

**JOINT LEGISLATIVE COMMITTEE TO SCREEN CANDIDATES
FOR COLLEGE AND UNIVERSITIES BOARD OF TRUSTEES**

Tuesday, December 9, 2014
10:49 a.m.
1101 Pendleton Street
Gressette Senate Building
Columbia, South Carolina

Committee Members In Attendance:

SENATOR HARVEY S. PEELER, JR., Chairman
SENATOR THOMAS C. ALEXANDER
SENATOR JOHN L. SCOTT, JR.
SENATOR ROBERT W. HAYES, JR.
REPRESENTATIVE WILLIAM R. "BILL" WHITMIRE
REPRESENTATIVE PHYLLIS J. HENDERSON

Staff:

Martha Casto
Julie Price

CHAIRMAN SENATOR PEELER: If there's no objection, we're going to go ahead and get started, and I'd like to call the meeting to order.

This will be for the Joint Legislative Committee to Screen Candidates for College and University Boards of Trustees. Please state your attendance and participation.

I understand Senator Hayes is on the way here. He's here at the Salary Commissioners Meeting. He's on the way. We have a new member of the Committee, Senator John Scott. He's replacing Lieutenant Governor McGill on the Committee.

You've got some big shoes to fill, but I know you can. I know you can.

To my left is Representative Bill Whitmire and Representative Phyllis Henderson. They're both here.

I've got Representative McCoy and Mack. I think they're on the way. They're supposed to be here.

MS. CASTO: He won't be here.

CANDIDATES FOR COLLEGE OF CHARLESTON

SCOTT WOODS

CHAIRMAN SENATOR PEELER: Oh, okay. McCoy won't be here, but Representative Mack is on the way I'm told.

So if there's no objection, we'll go ahead and get started.

First up, the College of Charleston, to fill Mr. Ravenel's seat. And first, we'll have Scott Woods from Charleston.

Good morning, sir. Would you make sure your microphone is burning.

MR. WOODS: Testing one, two, three.

CHAIRMAN SENATOR PEELER: Okay. I need to swear you in. If you would, raise your right hand, please.

Do you swear to tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, so help you God?

MR. WOODS: I do.

CHAIRMAN SENATOR PEELER: Good morning, sir. Would you like to give a brief statement on why you'd like to serve on the board?

MR. WOODS: A brief statement. Thank you for having me today. It's good to see you all again.

I graduated from the College of Charleston.

CHAIRMAN SENATOR PEELER: You need to hit the button.

MS. CASTO: Hit the button. See that?

CHAIRMAN SENATOR PEELER: Thank you.

MR. WOODS: Thank you for having me again this morning.

I graduated from the College of Charleston. It has changed my life, and I would like to give back to the college.

I believe the college has an important role in our state and in our region, and I believe that I am very passionate about workforce development. Of course, K through 12 is a key part of that, but I believe higher education also serves a very critical part of that, both in serving the needs of industries in our state, existing ones, from Boeing down in Charleston to Michelin in the Upstate and of all industries in between, but not just large industries, I believe it -- it, obviously, will help small businesses and also produce a new generation of entrepreneurs.

I believe that the college will serve a large part of the future of our -- for our state. I believe that the college is good about staying in touch with the needs of the business community but also meeting the needs of the individuals that attend college under personal desires.

As the president and CEO of South Carolina Federal Credit Union, one of the largest credit unions in the state, I understand responsibility to other people's trust in you. I am responsible daily for \$1.5 billion of other people's money. I am -- I have a \$65 million annual operating budget that my team and I developed, approved by a board of directors, and I am accountable for ensuring that that performance takes place every year.

I have previous experience as a -- on a college board also as the two -- two terms as chairman. So I understand the needs of an institution of higher education and the needs of the staff, the faculty, and students, and I, of course, understand accountability to the people that put you there.

So, Senator, that's what I have to offer.

CHAIRMAN SENATOR PEELER: Thank you.

Any questions or comments from members of the Committee?

REPRESENTATIVE WHITMIRE: I've got a few.

CHAIRMAN SENATOR PEELER: Mr. Whitmire.

REPRESENTATIVE WHITMIRE: If I'm going to drive 150 miles, I'm going to come up with a question.

Under your personal data questionnaire, I see you -- I noticed that you served on a Board of Trustees for another university. What university was that?

MR. WOODS: That was the Charleston Southern University. That's a -- as you know, not a public university.

REPRESENTATIVE WHITMIRE: Right.

MR. WOODS: That's administered by the Southern Baptist Convention, and I was recruited through my church to represent our church on that board of trustees. I was actually asked to serve on the --

REPRESENTATIVE WHITMIRE: And when -- what date did that occur?

MR. WOODS: Forgive me for not answering. I think I went from '06 to '10.

REPRESENTATIVE WHITMIRE: And I've noticed that you were chairman also.

MR. WOODS: Yes, sir. Thank you.

REPRESENTATIVE WHITMIRE: All right. The statement on number -- question 5, the ratio, you're just basically 2:1.

MR. WOODS: Yes, sir.

REPRESENTATIVE WHITMIRE: In my opinion, no qualified in-state applicant should ever be denied admission into the College of Charleston at the expense of granting permission to an out-of-state applicant. I'm glad to see you say that.

MR. WOODS: Yes, sir.

REPRESENTATIVE WHITMIRE: That's kind of been one of my concerns, not necessarily the College of Charleston but --

MR. WOODS: Yes, sir. It could be more profitable to admit students from out of state, but that's not why we're here.

REPRESENTATIVE WHITMIRE: No, it isn't. Very good resume.

MR. WOODS: Thank you, sir.

CHAIRMAN SENATOR PEELER: I thought you said you had several questions.

REPRESENTATIVE WHITMIRE: I had two.

CHAIRMAN SENATOR PEELER: Okay. Rep --

REPRESENTATIVE HENDERSON: Can I ask a general question, Mr. Chairman, if you will indulge me just for a second?

This is -- this -- all the -- all five of the candidates we're screening this morning on -- for this one open seat?

MS. CASTO: Yes, ma'am.

REPRESENTATIVE HENDERSON: Is it -- is there an incumbent? Is there somebody leaving? What's the situation?

MS. CASTO: Representative Henderson, this is the one that there was one person running in April at the election, and he was not elected by the General Assembly.

CHAIRMAN SENATOR PEELER: Do you remember that one?

REPRESENTATIVE HENDERSON: Thank you. Oh, yeah. The infamous meeting. Okay. Right.

Because I remember that we had talked to you not too long back, Mr. Woods, and that's why I was trying to make sure that I understood the situation. Okay.

MR. WOODS: Thank you.

REPRESENTATIVE HENDERSON: Thank you.

MR. WOODS: I understand. I have to reorient myself daily.

REPRESENTATIVE HENDERSON: Well, okay. I will ask a question now.

CHAIRMAN SENATOR PEELER: Okay. Ms. Henderson.

REPRESENTATIVE HENDERSON: Sorry.

Okay. Well, since we have, you know, five people running for this slot, tell us what your particular interest is, and what would make us say that you're the person to pick over the other four people we're going to talk to this morning?

MR. WOODS: Well, certainly, I have no criticisms of the other distinguished gentlemen behind me. They all have strong resumes. I've looked them all over.

I think the particular skill set that I bring is a business perspective, not that every student that graduates from the college needs to be prepared to go around a corporation. Again, it's about meeting their personal needs, whether it's to run a personal shop or just to enhance their own personal education for general purpose for the sake of education. That's their individual needs. But I do believe that I have a unique understanding of the business community and how it does and should continue to work with the college to find out what their needs are.

An example would be, the college under President McConnell has already started to expand the computer sciences degrees. Now, there is a huge demand for that in the business community right now, and if those are not produced by our in-state colleges, then they're going to -- then they're -- people are going to move to this state that have graduated from other colleges to fulfill those needs.

So I think that I would bring a perspective in helping to align the needs of the community, not just the Charleston community, but the state and the region and ensuring that the College of Charleston can fit those demands to ensure its success.

REPRESENTATIVE HENDERSON: Can I ask him one more?

CHAIRMAN SENATOR PEELER: Representative Henderson.

REPRESENTATIVE HENDERSON: So you've mentioned here your passion for workforce development.

And so what's your opinion on the whole topic of accountability funding for higher-ed and the combination of -- how shall I ask this without stepping on any toes? -- moving your student population towards the degrees in areas where there are jobs?

MR. WOODS: If I may say, first of all --

REPRESENTATIVE HENDERSON: Do you understand what I'm basically getting at?

MR. WOODS: I think I do, Representative. I'm sure you'll let me know if I get off track.

First of all, my perspective on higher education comes from having a workforce around 425, -35 employees.

And so we have a real turn in the turnover rate in our organization, but we still are constantly bringing folks on. And we do assessment testing to make sure that folks have minimum skills for the job; that is, whether it's an entry-level position, whether it's a -- an executive level.

And so workforce development is about preparing folks to -- when they apply for a job, to ensure they have a reasonable chance of getting it. So that's the crux for my interest.

Having looked at the statistics of the exit, when the folks graduate, to find out that they're being placed, not just in a job, but in a job that they interviewed for, that they had declared that that's where they want to spend -- what they believe to be at the time of graduation -- their careers.

So first of all, assess where we are in terms of placing students or meeting their needs, and if there's a gap, then we put together a plan to close that gap, whether it's changing curriculum, the instructions that

they're being taught, or even something as simple as opening up to more folks coming here to -- bringing in other companies to interview for positions.

REPRESENTATIVE HENDERSON: Do you believe that the university -- and I'm not specific to Charleston, just in general -- should look at areas where -- degree areas where the students are not getting jobs and consider the possibility of phasing those programs out?

MR. WOODS: If I could look back in the other direction, Representative, I think that the college should look at where emerging jobs are coming. For example, computer sciences demands are heavier in the last three or four years than they were in the last decade. So the college should look at moving resources from declining job placements to expand job placements and then also have a strategic view looking beyond the curve. What is emerging --

(Senator Hayes enters the room.)

MR. WOODS: -- what is an emerging job industry that we should maybe want to get ahead of the curve on.

So it's not about taking away from the decreasing ones just because they're decreasing, but moving those resources to expanding areas.

REPRESENTATIVE HENDERSON: Okay. Thank you.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN SENATOR PEELER: Welcome, Senator Hayes.

SENATOR HAYES: Thank you. I appreciate it. Sorry I'm late. I had another meeting over there.

CHAIRMAN SENATOR PEELER: This is Scott Woods. He's the lucky -- he's the first one. I don't know how he drew the lucky straw, but he's -- the College of Charleston.

All right. Senator Scott, do you have a question?

SENATOR SCOTT: I just want to make a comment, just a brief comment. I'm impressed with your resume --

MR. WOODS: Thank you.

SENATOR SCOTT: -- above all, on the ability to -- the background in accounting. Accountability to this institution is troublesome at times.

Also, what you've done in the workforce --

MR. WOODS: Thank you.

SENATOR SCOTT: -- is impressive as well and also having to attend a school outside of South Carolina as well and bringing a lot of perspective to education and your master's degree program.

MR. WOODS: Yes, sir.

SENATOR SCOTT: I'm just -- I'm impressed with your resume.

MR. WOODS: I appreciate that, Senator.

SENATOR SCOTT: I think you're -- I think you would make a fine trustee.

MR. WOODS: Thank you, Senator.

CHAIRMAN SENATOR PEELER: I'll have a couple of questions, Mr. Woods.

MR. WOODS: Yes, sir.

CHAIRMAN SENATOR PEELER: Did you keep up, before the end of the session in the Senate, of a bill allowing the College of Charleston to become a research university?

MR. WOODS: Yes, sir.

CHAIRMAN SENATOR PEELER: Are you familiar with that issue?

MR. WOODS: Yes, sir.

CHAIRMAN SENATOR PEELER: Do you have an opinion on the issue?

MR. WOODS: Well, I agree with the position that although it was obtained through the Higher Education Commission, I do agree with the direction they're taking where it should be ratified through the legislature. So I do believe that the research university is a good idea, but I would like to see it ratified through the legislature first and the Commission.

CHAIRMAN SENATOR PEELER: How about the law school? There's some talk, a rumor, and it lies with possibly -- of the College of Charleston or Charleston University, and I wanted to ask you about that. What's the difference --

MR. WOODS: Yes, sir.

CHAIRMAN SENATOR PEELER: -- acquiring the law school? Do you have an opinion on that?

MR. WOODS: Yeah. That's an interesting topic right now, because it's almost like you have three concentric circles. Over here, you have InfiLaw saying they're ready to invest in it and do it because they have the capital position. Over here, you have the legislature that, I understand, wants it to be taken on like a college. And then at the college --

CHAIRMAN SENATOR PEELER: Not all legislators.

MR. WOODS: I'm sorry. Yes, sir. I shouldn't put it all in --

CHAIRMAN SENATOR PEELER: Sorry. I didn't mean -- I didn't mean to --

MR. WOODS: Okay. Some legislation.

And then on the third circle is the College of Charleston, where President McConnell says he doesn't really want to take that on without certain guarantees of the funding. And I -- without having all of the facts, I do think that there is a place where all three of these circles can come together and find a place of common interest.

I certainly -- as I said to the -- Representative Henderson, I do believe that the college should look at offering any position, meaning a course of study where there is personal positions to be had. So it should be looked at and studied. I don't have the inside information to give a solid opinion. I'm not going to dodge your question, but I am saying I do think it's absolutely worth looking into if there's a potential for it being a success at the College of Charleston.

CHAIRMAN SENATOR PEELER: Any other questions or comments?

Motion is a favorable report.

Second?

All in favor, say aye.

ALL MEMBERS: Aye.

CHAIRMAN SENATOR PEELER: Opposed, no; but I think it's unanimous.

Thank you, sir.

MR. WOODS: Thank you, sir.

R. MICHAEL BRYANT, M.D.

Next, we have R. Michael Bryant, Dr. Bryant.

Good morning.

DR. BRYANT: Thank you for having me.

CHAIRMAN SENATOR PEELER: Thank you.

Do you swear to tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, so help you God?

DR. BRYANT: I do, sir.

CHAIRMAN SENATOR PEELER: All right. Do you have a brief statement on why you'd like to serve?

DR. BRYANT: When I was in high school, I went to a very small high school in Williamston. I was from Pelzer. I had the privilege of working with a small-town physician who felt it very important to give back to his institution. He was a huge contributor to Furman and to the medical university.

So all through my career and undergraduate and graduate, it has been important for me to look for ways to give back. And as a matter of fact, while I was at the medical university, I was able to become the fellow of the Society of 1824 through deferred giving through a life insurance policy that my parents had taken out on me. I felt like it could begin a career of giving back.

As I started my career and served nine years on the District 52 Board of Trustees, I started looking at how can I continue to give back and start marrying secondary education to graduate educate, and having matriculated through the College of Charleston from '81 to '85 and then on through the medical university, I just started looking.

And I was not aware, up until a year ago, how the process occurred that you could become a college board trustee, and this was the first opportunity that I had to make myself available. I'm at a point in my career where my practice is stable, and I can now take another step in having to use what I have learned as a District 52 School Board of Trustee and hopefully connect it with secondary postgraduate education.

So that is why I decided to make myself available to the college that gave me so much.

CHAIRMAN SENATOR PEELER: Thank you.

Questions or comments?

Mr. Whitmire.

REPRESENTATIVE WHITMIRE: Okay. My eldest daughter and son graduated from the college, so I've got an affinity to it.

But I noticed, when I was moving my daughter in, there's not any room down there to speak of, and, I mean, it's just -- everything is so compacted. I can't see how the college can grow, you know, populationwise very much.

Has there been any -- do you have any ideas how they can address that?

DR. BRYANT: Well, obviously, that's been a situation for a very long time, even when I was there. And I have been proud to see them be able to acquire surrounding property, you know, where the library sits. It used to be Bishop England, and now it is a wonderful resource for our students, and I also know that there is development out into the North Charleston area, and that's going to be a necessity.

We have to be able to figure ways to acquire property in the vicinity of the college so that it does not negatively impact the historical significance of the downtown area and the tourism and see how we can marry that with outlying areas, as they have. And I think that would be an economically responsible decision that the colleges make.

REPRESENTATIVE WHITMIRE: The college, was it in a branch campus, per se, I guess, say, up in North Charleston or just a building to --

DR. BRYANT: There are properties in the North Charleston area that they do offer some branch education. I don't know exactly what they offer there, but I do know that there is some just on the perimeter road off I-26.

REPRESENTATIVE WHITMIRE: Okay.

CHAIRMAN SENATOR PEELER: Senator Hayes.

SENATOR HAYES: College of Charleston and you went to MUSC; is that correct?

DR. BRYANT: That is correct, sir.

