**Special Faculty Meeting - MUSC and College of Charleston Merger - May 7, 2013**

**Present:** Speaker of the Faculty Senate Lynn Cherry; Provost George Hynd; Brian McGee, Chief of Staff and Senior Policy Advisor in the Office of the President, speaking on behalf of President George Benson; and College of Charleston Faculty and Staff.

A video recording of the meeting can be viewed at [http://facultysenate.cofc.edu/cofc-musc.php](http://facultysenate.cofc.edu/cofc-musc.php). Brian McGee's Powerpoint slides can be viewed here [insert URL].

Speaker Cherry explained that the impetus for the meeting was faculty and staff concerns precipitated by a recent newspaper report and general conversations of the possibility of a merger between the College of Charleston (CofC) and the Medical University of South Carolina (MUSC). The meeting was designed to allow the faculty to hear from CofC administration and to ask questions and exchange ideas.

Brian McGee spoke first, followed by Provost Hynd, after which both took questions from the audience.

**Brian McGee's Presentation**

McGee spoke on behalf of President George Benson, who could not attend the meeting and sent his regrets. McGee opened by stating that "there is no written plan to merge MUSC and the College of Charleston. There is no study committee of the College and MUSC to merge the College and MUSC. There has been no board vote or lengthy discussion of this in public or in any other fashion....What we are doing now is having a very early conversation on an idea that took on a life of its own, thanks to some enthusiasm inside the College and even more enthusiasm outside the College and giving you some background and context for past and present discussions of merger and other kinds of collaborations between the College of Charleston and MUSC."

See McGee's Powerpoint presentation here [insert URL]

McGee gave basic information about the history of MUSC and its current number of faculty member, students, organization, and operating budget. "They are," he pointed out, "much smaller than us by majors count; they are much smaller than us by faculty count; they are much larger than us by budget."

He also gave a run-down of past discussions, studies, and initiatives related to merging the College and MUSC, along with some of ideas for the form a merger might take.

The history of merger conversations include:
• 1824 - when the Medical College was formed, the original intent was to become a
department of the College, but that plan was rejected by the Board of Trustees, so they founded their own school.
• 1968 - during the College's transition from a private to a public institution, the Board of Trustees for the Medical College endorsed a merger with the College of Charleston and their budget for FY1969 actually included the merger. The merger, however, was stopped by a report of a conference committee that found that the College's physical plant was not sufficient for a university. The College went on to enter the state system separately as a liberal arts college.
• 1973 - the College's Board of Trustees again endorsed "the idea of looking again at a merger" in 1975. There were a "series of complicated conversations" beginning in 1975, but they died down after 1978.
• 1981-82 - a major study was conducted, led by Dewey Wise, a state Senator representing Charleston. Neither the College nor MUSC "wanted anything to do with the merger," however, so the idea died again.
• 1991-92 - President Harry Lightsey supported a merger and tried to establish a committee to study it, though it did not get far.
• 1995 - another failed effort to promote a merger
• 1998-2000 - another committee studied the merger idea, the result of which was to say that there was "not enough political will to merge" the schools but that some of the needs that might be met by a merger could be met by a new initiative. The Lowcountry Graduate Center emerged as a direct result of this process.

The current context of conversations about a merger was established with President Benson's "New Charleston" speech, in which he described a number of options for the future of the College, including a possible merger with MUSC. While the President did not state a preference for this option, the idea caught on with politicians and with community leaders associated with the Charleston Chamber of Commerce, leading to a series of conversations and a newspaper article. Mayor Joe Riley is also in strong support of a merger.

Past discussions have addressed the idea that the two institutions have very different characters and missions. Some wondered whether the College and MUSC could be merged without doing violence to the special nature and character of each.

In the past, MUSC presidents have suggested a "close association," perhaps even a sharing of academic or, more likely, administrative units, but not a full merger.

President Lightsey suggested a graduate consortium that would merge the graduate programs of the two schools but leave the undergraduate programs separate.

A variation on the idea of a merger could be a "confederation model," characterized by "two free-standing campuses" that might even maintain their own names but which are united under a single system of some sort.
Another variation might be a more traditional merger in which the two schools would become one entity, with a single president, a single provost, with merged administrative units and academic departments.

