

(Approved at May 7, 2020 Board of Trustees Virtual Meeting)

**COLLEGE OF CHARLESTON  
UNIVERSITY OF CHARLESTON, SC**

Board of Trustees Emergency Meeting  
Board of Trustees' Office, Room 208C, Randolph Hall  
Zoom Video Conferencing  
March 19, 2020  
3:00 p.m.

Chair Hay, presiding

Board Members Participating via Zoom Video Conferencing: Trustees Chuck Baker, Laurin Burch, Beth Burke, Cherry Daniel, David Hay (Chair), Shawn Holland, Toya Pound, Renee Romberger, Tav Swarat, Craig Thornton and Ricci Welch

Board Members Absent: Trustees John Busch, Demetria Clemons, Hank Futch, Henrietta Golding, Randy Lowell, Penny Rosner, Brian Stern, Steve Swanson and John Wood

Others Participating via Zoom Video Conferencing: Melantha Ardrey, Mark Berry, Alicia Caudill, Celeste Grainger, Elizabeth Kassebaum, Ron Menchaca, Amy Orr, Paul Patrick, Ed Pope and Fran Welch

**CALL TO ORDER:**

Chair Hay called the meeting to order at 3:00 p.m. noting that the meeting notice has been posted and the press notified as required by the Freedom of Information Act.

President Hsu thanked everyone for their participation in the meeting on such short notice and noted that Governor Henry McMaster will hold a press conference this afternoon at 4:30 p.m. regarding the COVID-19 pandemic.

President Hsu informed the Board that he met with other presidents around the state this morning, and everyone seems to be ready to announce their actions after the Governor 's speech.

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<sup>1</sup>In accordance with requirements of the *S. C. Freedom of Information Act*, news media was notified of the time, location, and agenda for this meeting.

President Hsu provided the Board with an update regarding COVID-19 and how it affects the College. The outline is provided below:

#### Housing

- Campus housing will be closed effective Monday, March 23.
- Only students with special exemptions will be allowed to remain in the halls.
- The College is working on an appropriate refund policy.

#### Commencement

- Degrees will be posted as 'official' May 11, 2020.
- We will hold a ceremony at a later date.

#### Continuity

- The College is working to maintain business and academic continuity.
- All nonessential employees, both permanent and temporary, are asked to work remotely.
- We are asking them to do what they can to maintain hours and productivity.

Chair Hay thanked President Hsu for his leadership during this extraordinary time and assured him and the Administration of the Board's support.

#### Motion to Adjourn

**The motion was made by Trustee Ricci Welch, and seconded by Trustee Beth Burke, that this emergency meeting be adjourned at 3:27 p.m. All in favor.**

For the record, President Hsu sent an email to the campus following the meeting regarding these extraordinary circumstances.

"Dear Faculty and Staff,

Based on the most recent developments of the Coronavirus (COVID-19) and in an effort to slow down its transmission and protect our campus community, I write today with several important updates regarding keeping classes online through the end of the semester, limiting authorized access to residence halls (with only a few exceptions) and postponing our spring commencement ceremonies.

These are incredibly difficult decisions, and we made them in consultation with health professionals, other state university presidents and the S.C. Governor's Office.

As you well know, we do not take these decisions and their effects lightly, both on our students and on you. I want to commend all of you for responding so quickly in trying to make the most of this spring semester. As we are seeing in real time, this is a generational crisis, meaning this pandemic will have an impact across our entire country and may affect many, many families for some time.

As a university, we have an obligation to promote public health and safety, while also helping our students reach their academic goals. We are committed to helping every student to determine the best path forward.

These are the steps the College of Charleston will be taking:

**Online and remote instruction has been extended through the remainder of the spring semester and final exam period.** The College most recently communicated that classes would be held online or remotely through at least Friday, April 3. Based on the most recent guidance from federal and state governments, we are extending our e-learning through the end of the spring semester, which will include final exams.

**On-campus residents will need to move out, if possible, by Monday, March 23, 8:00 p.m. or apply to stay.** In light of the national and statewide emergency declarations, as of 8:00 p.m. on Monday, March 23, residence halls and historic houses will have limited authorized access for the remainder of the spring semester.

Only students who have applied for and received housing exceptions will be permitted to stay. If they have extenuating circumstances and cannot go home, they must submit an exemption form by Friday, March 20 at 5 p.m.