SENATOR HAYES: There's been some talk, not so much lately but a few years, about merging those two or doing some type of thing of that sort. And there's also been some talk about putting the law school under the umbrella of the University of Charleston, College of Charleston. So what are your thoughts on that?

DR. BRYANT: I've watched that develop, and I agree with my colleague. I believe that the college needs to keep those doors open. You know, and I thought about this more as my daughter, who is now matriculating through -- when I was going -- chose the College of Charleston, I needed to stay in state because of finances. That was just at the outset of the University of South Carolina developing their medical school.

I wanted to attend a college that had an association with the degree that I wanted to pursue. I felt like I would have a leg up in getting into graduate school. And as I stated in my responses, I believe the college needs to look at where kids are wanting to go, what kids are wanting to do.

A lot of times now, a four-year degree is not going to get you much more than what you would get out of high school. We need to be able to offer the things that kids want from start to finish. You can come to our institution, and the things that we can excel in and offer you, we can take you as far as you can go here. This is why you should come to us.

I'm actually in favor in a cursory manner, not knowing the intricate details in an association with the law school and in association with the medical university. I believe it can enhance the College of Charleston's offerings.

I believe it can be the destination that our students from this state and others would be able to identify with and say, this is where I want to go because I can go there. I can put down roots. I can invest in the community, and I can get all that I need at the college or the University of Charleston, as it may become to be known.

CHAIRMAN SENATOR PEELER: Senator Scott.

SENATOR SCOTT: I see that your resume indicate -- indicates you were in the Army Reserve?

DR. BRYANT: Yes, sir.

SENATOR SCOTT: Did you get a chance to spend any time in active duty?

DR. BRYANT: I did not have to spend -- active duty, sir.

SENATOR SCOTT: What's your thoughts on attracting more military families and children of military on courses to come to the College of Charleston since we are surrounded in South Carolina by a lot of military bases?

DR. BRYANT: You know, it was a heartbreak of mine, because I was able to serve on the naval base of the hospital, that institution -- that naval base was shut down. Now, I have a special place in my heart, as most Americans would, for our military families, and I believe that anything that we as American citizens can do for our military families, offering scholarships, incentives, would be a great thing, because if you get someone who has spent their time in the military, they have the discipline to do whatever they need to and should be given those opportunities.

SENATOR SCOTT: Thank you so much.

CHAIRMAN SENATOR PEELER: Ms. Henderson.

REPRESENTATIVE HENDERSON: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Thank you for your offering to serve.

So I was going to ask you about Piedmont Healthcare, but I've noticed that you're an M.D. So what kind of -- I'm just curious. What kind of practice?

DR. BRYANT: It is a multispecialty. We started as a family medicine office that merged with another. We expanded around Greenwood to offer health care to the outlying areas, and then we merged with a neurology office and developed an imaging center.

REPRESENTATIVE HENDERSON: Okay. So you're a family practice -- or general practice doctor?

DR. BRYANT: I am, family practice.

REPRESENTATIVE HENDERSON: So I'll ask you the same question that I asked Mr. Woods; and that is, your opinion on performance funding for universities, it's been something that the governor has talked about. You know, we've talked about it off and on in terms of looking at, you know, the areas where, perhaps, the graduation rate is not the same, or the job placement of employment is not the same, and start looking at where we can direct resources into programs that are, you know, where our economy is, where kids can get jobs. What's your opinion on that issue?

DR. BRYANT: I do think with the limited funds -- I think government has grown too big. I think government should be to provide for the people, defend the people, and provide for the education and health and well-being of the people. And I do think that we should be able to fund money into areas, especially for our state, where they are developing; however, I will tell you, being at the high school level, if we can't do the basics great, we shouldn't be expanding out. I do think that the College of Charleston has and does the basics great, and we should be able to expand.

We do have the resources to know where job markets are heading. And in each one of -- in each area, it does need to develop from, you know, computers, hardware, to where developing markets are. We should be able to expand in areas that our state needs.

REPRESENTATIVE HENDERSON: Okay. So what about programs that are not --

DR. BRYANT: So the answer to your question is, Yes, ma'am.

I'm sorry? Repeat that, please.

REPRESENTATIVE HENDERSON: Well, what about programs that are not effective? What do you think, that because -- the university should continue those just because you've always done it or --

DR. BRYANT: I don't believe that you should always do something just because you've always done it. I believe that we should see where our state is headed, where the industry is heading, and be able to supply the workforce that these industries need.

REPRESENTATIVE HENDERSON: Thank you.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN SENATOR PEELER: Mr. Scott.

SENATOR SCOTT: Would you expand on government and just -- and that's a small -- is that to say you don't support tuition grant programs and need-based funding?

DR. BRYANT: Oh, absolutely not. Absolutely not. I would not even associate that as part of my answer, and I apologize --

SENATOR SCOTT: Okay.

DR. BRYANT: -- to you if I gave that impression.

SENATOR SCOTT: Thank you.

CHAIRMAN SENATOR PEELER: Dr. Bryant, you say you served on the local school board for like ten years?

DR. BRYANT: I'm into my ninth year, my third term.

CHAIRMAN SENATOR PEELER: And you're the chairman?

DR. BRYANT: I have chosen not to be chairman. I have been the vice chairman and secretary, but I felt like there were others on the committee that could spend their time being chairman more than I.

CHAIRMAN SENATOR PEELER: And the membership on the board is an elected committee --

DR. BRYANT: It is elected.

CHAIRMAN SENATOR PEELER: And if you were successful in this, you would resign from the local board?

DR. BRYANT: I would, yes, sir.

CHAIRMAN SENATOR PEELER: You've got some experience with crisis management, so he'd be operating down there.

And your wife is a school nurse?

DR. BRYANT: Yes. She had stood before you.

CHAIRMAN SENATOR PEELER: My wife's a retired school nurse, so I know how that is. But how are things there? Have they calmed down a little bit?

DR. BRYANT: They have. Our -- you know, our enrollment has continued to grow. We do have issues that come in where parents will -- for instance, just this past week, we had a parent who wasn't very familiar -- her child was not even in the school last year or the year before -- telling us that she's going to have her kid tested because the kid has come in and has coughed and coughed and coughed, and she feels like he needs to be tested. And we have certainly encouraged her to take her child to their physician to have them tested. So, yeah.

But for the most part, I mean, it was a very small minority that we're still facing.

CHAIRMAN SENATOR PEELER: And did I understand you correctly? You would be in favor of the College of Charleston or Charleston University having some relationship with the law school?

DR. BRYANT: I would.

CHAIRMAN SENATOR PEELER: And also the possibility with USC?

DR. BRYANT: I would.

CHAIRMAN SENATOR PEELER: Any other questions or comments?

What's the desire of the Committee?

REPRESENTATIVE WHITMIRE: Move for favorable.

CHAIRMAN SENATOR PEELER: The motion is favorable.

Any discussion?

Hearing none, then we'll vote.

All in favor, say aye.

ALL MEMBERS: Aye.

CHAIRMAN SENATOR PEELER: Opposed, no; and the ayes have it. It's unanimous.

Thank you, sir.

DR. BRYANT: Thank y'all -- you too.

CHAIRMAN SENATOR PEELER: We appreciate you willing to serve.

Next, Mr. Randy Lowell.

Good morning, sir.

Do you swear to tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, so help you God?

RANDY LOWELL

MR. LOWELL: I do.

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

MR. LOWELL: Yes, sir. Thank you.

Mr. Chairman and members of the Committee, I appreciate the opportunity to be here today and the opportunity to seek this position.

I was born and raised in the Lowcountry, graduated from Summerville High School, went to the College of Charleston. I was there for five years. I got my undergraduate degree in four and then spent one year in the graduate school program as a grad assistant coach for the men's soccer team down there.

I believe that service on the board is a privilege, and I believe it is a form of public service and a way for me to give back to the college that helped me get where I am today. I believe that my service on other boards -- I currently serve on the Humanities Council Board, the board for Palmetto Richland Hospital and the South Carolina Chamber of Commerce -- combined with the professional experience I've had as a lawyer as counsel for state agencies, businesses, and individuals will help give me a useful perspective and allow me to be a productive board member to help the College of Charleston navigate the challenges and opportunities now that are presented to it going forward.

And that concludes my statement.

CHAIRMAN SENATOR PEELER: Thank you.

Questions or comments from members of the Committee?

Mr. Whitmire.

REPRESENTATIVE WHITMIRE: Thank you for your willingness to serve.

Well, I'm noticing on your question 5, you state that -- it was asking about the -- you know, the number of in state versus out of state. You state, The college should also strive to maintain a diverse student body, which includes some percentage of out-of-state students that offer a different perspective.

I want to go with a little different approach on that. Minorities, what's your opinion on the college trying to attract a larger percentage of minorities? Because we do have a large minority population in this state.

MR. LOWELL: We do, and I believe that diversity is important, and, you know, the College of Charleston has recently -- my understanding is, recently implemented a diversity program to try to increase the diversity and the percentage of minorities in school at the college. I understand that those numbers were up this year from last year. My recollection is, the African-American population is approximately 6 percent of the enrollment and the Hispanic population is approximately 4 percent of the enrollment.

Again, that's slightly up from last year, and I think that the college needs to continue to work to increase that diversity.

REPRESENTATIVE WHITMIRE: Do you know if the college sends recruiters out specifically to target minority students to see if they're interested -- have an interest in college?

MR. LOWELL: I do not know. I would hope that that would be part of the diversity program that they recently implemented. That would certainly be a natural thing to do.

REPRESENTATIVE WHITMIRE: I know that's the problem for not only the College of Charleston, but, where I live, Clemson has actively tried to recruit minorities. But sometimes it's hard to get them to show up. So, you know, I hope, if you are elected, that you would pursue those efforts.

MR. LOWELL: Yes, sir.

CHAIRMAN SENATOR PEELER: Any other questions or comments?

Senator Hayes.

SENATOR HAYES: I just wanted to follow up.

You graduated from the Charleston Law School, and I'll kind of ask you the same question I asked before.

Do you think the college should establish a relationship with the law school in Charleston and/or with the medical university?

MR. LOWELL: I certainly think there needs to be a -- at minimum, a degree of coordination, and from the standpoint of, you have three universities that are on a peninsula. You've got a finite amount of space. As, you know, Representative Whitmire alluded to earlier, growth is limited.

When you start looking at -- this is a roundabout way to answer your question, Senator, so if you'll indulge me for a minute.

But when you look at how universities have responded to some of the budget cuts -- I mean, the College of Charleston, their recurring appropriation in 2003, 2004 was approximately \$26 million, and I think two years ago, it was down to 19. So that's a significant decrease, and that's across the board. And, you know, I think we all understand that and the reason for that. But the way other universities have addressed that, essentially, the increase in enrollment.

When you look at the increase in enrollment over that same period, USC increased 32 percent; Clemson, 25; Coastal, 59; and the College of Charleston increased 7 percent. And I think part of the reason is because you have the finite amount of space down there that you can deal with. So to the extent that there should be additional coordination, especially on that front, absolutely.

As far as a more formal arrangement, I think it probably does make sense to, you know, not necessarily emerge -- or not necessarily bring in the Charleston School of Law into the umbrella of the University of Charleston, but to at least have some conversations and maybe a little bit more coordination. I mean, for the same reason that doctors go to the College of Charleston to try to help them get a leg up at MUSC, it makes sense to help strengthen that relationship to ensure the College of Charleston students -- that the education they're getting there does prepare them to help them get to MUSC, and the -- to the same extent with the law school.

Law school is a little trickier right now because of all the adversity and everything that's going on between InfiLaw, and, you know, the mixed opinion of the College of Charleston right now. Based on what I know about that situation, I'm not sure that it's something that I would be in favor of, as far as merging with the Charleston School of Law, but, you know, circumstances change.

But, again, having additional conversations with the Charleston School of Law and make sure that College of Charleston graduates are well prepared and well suited to go to either the Charleston School of Law or the South Carolina School of Law and pursue whatever endeavor they want is something that I would be in favor of.

CHAIRMAN SENATOR PEELER: Mr. Scott.

SENATOR SCOTT: I'm going to go back to the expansion.

And I've heard different estimates, but it's somewhere between 20 to 30 percent. We've heard expansion of the College of Charleston. Like most college towns, they always find themselves kind of locked into that surrounding. With most college towns, you're always put under seal, kind of locked into that and surrounding.

What are your thoughts on capital projects, capital needs? Because kids think about it. So now your plans to expand --

MR. LOWELL: Well, there is --

SENATOR SCOTT: Any thoughts on that?

MR. LOWELL: Well, there is -- of course there is an extension up in North Charleston, and there is a Lowcountry graduate school in North Charleston as well. And, you know, as one of the capital projects, one of the unique challenges to the College of Charleston is, it is extremely expensive to renovate buildings downtown. And when you -- because of the historic nature of the College of Charleston, they have over six -- well, they have 65 buildings that are over 100 years old, which is more than MUSC, Clemson, and USC combined. So when you start talking about "let's," just the maintenance on those buildings...

You know, we end up spending a lot more on maintenance of our facilities than other universities and where you start looking at a per square per basis because of that. So renovations of those buildings is much more difficult, and it's much more expensive for us than it is for other schools. You know, I -- it really makes you focus in and hone in on what are you going to spend your money on? What are you going to devote those resources to?

As far as expansion, you know, one potential expansion is distance learning. That's another way to try to reach out and accommodate some students. But distance learning has its pros and cons as well.

You know, the College of Charleston has made its name as the liberal arts school. A liberal arts curriculum school is not necessarily the most conducive to a distance-learning environment. Part of humanities and liberal arts is the interaction that you have with your fellow students and your professors.

But on other things, such as, you know, the courses where there are questions where there's only one right answer, statistics, math, those types of things, that's more conducive than maybe something -- an avenue that we can explore to open up to increase our enrollment and to provide better services through the students we currently have.

SENATOR SCOTT: One last question.

You talked about recruiting minority students. What about recruiting minority faculty and staff, which would also help in getting some of those minority students to come to the College of Charleston?

MR. LOWELL: I think --

SENATOR SCOTT: Give me some ideas and directions you would be willing to go in to try to make it happen.

MR. LOWELL: Well, I think diversity needs to be across the board. And I understand the African-American program at the College of Charleston is actually currently expanding, and I think President McConnell has been a driving force behind that. And of course, they're looking at building the African-American Museum down in Charleston right on the water. So -- and I think that will lend itself to help draw in being an attraction for African Americans to come to the College of Charleston with those two things developing.

You know, certainly, you look at things as -- endowments and chairs to help spur that kind of growth and development. So that's certainly something that I think we should extract from.

SENATOR SCOTT: If you're going to get some of the best staff from across the country, you know what's required. You either have to have additional funding coming in, limited research, and other kinds of studies of funding and getting those other -- like other institutions coming in here. You have to be willing to make some adjustments in some of these department heads. And I can almost assure you the debts are coming from up higher.

MR. LOWELL: To be competitive, you're right. You've got to step it up.

CHAIRMAN SENATOR PEELER: Ms. Henderson.

REPRESENTATIVE HENDERSON: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Thank, Mr. Lowell. I know that you have been here before. I will make a comment. I am very impressed in your knowledge of the university and its budget and programs. And either you've been around a long time, or you've studied up, but either way, I commend you for that because it's -- that's good.

Let me ask you a question before I ask my performance-spending question, thinking about this. Now, I might be trying to get into something I probably shouldn't here, but -- so before President McConnell was hired, you know, we heard all of these like people waving their hands and yelling that, you know, Oh, my gosh. If -- you know, if Glenn McConnell was made president, you know, giving to the university is going to go down, and, you know, all these things are going to happen. Has any of that -- has it made -- obviously, he's done a lot of good things. I don't mean that, but I mean all of the things that people said negative might happen, has any of that actually occurred?

MR. LOWELL: Not to my knowledge, and not from my viewpoint. As a matter of fact, I had a conversation last week with a staff member at the College of Charleston who called me to say, you know, when all -- the hiring of President McConnell, this person, they just -- all they knew about President McConnell was what they read in the paper.

And so, initially, they had called me, concerned.

And I said, listen, Lieutenant Governor McConnell is -- you can't believe what you read in the paper. I mean, this is somebody who is driven, and he understands. He's going to come down there, and just give him a chance.

And this person called me last week and said, You were right. President McConnell has been great. He's making friends across campus. He's doing everything he needs to do.

He's paying attention to little things. He's treating everybody with respect. He's got an open-door policy. You were right.

And, you know, on the fundraising side, that is absolutely something that the college has to refocus on. You know, the endowment isn't where it should be, which is really just as much a historical fact, from the fact that they were a municipal college for so long. That just wasn't the emphasis.