**Provost George Hynd's Presentation**

Provost Hynd's Powerpoint slides can be seen here [insert URL]

Provost Hynd acknowledged a number of ongoing collaborations between the College and MUSC, collaborations that may be largely unknown to faculty and staff and to the public:

- Student advising -- Karen Eippert, a former employee of MUSC, advises School of Science and Mathematics students for possible careers in the Health Sciences
- 11 CofC faculty advising MUSC students
- Undergraduate research collaborations
- Cross-appointed faculty at the College who either have joint faculty appointments at MUSC or courtesy appointments
- Research and teaching collaborations -- Biology, Chemistry, Mathematics, and Physics, among other departments, are engaged in collaborations and joint research projects and teaching and instructional activities with MUSC faculty
- Non SSM faculty are also collaborating with MUSC faculty on program development and teaching and learning
- Joint graduate and fellowship programs
- 11 MUSC faculty are teaching or advising our students
- 13 CofC faculty are collaborating with 25 MUSC faculty
- External funding (keeping in mind that this can fluctuate year by year): currently two grants are funded jointly between CofC SSM and MUSC. Three grants are funded jointly between CofC School of Education, Health, and Human Performance and MUSC.

Provost Hynd outlined some of the foundations for and the supporting elements for these collaborations.

- 18% of our student population are in the School of Science and Mathematics (SSM)
- 1022 students are Biology majors; 221 are in Chemistry and Biochemistry; 108 are in Geology.
- Many students come to the College for the strong sciences program in a liberal arts context. Employers report that this kind of training, with its emphasis on the study of culture, writing, and so on, is very appealing.
- 22 to 24 out of the 40 to 45 students each year who go on to medical school, go to MUSC. We have another 130 students who go to other health professions.
Additionally, the College sits in a particular position in relation to other colleges and universities. The state has comprehensive universities and comprehensive research, or R1, universities. The latter include Clemson University, the University of South Carolina (USC), and MUSC. Among the many comprehensive, Masters degree-granting universities in the state, the College is the largest. With our number of students in undergraduate and graduate programs, we sit just underneath Clemson and USC.

Charleston, moreover, is in the fastest recovering area of the state, which is also the region of the state poised for the most dramatic growth. But the same region does not have a comprehensive research university, and we are turning out students in the Sciences and Mathematics at essentially the same rate as Clemson and USC.

Having discussed the current collaborations between CofC and MUSC and the foundations for these collaborations, Provost Hynd discussed the formation of a joint committee on collaboration by the boards of trustees of both CofC and MUSC. The committee is composed of CofC trustees Dan Ravenel and Demetria Clemons, Provost Hynd, and Executive Vice President for Business Affairs Stephen Osborne. MUSC members of the committee include two of their trustees, Provost Mark Sothmann, and Executive Vice President for Finance and Operations Lisa Montgomery. The committee's purpose is to "explore present and future collaborations that build on each institution's strengths." The committee, as of the time of this special faculty meeting, have only met once.

The Provost then turned the meeting back over to Brian McGee for an update on the current state of affairs in a larger context.

**Brian McGee**

McGee stressed that, other than the formal committee Provost Hynd described, there is "no formal conversation between the College of Charleston and MUSC at this time addressing collaboration or any sort of merger talks."

Mayor Riley has expressed keen interest in a possible merger and thinks the timing is good for this. The rationale of the mayor, other politicians, and the business community, representatives of whom have met with the mayor, is that the city, as an economic engine for the region, is "notable by its lack of access to a comprehensive research university," that other great cities have comprehensive research universities to support their research needs, and they see in a hoped-for merger of CofC and MUSC a way to address the perceived deficit and benefit the city, region, and state.

Business community and, at times, political "enthusiasm" has driven merger discussions in the past, as well.

**Questions and Discussion**
Speaker Cherry opened the floor at this point for questions, concerns, and ideas. The questions and response are reported below. For a full record of these, or, for that matter, of the reports of Provost Hynd or Brian McGee, please see the videorecording of the meeting here [insert URL].

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Bryan Ganaway (Honors College) posed "a hypothetical" to the Provost: "if you had the opportunity to say 'yes' or 'no' on whether or not a merger would be a good idea, what would you say?"

