

## RESOLUTION OF NO CONFIDENCE IN THE COLLEGE OF CHARLESTON BOARD OF TRUSTEES

WHEREAS the Board of Trustees has concluded a presidential search that was beset by leaks of confidential information to the press<sup>1</sup>, including reports that two of the candidates interviewed were not on the search committee's final list of candidates<sup>2</sup>, and has shown clear disregard for the best practice recommendations of its consulting firm<sup>3</sup> and the results of the faculty poll on the acceptability of candidates<sup>4</sup>, and thereby has undermined confidence in the integrity of the search and its outcome, creating the impression among faculty that the search was predetermined;

WHEREAS several members of the Board recently made sworn statements to the legislature that are in direct contradiction to the Board's recent statement on Academic Freedom and the College's policies of creating a welcoming campus for all<sup>5</sup>;

WHEREAS the Board of Trustees has failed to inform the campus community of its positions on plans for a merger with the Medical University of South Carolina and other issues pertaining to the College's potential re-shaping into a research university<sup>6</sup>;

WHEREAS these recent actions have called into question the independence of the Board from outside influences and reflected their willingness to interfere in curricular issues, both of which bear on the College's regional accreditation<sup>7</sup>;

WHEREAS these recent actions and positions have hurt the image and brand of the College and appear likely to negatively impact our ability to recruit students, expand our outreach to minorities, recruit and retain faculty, and successfully engage in fundraising, particularly with regard to the upcoming capital campaign<sup>8</sup>;

THEREFORE, be it

RESOLVED that the Faculty Senate of the College of Charleston endorses a motion of no confidence against the Board of Trustees.

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<sup>1</sup> These leaks of confidential information were publicly acknowledged by Chairman Padgett at the March, 2014 faculty senate meeting. For more information, see: <http://facultysenate.cofc.edu/archives/2013-2014/march-2014/minutes%202014-03-11.pdf>.

<sup>2</sup> References: <http://www.postandcourier.com/article/20140214/PC16/140219647>;  
<http://www.postandcourier.com/article/20140305/PC16/140309661>. See also, more recently:  
<http://www.charlestoncitypaper.com/TheBattery/archives/2014/03/21/cofc-students-rallying-against-unfair-process-in-president-selection>.

<sup>3</sup> A review of recent presidential searches on which AGB Search had been the consultant all included 3 or 4 faculty on the search committee. Also, from *Increasing the Odds for Successful Presidential Searches* by Jamie Ferrare (AGB Search consultant to the CofC presidential search), search committees typically synthesize constituent feedback before making a recommendation to the board, and "We have also seen boards that retreat into themselves and come up with the presidents they want, only to find their choices frustrated or rejected by important constituencies. Both types of outcomes -- having to start a new search or appointing someone unwanted or likely to fail -- are ones every board wants to avoid." (<http://agbsearch.com/resources/increasing->

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odds-successful-presidential-searches). For additional guidelines about “best practices” for presidential searches, see: <http://www.aaup.org/issues/governance-colleges-universities/presidential-search>.

<sup>4</sup> In an anonymous campus-wide poll, faculty were asked the following question: “A presidential candidate that is acceptable to the faculty should be one that could gain its trust, support and confidence in order to lead the College effectively in a relationship of shared governance. In each case, indicate whether you find the candidate acceptable for the position of President of the College of Charleston. [Yes, No, or Neutral]” Of 312 faculty that responded to the poll, 83% reported that they believed McConnell to be “unacceptable” and only 11% reported him to be “acceptable”. In addition, over 2,200 students have signed a petition in opposition to his selection as the next president of the College.

<sup>5</sup> The transcript of sworn statements in question can be found here: <http://www.scstatehouse.gov/CommitteeInfo/Universities&CollegesScreeningCommittee/ScreeningReports/Screenings%20Transcripts%20For%20March%2013%202014.pdf>. And a full listing of transcripts can be found here: <http://www.scstatehouse.gov/committeeinfo/Universities&CollegesScreeningCommittee/Univ&CollScreening.php>

<sup>6</sup> To our knowledge, there have been no resolutions, statements, press releases, or other forms of non-ambiguous public communication on these issues by or from the Board.

<sup>7</sup> Of particular concern are the regulations 3.2.4: The governing board is free from undue influence from political, religious, or other external bodies and protects the institution from such influence, and 3.7.4: The institution ensures adequate procedures for safeguarding and protecting academic freedom. For additional information, see: <http://www.sacscoc.org/pdf/2012PrinciplesOfAcreditation.pdf>

<sup>8</sup> As just one example: <http://www.postandcourier.com/article/20140310/PC16/140319982/1009/naacp-to-release-statement-on-mcconnell-being-among-college-of-charleston-presidential-finalists&source=RSS>.