And, you know, now they have the Balance Campaign, and I tip my hat to President McConnell and co-chair, who is, you know, Steve Swanson, who's going to be up next. I mean, they've done an excellent job of getting the word out there, reaching out to alumni. You know, the alumni giving rate is at 7.1 percent right now, and that's something that we have to work on and we have to improve on. And I think the Balance Campaign, you know, one of the goals of that is to reach out and increase what that number is, to help give us the funds and build that endowment to let us do the things we need to do to move forward.

REPRESENTATIVE HENDERSON: Okay. One other question.

So -- and I know Senator Scott said something. I'm just following up.

So we have heard a couple of you mention this whole expansion issue. So would it be fair to characterize the fact that this is going to be an issue that the board is going to have strong opinions on both sides of, going into the future; and that is, do we expand -- do we continue to expand in the city where it's very expensive, or do we look to expand outside the city? Because even just amongst the three of you, we -- you know, there's a couple of different opinions about what should be done.

So I'm thinking on a bigger level. It's probably going to be something that -- there's strong feelings on both sides.

MR. LOWELL: Probably, and frankly, I hope there are strong feelings on both sides on the board. I mean, you don't want a board where you have 20 people and everybody --

REPRESENTATIVE HENDERSON: Right.

MR. LOWELL: -- has the same opinion. That's not good for anybody.

REPRESENTATIVE HENDERSON: No.

MR. LOWELL: So, I mean, I hope there is. That's what prompts conversations and gets you -- gets the best decisions.

REPRESENTATIVE HENDERSON: All right. Okay.

So my last question -- and I've asked everyone else -- on this whole issue of performance state funding for higher ed, you know, from our standpoint, looking at universities and seeing graduation rates and programs that are effective and programs that aren't effective and that kind of thing, what's your opinion on that? And, you know, and as a member of the board, what would be your take on looking at programs and things that maybe aren't accomplishing what they should and, you know, adjusting your programs for the job market and that kind of thing?

MR. LOWELL: Well, I think -- to take the last part first and work backwards, I mean, I -- of course, you've got to adjust. You know, I believe you're either moving forward or moving backwards, but you're never standing still. So you're always going to have to reevaluate, you know, what works, what doesn't, and, you know, in some ways, the anticipation of what's coming down the pipe, and you have to read the tea leaves somewhat, and then just try to make a decision on the best information available to figure out where -- what direction you want to head in.

So that -- you know, that can be tricky sometimes. You know, with the college, I think there should be a refocus on the liberal arts and sciences components; but at the same time, you've got to accommodate the folks that talk about the workforce development and the workforce profiles.

And, you know, at the state chamber level, that is a topic of much interest. Almost our entire last board meeting was devoted to talking about workforce development and what do we do. And, you know, I think you can see that at the college, they're, you're know, in the midst of implementing a supply chain, a management logics degree, which just makes natural sense.

You've got Boeing there. You've got the Ports Authority there. You've got -- Bobby Hitt will tell you that Michelin is not a tire company. It is a logics company that makes tires, and I think there's a lot of truth to that.

So when you have those types of companies here, then it's natural to try to -- not just draw upon them, but to give to them students that can satisfy their workforce needs.

On performance funding, you know, that's -- to be honest, I don't know that I have enough information on what that would look like to know whether I would support it or not.

REPRESENTATIVE HENDERSON: All right. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Thank you.

CHAIRMAN SENATOR PEELER: You served on the Richland Memorial Hospital Board. Is that an appointed position, or --

MR. LOWELL: It's elected by Richland County Council, yes, sir.

CHAIRMAN SENATOR PEELER: Okay. So the county council appoints that seat?

MR. LOWELL: Yes, sir.

CHAIRMAN SENATOR PEELER: And if you are successful with the College of Charleston Board, you would resign from the hospital?

MR. LOWELL: Yes, sir.

CHAIRMAN SENATOR PEELER: Any other questions or comments?

Senator Hayes.

SENATOR HAYES: If it's the appropriate time, I have had the honor of working with Randy on a number of issues and properties. If not -- certainly one of us is not the premiere environmental lawyer who has helped the State with minimum wage, so I think he would be a strong addition to the board.

I move for approval.

SENATOR SCOTT: I'll second it.

CHAIRMAN SENATOR PEELER: Motion is seconded for a favorable report. Any other discussion?

Hearing none, we'll take the vote.

All in favor, say aye.

ALL MEMBERS: Aye.

CHAIRMAN SENATOR PEELER: Opposed, no; and the ayes have it.

Next, Mr. Steve Swanson.

Do you swear to tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, so help you God?

STEVE SWANSON

MR. SWANSON: I do.

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

MR. SWANSON: Certainly.

First, thank the Committee members for having me here today. I definitely appreciate the opportunity to speak before you.

I am the product of the College of Charleston. I'm a graduate of 1989, and I attended the school on a full scholarship. I didn't know what a gift I was getting at the time, but it truly changed my life. I not only got a terrific education there, I met my business partners, and more importantly, I met my -- I started dating my wife while I was at the college.

After graduating, I formed a company called Automated Trading Desk. We grew that firm over the years to one of the largest trading organizations in the country, and in 2007, we sold that organization to Citigroup.

Over the past 11 years, I have served the college in many different roles, and most recently, I have served as co-chair of the College of Charleston's comprehensive campaign, co-chair with President Glenn McConnell. Thus far, we have raised 111 million of a \$125 million goal, and it's been quite a rewarding experience.

My wife and I have established our own scholarships, giving back after having received a full scholarship there, and we currently have 29 Swanson Scholars that are attending the college.

I'll end with a quick story. My -- I received a call from President McConnell recently, and he basically surprised me and asked me if I'd be willing to speak at -- be the speaker for the commencement in May, and at that ceremony, my wife and I will both be receiving honorary doctorates.

And so I'm truly -- the relationship that I've had with the college since I graduated has been tremendous, and I'm very, very honored to be in that position.

And so with that, I'll end my statements.

CHAIRMAN SENATOR PEELER: Thank you.

REPRESENTATIVE WHITMIRE: Okay.

CHAIRMAN SENATOR PEELER: Mr. Whitmire.

REPRESENTATIVE WHITMIRE: Under question 3, in what areas do you think the college or university can improve? The diversity, that, we've talked about several times, and I agree with your statement there.

You say we need to focus on limited Ph.D. programs to help foster the technical communities.

How many Ph.D. programs does that college have now?

MR. SWANSON: I don't believe there are any.

REPRESENTATIVE WHITMIRE: There are not any?

MR. SWANSON: I don't believe so.

REPRESENTATIVE WHITMIRE: So that would be one of your main focuses, to --

MR. SWANSON: I believe that the college in Charleston does have needs for limited Ph.D. programs, you know, computer science, certainly, being a great example. The tech community in Charleston is growing by leaps and bounds, and certainly, the tech community is really calling for, you know, advanced degrees in Charleston.

And so we certainly -- I certainly believe that this is a great opportunity for --

REPRESENTATIVE WHITMIRE: So you would focus more on that as opposed to the liberal arts degree my daughter got and couldn't get a job, right?

MR. SWANSON: I think it's of paramount importance that our graduates get jobs, and the computer science is a great example. Our current graduates from the college from the computer science department, on average, have five offers in hand as they graduate. You know, we've doubled the size of the program in the past two to three years. We probably need to double or triple it yet again.

And so, you know, it's great opportunities for a job, for Charleston, and the whole state for that matter. So I'm very much in favor of focusing our -- on these programs where we will be finding jobs for our students.

REPRESENTATIVE WHITMIRE: They're relevant.

MR. SWANSON: Absolutely.

REPRESENTATIVE WHITMIRE: Okay.

CHAIRMAN SENATOR PEELER: Senator Scott.

SENATOR SCOTT: I'm proud to hear that -- was it 29 scholarships, you said?

MR. SWANSON: Correct, sir.

SENATOR SCOTT: How many of those scholarships have been awarded to minority students of the 29?

MR. SWANSON: I -- there are several. I don't know the actual number. First of all, I don't choose the scholars, but I do -- I know there are several minority scholarships as part of the Swanson Program.

SENATOR SCOTT: The scholarships that you award, are they particular academy areas that you're looking for these children are going to?

MR. SWANSON: I was an honors college graduate, so my -- these scholarships are focused on the honors college.

And so -- attracting students to the honors college.

SENATOR SCOTT: I see you've spent a lot of time in the fundraising aspect.

MR. SWANSON: Yes, sir.

SENATOR SCOTT: I'll ask the same similar question about expanding the university beyond its boundaries in the downtown area and the other locations as well instead of trying to buy some other surrounding properties. What's your take on that?

MR. SWANSON: My understanding is that the college is -- it actually has an agreement with the City, with downtown, that it can only be a certain size.

And so it's structurally prevented from growing downtown. At the same time, we do have the north campus, and I think that creates a great opportunity to service a larger population, both people continuing -- finishing their degrees, completing their degrees, and offering full programs there as well.

So I believe that the expansion should be seen in that area.

SENATOR SCOTT: Thank you.

CHAIRMAN SENATOR PEELER: Senator Hayes.

SENATOR HAYES: I'll ask you the same questions I've asked the others as far as the -- having some type of relationship with the law school and/or the medical school. What are your thoughts on that?

MR. SWANSON: So without State support, I'm actually against the law school -- or merging the law school in with the College of Charleston. The college is definitely resource constrained, you know, as all public schools, I think, are these days. I am concerned it would be a drain on our current resources, and I also, you know, personally question whether or not we need two State-supported law schools. So I -- from that perspective, I would be against a merger there.

With MUSC, I'm hopeful that we are able to get the limited Ph.D. programs for the college that President McConnell is moving us towards, and from my perspective, I hope that that would keep us from having to merge with MUSC. My primary concern there, in having both acquired a firm and been acquired, it is very easy to lose your identity as in acquisitions like that or mergers.

So I would be concerned that the college could just -- you know, the budget for the college is about 250 million. The budget for MUSC, I believe, is well in excess of 2 billion. So MUSC very much would be the larger -- much, much larger and probably -- I worry that the college could be just kind of lost in all of that shuffle.

CHAIRMAN SENATOR PEELER: Ms. Henderson.

REPRESENTATIVE HENDERSON: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Thank you for your offering to serve, and you've got quite an impressive resume.

Let me ask you, what will the South Carolina Venture Capital Authority or --

MR. SWANSON: Yeah, in 2007, the State set up a \$50 million fund, basically through tax credits, that were then deployed to a variety of private equity firms with the intention of focusing on South Carolina investments. And at the time, there was kind of a dearth of private equity capital coming into the state. So the concept was let's get some of that capital in.

And we actually just had a call the other day, and there have been, I believe, 13- or 1,400 jobs that have been created as a result of that activity. And at this point, only something like \$12 million of the tax credits have actually been used. So the program has been an amazing success, in my opinion.

REPRESENTATIVE HENDERSON: So you're the director of that?

MR. SWANSON: Not -- no, I'm not.

REPRESENTATIVE HENDERSON: Okay.

MR. SWANSON: I'm on --

REPRESENTATIVE HENDERSON: So you're on the board.

MR. SWANSON: I'm on the board.

REPRESENTATIVE HENDERSON: And so do you guys invest the money but -- or are you making awards, or how -- what are you doing with it?

MR. SWANSON: In 2007, we took the funds that were available and did invest those in several private equity organizations.

REPRESENTATIVE HENDERSON: Okay. I'm just curious.

MR. SWANSON: And from that point, it's really just been -- we've been monitoring the investment since that stage.

REPRESENTATIVE HENDERSON: Okay. Okay.

All right. So my question, again, just like Senator Hayes, I've asked everyone. This whole concept of the State looking at instructions about higher education and how to evaluate performance, you know, and funding based on certain criteria as well as the whole concept of looking at degree areas that are not necessarily, you know, placing students in jobs and directing money to other types of programs related to workforce development --

MR. SWANSON: Right.

REPRESENTATIVE HENDERSON: -- what's your opinion on all that?

MR. SWANSON: I --

REPRESENTATIVE HENDERSON: I know it's a couple of different things.

MR. SWANSON: I was going to say, as a businessman, I'm always in favor of performance-based funding. I think I -- I always think that's a good idea. I do, though -- I think there's a balancing act on changing, you know, the nature of the school.

And so I look back on my experience as a student there, having, you know, had history and been exposed to art and philosophy and things that I probably otherwise wouldn't naturally have had. I believe I was a better executive as a result.

With that said, you know, back to the computer science, I think we want to expand the programs that are getting our students employed. I think those are very, very, very important at the end of the day.

REPRESENTATIVE HENDERSON: Okay. Thank you.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

SENATOR SCOTT: Mr. Chairman, one last question?

CHAIRMAN SENATOR PEELER: Mr. Scott.

SENATOR SCOTT: One question I forgot to ask you. Recruiting minority faculty staff and students, give me some of your ideas of how that can be done.

MR. SWANSON: Probably the simplest I am involved with -- book with a campaign and some individuals raising funds for scholarships, focusing purely on -- I -- actually, I made a donation last night, as a matter of fact, to a minority-based scholarship. I think that's probably one of the best ways.

In terms of attracting faculty, I -- you know, I've heard great ideas, you know. Go to any conferences that somebody's attending. Invite some of the minority faculty to dinner, and, you know -- you know, I think that you just have to out -- a lot of it is outreach, and it's important to do that.

President McConnell's concept that he's still working on the 10 percent, where, basically, if you graduate in the top 10 percent of your school, you'll be guaranteed a position or a slot at the College of Charleston. For in state, I think that's another attractive and positive way to help find more minorities for the College of Charleston.

SENATOR SCOTT: Thank you.

CHAIRMAN SENATOR PEELER: Mr. Swanson, I'd like to follow up on what percentages you're talking about. Venture Capital Authority, now, what is it? Is that a State entity or --

MR. SWANSON: It is a State entity, so it's a group of -- and, again, this was established in 2007. You know, the -- it's -- the tax credits were allocated for the program. They took a loan from Deutsche Bank, basically, and deployed \$50 million to the private equity sources. And you know, at this point, the -- there actually is like positive return on those dollars that were deployed.

CHAIRMAN SENATOR PEELER: And you're a director?

MR. SWANSON: I am on that board.

CHAIRMAN SENATOR PEELER: Okay. Do you get paid?

MR. SWANSON: I -- it's a non-paid position. Volunteer, basically.

CHAIRMAN SENATOR PEELER: Do you just volunteer to be on the board or somebody appointed you?

MR. SWANSON: I was appointed by Bobby Harrell. I guess -- I don't know if I will be on then.

CHAIRMAN SENATOR PEELER: Okay.

MR. SWANSON: I don't know what will happen with that position.

CHAIRMAN SENATOR PEELER: And you said you have a business interest. Do any of those businesses do business with the State?

MR. SWANSON: Not at all, no.

CHAIRMAN SENATOR PEELER: No?

And on your SLED report back in '90, on the statute of limitations, a note on that, disobeying a police officer.

MR. SWANSON: I learned a very good lesson that day. So I disagree with the officer.

CHAIRMAN SENATOR PEELER: And your credit report, you've got a couple of outstanding things you may want to look at.

MR. SWANSON: Okay.

CHAIRMAN SENATOR PEELER: A hundred dollar -- \$50 medical bill.

They thought this -- wait a minute. The insurance and you owe the State \$95.

MR. SWANSON: Okay. Not aware of those, but I will clean that up immediately.

CHAIRMAN SENATOR PEELER: You might want to check on those things.

Any other questions or comments?

Hearing none --

SENATOR HAYES: Favorable.

REPRESENTATIVE WHITMIRE: Second.

CHAIRMAN SENATOR PEELER: Second.

Any other discussion?

All in favor, say aye.
ALL MEMBERS: Aye.
CHAIRMAN SENATOR PEELER: Opposed, no; and the ayes have it.
Thank you.
MR. SWANSON: Thank you.

GARY W. THOMAS, M.D.

