMIRE: Martha, do you want to tell them their rules and orders and stuff?

MS. CASTO: Julie will get with y'all two. The election is scheduled now for May 5th. We are to get the transcripts printed in the journal next Thursday --

MS. PRICE: Tuesday.

MS. CASTO: -- Tuesday, I'm sorry, Tuesday, release them for commitments on Thursday, and then the election will be the following Wednesday at noon. Now Wil Lou Gray has four seats and five candidates. Remember y'all screened three last week, and then the other school is Coastal Carolina, and there are two contested seats on there.

CHAIRMAN WHITMIRE: And please do not talk to any representatives or senators before the day you can ask for commitments. We've had that come up in the past, and that really creates a problem for some. Okay. Anything else before the Committee? Thank you Senator for coming up, and thank you to the speaker, and we now stand adjourned. (There being no further questions, the hearings concluded at 12:49 pm)

(There being no further questions, the hearings concluded at 2:41 pm)

Letter received by the Commission from a Winthrop Alumnae on April 9, 2021

To Whom It May Concern,

I am writing as a deeply concerned alumna of Winthrop University urging that Mr. Glenn McCall NOT be appointed once again to the Winthrop Board of Trustees. As the current Chairman of Winthrop's Board of Trustees, a great deal of unethical conduct and corruption has transpired and ultimately, our leaders should be held accountable for their conduct, not rewarded to additional terms. Not only will I provide evidence, but I urge you to do confidential interviews with every member of the current Board of Trustees to verify. Some will be brave enough to say as such, but only if in confidence.

First and foremost, I expect all Board members to abide by the South Carolina Freedom of Information Act. Legislator Seth Rose can also attest, but this state law is violated at every Winthrop BOT meeting. The law permits the Board to enter into Executive Session for a limited number of reasons, however, over 90% of every board meeting is held Executive Session, during topics that do not qualify. In general, they open the meeting, say the invocation, approve the agenda/past minutes and then enter immediately into executive session for hours on end. They come out, read the resolutions and vote with Board members passing every resolution unanimously, then they adjourn. Topics such as athletic programming simply do not belong in Executive Session. That's the bottom line. I have voiced my concerns on this and other major governance issues directly to WU's legal counsel Caroline Overcash, Interim-President Hynd and Chairman McCall as far back as September, 2020, yet no efforts have been made to abide by state law. It all begins with Chairman Glenn McCall, who presides over the meeting. They continue the same pattern of doing things, without formal board training and assuming the way it has been done in the past is okay for the future, whether it is lawful or not. No ignorance to the law may be pled as the plethora of illegal executive sessions has been brought up many times, directly to Chairman McCall. Winthrop's head of the Political Science and Mass Communications departments, Ms. Jennifer Disney and Mr. Guy Reel, can also verify their eyewitness accounts of the current Board entering into Executive Session illegally.

At the November, 2020 Board of Trustee meeting, I witnesses nearly 14 guests of Winthrop University speaking during the public comment time in advance of the Board of Trustee meeting. Those guests, which included three current students, were not welcomed into the room by Chairman McCall, Vice-Chair Bigham, Secretary Faust (responsible for lining up speakers) nor Interim-President Hynd. A microphone was not initially afforded to speakers (despite being requested in advance and the board having microphones at their tables). It was only one member of Winthrop public relations and a retired WU staff member who actually spoke to these individuals to thank them for their time in coming. The retired staff member even went as far as apologizing for their treatment by the Board after everyone was removed from the room because of executive session happening. It was highly embarrassing for me that my own alma mater cared nothing for these speakers who simply wanted their voice to be heard.

As you will soon find out in the media in the coming weeks, not only is Winthrop University in gross violation of compliance of federal law, Title IX, but there will be a much deeper story coming out that I don't even have all of the facts of. University officials are finally going to be held accountable to the public on many fronts, and hopefully, it will lead to positive change. As you know, any University not in compliance with Title IX may lose ALL of its federal funding as a result. Here is a link (https://share.icloud.com/photos/0MzyFTjWeN_N8Ago8KbQ6yB2g#Cramerton) to a very serious audio conversation that I had with Josh Whitlock of Jackson Lewis (their outside Title IX legal counsel) just a few weeks ago. **It is vital that you listen to the entire conversation.** I did notify Josh in advance I would be recording our call, however, I did not need to do that as both NC and SC are one consent law states. Please pay attention to the entire conversation as after the Title IX conversation, we go into a timeline that unveils a great deal of unethical behavior and corruption amongst many members of Winthrop leadership, including select members of the board (including Mr. Glenn McCall). I have evidence and witnesses to back up every single statement that I made to Mr. Whitlock. I am happy to provide ALL of that to you. I have also

included a copy of my follow-up email to Mr. Whitlock (including those attachments). ***see follow-up email.

I speak to you having significant board experience myself as I serve on the Executive Committee of a global non-profit board based out of NYC. In my view, this Board operates as a dictatorship. In private conversations I've had with board members, a great deal of vital information is kept from the full board and they only find out key information after the fact. The poor governance procedures I outlined only breed this type of activity and needs to be corrected immediately. It is not surprising to me that Chairman McCall and Vice Chair Bigham continue to purposefully withhold information from the full board in order to push their personal agendas. This is NOT how a productive board operates in the least.

Leadership starts at the top and appointing Mr. McCall (and Kathy Bigham for that matter) to an additional term would only make the situation worse. Winthrop needs new leaders that take seriously their fiduciary responsibility to the institution, not to themselves and the power they wield. We don't need more politicians doing what they want (because there is no accountability otherwise) having created a culture that is based in fear. Did you know that University officials have informed me that in no way can members of the Board be held accountable to even the most basic level of ethical conduct outside of the finite stipulations outlined by the SC State Ethics Commission (basically nepotism and where financial gain is at hand)? Even Winthrop's own General Conduct Policy is ignored. I have attached two letters to University leadership (2/12) and the full board (2/21) that outline the gross mishandling of a complaint to Human Resources.

I understand that Mr. McCall is the only candidate to have submitted his candidacy. Why? It is not surprising to me that in no way does Winthrop post details publicly about the process of doing so, for those who may be interested in running Board seats. Perhaps it is leadership's way of ensuring that the same select few individuals can go about their business as they have in the past, with no regard to abiding by good governance, or state law for that matter. I urge the state to mandate universities provide this "process for being appointed to the Board" available on their web site at the minimum. That's just good governance.

Lastly, Mr. McCall is NOT an alumnus of Winthrop University. Read that again. **Mr. Glenn McCall is NOT an alumnus of Winthrop University.** I understand politics are often involved in matters such as these and a Republican governor will want to appoint someone who serves on the RNC. While state officials may also choose to "look the other way" and appoint him anyway citing he was the only applicant, it is only a matter of time before the volcano erupts. To give you a runner's analogy, "it is better to go through the temporary pain of surgery in order to run swiftly once again, than it is to continue hobbling on a bum knee." A bum knee only gets worse over time if not corrected.

I urge that you yourselves serve in the best interest of my alma mater and NOT allow Mr. McCall to serve again. Winthrop's future depends on the decisions you make. Thank you for your time and deep consideration.

Sincerely,

Julie Busha
Winthrop Class of 2000
Academic All-American, XC/Track, Order of Omega, 3 Departmental Honors