

**EXCERPT FROM THE PRELIMINARY REPORT
OF THE REAFFIRMATION COMMITTEE**

Statement Regarding the Report

The Board of Trustees of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC) is responsible for making the final determination on reaffirmation of accreditation based on the findings contained in this committee report, the institution's response to issues contained in the report, other assessments relevant to the review, and application of the Commission's policies and procedures. Final interpretation of the Principles of Accreditation and final action on the accreditation status of the institution rest with SACSCOC Board of Trustees.

Name of the Institution: **University of South Carolina - Columbia**

Date of the Review: **November 3-4, 2020**

SACSCOC Staff Member: **Dr. Linda Thomas-Glover**

Chair of the Committee: **Dr. Timothy S. Brophy**
Director, Institutional Assessment
and Professor, Music Education
University of Florida
Gainesville, FL 32606

Section 4: Governing Board

- 4.1 **The institution has a governing board of at least five members that:**
- (a) **is the legal body with specific authority over the institution.**
 - (b) **exercises fiduciary oversight of the institution.**
 - (c) **ensures that both the presiding officer of the board and a majority of other voting members of the board are free of any contractual, employment, personal, or familial financial interest in the institution.**
 - (d) **is not controlled by a minority of board members or by organizations or institutions separate from it.**
 - (e) **is not presided over by the chief executive officer of the institution.**
- (Governing board characteristics) [CR]*

Compliance

The Off-Site Reaffirmation Committee found support for the institution's case for compliance.

The University of South Carolina is under the authority of The Board of Trustees (BOT) of the University of South Carolina, which was established and authorized by the State of South Carolina (South Carolina Code of Laws, Section 59-117-40(5)) to govern all the associated components of the institution. The board consists of 20 members and is the policy-making body for the institution and is ultimately responsible for ensuring that the financial resources of the institution are adequate to provide sound educational programs.

The Board of Trustees Bylaws and Board Policy (BTRU 1.00) establish the roles and responsibilities of the Board of Trustees (BOT), which include appropriate structures pertaining to the selection of the institutional president, board governance, review of academic programs, approval of tuition, fees and institutional budgets, ability to incur debt, acquire and dispose of property, and other matters associated with the operations of the institution (BTRU 1.00 Sections 59-117-40). Evidence that the BOT is not controlled by a minority of board members or interests separate from it is also presented through Policies and Bylaws, which note that the BOT must adhere to state statutes and policies concerning conflicts of interest.

Evidence that the BOT is not controlled by a minority of board members or interests separate from it is also presented through Policies and Bylaws, which note that the BOT must adhere to state statutes and policies concerning conflicts of interest, administered by the South Carolina State Ethics Commission Rules of Conduct and specifies the following: "A public official, public member, or public employeemay not knowingly use his official office, membership, or employment to influence a government decision to obtain an economic interest for himself, a member of his immediate family, an individual with whom he is associated, or a business with which he is associated. A person may not directly or indirectly give, offer, or promise anything of value to a public official, public

member, or public employee with intent to influence the public official's, public member's, or public employee's official responsibilities, nor is the public official, public member, or public employee to ask, demand, solicit, or accept anything of value for himself or for another person in return for fulfilling his official responsibilities or duties.”

The institution provided board meeting minutes to document fiduciary responsibility. The appointment process, staggered terms of service, election of the chair and vice-chair by board members, and the transparency of meetings ensure the board is not controlled by a minority of board members. Conflict of interest and financial disclosure reporting by board members, accompanied by comprehensive educational initiatives, assure the presiding officers and the majority of other board members are free of contractual, employment, or personal or family financial interest in the institution.