CHAIRMAN SENATOR PEELER: Next, Gary W. Thomas.
Dr. Thomas, how are you?
DR. THOMAS: I'm great. How are you, sir?
CHAIRMAN SENATOR PEELER: Do you swear to tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, so help you God?
DR. THOMAS: I do.
CHAIRMAN SENATOR PEELER: Would you like to give a brief statement?
DR. THOMAS: Certainly.
Thank you for having me here today.
Why do I want to be on the board? Well, I -- I would say, very simply, I love the College of Charleston. It's the main reason I want to be on the board.
I graduated in 1983. My father graduated from the College of Charleston in 1943, and I have multiple family members who have also graduated from our school. So I have a great love for the institution. I would like to quote Glenn McConnell when he -- and when he became president of our school, he said he felt the College of Charleston was in his DNA, and I sort of feel the same way.
So that's the main reason I want to be on the board. When I was a student at the college, I was able to win the Willard Silcox scholarship, and that meant so much to me. It gave me the time and the freedom to concentrate on my studies. So I knew that when I got into a position that I could give back to the college, then I certainly would.
So about three years ago, after my parents passed away, I started a memorial scholarship, the Thomas Scholarships, in their honor. And this scholarship is dedicated to students who are planning careers in medicine. And thus far, we've given out three of the scholarships. So it's really meant an awful lot to me.
I've always stayed very well connected to the College of Charleston since my graduation. I previously had served on the Alumni Association Board. But through this scholarship program, I've been able to interact more with some of the current-day students, and these three people are so amazing.
When I look back at how I was when I was in their situation, I can't even believe I could even have graduated. They're so far ahead of where I think I was at the time.
So that's another reason I wanted to basically get involved with the school more. I'm only doing it for love of the college. I don't have any other agendas. You know, I'm a busy physician, but I have plenty of time for my own barter.
So that's my opening statement.
CHAIRMAN SENATOR PEELER: Mr. Whitmire.
REPRESENTATIVE WHITMIRE: Actually, this is a statement, not a question, Mr. Chairman.
I've been on this Committee quite a few years, and I cannot remember five more outstanding candidates for one position.

CHAIRMAN SENATOR PEELER: And I will agree with that.

REPRESENTATIVE WHITMIRE: We are -- actually, it's unfortunate that we don't have more physicians to be open because I hate to think four of these gentlemen will not be elected. But I do want to say, I'm very impressed by all of you. I can see that all of you are very dedicated to the college, and I think President McConnell would be very fortunate to have any of you serve as the trustee.

So good luck to you. Those four who don't get elected, please don't close the door, because I think other positions will be coming up in the future.

DR. THOMAS: If I could just comment on that, please. I really didn't know these other four gentlemen, and I'm really shocked and amazed and proud that these guys all are graduates from my college too. And if I, perhaps, don't get the position, I'm going to be backing them 100 percent.

CHAIRMAN SENATOR PEELER: Okay. Any other questions?

Senator Hayes.

SENATOR HAYES: To be consistent here...

As a doctor, what are your thoughts on the potential relationship between MUSC and/or the law school?

DR. THOMAS: Okay. In terms of the medical school, I'm a graduate also of the Medical University of South Carolina.

And so I graduated from both schools, so I sort of feel like I have personal, inside info on this type of thing.

I really am against the consolidation of the two schools, personally. And some of my colleagues have said earlier, I think the budget is so disparate between the two institutions, 90 to 10 almost.

One of my old biology professors, when this all came up 10, 20 years ago, said to me -- he said, You know, Gary, I'm not in favor of it because if the medical university needs \$5 million for a new heart thoracic surgery lab and we need some money for the fetal pig research, we're not going to get it, you know.

And I think he's right on that. And I think both institutions are fantastic, and they both have different goals and aspirations, and I think they would be stronger apart rather than together.

If you look across the border over in Georgia, the Medical College of Georgia, which I'm also a -- did my fellowship -- or excuse me -- my internal medical training there, they merged with Augusta University, Augusta State University. And for a lot of the reasons -- we were looking to merge the two schools: cost savings, strength in numbers, so to speak. And I don't think, from what I've read from afar, that it's really gone over as well as they thought.

Augusta State College, the university has pretty much disappeared, I would say, from what I've seen. And the medical school has taken -- it's called Regent -- excuse me, not Regent University. I'm blocking on the name of the school.

Anyway, I don't even remember the name now. So that should tell you.

But I don't think it's good that the two schools merge. I think there's a lot of collaboration that could go on and should go on. From my knowledge, the College of Charleston provides the largest number of medical students to the medical university than any other School in the state, or in the nation, for that matter. So I think there's areas where we can collaborate and should and do already in this Lowcountry Graduate Program they have up in North Charleston, but I don't really believe that the two should join up.

In terms of the law school, the way I would -- I'm certainly not a lawyer. My first question would be, Do we need another law school in this state? Is there a need for that? And if there is a need, then I think if the funding is there, then the College of Charleston would be a fine place to shepherd that and help that

school along and get it to where it should be. But if there's not a need, then I think we should focus on building up our programs that we do have that are excellent but could even be better with money that could have been spent on the law school that maybe is not necessary.

CHAIRMAN SENATOR PEELER: Ms. Henderson.

REPRESENTATIVE HENDERSON: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Thank you, Dr. Thompson. I agree with my colleague, Mr. Whitmire, here about the quality of all five of the candidates. And it's going to be difficult for us to end up, the whole body, to have to -- you know, staff has to figure out which person is going to be appointed.

But I do appreciate all that you've already done for the university of -- you know, through your scholarships and all that.

DR. THOMAS: Thank you.

REPRESENTATIVE HENDERSON: So, again, being consistent as to the things that -- with my question about performance funding, evaluating programs, you know, and as far as looking towards the future where the college -- as where to, you know, get your resources, what's your opinion on all that?

DR. THOMAS: Well, I agree with several of my colleagues. I think that we should focus on the areas that are going to be able to get students jobs because I think that's the number one thing that's going forward. And I think there's even going to be -- this is going to be something that's going to be recorded for each college throughout the United States, what percentage of their graduates are getting jobs and then how soon, that type of thing. So I think for us to be competitive and be able to recruit the top students, that's going to be something that we definitely have to focus on.

I do agree with Steve Swanson, though. I took a lot of history and political science, and I think it helped balance me out and made me a better person in terms of being a doctor that can look at both sides of things, science and non-science. So I do think there's a role for these non-job creator programs, so to speak, but we have to make sure they're doing as good as they can. And if they're not pulling their weight, so to speak, then I think we need to focus on the job creators.

REPRESENTATIVE HENDERSON: What's your opinion on the whole downtown versus out of town kind of expansion question?

DR. THOMAS: Well, you know, I don't think the College of Charleston is planning to get any larger in terms of student population. I think one of the great aspects of our college is the small class size. When I was in school there, we had -- you know, I had classes where there would be nine or ten students there.

Now, I don't think it's quite that good now because the student population has grown so much -- about 11,000 students there now -- but I personally think it's probably an ideal population student bodywise right now. I don't think we necessarily need to increase the number of students, but concentrate on getting, you know, the programs as good as they can in getting our top students the education that they need.

Having said that, the North Charleston campus, I think, is completely, up to this point, underutilized. They just -- I -- they just moved into a new building. I haven't had the chance to go up there and visit it.

We have a brand-new, African-American dean who is in charge of that facility, and I think we need to put a lot of money into that particular program, because that North Charleston is also a growing area, a lot of job creation up there, and that's an area where a lot of the people, older people who haven't gone to college, would like to get some training that would help them. And I think it's really underutilized, and I think if the College of Charleston doesn't fill that void, somebody else is.

Mount Pleasant, which is where we have a lot of our athletic fields, Francis Marion College, I believe, Ms. Taylor, is trying to open a campus over there in Mount Pleasant. And, you know, a good friend of mine graduated from Francis Marion, so that's a good school. But I sort of feel like that's sort of our home territory, and I would like to see what it is that they're doing that we haven't done or could we do it or along those things.

REPRESENTATIVE HENDERSON: Okay. Thank you.

DR. THOMAS: Thank you.

SENATOR SCOTT: I have a question.

CHAIRMAN SENATOR PEELER: Mr. Scott.

SENATOR SCOTT: Along -- sorry. Along the same lines, including minority faculty staff and students, some of your ideas on how that could be accomplished.

DR. THOMAS: Sure.

I think that's vital that we do that for sure. And I'm proud to say, out of my three scholarships, two of the three are women, and the third person was a young, African-American female who wants to be a cardiologist, and she is an outstanding person.

And so I think we just need to concentrate on this. I think that the college needs to be proactive, and I don't think they have ever been proactive. Maybe up to this point now, we're starting to move in the right direction, but I think that perhaps there should be a committee of people that should say, we're going to focus on this. And we should go out and identify the top minority students in the United States -- South Carolina, of course, getting preference -- and recruit them heavily, just as we would a football player or basketball player, and say, We want you to come to our college, and make it a priority, and if you don't make it a priority and state it as a priority and follow through with it, it will never happen.

So I think you need to do that. You need to look for the top faculty throughout the United States who are minority candidates and encourage them to come. And I think when you have more faculty that are minority, I think minority students will follow.

SENATOR SCOTT: Thank you.

DR. THOMAS: But if you don't make it a priority, it won't happen.

CHAIRMAN SENATOR PEELER: Any other questions or comments?

What's the desire of the Committee?

REPRESENTATIVE WHITMIRE: Move for favorable.

MR. HAYES: Second.

CHAIRMAN SENATOR PEELER: All in favor -- any other discussions?

Hearing none, all in favor, say aye.

ALL MEMBERS: Aye.

CHAIRMAN SENATOR PEELER: Opposed, no; and the ayes have it.

DR. THOMAS: Thank you.

SENATOR SCOTT: Mr. Chairman?

CHAIRMAN SENATOR PEELER: Mr. Scott.

SENATOR SCOTT: In the previous vote, I had to step out for a second.

CHAIRMAN SENATOR PEELER: Sure. Thank you.

Well, that completes our screening of the College of Charleston candidates. We'll take a break. Please be back at 1:30.

(A lunch recess transpired from 12:23 p.m. to 1:42 p.m.)

CANDIDATES FOR LANDER UNIVERSITY

CARY CORBITT

CHAIRMAN SENATOR PEELER: I'd like to call the meeting of the Joint Legislative Committee to Screen Candidates for Colleges and Universities Boards of Trustees back to order.

The next order of business is Lander University. Candidate Cary Corbitt.

Good afternoon, sir.

MR. CORBITT: Good afternoon.

CHAIRMAN SENATOR PEELER: For the record, Senator Hayes had to go back to Rock Hill, but he left his proxies. So we'll have his proxies up for you friendly folks.

Mr. Corbitt, if you would, raise your right hand.

Do you swear to tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, so help you God?

MR. CORBITT: I do.

CHAIRMAN SENATOR PEELER: Do you have a brief statement on why you'd like to serve on -- as a Lander University Board of Trustee? And I understand you're already on there in an interim appointment.

MR. CORBITT: I am on an interim appointment through 2016, and I've had close ties with Lander University for many, many years. Most -- a lot of the faculty --

MS. CASTO: There we go.

MR. CORBITT: Oh, okay. -- are fraternity brothers of mine and close friends. And I just have a passion for the school, and I hope through my experience and with the resort environment and for all of my entire career that I can offer some insights that some others may not be able to do.

And so I just look forward to participating.

CHAIRMAN SENATOR PEELER: Any questions or comments?

Mr. Whitmire.

REPRESENTATIVE WHITMIRE: I'm still going through them.

CHAIRMAN SENATOR PEELER: Ms. Henderson.

REPRESENTATIVE HENDERSON: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Corbitt, I appreciate your service, at least, you know, for the last few months. What do you see -- and I'm not that familiar with Lander, really. Mostly just through my service on this board.

What do you think are some of the biggest issues you all are facing in the next couple of years?

MR. CORBITT: Well, the number one challenge -- well, challenge -- or the number one opportunity we have right now is Dan Ball, the president over Lander University, is retiring in May.

And so we're in search for his replacement, and that has been vetted out now, and we should see some -- an update. We have a board meeting this Friday and Saturday and should see some updates on the candidates' elections.

Also, our endowment program with Lander University is a -- is much of a concern. We need to raise the endowments for the college. And so that is on the forefront.

And since the ever concern of student enrollment, it's a very affordable college, but there's a lot of choices out there, and we are probably down anywhere between 250 to, say, 700 students.

And so we're kind of looking at the makeup of the different classes and the online components and so forth. So I'd say probably that's the issues of -- at hand.

REPRESENTATIVE HENDERSON: All right. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN SENATOR PEELER: Mr. Whitmire.

REPRESENTATIVE WHITMIRE: Oh, I'm good.

CHAIRMAN SENATOR PEELER: Mr. Scott.

REPRESENTATIVE WHITMIRE: No, go ahead.

CHAIRMAN SENATOR PEELER: It's Mr. Scott.

SENATOR SCOTT: What is the makeup in the student body?

MR. CORBITT: I'm sorry?

SENATOR SCOTT: Makeup, minority students versus --

MR. CORBITT: I don't know that I could tell you that. I would say it's probably a good mix of all nationalities there.

And so I don't know that I can tell you exactly what the breakdown is.

SENATOR SCOTT: What are you doing different in your recruiting minority students to this college?

MR. CORBITT: What do we do in recruiting -- do -- well, right now, a lot of the recruiting is -- I don't know exactly what we do for -- specifically for minority students. A lot of the recruiting is by paper products and a little bit online. I think we need to do a better job with our online components that we do for getting the message about Lander University out there.

And so I think that's something that I will work on with the school. But specific, I couldn't probably tell you.

SENATOR SCOTT: I'm sorry. The reason why I asked that is, you indicated that -- this drop in enrollment. What do you think is the number one cause of the drop in enrollment? Federal funding? Parent-student loan program? Need-based tuition grant? Non-recruiting? What do you think?

MR. CORBITT: Our -- scholarships that go beyond the State scholarship programs have been difficult because of some of the schools that are close by offer much better opportunities with some of the scholarships than Lander has been.

And so part of our desire to increase our endowment, we can certainly address that better than we have been.

SENATOR SCOTT: What do you think the total population is of the school right now?

MR. CORBITT: We are...

SENATOR SCOTT: I know you indicated at one point, it was as high as 5,000 students.

MR. CORBITT: I think we're just at 4,000, just a little bit over that.

SENATOR SCOTT: Okay. All right.

Thank you.

MR. CORBITT: Sure.

CHAIRMAN SENATOR PEELER: Mr. Whitmire.

REPRESENTATIVE WHITMIRE: Mr. Corbitt, thank you for your service and willingness to serve as a teacher.

Just -- just continuing on what Senator Scott and Representative Henderson said, it's concerning to me about the 200 to 750 students in decline. I'm probably sure it means your revenues are down.

MR. CORBITT: Uh-huh.

REPRESENTATIVE WHITMIRE: Is that mostly in-state students that are not attending Lander now, or do you know?

MR. CORBITT: I would say it probably is a lot of the -- a lot of in-state students. This year, I think enrollment is down 20 from this time last year as far as for the spring semester. I think I just read that in an e-mail that just came across.

And so I think that will be a lot of what we will be addressing with our new president and some of the goals and objectives with the new appointment.

REPRESENTATIVE WHITMIRE: Yeah, because I --

MR. CORBITT: It is very much a concern.

REPRESENTATIVE WHITMIRE: Yeah. I would think, you know, you're talking about a small, you know, mid-sized college right in the middle of the Piedmont area. You would think you wouldn't have that problem, so many students.

MR. CORBITT: I would agree. And Lander University has improved its campus immensely. It's got a wonderful athletic complex. It's brand new.

It's got a new dormitory, Centennial Hall, that opened about six years ago. They have another one right now under construction, and shortly thereafter, they will be addressing a couple of the others.

The library is -- a program to kind of improve the library and some other things. So they're certainly going in the right direction, making the improvements that the students that are -- need to be addressed.

And so there's just -- there's a lot of great colleges and universities out there, a lot of choices.

And so, yes, we need to make sure we keep pace and give the activities and the -- and meet the needs of the students.

REPRESENTATIVE WHITMIRE: Okay. Thank you.

Oh, if I do support you, can I get a couple of golf lessons?

MR. CORBITT: We certainly have enough folks to provide that. All right.

REPRESENTATIVE WHITMIRE: Thank you. Thanks. I need them.

CHAIRMAN SENATOR PEELER: You say you attended Lander on a golf scholarship?

MR. CORBITT: I did.

CHAIRMAN SENATOR PEELER: Okay. And I assume that's Lander, the golf team there.

MR. CORBITT: It -- they are. The girls' team is probably outpacing the boys, but it's -- they've got a nice program.

CHAIRMAN SENATOR PEELER: So what's your thoughts on paying student athletes?

MR. CORBITT: I'm totally not for that, no. I think that amateurs should be maybe given a little more latitude because of the costing as is to play amateur sports in golf and -- but paying them to play, no.

CHAIRMAN SENATOR PEELER: Any other questions or comments?

What's the desire of the Committee?

REPRESENTATIVE WHITMIRE: Move for favorable.

CHAIRMAN SENATOR PEELER: Favorable and a second and a third now.

Now we have Senator Scott, Representative Whitmire, Representative Henderson, and we have Senator Hayes's proxy.

So all in favor, say aye.

ALL MEMBERS: Aye.

CHAIRMAN SENATOR PEELER: Opposed, no; and the ayes have it.

Thank you, sir.
MR. CORBITT: Thank you all.

CANDIDATES FOR SOUTH CAROLINA STATE UNIVERSITY

CONSTANCE NELSON BARNES

CHAIRMAN SENATOR PEELER: Next, we'll go to South Carolina State, Constance Nelson Barnes.

