

**LOWCOUNTRY GRADUATE CENTER  
SUPERVISORY COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES**

**Wednesday, August 8, 2018  
Office of Brian McGee, Provost  
Randolph Hall 209B  
College of Charleston**

**Supervisory Council Members Present:**

*Mark Bebensee* – Associate Provost and Interim Provost, The Citadel

*Brian McGee* – Provost, College of Charleston, Chairman of the Supervisory Council

*Lisa Saladin* – Provost, Medical University of South Carolina

**LGC Staff and Others Present:**

*Godfrey Gibbison* – Dean of the School of Professional Studies, College of Charleston

*Nancy Muller* – Director & Associate Dean, The Lowcountry Graduate Center

**Call to Order:**

McGee promptly called to order the meeting of the LGC Supervisory Council (“The Council”) at 10:30 a.m. in the office of McGee at the College of Charleston.

**Minutes:**

By unanimous consent, the minutes of the previous meeting of The Council held on February 19, 2018 were approved as previously distributed. The document will be posted on the LGC website.

**Annual Election of the Chair:**

In accordance with the Memorandum of Understanding dated January 30, 2017, the position of The Council’s Chair must be elected annually. McGee noted that no one may serve more than three successive terms. Bebensee nominated McGee to continue a third year as Chair. The nomination was seconded by Saladin. By unanimous consent, McGee was elected to a third term.

**Enrollment Reports:**

Muller pointed out that total student enrollments at 1,041 for the year ending June 30, 2018 nearly returned to their peak of 1,286 experienced in 2013, despite the sharp decline in enrollments in College of Charleston graduate programs at the LGC, now at only 260. This is because enrollments in both The Citadel’s project management program and USC’s MSW program offerings have continued at robust levels, offsetting the loss. Total enrollments witnessed in year to year comparisons, by term, remained largely unchanged.

Muller directed attention to the table depicting graduates over the past eight years from programs offered at the LGC, cumulatively reaching 1,144. She noted the shift away from master’s degree programs in favor of graduate certificate programs, reflecting a national trend,

especially in “stackable” certificates such as The Citadel has successfully constructed for its Project Management offering.

**Space Utilization:**

Calculations of space utilization by the LGC of the North Campus are historically based not on enrollments but rather the hours rooms are booked for classes and events. On this basis, the LGC used 22% of available space in FY 2017-2018, down 3% points from two years earlier. Muller reminded The Council that at \$403,346, the LGC provides approximately one-third of the \$1.2 million total operating expense incurred by the College of Charleston for the North Charleston location. She pointed out that the College of Charleston’s Center for Continuing Professional Education (CCPE) is responsible for increased space utilization primarily because of the weekly meeting of retirees and the strong enrollments in a real estate licensing preparation course continuously offered.

The calculations based on hours, however, mask usage of the building, as nearly 1,000 requests for rental space by third parties were processed last year, generating for the College of Charleston approximately \$120,000 in revenue. The Charleston County School District is a big user, especially in summer months for teacher training and professional development, bringing 150-200 to the campus routinely for its all-day sessions. This places an extra load on janitorial services and disposable supplies, she explained. Muller suggested that space utilization therefore be analyzed in the future from several different perspectives. McGee commented that such traffic gives positive exposure to the campus for brand awareness, since both the LGC’s and the College of Charleston’s names are on the building’s exterior. Gibbison said that the ample, free parking is a big draw in comparison to scheduling events at downtown locations. Saladin asked about rental rates since MUSC is asked from time to time by outside parties for meeting space. Muller said she would email rates, discounted for nonprofit organizations, to both MUSC and The Citadel, along with up-to-date “blueprints” of classroom sizes and teaching technology in each. She added that member institutions wishing to book space for a special event related to an academic program offered at the LGC, such as a public information session to stimulate new applicants, are not charged anything.

**Program Course Offerings:**

Muller briefly referenced the list of Fall 2018 Course Offerings, as the document is routinely provided at meetings of The Council. She then explained the 2018 updates to graduate offerings across the state in the three employment sectors targeted by the LGC, excluding strictly online offerings and/or clinical programs. Saladin said that she noticed a doctoral program from MUSC is missing and will send updates to the brochure covering Healthcare Management and Community Wellness. She asked how they are used, and Muller explained that copies are placed in the lobby in the building for visitors and students to take. Inquiries can prompt her to contact an institution about sharing the program at the LGC. Gibbison cited the example of how Clemson connected its main campus to the LGC while using a single faculty member traveling back and forth alternative weeks, increasing enrollment while wisely leveraging teaching resources.

To maintain public awareness of the LGC and program offerings, Muller directed attention to the LGC's FY 2017 – 2018 web site analytics, boosted by social media posts. Muller was complimentary of the LGC's weekly blogs written by freelance writer Barry Waldman. Web site traffic of unique visitors last year exceeded 12,000, with a strong uptick during the spring quarter. Influenced largely by continued interest in the MSW program, 60% of visitors are female. While one-third are under age 35, two-thirds are 35 or older, reflecting current national trend in the older age of adults returning to school for graduate studies in career-oriented programs. Gibbison asked if the LGC is tracking the click through rates to web sites of participating institutions, and Muller responded affirmatively but said she would have to forward such details to The Council, not having them in hand at the meeting. Bebensee expressed interest in seeing them.

