

**JAMES B. EDWARDS**  
**100 VENNING STREET**  
**MOUNT PLEASANT, S.C. 29464**

January 21, 2014

The Honorable Murrell Smith  
SC House of Representatives  
420B Blatt Building  
Columbia, SC 29201

Dear Representative Smith:

I respectfully request your help in addressing a critical issue regarding the James B. Edwards College of Dental Medicine.

By the time my presidency at MUSC was coming to a close in 1999, we had been aware for some time that our existing dental facilities were no longer adequate for modern practice or instruction. A study by HOK Architects confirmed what we knew to be true: that the existing spaces were cramped, antiquated and poorly designed for the purposes of optimal safety and efficiency. While the same might be said about other colleges and universities, I think we'd all agree that such deficiencies can be especially problematic in dental instruction – especially if one happens to be sitting in the patient's chair.

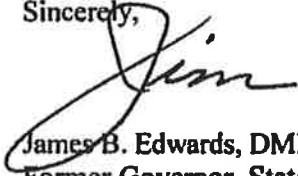
Fortunately, the S.C. Legislature in its wisdom agreed, and in 1999 approved \$6.3M funding from a capital improvement bond bill (CIB). Seven years later, it appropriated \$7 million toward the project and the following year provided an additional \$7.5 million from the capital reserve fund. Encouraged by the state's show of support, hundreds of alumni, dentists and other concerned parties stepped up and committed more than \$10 million of their own private funds for the project.

Once the aforementioned funding had been set in place, we sought to secure the remaining \$30 million needed for the project through a bond anticipation note, with the hope that it would be converted to a capital bond issue (CIB) in the future. Unfortunately this has not happened. Central Administration has paid down \$2 million of the debt and the dental school has paid the yearly interest.

With rising interest rates, we have an urgent need to resolve this short-term bond anticipation note matter. If the dental school assumes the principal and interest payments on this \$28 million remaining obligation, it would incur more than \$2.2 million in additional operating expenses per year for 20 years. If no alternative source of funding is identified, it will have no choice but to pass these costs on to its students through tuition increases of approximately \$8,685 per student per year. This would come on top of the \$60,000 per year in-state students currently pay for tuition and fees. I believe this would have dire consequences for the students as well as our state.

In keeping with the original funding intent of over a decade ago, I respectfully request that the Legislature provide funding for the relief of this debt. This would clearly safeguard the future of the College of Dental Medicine that continues to be such a valuable asset to this state. Thank you very much for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jim", written over the word "Sincerely,".

James B. Edwards, DMD  
Former Governor, State of South Carolina