How do you do, ma'am?

MS. BARNES: I'm fine. Thank you, Chairman.

CHAIRMAN SENATOR PEELER: You've got a cold too?

MS. BARNES: Yes.

CHAIRMAN SENATOR PEELER: If you would, raise your right hand.

Do you swear to tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, so help you God?

MS. BARNES: I do.

CHAIRMAN SENATOR PEELER: Would you like to make a brief statement to the Committee about why you'd like to serve?

MS. BARNES: Yes.

First of all, Mr. Chairman, and members of this Committee, I want to take an opportunity to thank you all so much after what you did to ensure that South Carolina has strong and effective leadership.

I come before you today, in addition to what I have shared in my written statement, with 30 years of experience in upper-to-middle management and 20 years in profit -- non-for-profit organizations, 10 years in pastoral leadership as a pastor and now as a campus administrator in higher education working for students at South Carolina State and Claflin.

I'm doing my tenure at the organizations, and I've been very involved in strategically working with organizations to change their trajectory in terms of when I got there. I had to be creative in helping them to reach their mission to use creative methods, fundraising, and a grant writing.

Also, as I come today, I recognize that during my work, I've had an opportunity to help these organizations achieve their mission in the community. While they were doing -- you know, creating their mission, I had to also be strategic in working with groups and organizations to ensure that we move forward and to make a difference in the community.

I dearly love South Carolina State because it was there that I found my purpose and my mission's work to be a voice for the underserved, the oppressed, and disenfranchised and to reinvest in people and in the community. So when I get an opportunity to talk about South Carolina State -- and I don't normally -- I just don't talk about her, but I promote her in three significant ways that I'd like to share with you all today.

First, it's a recruitment of students. Five members of my immediate family, they are a graduate of South Carolina State.

Second, in terms of investment, I contribute to South Carolina State for scholarships personally as well as encourage others to give, and I invest in athletics. I have a season pass to the football game.

And then third, accomplishments in service. Wherever I've lived, I've always affiliated with the alumni chapter. When I lived in Columbia, I provided an opportunity for the alumni chapter to meet at my office, and additionally, when I served as the president of our alumni chapter in Columbia, our membership increased, if not doubled.

When I went to work in the Washington, D.C., area, I affiliated with the D.C. chapter there. And now that I'm a resident in Orangeburg, I'm a part of the Orangeburg chapter there.

I am delighted to have an opportunity to come before you because, as I said, I dearly, dearly love South Carolina State University and Bulldog pride.

And so, Mr. Chairman and members of this Committee, I believe that I have the temperament, the commitment, and the experience to be a positive impact at South Carolina State at this time in her life.

Thank you.

CHAIRMAN SENATOR PEELER: Thank you.

Mr. Whitmire.

REPRESENTATIVE WHITMIRE: Thank you, Ms. Barnes, for being willing to serve. I definitely agree with you that there's been way too much negative publicity, whether it's been the State's fault or the fault of other people. It's probably some of both.

But I'm reading in your question 4, What can a college or university do to attract more students?

You say, specifically, if the university is successful in rebranding itself and creating an environment that is conducive for teaching and learning, it will be competitive in attracting students.

You said, specifically, but I didn't get any specifics out of that. Would you be willing --

MS. BARNES: Okay.

REPRESENTATIVE WHITMIRE: -- to elaborate on that?

MS. BARNES: On question 4, What we can do to attract more students?

REPRESENTATIVE WHITMIRE: Uh-huh.

MS. BARNES: You know, I recognize my sister has been a part of the college tour then taking students on college tours. And when I ask her, you know, how does South Carolina State show, and she says to me that South Carolina State does not show well.

And so I believe that because of some of the issues that are going on at South Carolina State -- particularly, one of the issues is that there are problems there at the university in terms of how the students see the university. There are some things there that, perhaps, they need to do a better job.

But I believe that they can attract more students by making sure that what they are offering are appealing to high school students. A lot of times I think people are not supporting or promoting the university. If the university also can have the 3,000 public relation ambassadors on the campus, the students -- if they would invest in each one reaching one, that would ensure that students are coming to South Carolina State.

So I think the major way of reaching students is have those students who are presently there to serve as ambassadors to reach other students.

REPRESENTATIVE WHITMIRE: Has State reached out to the white communities and Hispanic communities? Because I'm looking at your tuition. It's -- I mean, it's great compared --

MS. BARNES: Yes.

REPRESENTATIVE WHITMIRE: -- to a lot of other schools.

MS. BARNES: Yes, yes.

REPRESENTATIVE WHITMIRE: So I would think there would be other students besides African-American students that might be interested in going there.

MS. BARNES: And I definitely would agree with you regarding that. Perhaps they may have. I'm done -- I've been on the campus, and I'm beginning to see other than African-American students on the campus.

As I frequent the campus, I see white students. I see Hispanic students. So I'm confident that they're doing a better job recruiting those students.

REPRESENTATIVE WHITMIRE: That's good.

My last question. You're -- you say growing enrollment is a priority because of -- you're so heavily dependent on tuition. I totally agree.

Are you prepared to make the tough choices if enrollment does not increase? Because you know that -- the financial situation.

MS. BARNES: I do.

REPRESENTATIVE WHITMIRE: I don't see the General Assembly being willing to go any further than they have now.

MS. BARNES: Of course.

REPRESENTATIVE WHITMIRE: So what would you do in that case? Would you reduce faculty? Reduce services? What?

MS. BARNES: Well, what we don't want to do is to shortchange the students. We want to make sure that they get a quality education.

And so I believe that they will have to take the time to do some strategic planning to ensure that if they do have to cut expenses, that they do that in such a way that the students will continue to have a quality education. But also, sir, I believe the board of trustees are going to have to be more involved in ensuring that they are able to generate more resources from public and private sources as well as alumni and friends.

I believe that people want to contribute to South Carolina State. They have a vested interest in South Carolina. But we're going to have to make sure that people feel that the university is worthy of their fundraising.

And so I do believe that we will be able to generate more funds, more resources, and I am committed to that myself.

REPRESENTATIVE WHITMIRE: Well, I agree with you, the need to reverse the negative publicity. That's step one.

MS. BARNES: Thank you.

REPRESENTATIVE WHITMIRE: Thank you.

CHAIRMAN SENATOR PEELER: Senator Scott.

MS. BARNES: Hi there.

SENATOR SCOTT: Good to see you.

MS. BARNES: Same to you.

SENATOR SCOTT: Generally, two areas that are being looked at is HBCU's all across this country and also smaller schools. And we just had a candidate for Lander up with the same issue. Many smaller schools have been hit pretty hard in terms of enrollment due to the lack of federal funding. A new concept and new ideas in terms of how we recruit students, the students with the better grades, from what we see, are going to the larger institutions if they get offered scholarships.

So what's some of your ideas in terms of how we change that behavior, especially growing scholarships? And I heard that you spent a lot of time, and I know you spend a long time --

MS. BARNES: Yes.

SENATOR SCOTT: -- a long time raising money --

MS. BARNES: Yes.

SENATOR SCOTT: -- so that we can provide scholarships to those kids who can get the larger scholarships when they go into larger institutions. Given what the SAT requirements are, they automatically come in with \$5,000.

MS. BARNES: Right.

SENATOR SCOTT: Some of your ideas in terms of how we got here, fix the rest of what's broken on that system so we try to reach some of those students.

MS. BARNES: I am very aware, as a mother myself, the cost of higher education. When my daughter graduated from medical school, I thought that she had a minimum student loan amount. But when she graduated and we actually looked at the amount, it was more than I imagined.

I believe those of us who have graduated from the university, we have a vested interest in giving back. Perhaps more of us can adopt some of the students to make sure that we're able to fund some of their needs, because so much has been invested in me. You know, our ancestors have given so much that we have the opportunity now to give back as well.

So as -- in terms of answering your question, I really do want to be one of these persons who have taken the opportunity to ensure that all young people have access to higher education. And if that means that I'm going to have to be a better -- do a better job in recruiting in terms of our alumni association groups, I have to put -- find more resources for scholarships, then I want to do that.

But more so than that, I have decided just personally, you know, to include South Carolina State in my State planning, and I think we need to have more people who are willing to do that so that they can continue to invest long-term in the lives of young people.

SENATOR SCOTT: Thank you so much.

CHAIRMAN SENATOR PEELER: I see looking at your record of campus ministry -- are you located actually on the campus of SC State?

MS. BARNES: No. The United Methodist Church has a facility in Orangeburg.

And so our office is directly across the street on the boulevard at the entrance, the first entrance, at -- to South Carolina State.

CHAIRMAN SENATOR PEELER: Do you live in Orangeburg?

MS. BARNES: I do. I have moved to Orangeburg, yes.

CHAIRMAN SENATOR PEELER: Okay. So you're no longer on the Kershaw First Steps Board?

MS. BARNES: No. I sent them my resignation, but they continue to send me e-mails.

And so I continue to support that as I'm able.

CHAIRMAN SENATOR PEELER: Former Senator -- he used to look at people's speeding tickets a lot.

MS. BARNES: Yes.

CHAIRMAN SENATOR PEELER: He would want to show us the driving record.

MS. BARNES: Yes.

CHAIRMAN SENATOR PEELER: Have you slowed down a little bit?

MS. BARNES: I definitely have. And most of the time is -- when you look at that, when I moved to Kershaw County and I had to get acclimated, you know, to the street signs and the speeding stickers. And -- so I'm acclimated.

When I moved to Orangeburg, I had to get acclimated, you know, to the speed, the speeding rate. So the last time the officers got me, I said, this is enough.

So now when I drive around Orangeburg, I put on my cruise control so I won't...

CHAIRMAN SENATOR PEELER: It also affects your insurance rate too.

MS. BARNES: Oh, doesn't it. It sure does. It sure does.

CHAIRMAN SENATOR PEELER: Any other questions?

Ms. Henderson.

REPRESENTATIVE HENDERSON: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Thank you, Ms. Barnes. I appreciate you being here and offering yourself for service.

So I just wanted -- and I'll ask, you know, the other two folks coming up here too -- the issue of, obviously, the institution's financial situation. I actually just read the State over lunch and saw their Prevention Control Board, you know, gave the institution another \$12 million.

You know, that concerns me, as I know it does other members of the General Assembly, to continue in the financial situation and us being asked to continue to put money in. And I guess I just really didn't focus in on this until I was reading your supplemental information that the in-state tuition is only \$3,645. I know the chicken and the egg -- you raise tuition, and then you have less students, and you already have that problem.

But it sounds like you've been involved with the institution for a while. So, I mean, what do you think you are going to have to do to make this institution financially stable?

MS. BARNES: Thank you for the question.

One of the things that I don't want to do is to assume that I know all the specifics, but I do know that they're having financial difficulties, as a lot of the other HBC's and universities in our state and in our country.

I'm very aware that you can't really borrow yourself out of debt, and you're really going to have to find some ways to do that effectively.

When I told a friend of mine that I was going to offer myself for board of directors, he said three times, As a board member, you will be asked to lead by example in practicing the three G's. You give, you get, or you get off.

And so I'm -- as I said previously, so I really am committed to do everything within my powers to ensure that the university is financially sovereign and that their credibility is returned as the first great institution that I know that they are.

My commitment is my commitment to be there, to pay attention, specifically with what has taken place in the past, so that we do not repeat some of those same challenges.

I agree that funding is diminishing from the State support, and when they have difficulties with tuition, that's another problem. So the Board of Trustees must be at the forefront in ensuring that we take advantage of the old alumni who have graduated -- that I know they're doing exceptionally well -- and to ensure that they step forward and to take a leadership role in ensuring that the university is financially sovereign.

REPRESENTATIVE HENDERSON: Are you willing to support significant financial cuts if that's what's needed to support the agency's situation?

MS. BARNES: Of course. I am willing to support cuts as long as it does not diminish the quality of education that the students will receive.

REPRESENTATIVE HENDERSON: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN SENATOR PEELER: Thank you.

Any other questions or comments at all?

SENATOR SCOTT: Favorable report.

CHAIRMAN SENATOR PEELER: Motion is a favorable.

A second?

REPRESENTATIVE WHITMIRE: As a Methodist, I sing.

CHAIRMAN SENATOR PEELER: Okay. Any further discussion?

Hearing none, we'll move to a vote.

All in favor, say aye.

ALL MEMBERS: Aye.

CHAIRMAN SENATOR PEELER: Opposed no; and the ayes have it, including Senator Hayes.

Thank you.

MS. BARNES: Thank you, again, Mr. Chairman and the members of this Committee.

TAMMY KELLY

CHAIRMAN SENATOR PEELER: Next, Tammy Kelly.

How do you do?

MS. KELLY: Great. How are you doing today?

CHAIRMAN SENATOR PEELER: I'm staying in.

If you would, please raise your right hand.

Do you swear to tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, so help you God?

MS. KELLY: Yes, I do.

CHAIRMAN SENATOR PEELER: Would you like to make a brief statement and the reason on why you'd like to serve?

MS. KELLY: Sure.

Good afternoon, everyone. I'm Tammy Kelly, and the reason that I am interested in serving on the board of directors is because I truly believe that our education and the fact that our ability to attain education secures as our future for every individual, every student, every child in South Carolina financially.

And without my college education, I certainly would not have been able to have the relationship that I have as being a business owner with State Farm Insurance for the last 28 years. And I just believe that every student needs and -- has a -- needs an opportunity, and I dearly love South Carolina State University.

My husband is a 1986 graduate, and I have two children who have attended as well. So it is very dear to my heart, and my goal is to help wherever I can help.

CHAIRMAN SENATOR PEELER: Thank you.

Any questions or comments from the Committee?

Mr. Whitmire.

REPRESENTATIVE WHITMIRE: Thank you, Ms. Kelly, for your willingness to serve.

Under the questions, number 4, what kind of colleges and universities attract more students, the statement you made was very disturbing to me, where you say, Enrollment is declining at all -- and you emphasized that -- all historically black colleges and universities, in part because of an increase of competition from predominantly white institutions, online proprietors, et cetera, et cetera.

Why -- I know there's competition, but, you know, South Carolina State has a good product to sell and a lot of these other schools do too. Why is this happening, I wonder?

MS. KELLY: I think that the focus for all of the institutions has been on the way that we've done it in the past, and the world is changing. As you -- the world is changing now. And even in my business, things

that I used to do five years ago, I don't do right now because it's not effective in order for me to reach our goals -- my business goals.

So as the dynamics of the marketplace see changes, the schools have to change. And an institution -- or even in my business, with the history of State Farm, sometimes it's slow, but you can't be too slow. This world is moving very fast and with the -- in the business climate today, and I know this is an institution and it's not for profit, but it still has to be treated as a business.

So I think that with the faces where -- and the children I talk to who are heading for college -- because I don't say -- when I'm asking them where they're planning to go and I don't hear South Carolina State University, I'm like, Wow. And the reason is because the advocates for the university are not in the right places. And those right places will mean being in the high schools and using the alumni to support the university's efforts as far as marketing for the students. That's the key.

I -- you'll notice on my resume that I did not attend South Carolina University, but I almost did, and in a lot of ways I regret that I did not attend South Carolina University, but that's the key. That's why they have done so well, is because other's advocates who ask three people who are in the community, who says, Yeah, I went there. And this is where you need to go.

And the students that I find that are there, like my kids who were there, is because that somebody showed them what it really means to be at the university. And that's the problem.

REPRESENTATIVE WHITMIRE: I totally agree with you taking a business approach. I mean, it's great if you could go back 50 or 60 years, but it's a different world.

MS. KELLY: It's a different world.

REPRESENTATIVE WHITMIRE: And I think South Carolina State, in order for it to survive as we know it, is going to have to make some drastic changes. It's going to take some trustees with some backbone, and because you're probably going to have some pushback, especially from the alumni, when you have to do this. But I just don't see that the money is going to keep coming from the State like it has recently.

And so I'm hopeful -- I'm very hopeful if we can get the State back on track like it should be.

MS. KELLY: I don't know whether that was a question or a statement.

REPRESENTATIVE WHITMIRE: That was just a rambling statement.

MS. KELLY: But I do think the plan for the university -- and please do not take it that I know the entire plan for the university. I do not. But I know what it needs to look like and is it -- we need to look at what do we want the university to look at -- look like in the next 20 years, and then all steps and all plans need to be made to ensure that that vision and that mission is accomplished.

How that happens? I think that collectively with the board of trustees and stakeholders, it can be done. It can be done, but the steps that -- to ensure that, it cannot be based upon relying on the citizens of South Carolina. It has to be done with major donations from the private sector.

REPRESENTATIVE WHITMIRE: I like the way you think. Well, thank you.