Provost Hynd replied that his reply would to the yes or no question would be "interesting question," in that there are a number of positive possibilities such as we have already seen with current and ongoing collaborations. But interesting ideas might come forward in the discussion of a merger that could impact the direction that discussion could help lay the groundwork for better conversations.

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Helen Delfeld (Political Science) asked what the downsides to a merger might be.

McGee replied that past conversations identified some of those potential downsides. Alumni love the institution, its identity and character, and the undergraduate focus, and wouldn't support any move that would alter those things.

Another downside is the standard risk that comes with change: we're blind as to the future even as we enter into it. Some mergers of other schools have had mixed reviews. CofC and MUSC might also look at their current success and justly question why it makes sense to change at all.

Provost Hynd offered an example of a merger that has not been as successful it promised to be in Augusta, Georgia [the merger of Augusta State University and Georgia Health Sciences University].

The provost also added that, if we go down the road of a merger, he would want the process to be seen as adding value that requires investment. "The worst thing," he said that could happen is the merger is pursed as a "cost saving," which seems unrealistic. A merger would require a "very significant investment of resources from the state and potentially others as well."

McGee added that the President's position, likewise, is that cost-saving cannot be a rationale for any merger between MUSC and CofC. The rationale has to be better serving the city, the state, and our students.

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Scott Peeples (English) asked if in the discussions so far the assumption has been a merger would not simply be a combination of what CofC and MUSC already do but mean adding more students and additional programs, such as graduate programs, to become a research institution and not just "MUSC plus CofC."

Provost Hynd replied that discussions so far have not employed the term "merger," and he reiterated that no internal committee to CofC has been establish to explore the merger idea. If we were pursuing the idea, the process would rely on full participation from faculty and everyone else at CofC for guidance.

To make a comprehensive research university, the Provost stressed, a merger of MUSC would have to build PhD programs outside the sciences as well.

McGee added that in discussions in which the President and he have been involved, interest from the business community, for example, has been for a comprehensive university, not just a health sciences institution, but the business community has not suggested what kinds of programs there should be. The work of making those determinations, he stressed, would have to be done by faculty.

The President has also stressed, according to McGee, that, regardless of what graduate programs are developed, the College has to keep its high level of commitment to its undergraduate programs. One might see such a balanced model in William and Mary.

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Steven Jaume' (Geology) offered a follow-up comment to Scott Peeples's query. He reported being glad to hear that there has been discussion about the importance of comprehensiveness and not just a focus on science.

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Lou Burnett (Biology) related a disappointing "experiment" in collaboration that he offered as a cautionary tale that "speaks to the different cultures" of CofC and MUSC. In the early 90s, both CofC and MUSC were pursuing Environmental Studies programs. MUSC secured millions of dollars worth of federal funding for an environmental hazard assessment program. They were interested in developing a graduate program in Environment Science and partnered with CofC, offering a portion of their money, around one million dollars. CofC faculty worked on developing and putting into place a program with three legs: public policy, science, and risk assessment. But when MUSC's money ran out, they lost interest, and CofC could not replace the loss of risk assessment and biometry faculty housed at MUSC. Burnett stressed that department chairs at MUSC have extensive control over money, and while the MUSC faculty themselves were interested and dedicated, the administration was unwilling to continue supporting the program, and the MUSC faculty had to drop out. As a result, risk assessment is no longer part of the program offered by CofC. Burnett closed by saying that, while he was excited about this particular collaboration, there's a cultural consideration that we have
to be aware of, have out "eyes wide open" about, in any discussions of future collaboration.

Provost Hynd replied that at MUSC, under "responsibility-based management," every school is a cost center, and that the financial differences between our institutions mean that we operate differently academically, as well.

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Todd Grantham (Philosophy) offered a comment, noting that the College's faculty is comprised of many who came here precisely because it is a liberal arts and sciences institution, people who may have had other choices but who chose to come here or remain here because of the kind of place it is. Were there a merger and a conversion to a comprehensive research university, that faculty would still be here, a group of "wonderful, talented faculty" dedicated to a certain model of education. The faculty would be one of the big things that would have to change in a merger.

Provost Hynd replied by saying that he believes it's possible to have outstanding undergraduate education in the same context as outstanding graduate education.

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Reid Weisman (Biology) asked what MUSC's bond indebtedness is.