All residential students will receive a communication from the Office of Campus Housing on Thursday, March 19, requiring students to choose one of the following options:

- Choose a move-out time between March 20 at noon and March 23 at 8:00 p.m.
- Indicate that they cannot get their items by March 23 and will need to be contacted next week to schedule an alternative date and time to get their items later in April.
- Apply for an extenuating circumstances exemption requesting to stay on campus through the end of the final exam period. An extenuating circumstance means they have no other option for housing but to remain in campus housing until the conclusion of their final exams.
  - They will need to provide details of their request for an exemption.
  - Extenuating circumstances may include:
    - International students who do not have another place to go and cannot return to their home country
    - Students who are homeless
    - Students who have a family health situation
    - Other (e.g. it is unsafe to return to your home)
    - If students are granted an exemption, it is likely they will be relocated to another room in a residence hall for safety and building access control. They will also not have visitation. “Grab and Go” meals will be made available for them to pick up from one location during designate times.

Students who request an exception to stay on campus will be notified of the College's decision to grant or deny the request no later than 5:00 p.m. on Saturday, March 21.

If students are experiencing any symptoms, including fever, cough, and/or difficulty breathing or in the last 14 days, they have been in close contact with a person known to have COVID-19 *OR* have recently traveled from an area with widespread or ongoing community spread of COVID-19, they **SHOULD NOT** return to campus. The Office of Campus Housing will coordinate with them directly upon completion of the form.

**The College is considering refunds for housing fees, meal plans and parking fees.**

A plan will be communicated to students and their families in the near future regarding refunds for housing fees, meal plans and parking fees. At this time, the College, like most state universities, is awaiting guidance from federal and state government agencies.

**Students are urged to not return to live in off-campus housing at this time.** Please note that in-person access to university facilities and services is extremely limited. Most College buildings are not open to in-person visits, including the College's Addestone Library, which is providing services and access online.

**Spring commencement ceremonies have been postponed.** Our spring commencement ceremonies are a signature moment in our students' College of Charleston experience. And it will happen, just not when it was originally scheduled. We do not have a new date as of yet for the Class of 2020, but we will communicate that to you and students as soon as possible. As an institution, we will celebrate their accomplishments and success in the Cistern Yard in true College of Charleston fashion! Even without a commencement ceremony on May 8-9, our students' graduation date will still be May 11, 2020, once final grades are received. Regardless of the timing of the postponed ceremonies, diplomas will be mailed this summer, in accordance to our standard university process.

**All events on campus are canceled, regardless of size, through May 15.** Based on guidance issued by the White House to not gather in groups of more than 10 people, all events on the College's campus, regardless of size, are canceled through May 15. These restrictions include events at the College that are not College-sponsored, including conferences and social gatherings.

**For Questions**

- Campus Housing questions: [housing@cofc.edu](mailto:housing@cofc.edu) or 843.953.5523
- Dining Services questions: [cougarcad@cofc.edu](mailto:cougarcad@cofc.edu) or 843.953.1100
- Parking Services questions: [parkingservices@cofc.edu](mailto:parkingservices@cofc.edu) or 843.953.7834

For all other questions, please email [covid-19@cofc.edu](mailto:covid-19@cofc.edu) so we can route your email to the appropriate person or office and get answers back to you as quickly as possible.

As before, please keep checking the [FAQs on emergency.cofc.edu](https://www.cofc.edu/faq-emergency) for the most up-to-date information.

**Virtual Town Halls.** I know you have or will have many more questions, especially in light of these changes to our schedule. The College's administration will conduct virtual town hall meetings for the campus community over the coming days. More information on time and how to access these virtual town halls will be sent by email and posted on social media in the next few days.

In closing, yes, these are indeed challenging times. We, as a society, are not used to suddenly being so restricted and limited in our movements and activities. I know firsthand that uncertainty creates great anxiety. However, you are not alone in this. No matter what, we are all in this together.

In my own life, I have found that adversity can be an effective teacher if we let ourselves learn the lessons it offers. I encourage all of you to take a breath, be patient, be flexible and be thoughtful to others. If we do, we will inspire those around us to do the same, and, together, we will "strive to conquer and prevail" over something truly unprecedented in our times.

Sincerely,

Andrew"