CHAIRMAN SENATOR PEELER: Senator Scott.

SENATOR SCOTT: I've got just a couple of questions for you.

I want to go back to a couple of things that you said, and I'm concerned about those students who will be -- and it's things we see where students who won't have the 3-point average to get in. South Carolina State is a land-grant institution, basically creating all of these kinds of schools, Voorhees College, Clafin College, Morris College, and so many others whose families don't have the income to make those kinds of selections if they don't make 1,100 or 1,150 on their SAT in getting into those colleges.

So where are those children supposed to go? And these are some of the most needed students in the state. My parents put three students through South Carolina State college at the same time. We didn't get any grant funding. My parents paid it all, no grants. In the end, it took a lot to do that, but today, you don't have that.

So where are these kids supposed to go? The private sector is not going to fund all of that. It sounds good to say it, but that's just not the way it works.

MS. KELLY: Well, the private sector, the opportunity for those students, there has to be funding set aside, and it, unfortunately -- they -- because of the qualifications for federal funding, there are going to be those students who cannot qualify for scholarships. But interest -- but creating a private funding within the university system, that's how they're going to be able to go.

They can get accepted to the college, but there has to be a mechanism to support those children through private donations and private -- and that money has to come from the stakeholders, from the alumni, from those corporate -- there's some businesses in Orangeburg.

There's stakeholders. There are churches there. There are people who live there. And they just need to know, you know, what the university needs, and there needs to be somebody talking to them, asking them to support this particular university, because with workforce development, economic development, there's a reason there. And every child that -- if they say they want to go to college -- and it makes a lot of sense, and that's what the branding is all about is, if you have a child that lives, you know, in Orangeburg on Amelia Street, and he cannot go or she cannot go anywhere else, why shouldn't they be able to go?

But -- and they won't pay -- their family cannot help them pay for it, but there needs to be a mechanism there to help them get to where they need to go.

Looking at the technical schools, those kids who are perhaps matriculating as for like an associate's degree, they may or may not be able to run up to Morris or Voorhees. They want to go to school in Orangeburg. So let's look at those pool of students and find a way to help them reach -- get to pay for that tuition right there in Orangeburg. That's a plus.

SENATOR SCOTT: My last question.

You ran for the South Carolina State Board last year.

MS. KELLY: Yes.

SENATOR SCOTT: What happened last year? Did you drop out, or did you win, or what happened?

MS. KELLY: Well, I withdrew my -- I withdrew from the competition from the board last year because of just reasons. Because I just did not feel that I had enough support from the House to continue with the race. So I just think --

SENATOR SCOTT: Did any member of the House promise you last year for support for the position this year? Because there were some real strange things that happened in that race last year. The candidate from last year was forced out of the race. Did any member of the House last year promise you support, and that candidate was pushed out for you to come this year?

MS. KELLY: No, sir.

SENATOR SCOTT: Thank you.

REPRESENTATIVE HENDERSON: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you, Ms. Kelly, for being here.

I don't remember you coming through this process last year. So as a businessperson, I respect what you had to say about the approach that the institution needs to take, and I think both you and the previous

gentleman stressed the fact that the institution has a negative image that needs to be changed, but I think a lot of it is related to the financial problems.

So I'll ask the same question, which is basically, you know, the General Assembly has been asked for many years in a row, and now, of course, the budget control board has given some additional funds to the university. What do you think the university is going to have to do in order to -- I'm sorry. My phone is ringing -- to make themselves solvent and financially stable in the future as well as be able to recruit new students and build up their programs?

MS. KELLY: Well, as far as the financial management and the financial standpoint of it -- of the university, they've really got to turn everything upside down and figure out what programs are validating themselves financially and hold people accountable for their positions. You know, we like to think that every department is worthy, but sometimes you've got -- when you tear something down, and it's not bringing you -- you're not getting a return from that, you know, that might be something you've got to change or let go.

REPRESENTATIVE HENDERSON: So am I taking it, from what you're saying, that you're willing to look at areas and have an open mind and say, you know, This may not be working, or, This department might need to be -- you know, we're going to have to cut some things in order to balance books?

MS. KELLY: Oh, absolutely.

REPRESENTATIVE HENDERSON: So you're willing to do that?

MS. KELLY: Absolutely.

But -- and on the same side, if it's not there, if it's not an investment and we're looking for a return, then, absolutely, that would be something that -- it wouldn't make any sense to hold on to that. That's the way I manage my business right now. I have to make some really, really, really tough, tough changes but -- and tough decisions relating to, you know, where I place marketing dollars, and, you know, do I hire someone new, or if someone's not working out.

And if it's not working out, then we've got to move on, because the big picture is, you've got a plan that you've got a vision and a goal that you're trying to reach. And if there's something there lagging, it's not worthy. You've got to let that go so you can move forward.

REPRESENTATIVE HENDERSON: I appreciate that. Thank you.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN SENATOR PEELER: Motion for a favorable report.

A second.

Any other discussion?

Hearing none, we can vote.

All in favor, say aye.

ALL MEMBERS: Aye.

CHAIRMAN SENATOR PEELER: Opposed, no; and the ayes have it, including Senator Hayes.

Thank you.

MS. KELLY: Thank you very much.

CHAIRMAN SENATOR PEELER: Good luck.

MS. KELLY: You guys have a blessed day.

VERNON L. PRYOR

CHAIRMAN SENATOR PEELER: Next, Mr. Vernon L. Pryor.

MR. PRYOR: Good afternoon.

CHAIRMAN SENATOR PEELER: Good afternoon.

Let me swear you in.

Do you swear to tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, so help you God?

MR. PRYOR: Yes, I do.

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

MR. PRYOR: Yes.

Good afternoon, first of all, and thank you for this opportunity to stand before you, Senator, and your esteemed board as well. And as you stated earlier, my name is Vernon Pryor. I'm a native of Charleston, South Carolina, and a nineteen ninety -- I'm sorry -- a 1988 graduate of South Carolina State University.

I presently serve on the board of visitors at South Carolina State University and became interested in that particular role because of all the adverse issues that were becoming heavy issues for our university.

So I wanted to serve in that capacity to offer any resources that I may have available or just the talents that I might lend to the institution to make it a stronger, more solvent institution.

CHAIRMAN SENATOR PEELER: Thank you.

Questions or comments?

Senator Scott.

SENATOR SCOTT: I don't have any.

CHAIRMAN SENATOR PEELER: Okay. Mr. Whitmire.

REPRESENTATIVE WHITMIRE: Welcome, Mr. Pryor.

MR. PRYOR: Thank you.

REPRESENTATIVE WHITMIRE: I'm reading on your questions 7 and 8, that's the biggest strength and the biggest weakness of the university. I like your statement about providing a quality education for African-American students. So there's probably a lot of young folks that wouldn't have the opportunity to get a college education without South Carolina State.

I notice your saying the weakness at State has been a lack of trust with your leadership. Do you equate that to the previous president -- presidents and the board, or who are you talking about when you say lack of trust?

MR. PRYOR: And thank you for that question.

Well, sir, to be quite honest with you, I attribute that answer to a wide area of things. And I will just start back from 1984, when I became a student.

It just became apparent to me that the system itself was just so ingrained in the buddy-buddy system, for the lack of a better term. You see things where, if you don't belong to a certain mindset, that you won't fit in. And over the years as it progressed, I had two nephews and one niece that actually went to South Carolina State University after me and graduated and just saw some gradual declining areas that needed much more attention.

So when I say, the trust factor -- and a prime example, if I may digress for just a second.

In my opinion, after I graduated, I saw Dr. Hatton -- Barbara Hatton became president of the institution. From the things I read in her bio and the things I read that she attributed to the institution, I felt very confident that she would be an excellent leader for our organization moving forward.

But from the -- from what you hear from the alumni association and being a part of the institution, going to the various games and the different functions at the institution, some of the alumni felt as if her progress was being stifled by the -- again, the good old system that was ingrained in South Carolina University.

So to answer your question, what I stated as that weakness is, this -- again, it starts -- it's a systemic problem that began, not just in one area, not attributed to one president, but just issues that evolved around any president that serves in that capacity.

REPRESENTATIVE WHITMIRE: So that was a slow slide.

MR. PRYOR: Absolutely.

REPRESENTATIVE WHITMIRE: All right. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN SENATOR PEELER: Thank you.

Ms. Henderson.

REPRESENTATIVE HENDERSON: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Thank you, Mr. Pryor, for your --

MR. PRYOR: Thank you.

REPRESENTATIVE HENDERSON: -- offering for service.

I wanted to ask you -- I'm going to ask you the same question I asked the others, but before I do, you hit on something in your additional information that is something that has concerned me for a while, and I have heard a lot. And you mentioned here in one of your -- on number 4.

You say, the true fact is that the University of Phoenix online campus is the largest producer of African-American recipients of bachelor's degrees in all disciplines.

And I wanted you to comment on that because, you know, one of the things that we hear from -- for example, when South Carolina started the Palmetto College, which is an online school, you know, that we in South Carolina don't really have a lot of oversight over these for-profit universities like the University of Phoenix --

MR. PRYOR: Yes.

REPRESENTATIVE HENDERSON: -- and that their tuition is very, very high, and the cost of anybody getting a degree from one of them is pretty substantial. And, you know, there's been a lot of reports just nationwide about problems with some of these institutions.

But the question I'm drawing down to, and that is, how can you explain the fact, for example, that, you know, the tuition at SC State is like \$4,000 a year and you could pay 20 or so to get a degree from a University of Phoenix? What would be -- explain to me why it is that you can -- how do you explain that phenomenon that these online schools are the highest producers of degrees yet at some times probably a lot more expensive than your traditional public institutions?

MR. PRYOR: Right. And thank you for that question.

One of the -- a part of my explanation to your question could be the variety of fields that are offered in schools like Phoenix -- University of Phoenix, Strayer University may not be offered at a historically black college and university that would put you directly into the mainstream of the working environment upon graduation.

Now, the second part of your question, as it pertains to the funding, you're absolutely right. The tuition compared to a historically black college or university is astronomical. It is. Sometimes it doubles, maybe even triples.

But the financial aid possibility for those schools give more opportunities for those online universities like Strayer and, again, the University of Phoenix, and it offers a variety of opportunities for that community that may not want to attend a historically black college or university, and for that reason, the graduation rate for those colleges are extremely high.

REPRESENTATIVE HENDERSON: So would you think that if you're a part of the SC State Board, part of it would be looking at, you know, maybe trying design programs that are doing the same types of things? It kind of goes back to my workforce questions I had for some of the other people from other boards.

MR. PRYOR: Sure, ma'am --

REPRESENTATIVE HENDERSON: Where could you get --

MR. PRYOR: I'm sorry.

REPRESENTATIVE HENDERSON: -- a job? That's why they're going there. Probably one of them is, they know they can get a job.

MR. PRYOR: Absolutely, and I agree with you 100 percent. The answer to your question is yes.

I mean, the school has to become more diverse in the areas that we educate our young folks, is a much simpler answer to that. And if it takes mirroring what success rates the other institutions, like the University of Phoenix or the other online institutions have, of course we need to explore those opportunities and make sure they're fiscally and financially responsible and with -- you know, serve as an asset to the university, and we definitely need to explore those options.

REPRESENTATIVE HENDERSON: Okay. So then my other question that I've asked the others is, you know, What is your view on what you think the university needs to do in order to achieve the financial stability that, you know, we really haven't seen in the last several years?

MR. PRYOR: A very good question as well.

Well, to be quite honest, all colleges and all universities -- and, again, in my opinion -- should be treated as a business. I'm a former business owner. I owned a Blimpie's Subs & Salads restaurant for 11 years, and in my opinion, the approach should be just treating it just like a business.

And I said that to say this. The students are our number one assets. Those are our customers. We should be out recruiting with better methods, better techniques, more things to attract the students, not only in the state of South Carolina but beyond as well, because South Carolina State University has a whole lot to offer.

It's an excellent, excellent institution. And, you know, I feel very confident in that fact that if we treat it more as a business and understand that the students are our customers and cater more towards the students -- again, back to your earlier question -- with different programs that may be more attractive to them to get them here, different majors and courses of study and things of that nature, that would, you know, bring them closer to acclimating to the working environment in the twenty-first century. I'm definitely for that.

And the short answer to your question is to treat it more like a successful business, and that goes with the fiscal responsibility as well.

REPRESENTATIVE HENDERSON: Thank you very much. I appreciate it.

MR. PRYOR: Thank you.

REPRESENTATIVE HENDERSON: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN SENATOR PEELER: Senator Scott.

SENATOR SCOTT: Looking at all these HBCU's across this country -- and there are a couple of exceptions and everything -- but looking at the state of South Carolina State college, which is -- the enrollment now is probably about 1,280 students.

MR. PRYOR: Yes.

SENATOR SCOTT: Looking at the numbers that you indicated -- cost of tuition, housing, room and board about \$8,600 a semester up to \$17,200 -- and I've heard back and forth the same question, what can we do in order to offset some of the costs and make sure that South Carolina State is on solid foundation? One thousand students and \$17,200, then they don't have a problem anymore.

But the students -- when I look at where those students actually came from, we no longer received tuition grants, need-based parent PLUS loans. Those are the students, when the economy collapsed, that got caught in the middle.

MR. PRYOR: Sure.

SENATOR SCOTT: So how do we get them back? When Washington, of course, is cutting these programs so these students can't get them back, how do we get them back?

We -- I heard a lot about, you know, we're going to get the private sector to fund all of the needs. And we know that's not going to happen --

MR. PRYOR: Sure.

SENATOR SCOTT: -- in the real world. So how do we get these students back?

MR. PRYOR: Well -- oh, I'm sorry.

SENATOR SCOTT: How do we get them back?

MR. PRYOR: Well, in my opinion --

SENATOR SCOTT: The magic wand -- and I'm not -- I'm just not getting it.

MR. PRYOR: I get it, and I appreciate your question. But the answers that I heard before, just from sitting in the audience, is absolutely spot on. Private sector definitely has to be engaged and definitely has to be involved. But it all comes, sir, by selling the private sector a product that they actually can believe in, a product that they can invest in and reap the benefits of the investment.

For an example, in Charleston, Boeing -- and I'm sure you all are familiar with the Boeing Corporation that just moved to Charleston recently. They were in the process of trying to train current college students for certain areas that would serve them better after graduating to become a part of the Boeing Corporation, not only here in Charleston but in Bellevue, Washington state; Seattle, Washington, and things of that nature.

Well, if South Carolina State University, just for an example, could be a vital part of that -- and going back to the question I answered earlier, about diversifying the areas of study that we have and being more inclusive of other areas, things like that with the private sector would definitely help.

SENATOR SCOTT: Are those students already on the campus at work? Are those students actually back to the campus?

MR. PRYOR: Yes.

SENATOR SCOTT: Parents can't afford it, programs are no longer there, and it's just not South Carolina State College. Using 1,000 students and \$17,000 -- \$17 million, it would not have the problem that we have now if it had enrollment, and there's all these other schools. I assume most of them aren't HBCU's.

MR. PRYOR: Sure.

SENATOR SCOTT: So the private sector is not going to cough up \$17 million --

MR. PRYOR: No, sir.

SENATOR SCOTT: -- a year to do that.

MR. PRYOR: Sure. And I hope I wasn't insinuating that with my answer, because your -- again, I -- and, you know, as I stated earlier, they need to be engaged for part of the help for that solution. But you're absolutely right.

I think, in my opinion, the responsibility of all trustees on whatever board that they actually serve is to ensure that the entity that they're serving for is financially solvent and on solid ground, period. Whatever that takes as far as fundraising, engaging private sectors, engaging other entities, or engaging alumni to give more, create more of a -- you know, an estate planning for when alumni is actually, you know, unfortunately, passed away, things like that can be passed on to the institution.

Those are ideas that have to start being talked about but actually be implemented, and there's a lot out there that's just hanging, low-lying fruit that's just hanging there, but it takes minds, and it takes a mindset to go after those issues to make it a reality.

So, again, your question is absolutely right, sir. The private sector is not the fix all. It's not the magic wand to everything, but it certainly plays a major part in any community.

In a community like Orangeburg and knowing that, you know, the institution, which is, you know, one of the oldest historically black colleges and institutions with a very high success rate, militarily or businesswise, it's very worthy of that private sector help.

SENATOR SCOTT: Thank you.

CHAIRMAN SENATOR PEELER: Mr. Pryor, I see where you served on the SC State Board of Visitors.

MR. PRYOR: Yes.

CHAIRMAN SENATOR PEELER: How long have you been on that board?

MR. PRYOR: Sir, to this point, I think it's two years. I'm fast approaching two years, maybe one year and 11 months.

CHAIRMAN SENATOR PEELER: Were you appointed for that? Who appointed you to that?