Provost Hynd replied that, from a business standpoint, there would be many issues to resolve, including the relative indebtedness of both institutions. This would all need to be worked out because, at a minimum, we would need new facilities, and the state would probably not foot those bills.

McGee added that CofC has an A1 bond rating from Moodys, but that MUSC might get better terms for bond borrowing due to the particular features of that institution.

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Tom Heeny (Communication & President of the College's chapter of the American Association of University Professors) stated that AAUP has "no official opinion on the outcome of these discussions if, and only if, the faculty are involved from the start."

Heeny also commented that there is a lot to be said for the two institutions remaining separate, given that both are doing well, and that there are strong collaborations already, but that we should be aware of legislation currently under consideration at the state capital. Heeny noted that President Benson informed him in a prior meeting of Senate Bill 535, which would alter Clemson's legal authority, adding to it a "research authority." The bill has not been decide on, but Heeny reported having asked the President if, in this coming year, a bill could possibly be introduced pertaining to a CofC/MUSC merger. The President said yes.
Heeny asked the faculty to stay involved.

Heeny also noted that, while the AAUP has no position on the outcome of the ongoing discussions, from the AAUP's point of view any discussions pertaining to the future of the institution ought to be in public meetings with written records and votes on the record.

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Claire Curtis (Political Science) offered a follow-up to Tom Heeny's comments, asking the Provost if he can commit to keeping the faculty updated on the deliberations and decisions of the committee on collaboration.

Provost Hynd replied that he would be glad to do that.

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Curtis also asked, imagining a merger, what kind of time line there would be, who would make the decision, and what the fastest time to completion might be.

McGee noted that the timeline would not be in the hands wholly of the school. While the faculty should be involved and paid attention to, in the end, it would be in the legislature's hands. The timeline has varied widely in other mergers. He also noted that, following his own "musing" about how it might work here, if there were some will to explore the possibilities, a committee-driven dialogue could start in the fall.

Provost Hynd added that, apart from the complexity and depth of the issues for the faculty, two different boards of trustees, and other stakeholders to consider, there is also the question of whether or not there is political will at the level of the state to make a change happen. He also stated that it would be worth taking several years to develop conversation and get at the issues and then proceed, rather than getting a legal mandate from the state without such a process behind it.

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Rich Bodek (History) noted that a letter to all CofC faculty received in hard copy from President Benson, very optimistic about the possibilities of merger, differs markedly from a letter from MUSC President Raymond Greenberg to MUSC employees. The latter was "much more cautious, much more measured." Bodek asserted that this "bespeaks radically different cultures at the two institutions." Given the vast differences in the institutions and their cultures, Bodek, asked of the Provost, "what fears, what cautions, what worries do you have? ... What do you see as the possible pitfalls of working more closely together?"

Provost Hynd replied that the financial model is an issue of great concern. The financial model would have to sustain the mission of a comprehensive research institution, while also respecting the core missions of both schools. As it concerns
CofC, the model would need to support what we do now, while also supporting the faculty that would need to be added to support the R1 mission. William and Mary might be a model of an institution that supports both undergraduate and graduate missions.

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Brian Lanahan (Teacher Education) asked about the implications for faculty salary, should CofC be merged into a comprehensive research university with MUSC. Given that typical faculty in liberal arts and sciences settings earn less than typical faculty in R1 settings, what could be done to ensure fairness of compensation?

McGee replied that this concern speaks to the concerns over institutional identity that many of us have, which is inextricably tied up with how we value faculty. The President is aware of how we already lag behind averages for faculty compensation in similar institutions, and compensation is and will be an issue he is pursuing, not matter how things turn out in relation to a possible merger with MUSC.

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Richard Nunan (Philosophy) pointed out that the local interest in a merger is well established, but asked what the interest is in Columbia over this potential merger.

Provost Hynd replied that at a recent Commission on Higher Education meeting, there appeared to be benign interest in the conversation they're seeing in their papers. But if there were serious conversation in Columbia, USC and Clemson, Provost Hynd remarked, surely would have "thoughts about it."

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Irina Gigova (History) offered a comment. Many students are coming to the College for precisely the kind of institution that we are already. If we turn into a research institution, we might loose those students, and we would be competing for the students who might also be interested in Clemson and USC. We might find it hard to compete, whereas at the moment our character allows us to compete by offering something different. A merger with MUSC would, thus, undermine our success.