#### **Executive Session:**

At 11:05 a.m., The Council entered Executive Session to discuss personnel matters and emerged to be rejoined by Gibbison and Muller at approximately 11:10 a.m. McGee stated the three provosts had a conversation about Muller's faculty appointment recognizing her faculty credentials and teaching accomplishments. The College of Charleston therefore will be picking up a portion of her compensation beginning in the current fiscal year, and she will receive a letter to this effect early in the coming week, he explained.

#### **Financial Report and FY 2018 – 2019 Budget:**

Muller presented preliminary financial data for FY 2017-2018, commenting that 2017 included some sums representing payout of accrued but untaken vacation by former employees Chris Duncan and Patty Simpson. A negative variance to budget for the year occurred due to assumptions in the timing of hiring a student worker full-time. Both items impacted fringe benefits. The College of Charleston agreed to a more simplistic approach to charging the LGC for a share of occupancy, collapsing multiple, pro rata line items into a single annual charge of \$400,000. Because EAB was used for market research rather than a paid agency as budgeted and because no Opportunity Funds were approved or distributed during the year, a cash excess of approximately \$63,000 was moved to the Fund Balance as carryover.

The proposed budget for FY 2018 – 2019 attempts to recognize the aforementioned faculty appointment by removing \$50,000 from total personnel expense. Muller pointed out she had updated her job duties, included in the meeting packet distributed, to reflect not only restructuring of the LGC under the latest consortium agreement but also to reflect her expanded responsibilities beyond those for which she was originally hired, including teaching, program development research, and CCPE for the College of Charleston. Gibbison said that the base salary for Muller imbedded in the \$156,133 reflected in the table needs to be adjusted upwards to account for pay otherwise received as an adjunct. McGee responded that even if the proposed budget is approved, it can be amended for such items as needed in January when The Council meets again.

Bebensee asked if the unspent but budgeted \$28,900 was included in the \$85,786 shown in the proposed budget. Muller responded it was not; nor was it returned to the state. She explained

that the \$85,786 was derived by default when assuming a breakeven budget for the full year 's spending against appropriations. A brief discussion ensued in which Saladin commented that the fund balance is nearly sufficient to cover a full year's worth of operating requirements. McGee said that for a small size budget, such a ratio could be misleading. Muller commented that occupancy charges plus personnel costs constitute 85-90% of total appropriations, both of which are more fixed costs than variable. She added that if the College of Charleston were to decide not to renew its 7-year lease, the LGC is obligated to find and provide for space for programs so monies may be needed for such a transition. Bebensee agreed, saying Project Management would otherwise not have a home. Saladin moved the budget be approved. Bebensee seconded the motion. The budget for FY 2018 – 2019 was approved by unanimous consent.

### **Opportunity Funds:**

McGee stated that The Council needs to develop how requests are to be reviewed. Muller reminded the group that the instructions approved by The Council in February provide a timetable for submissions and outline that process. In this first year, it was already late in the fiscal year 2017-2018 for department chairs or deans to submit a proposal. Gibbison said that Muller had met during spring months with both the Graduate Council of the College of Charleston and The Citadel's Faculty Senate to alert individuals to the availability of such funds. Gibbison submitted a request in early June. Dean Welch, also with the College of Charleston, submitted a request as well but withdrew it afterwards. Letters of support were solicited for both, Muller explained, but after two months only letters for Gibbison's proposal had been received, one from Verizon and the other from the City of Charleston. Saladin said she wants MUSC to have the opportunity to submit requests and feared no one at MUSC knew about the process. She asked Muller to contact her administrative assistant to arrange a meeting this Fall with college deans at MUSC. Bebensee said that the Faculty Senate meeting at which Muller had presented had a very full agenda and she needed to return, this time to meet with his school deans. McGee agreed that Muller needed to return as well to the College of Charleston campus, asking her to meet with the Academic Council. Gibbison said she still needs to speak to the program directors at the Graduate Council. Muller agreed to act swiftly to schedule all of the above.

There was also discussion about timing the reviews by The Council. Saladin said The Council needs to receive proposals a month in advance of its meeting for ample time to review documents. McGee suggested members do a forced ranking a week in advance of the subject meeting. Saladin asked that proposals be considered more than once a year. Muller said time needs to be allowed to solicit and receive community expert letters of support. Gibbison therefore suggested that a November 1<sup>st</sup> deadline be added, followed by a Supervisory Council meeting in January and that the March 1<sup>st</sup> deadline be moved back to February 1<sup>st</sup>, followed by a Supervisory Council meeting in April or May. Saladin asked that at least the next two meeting dates be arranged at this time, well in advance to find dates on busy calendars. McGee then recommended deferring a vote on the proposal for "Workplace Wellness" submitted by Gibbison so that it might be considered in unison with other submissions received by November 1<sup>st</sup>. For clarification, Saladin asked if funds were in theory being requested for a program yet to

be approved by the Commission on Higher Education (CHE). McGee responded affirmatively, stating it, of course, could not be promoted to prospective applicants for enrollment without CHE approval.

With no unfinished nor new business, McGee adjourned the meeting at 11:45 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,  
Nancy Muller  
August 10, 2018