MR. PRYOR: I was appointed through -- I think it was the current board member, Mr. Washington -- I'm sorry -- Maurice Washington.

CHAIRMAN SENATOR PEELER: Okay. Would you feel an allegiance toward him?

MR. PRYOR: I'm sorry?

CHAIRMAN SENATOR PEELER: Would you feel an allegiance for him because he appointed you more of --

MR. PRYOR: Absolutely not. Absolutely not. And I think the reason he decided to appoint me is because of my independent thinking.

I'm certainly not a person who goes with the status quo just because it's popular. I've been dealing with adversity all my life. It doesn't matter. If it doesn't sound right or if it doesn't pass the smell test, even if I'm just that one lonely vote in the dark, I'm going to vote with my conscience because I'm here to serve -- or would want to be potentially here to serve the students of South Carolina State University.

CHAIRMAN SENATOR PEELER: I believe you would.

Any other questions?

REPRESENTATIVE HENDERSON: Move for favorable.

CHAIRMAN SENATOR PEELER: Motion is favorable.

SENATOR SCOTT: Second.

CHAIRMAN SENATOR PEELER: A second.

Any other discussion?

Hearing none, we'll move to vote.

All in favor, say aye.

ALL MEMBERS: Aye.

CHAIRMAN SENATOR PEELER: Opposed, no; and the ayes have it.

MR. PRYOR: Thank you again for your time.

CHAIRMAN SENATOR PEELER: Thank you.

That completes South Carolina State University.

Now we're going to Coastal Carolina University, and we'll have Alan Connie.

CANDIDATES FOR COASTAL CAROLINA UNIVERSITY

ALAN CONNIE

MR. CONNIE: Good afternoon.

CHAIRMAN SENATOR PEELER: Good afternoon to you, sir. Glad you're here.

Do you swear to tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, so help you God?

MR. CONNIE: I do.

CHAIRMAN SENATOR PEELER: Would you like to make a brief statement on why you would like to serve?

MR. CONNIE: Yes. I had retired this summer after 28 years as the head women's track and field and cross-country coach of Coastal Carolina University. Twenty-eight years, a lot of these were 70-, 80-hour weeks, you know, carrying the Coastal brand all around the country and even internationally when we recruited. So it's a place that I'm very passionate about.

I was honored within a month after my retirement to be named head coach emeritus by our board of trustees, which was this first athletic coach to get that title. They named me the chanticleer of the year at our athletic foundation gala, and I was just recently inducted into the Athletic Hall of Fame.

I'm very invested in Coastal. What I've learned as a coach that -- it's a team effort. It takes a team, and I'm looking to continue my service to Coastal, a place that I've seen grow from the first time I stepped on that campus in 1976, when there were about four buildings, to what it is today is a remarkable story, one that I have been very proud to be a part of, to help build it to where it is.

I've got great relationships with many of the administrators, faculty on campus, and I just want to continue to serve. I'm grateful for what Coastal has given me. I want to give back, you know.

I also have a unique situation. I spent 26 years as a public school educator, special education teacher in South Carolina schools. So for 17 of my 28 years, I did double-duty, where I teach until 3 o'clock and then spend until about 10:00 or 11 o'clock at night at Coastal, assuming the role of head coach.

But I think that gives me a prospective, and I wrote it. I absolutely can see the transformative effect of education both at the public school level, at the university level, and at every level. And any way I can give back and serve this university, this great community, would be a privilege and an honor.

CHAIRMAN SENATOR PEELER: Thank you.

Questions or comments?

Mr. Whitmire.

REPRESENTATIVE WHITMIRE: Thank you, sir. And being a former educator, hats off for you doing special needs.

MR. CONNIE: Thank you.

REPRESENTATIVE WHITMIRE: That's a higher calling, in my opinion.

On your question where you say what do you think is the biggest weakness of this university, you said - and this -- you're the first one to mention this, which I think is a major problem to our State -- the retention rate is not high enough, and you say you want to get to 70 to 75 percent. What is it now; do you know?

MR. CONNIE: I think we have gotten to about 66 percent, which is a remarkable growth from about ten years ago, when it was about 48 percent.

REPRESENTATIVE WHITMIRE: Okay. That is.

MR. CONNIE: And I know that has been a major emphasis throughout our university, is student retention. We find a lot of people want to come to the beach. They don't always want to study.

CHAIRMAN SENATOR PEELER: Really?

MR. CONNIE: But the -- you know, our president has put forth initiatives, customer service initiatives, the freshmen 101 classes. They have reached out to make -- especially through the customer service initiative, you know, to really reach out to incoming students to help them make that transition to college life, and we've seen the -- certainly have seen that.

You know, I'm hoping that the retention rate gets to over 70 percent, and I think we're well on our way to be headed there.

REPRESENTATIVE WHITMIRE: All right. That's the -- a little goal.

I notice you have one of the largest, if not the largest, out-of-state populations, and I'm assuming part of that is because of your location. And -- but is that also something that the administration actively recruits, is out-of-state students?

MR. CONNIE: The administration -- right now we're at 52 percent and 48 percent out of state, to the best of my knowledge. I'd like to see our in-state population -- student population grow to 60 percent.

We do recruit heavily in -- you know, in the Northeast Corridor. It's a very attractive school for students from the Midwest and the North to come to, but at the same time, we have made a point to really recruit in state to get that student population up. Our speaking to people in our admissions staff, they've pointed out that no qualified in-state student is rejected from Carolina Coastal University.

One of the things I'm real proud of -- you know, I coached the team that was predominantly minority -- you walk around that campus now, and it's a very diverse campus. I think we're 69 percent white, you know. That means 39 percent minority students on our campus. That was not the case ten or twenty years ago.

I'm very proud of that. I'm proud that I had a role in that in recruiting student athletes. Certainly, bringing on football has had a lot to do with that, but I think the university would like to see that percent rise to about 60 percent.

At the same time, our funding dilemma, you know, as I'm sure you heard before, were -- percentagewise, we're one of the least-funded universities in the state of South Carolina. So the in-state tuition is \$10,140. Out of state is \$23,480. So I think we're very dependent as this university has grown, which is amazing to see the growth.

We're dependent on that \$13,000 differential that the out-of-state students bring to keep the growth growing.

REPRESENTATIVE WHITMIRE: This might explain why South Carolina is struggling, because they're going to Coastal Carolina.

SENATOR SCOTT: No.

REPRESENTATIVE WHITMIRE: It's not?

SENATOR SCOTT: No. I've said more than one time, federal funding for all HBCU's have been cut.

REPRESENTATIVE WHITMIRE: Well, they don't have the money anymore.

SENATOR SCOTT: No. It's not here, and the students can't come to school --

REPRESENTATIVE WHITMIRE: Sorry. We're on another subject.

That's all I've got. Congratulations on a career --

MR. CONNIE: Thank you.

REPRESENTATIVE WHITMIRE: -- and as a coach.

MR. CONNIE: Thank you.

REPRESENTATIVE WHITMIRE: And I appreciate your willingness to serve.

MR. CONNIE: Thank you.

CHAIRMAN SENATOR PEELER: Ms. Henderson.

REPRESENTATIVE HENDERSON: Thank you, yes.

Thank you, Mr. Connie, yes. Thank you.

I had a -- I ran cross country and track in high school. So I understand all of the things you have to do to carry people proud. I was just remembering my experiences, by the way. I was all new to running and all of the new things.

So I do appreciate it but -- so let me ask you a question. I picked up on two things in your remarks, and this has to do with the in state/out of state. So in your statement, you say that Coastal is the fastest growing institution of higher education in the state, yet you've got pretty much a 50/50 in-state/out-of-state balance.

So has the growth been coming from in state or out of state or equal?

MR. CONNIE: I would say, percentage-wise, it's been fairly equal. I mean, the percentage of in state/out of state in the last ten years hasn't changed much, but we've gone from, I think, 7,600 students ten years ago to over 10,000 students, and the master plan has us getting to about 12,000, 12,500.

And from what I gather, the administration feels very good about the path that we're on to reach that goal.

REPRESENTATIVE HENDERSON: And just -- since I'm from Greenville, I don't really know. Can you just give me, just for my understanding, kind of the whole rundown in this penny sales tax. How much of that do you get, and what does that do?

MR. CONNIE: The Penny Sales Tax Initiative is largely responsible for the growth and building, both for within the school district, within the technical college, Horry Georgetown Technical, Coastal Carolina University. It was a unique effort, you know, by the school board, by the university, by the County.

REPRESENTATIVE HENDERSON: So it's all for education?

MR. CONNIE: Yes. It's all --

REPRESENTATIVE HENDERSON: Okay.

MR. CONNIE: -- for educational, and that has been transformational. It's -- I believe there are -- two years ago, there were nine building projects going on on campus; last year, there were ten; and I think there's about ten going on right now.

REPRESENTATIVE HENDERSON: I just -- I didn't know. So...

MR. CONNIE: Yes.

REPRESENTATIVE HENDERSON: Okay. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN SENATOR PEELER: Any other questions or comments?

SENATOR SCOTT: Move for favorable report.

CHAIRMAN SENATOR PEELER: The motion is a favorable report.

REPRESENTATIVE WHITMIRE: Second.

CHAIRMAN SENATOR PEELER: A second.

Any other discussion?

Hearing none, we'll move to a vote.

All in favor, say aye.

ALL MEMBERS: Aye.

CHAIRMAN SENATOR PEELER: Opposed, no; and the ayes have it.

Thank you, sir.

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

Next, Mr. Carl H. Schwartzkopf from Conway.

CARL H. SCHWARTZKOPF

MR. SCHWARTZKOPF: Good afternoon, ladies and gentlemen.

CHAIRMAN SENATOR PEELER: I'll swear you in.

Do you swear to tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, so help you God?

MR. SCHWARTZKOPF: Yes, I do.

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

MR. SCHWARTZKOPF: I'll make a brief statement, yes.

I moved to Horry County 26 years ago after having a career as a golf administrator in the business world, and I taught golf course management at Horry Georgetown Technical College. I was the first professor that they hired at the law school of business when they started the PGM program.

I've been involved in several activities on the campus at Coastal Carolina University as part of the long-range planning committee. I currently serve on the board for evaluating the research grants. I'm involved in a lot of other activities.

I live probably about 100 yards from the university. I live right across the street from the university in Lackey Chapel and on the sixth tee of a golf course that is owned by the university. When I taught there, I rode my bike to campus because I didn't have to worry about the parking problems.

And my heart has been at Coastal ever since I got there. And, in fact, I made such a dedication to Coastal that upon my passing, my property, my lots, my houses, et cetera are all bequeath to the university.

CHAIRMAN SENATOR PEELER: Any questions?

Mr. Whitmire.

REPRESENTATIVE WHITMIRE: Thanks for your willingness to serve.

I like your answer for your biggest strength in the university, mentioning the marine science, which, obviously, is a major --

MR. SCHWARTZKOPF: Yes.

REPRESENTATIVE WHITMIRE: -- part of the university's mission.

And professional golf management, explain that to me. Exactly what is that?

MR. SCHWARTZKOPF: Yes. You were talking earlier with Mr. Connie about the ratio of students, in-state/out-of-state students. The marine science program, when I started, I still kept in -- I was a -- I was at

the naval academy for several years. Unfortunately, I'm not going to spin the Army/Navy game with Senator Hayes this year, but he probably doesn't want to because we've won the last six or seven years now.

CHAIRMAN SENATOR PEELER: He may revoke his proxy. You better --

MR. SCHWARTZKOPF: He may, he may. I don't know. That's good but -- so...

He was good friends also with my uncle -- cousin Norman, so we're okay there.

CHAIRMAN SENATOR PEELER: Well, I was going to ask you about him.

MR. SCHWARTZKOPF: Yeah.

CHAIRMAN SENATOR PEELER: We have a Norman who --

MR. SCHWARTZKOPF: Yeah. We're -- yeah. We're cousins.

CHAIRMAN SENATOR PEELER: Oh, okay.

MR. SCHWARTZKOPF: Yes.

And the marine science program basically draws students from across the country. And one of my classmates from the Naval Academy, when he found out I was teaching at an -- or teaching at Coastal, he finally said that, I'm glad you landed at a good school. Because he did his master's degree, I think, at Woods Hole or one of the other marine things and said how highly regarded Coastal Carolina University's marine science program is. And it also turned out we have the same recognition as far as the PGM program.

I remember teaching -- the guy and I taught ten, twelve years at Coastal in the PGM program. There were some classes that I had, and I probably had two or three students from South Carolina. All the rest were from out of state.

And there are basically two attractions. One is when they come to Myrtle Beach, and the students realize we've got 120 golf courses. They say, Wow, I can play a different golf course every day of the week, every month of the -- and every day of the month, and I don't have to play any of them twice. So that was a big attraction.

So those -- that's how come there's such a large amount of out-of-state students.

And the other thing is, talking with a lot of the parents from out of state, they found out that sending their son or daughter to Coastal was a lot cheaper than sending them to the University of Connecticut or someplace up in the East. And they always say, Boy, what a great bargain to send a kid down here, you know, that type of thing.

So, you know, it's -- yeah. So the PGM program and the marine science program were two big attractions for out-of-state students.

REPRESENTATIVE WHITMIRE: I noticed that you said the biggest weakness, in your opinion, is the lack of on-campus housing. What percentage of students do stay on campus? Do you have any idea?

MR. SCHWARTZKOPF: That is being -- that's in the process of being corrected.

Earlier, we were talking about retention, and that was one of the problems we had in the PGM program, the golf program, at Coastal -- is students were there for a year or two and then they were gone, and it was because of grade point average. It wasn't because they lacked the ability or the skill or the talent to play golf.

And so I -- at one of these faculty meetings, I made the recommendation that we house the freshmen and sophomores on campus in the PGM program, and the retention rate went like up to 90-plus percent, and a lot of the other departments initiated a similar type program.

What's happened since then is several private sector individuals have built apartments around campus that are part of the -- a relationship with the foundation -- of the housing foundation, and we're currently in the process of building more dormitories on campus. So that's going to take care of that.

REPRESENTATIVE WHITMIRE: I know Senator Peeler and I wouldn't have made it through our freshman year off campus down at Myrtle Beach.

CHAIRMAN SENATOR PEELER: You said that golf courses attract them? That's not what I was thinking.

MR. SCHWARTZKOPF: No. Basically, it's the sand, the sun, the surf, the --

CHAIRMAN SENATOR PEELER: There you go. Now, there you go.

MR. SCHWARTZKOPF: Yes, uh-huh.

REPRESENTATIVE WHITMIRE: I think I'm good.

CHAIRMAN SENATOR PEELER: The Coastal experience.

Ms. Henderson.

REPRESENTATIVE HENDERSON: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Yeah. We won't -- we don't need a discussion about that.

CHAIRMAN SENATOR PEELER: No, we don't.

REPRESENTATIVE HENDERSON: But, no, I appreciate all your service at the university and offering to serve.

So what do you think -- zeroing in on what I'm thinking is possibly one of the biggest challenges there, and that it's this whole in-state/out-of-state balance, what do you think that, you know, as a board member you -- your ideas would be about in how to, you know, recruit more in-state students there?

MR. SCHWARTZKOPF: The College of Education has grown dramatically in the last several years, and the majority of the faculty members at high schools and elementary schools in Horry County and surrounding counties have got their bachelor's and master's degrees in education from Coastal. And it's a case of also expanding a lot of the other programs that we already have in place in travel and tourism and things like that to ensure that we can increase the in-state enrollment.

REPRESENTATIVE HENDERSON: Okay. Thank you very much. I appreciate it.

CHAIRMAN SENATOR PEELER: You have served on the county council?

MR. SCHWARTZKOPF: Last night was my last night of county council.

CHAIRMAN SENATOR PEELER: Oh, okay.

MR. SCHWARTZKOPF: After three -- after three terms and twelve years, several months ago, I made the conscious decision to -- not to seek reelection. I believe somewhat in term limits, and I just thought that having been there for three terms in twelve years, it was time to give somebody else the opportunity to serve on county council and listen to the pothole problems and the ditches not getting mowed and the dead dog in the street not getting picked up.

CHAIRMAN SENATOR PEELER: And the unfunded mandates.

MR. SCHWARTZKOPF: And the unfunded or non-funded mandates and local government funding.

REPRESENTATIVE HENDERSON: I didn't ask you about local government funding.

MR. SCHWARTZKOPF: Yeah, look at the way I say it.

CHAIRMAN SENATOR PEELER: All right. Well, if there's no other questions --

REPRESENTATIVE HENDERSON: Move for a favorable.

CHAIRMAN SENATOR PEELER: Move for a favorable.

SENATOR SCOTT: Second.

CHAIRMAN SENATOR PEELER: And a second.

Any further discussion?