Another concern is funding. Since there is little money coming from the federal government and from the state, we have to fall back on fund raising. Gigova expressed concern about the sustainability of the financial model, should we merge with MUSC.

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Daniel Greenberg (Psychology) asked what the business community thinks a merger would accomplish that we're not already doing.

McGee replied that from the business community's point of view, there are gaps between what's offered by a health and medical sciences research institution and a liberal arts and sciences undergraduate institution. Their interest seems to be in certain
fundamental and applied research that might attract businesses. They're thinking about the transformation of Charleston in recent years and imagining a research university capable of valuing and rewarding cutting edge research and that is, thus, capable of feeding into high tech enterprises, particularly in high tech manufacturing, IT, aerospace, etc. The business community is concerned that they cannot get these things from MUSC and CofC and that it will be difficult to get it from universities elsewhere.

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Bob Podolsky (Biology) asked if there are any other models for the future of the College being considered here or at the level of the state that we should know about or about which we should be concerned. Is there another potential future we are trying to avoid? In what context are we considering this model, other than the model we are already in?

Provost Hynd replied that he knows of no other models being floated. Another conversation that the college is having currently deals the strategic plan's call to establish a PhD in Marine Biology, on which conversations are ongoing and about which discussion has been affected by Coastal Carolina's recent addition of a Marine Sciences PhD.

McGee added that the strategic plan also includes an emphasis on continued collaboration with other institutions and noted that Podolsky's question speaks to the structural concerns all university's are faced with at this time: trying to map out a future in an environment of decreasing state support and increasing costs.

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Jen Wright (Psychology) asked, setting aside what the business community believes they stand to gain from a merger, what the Provost feels is the upside for us, given our mission, who we are, and why we are here. A second question was, given that there is an external push for an R1 institution in the Lowcountry, if we don't do this, will someone else? What's the likelihood of someone else stepping in?

McGee, addressing the second question, replied that the President does, indeed, think someone will come in, whether it's Clemson, USC, institutions from Georgia, or possibly even private institutions. Whether or not, another institution could do it as well as CofC and MUSC, there my be reason to doubt, but there appears to be an opportunity, and it is likely that somebody else will try to fill the gap.

Provost Hynd concurred with McGee, reporting that there are rumors of a USC branch in Charleston. Clemson is manifestly interested in establishing an engineering foothold in the Lowcountry.

Addressing the first question, the Provost said that, putting aside all unknowns, we might get better facilities; more classroom space; more faculty, given the building out of graduate programs; hire faculty that can bring in external resources; and hire faculty
with different missions. There would also, likely, be graduate assistantships, which become essential for research productivity.

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Joe Kelly (English) directed a question to Dan Ravenel of the Board of Trustees, who was in the audience. Not asking him to speak for the board, Kelly asked him if he could speak to where the board is right now on these issues.

Trustee Ravenel replied that, from his viewpoint, "there are no firm opinions; [they] haven't had any voting; there have been no committees assigned." His view is that "if the College doesn't fill the gap that is perceived, real or imagined, someone will, and the legislature will take great pride in making that decision. Do we want them to do that, or do we want to take the initiative and have a more considered proposal that will really solve problems?"

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Larry Krasnoff (Philosophy), noting that the Provost has been "pretty negative about the financial side" of things, asked what the financial gains of a merger might be. Given many of the difficulties already discussed, including high start-up costs, where would the financial gains come from? Additionally, Krasnoff observed that, from his standpoint, he doubts that it is possible to move from being an outstanding primarily undergraduate institution with just a few graduate programs to a research institution with a number of PhD programs across the board and expect them to be outstanding as well. "They almost certainly will not be outstanding, at least at the start," given our competition. There would seem to be "enormous costs" involved. While one might argue new programs would bring in more students, and thus, bring in more tuition revenue, that would also seem to create a "treadmill": we would bring in more revenue, but we would also need to lay out more money to support those students.

Provost Hynd replied that, with an awareness of the issues, he would describe his position as on the "cautious side of neutral." If there was a move toward an R1 status, there would need to be short, medium, long range plans. We would need to stage things strategically for incremental growth in identified programs, to include developing financial plans to support programs so that they could be successful. We would need to be very thoughtful about these matters.