Hearing none, we'll move to a vote.

All in favor, say aye.

ALL MEMBERS: Aye.

CHAIRMAN SENATOR PEELER: Opposed, no; and the ayes have it.

MR. SCHWARTZKOPF: Ladies and gentlemen, thank you for your time.

CHAIRMAN SENATOR PEELER: Thank you.

Next, Mr. Todd Setzer.

TODD SETZER

MR. SETZER: Good afternoon, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN SENATOR PEELER: Good afternoon.

I'll swear you in.

Do you swear to tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, so help you God?

MR. SETZER: I do.

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

MR. SETZER: I would.

I have been affiliated with Coastal Carolina University since 1996, where I went to college. It's been a wonderful part of my life, both, you know, academically, professionally, and personally. I -- and so for me, this is an opportunity for me to give back and contribute.

My family and I live in the Myrtle Beach area, a wife and two kids, and we spend a lot of time out there for various activities. I can see the excitement it brings my family, the excitement it brings me, and it's just an exciting time to be part of the university, seeing, obviously, tremendous growth since 1996. And I just think where the university is headed and of some of the ideas that I have, I would love to be a part of it and contribute.

We've made the area our home.

And so, for me, it was just a natural fit to apply for this board position and, you know, offer my services to Coastal Carolina University.

CHAIRMAN SENATOR PEELER: Good.

Questions?

Ms. Henderson.

REPRESENTATIVE HENDERSON: Mr. Setzer, so I see that you're one of the -- I won't call you a Yankee because you're from West Virginia, but close enough. You came down here and you went to school and stayed in the community, and that's probably one of the positives about the university with its high out-of-state population. A lot of people do come here and stay. And I noticed also that you work in business development, which would also be a great, you know, plus to the university.

What do you see as some of the issues, some of the things that you'd like to be interested in working on with -- how do you feel like you can contribute to the university?

MR. SETZER: With our enrollment up right now at 10,000 students -- you know, you look -- when I started there in '96, there was approximately, you know, 4,000 students.

And so the graduates that we have right now are all recent graduates. You know, obviously, being affiliated with the University of South Carolina until 1993, most people that are, you know, graduates of Coastal Carolina graduated in the past 20 years ago.

And so I think there's an opportunity to reach out to those alumni and have them come back to the campus. You know, one of the things that I think, from a growth strategy, is getting those folks to come back and visit it. And if you haven't been to Coastal Carolina, man, is it exciting.

You go and you'll look at all the new buildings. You'll look at our new athletic facilities. Everything about it is just a phenomenal place.

One of the things that I put on there was from the challenges that they'll have as being recognized as a beach university, that stigma. You're always going to have the stigma. We're 9 to 10 miles away from Myrtle Beach.

But if you come and visit the campus, I think that stigma really diminishes, and you get an opportunity to see why there's some really good things going on here on campus, the student life. One of the things Mr. Schwartzkopf mentioned, you know, was having the students live on campus. I think that's played a tremendous part and in kind of taking away some of that, the stigma.

When I was there, you know, when you were a freshman, you couldn't wait to get your first apartment at Myrtle Beach, and I don't think that's the case anymore. Folks are living there their freshmen and sophomore, even into their junior and senior years. They're staying around the university. There's apartments that are affiliated with the university and some that are not.

And so folks -- and a campus life is very, very strong right now, and I think, you know, from academically as well as our sports program. So hopefully everyone's been paying attention a little bit right now in the FCS. You know, our football team has made the playoffs yet again.

And so that's just enhanced our marketing opportunities, not only as a local state university, but on a national level.

And so I think there's a lot of opportunities that we can capture.

REPRESENTATIVE HENDERSON: Do you think like your statement -- and you may not -- you probably don't know this. I'm just thinking really. I mean, do you think there was a lot -- or are a lot of the students that come from out of state like yourself and then relocate in South Carolina to stay there to live and work or move back?

MR. SETZER: I do. Like I said, we're obviously making a big push in Horry County right now with our economic development and trying to get some of those folks to stay.

The company that I work for, the gentleman is a Coastal Carolina graduate, and I think that's one of the things in my interview process that impressed him. And I know we make a push in our universities, even having to do with the Horry Georgetown Tech and some of our field employs.

And so, yeah, I do think it's -- there's an opportunity there to keep them there. Obviously, we have to get the jobs and economic developments. That's part of the structure, that Coastal is going to work with us as well as working with our local city and county councils and to create those jobs for those folks to stay and the willingness.

You know, in Horry County, in the Grand Strand, we get 14 to 15 million visitors a year that come through there. A large portion of those are going to pass by 501 and see Coastal Carolina.

So our demand for out of state -- to students is always going to be there. I think it's a positive thing, I think, if we can capture that as a marketing opportunity. And, again, I graduated actually in the -- from Florence, South Carolina, West Florence. I was one of two folks that went to Coastal Carolina.

And so at that time it wasn't -- the demand wasn't there for, I think, folks in South Carolina. But I do think as we grow and educate people on the -- what I think is a wonderful university, you're going to see the in-state demand as well growth along with the out of state.

REPRESENTATIVE HENDERSON: Very good.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN SENATOR PEELER: Mr. Scott.

SENATOR SCOTT: I get real excited when young people talk about growth and development in the institution and making the surrounding better, and I applaud you for imploring what has already been done.

What is your vision for the institution? I'm pretty sure you've had the chance to think about some things that you would want to do differently as a board member.

MR. SETZER: Obviously, capitalize on the great things that are happening right now at Coastal Carolina University in -- both academically and professionally. I currently serve on the alumni association, and the big push we're making is reaching out to those alumni folks, educating them on the things that are happening, and getting them to come back to campus.

I think if we can do those, we're creating new advocates for Coastal Carolina in places in Charlotte, in New York, in these different states and these different cities. And so we need those advocates to continue to push.

And so right now, we do not have a lot of graduates through Coastal Carolina. And so, you know, we don't have the history that some other universities have and the tenure.

And so we need to capitalize on these new graduates or graduates from the past 15 to 20 years, get them to come back, and embrace all the changes.

You know, I kind of joke that folks ought to look at my wardrobe now. The amount of stuff I had at Coastal Carolina in my closet is way different now than when I did 20 years ago. That just didn't exist.

And so just all of the things exciting with the campus, I think if we can capitalize on that, the future is very, very bright for Coastal Carolina.

SENATOR SCOTT: Thank you.

CHAIRMAN SENATOR PEELER: Mr. Whitmire.

REPRESENTATIVE WHITMIRE: Question 7, I like your answer. What is the biggest strength of the university?

You list the diverse opportunities of study, 65 majors, 8 masters, and your first doctoral just started this year. Is there -- are there any plans for future doctorate study or --

MR. SETZER: I do know that those have been discussed. As far as for those details, I cannot elaborate on those because I don't have -- I'm not privy to the information.

REPRESENTATIVE WHITMIRE: Okay.

MR. SETZER: But I do know that is a part of a long-term goal as they get more master's programs in for Coastal Carolina.

REPRESENTATIVE WHITMIRE: It would be nice if they could.

Do they offer -- does Coastal offer the education majors down there? I'm not familiar. Do you know? Like a -- for -- like Winthrop offers, you know, education.

MR. SETZER: You can. There's definitely education degrees for Coastal Carolina.

REPRESENTATIVE WHITMIRE: Oh, there is?

MR. SETZER: Yes.

REPRESENTATIVE WHITMIRE: I didn't know whether it was emphasis or if it's just, you know, part of the general.

MR. SETZER: No, sir. I believe you have -- you have your education department, yes, sir, until we offer those programs.

REPRESENTATIVE WHITMIRE: Okay. Got it.

All I can say is, I wish you had been around when I was going to college.

MR. SETZER: It's still never too late to come visit our university.

REPRESENTATIVE WHITMIRE: I have never been there. I think I will.

MR. SETZER: The next time you come to the Grand Stand for a round of golf, you should just drive by.

I think it's kind of a hidden gem. Sometimes people ride through there, and they don't realize all of the --

REPRESENTATIVE WHITMIRE: I see the sign all the time, and I just haven't taken time to do it.

MR. SETZER: Take the five-minute detour.

REPRESENTATIVE WHITMIRE: I will.

MR. SETZER: I think you'll find it beneficial.

REPRESENTATIVE WHITMIRE: Good luck to you.

MR. SETZER: Thank you.

SENATOR SCOTT: Favorable report.

CHAIRMAN SENATOR PEELER: Motion is a favorable report.

Is there a second?

REPRESENTATIVE WHITMIRE: Second.

CHAIRMAN SENATOR PEELER: Any discussion? No?

We're taking a vote.

All in favor, say aye.

ALL MEMBERS: Aye.

CHAIRMAN SENATOR PEELER: Opposed, no; and the ayes have it.

Thank you for your willingness to serve.

MR. SETZER: Thank y'all for having me.

DELAN STEVENS

CHAIRMAN SENATOR PEELER: Next, we have Delan Stevens.

How do you do, sir?

Let me swear you in.

Do you swear to tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, so help you God?

MR. STEVENS: I do.

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

MR. STEVENS: Yes, sir.

Thank you. Thank you for having me here for the screening process.

I was born and raised in Conway, so I've always been there. I attended the university from 1975 to 1979 on a tennis scholarship, and all this time I thought I wanted to go to Clemson. And actually, I applied to go to Clemson and went for one day and just kind of missed home.

I wanted to play tennis and went back to the -- Coastal Carolina and played tennis there for four years. It was probably the greatest four years I had. I went and made the right decision, met a lot of people that I didn't know because the university was really small then.

So we were more like a tight community. It was about 1,200 students total, and they had three buildings when I attended. So it has changed tremendously since then.

I currently serve on a higher education commission, so for several years I've had the opportunity to watch a lot of buildings go up. The education commission, we actually fund several of the buildings that are currently there, and we also offer scholarships. That's one thing I think I've noticed the most changed.

When I first went on to the higher education commission, we'd probably spend about \$65,000 a year for local scholarships. And what we would do is, students from local high schools, we would offer those scholarships to the kids, and a lot of times they would choose other universities.

Last year, we funded \$267,000 worth of scholarships to local kids from local high schools. So there's been a big change in the local atmosphere of how kids want to go to Coastal. It's just changed that much.

So it's definitely not just the computer university that it used to be.

CHAIRMAN SENATOR PEELER: Thank you, sir.

MR. STEVENS: That's it.

CHAIRMAN SENATOR PEELER: Thank you.

Questions or comments?

Mr. Whitmire.

REPRESENTATIVE WHITMIRE: Question 8, what do you think is the biggest weakness of this college or university?

And you're not the first one to say rapid growth or, you know, faster growth is a weakness. And I have a tendency to agree. You know, you can outstrip, you know, your capacity past the -- to function as a good university if you're not careful. And I think the previous candidate --

THE COURT REPORTER: Excuse me. I'm sorry.

Can you turn your -- so I can -- thank you.

REPRESENTATIVE WHITMIRE: Yeah, it works. Tough luck.

Yeah, we were talking about rapid growth being a potential problem. Maybe it is a problem now. I don't know.

How would you address that? Would you stop the increase in enrollment, or would you try to provide more housing? What would you like to see there?

MR. STEVENS: I think you would -- I think we would need to look at putting a cap on enrollment until we go to where we knew we could satisfy everybody's educational needs properly.

I think we need to improve our academic side.

And so, I would think -- yes, sir, I -- that would be one thing I would look at. I don't think we can continue at the pace we're going until we get to 12- or 15,000 students. I think our students are almost outpacing what we can do as far as housing and a lot of other things.

But not only just from the educational standpoint, but I think sometimes when we grow so fast and bring so many students into an area like Conway and Myrtle Beach, it puts a lot of pressure on a lot of things,

from local law enforcement to a lot of other things with problems and things it can create if you're not careful and controlling your growth.

So my ideas would be to look and see if 10,000 students is the right number or 11,000. But I do think we do have to slow down growth from what we've been doing.

REPRESENTATIVE WHITMIRE: Yeah, bigger is not always better.

MR. STEVENS: Bigger is not always better.

REPRESENTATIVE WHITMIRE: And I agree.

MR. STEVENS: I thought the 1,200 we had was great. So...

REPRESENTATIVE WHITMIRE: Yeah.

CHAIRMAN SENATOR PEELER: Ms. Henderson.

REPRESENTATIVE HENDERSON: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Thank you, Mr. Stevens --

MR. STEVENS: Thank you.

REPRESENTATIVE HENDERSON: -- for your offering to serve and your involvement so far.

I just had one question. What is the Horry County Higher Education Commission?

MR. STEVENS: It was a commission that was established in -- I want to think in '57 or '58. Don't hold me to that.

REPRESENTATIVE HENDERSON: Oh, a long time ago.

MR. STEVENS: Yeah. A long time ago.

When the university was first established, the delegation decided that they wanted to help the university grow, so they actually formed a higher education commission and took part of the Horry County Tax Millage to actually build buildings and things like this. The Singleton building was probably one of the first buildings built by the higher education commission. So it was actually incorporated and set up as a separate entity to help advance the university.

REPRESENTATIVE HENDERSON: So it's appointed by the county council.

MR. STEVENS: No, ma'am. It's --

REPRESENTATIVE HENDERSON: Appointed by the delegation.

MR. STEVENS: By the delegation.

REPRESENTATIVE HENDERSON: Okay.

MR. STEVENS: We depend on the county council for our millage.

REPRESENTATIVE HENDERSON: So do you get -- does the higher education commission actually get millage from --

MR. STEVENS: Yes, ma'am.

REPRESENTATIVE HENDERSON: Really?

MR. STEVENS: Yes, ma'am.

REPRESENTATIVE HENDERSON: And you use that money to do bonds, or whatever, for the school?

MR. STEVENS: Yes, ma'am. Usually, from a bond standpoint -- like right now we're -- the student center, we're funding about \$2 million toward the student center, and we have bonded that off. So our total budget is probably about 1 million, 1.1, \$1.2 million.

REPRESENTATIVE HENDERSON: A year?

MR. STEVENS: A year.

But like I say, the two major things it was set up for was for the scholarships to keep local students and for the buildings.

So that's our two main objectives.

REPRESENTATIVE HENDERSON: Okay. All very interesting. All right.

Thank you very much.

CHAIRMAN SENATOR PEELER: Any other questions or comments?

Hearing none --

REPRESENTATIVE WHITMIRE: Favorable.

CHAIRMAN SENATOR PEELER: Motion is favorable.

Is there a second?

SENATOR SCOTT: Second.

CHAIRMAN SENATOR PEELER: A second.

Any discussion?

No further discussion, we'll take it to a vote.

All in favor, say aye.

ALL MEMBERS: Aye.

CHAIRMAN SENATOR PEELER: Opposed, no; and the ayes have it.

Thank you, sir.

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

CHAIRMAN SENATOR PEELER: That completes the agenda for today. The election will be held February the 4th.

Staff, do you want to give us some housekeeping on when we can release these candidates from commitments and so forth?

MS. CASTO: Yes. When it is right now, the first week of the session to release the screening report, it will be in the journals, and then the second week of session will be -- oh, wait. The 19th, you will be able to get commitments. We will send all of this out to the members and to the candidates too.

But starting --

CHAIRMAN SENATOR PEELER: Be sure to notify the candidates.

MS. CASTO: Yes, sir. Okay.

And it will be out at 12 noon on February 4th following the judicial elections. So we'll combine them, these elections with the judicial elections.

CHAIRMAN SENATOR PEELER: Now, Mr. Katon Dawson has notified us that he is retiring from the board of South Carolina State.

MS. CASTO: There's a vacancy there. There is a vacancy on the Lander board. They had a death of one of their board members.

And then the usual ones that are up for re -- up for election cannot be held until April -- after -- any time after April 1st. So my suggestion would be, if y'all agree, is to hold those two special elections at the same time as you do the others.

REPRESENTATIVE HENDERSON: Because we would do screening like in February or something, right?

MS. CASTO: Correct, right.

SENATOR SCOTT: When is Mr. Dawson's resignation effective?

MS. CASTO: His resignation is effective -- on the letter it would be -- it's December 31st, I believe.

SENATOR SCOTT: (Indiscernible.)

THE COURT REPORTER: I'm sorry. I can't hear you. I can't hear you.

SENATOR SCOTT: If it's any way possible, I'd like to try to fill those two positions at the same time so at least we can finally get a full board on that.

MS. CASTO: According to the statute --

SENATOR SCOTT: You can't?

MS. CASTO: -- you've got to publicize it for so many weeks and -- no, sir, time frame.

CHAIRMAN SENATOR PEELER: Anything else from the Committee?

ALL MEMBERS: No.

CHAIRMAN SENATOR PEELER: Hearing none, we'll stand adjourned.

(The screenings adjourned at approximately 3:13 p.m.).