McGee noted that answering such a question is difficult at this stage, though we could outline what success might look like in terms of needed resources for the work of the institution, including faculty compensation. McGee concurred with the Provost's assessment that there would need to be a deliberate plan for growth.

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George Pothering (Computer Science) asked if there is anything in our strategic plan that anticipates any of the discussion about CofC and MUSC merging.
McGee replied that other than the strategic plan's statements about increasing collaboration, "no," there is not.

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Garret Mitchener (Mathematics) noted that, to him, it sounds as if, financially, it's not even possible to consider a merger. Is there reason to believe there is money to do it?

McGee replied that examples, good and bad, of other mergers would argue that it is possible, especially with a confederation model. But that model might not be the best in our case, so it raises the question not of whether it could be done, but whether it is a good idea to do it.

Provost Hynd agreed that models might be instructive, for instance Indiana University-Purdue University, Indianapolis (IUPUI), a collaborative model of one institution, with two independent organizations collaborating on one campus, but other models might be investigated as well.

Mitchener asked where the money came from for IUPUI.

McGee replied that IUPUI operates on a confederation model that presumes the same cash flows from the previous year for each original campus, with the prospect of figuring out the finances for the continued collaboration over the long haul. But if the question is whether or not there is a revenue neutral way to do this, that model might suit, or there might be other models to be determined by thoughtful further study.

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Deanna McBroom (Music) stated that, coming from her experience as a person involved in a nearly 25-year collaboration with faculty at MUSC, we should definitely consider "thinking about and dreaming about the possibilities that we could evolve" with stronger collaboration with MUSC. Her collaboration paved the way for a Vocal Institute and clinical research. She encouraged faculty to imagine collaborations that we have not yet thought of.

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Elaine Worzala (Director of the Carter Real Estate Center) spoke in support of what had been said previously about the importance of understanding the depth of investment needed to run successful graduate programs. Underfunded graduate programs can be particularly hard on faculty: sufficient resources and fair compensation are a must. She also spoke from her experiences at a past institution that hired a number of new faculty to support a new initiative that ended up being underfunded and under supported. The result was that many of the faculty left and a generally tense atmosphere remains. Faculty who had come in under one culture found a different culture, producing a good
deal of animosity. It is essential, she suggested, that we take into account such experiences if we move forward with building graduate programs.

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Tom Heeny (Communication & President of the CofC chapter of AAUP) raised a concern about the legislature potentially taking the lead in charting the course for a merger. He adduced the example of Rutgers University, who have been forced by the New Jersey state legislature to absorb a medical school in an unfunded mandate in which the university is tasked with raising or otherwise coming up with 100 million dollars to see the merger through.

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Steven Jaume' (Geology) asked if the enthusiastic business community has said they would contribute to the cost of a merger.

McGee replied that nothing in that way has been discussed, but added that the Chamber of Commerce, convinced that the idea of a merger has great merit, have voted to form a blue ribbon task force to study it and, if they like the outcome, promote it.

Provost Hynd added that we cannot conclude at this point that support from the local and business community would not be available.

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Todd McNerney (Theater) asked how a merger would impact the undergraduate student and what students would get or gain from the merger. He added that he hopes we will invite student comment and feedback on any ideas about merging.

Provost Hynd replied that he understands the concern and that we don't want to lose what we have and what we are at the College but also that all institutions are going to have to evolve. He further asserted that if we stay strong in the department-level focus on the student, we will be able to maintain the character of the institution that we have now. Adding graduate level programs could add value to the undergraduate experience by introducing opportunities that we do not currently have.

McNerney reiterated his concern that, in some cases, "as that R1 agenda increases, faculty interaction with students" decreases. Students may not be connected to the faculty so much as to graduate students.

McGee, in reply, stated that the President has said a number of times on this very question that the College has to be an institution passionate about and dedicated to undergraduate education, any future that does not include that won't happen.

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Debra Boyle (Philosophy) asked if there has been any conversation about increasing undergrad programs under a merger.

McGee replied that, to his knowledge, there have been no discussions of increasing undergraduate programs and such an outcome would be unlikely, given the physical limits of the College.

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Speaker Cherry closed the meeting at this point by noting that the faculty want to be involved in any discussions about the future of the College and want transparency so that we can stay informed.

In the fall, this conversation will continue, possibly with another special meeting.