

BOARD OF DIRECTORS SPECIAL MEETING

Minutes of the Board of Directors Meeting – August 12, 2026

Submitted by Ashley D. Smith

The South Carolina Governor's School for the Arts and Humanities (SCGSAH) Board of Directors Special Meeting was held Wednesday, August 12, 2026, at 2:00 p.m. virtually via Microsoft Teams from the Callie Stringer Rainey Boardroom of the SC Governor's School for the Arts and Humanities.

Board Members in Attendance

Chad Prosser, Chairman; Irv Welling, III, Vice Chairman; Sandra Ayers; Rev. Josh Dry; Raye Felder; Rev. LeShawn Goodwin; Kim Lee; Dr. Carly Porter-Phinizy; Katherine Barnette Pinillos; Andrew Saleeby; Gerald Witt

Employees in Attendance

Dr. Cedric Adderley, President; Betsy Beam, Vice President (VP) of Finance & Administration; Dr. Matthew Burns, VP for Student Development; Dr. Jennifer Thomas, Dean and VP of Arts & Academics; Richard Jones, Director of Information Technology; Ashley Smith, Executive Assistant to the President/Board Secretary

Welcome

Chairman Prosser called the special meeting to order at 2:00pm and welcomed everyone in attendance. He announced that the meeting is being livestreamed and recorded in accordance with SC legislation. He announced the agenda has been adjusted to focus on two topics, a brief school update and to review the 2025-2030 Strategic Plan.

Notice of Meeting

Chairman Prosser announced the notice of this meeting had been provided to all persons, organizations, and news media that have requested notification, as required by Section 30-4-80(e) of the SC Code of Laws. (Page 1)

President's Report

Dr. Cedric Adderley, President, provided an overview of the summer programs and the opening of school for the 2026–2027 academic year. He reported that the summer program successfully closed at the end of July after serving 444 students from 34 counties throughout the state. He shared that early feedback shows strong student interest in returning for the next age-appropriate program and noted that some applications for next year have already been submitted despite not being officially released. He noted that the 2026–2027 Residential High program launched its opening in two phases: an initial week of professional development for staff and faculty, followed by extended orientation for students. He highlighted that the professional development program combined various sessions for all employees and was successful in completing required training to launch the school year. High school enrollment consists of 230 total students including 122 new students, seven of whom are new seniors.

Without further questions, the President's Report was received as information and will be established as a permanent component of these minutes

Strategic Plan Review

Dr. Jennifer Thomas, Dean and VP of Arts and Academics, presented a proposed addendum to the strategic plan, Strategic Horizon: Achieving International Distinction. The initiative was presented as two visionary pillars for a Global Experiential Learning Program and an Interdisciplinary Artistic Research Center. She explained that the pillars aim to expand the existing pre-professional foundation of the school's arts and academic programs and establish the Governor's School as an internationally recognized model for secondary arts and humanities education. A new facility is included to support creative and emerging technologies to include our new Film Program and other collaborative instructional efforts. She explained that Pillar 1 ensures all students receive global experiences, with outcomes aligned with their college and career paths. She added that Pillar 2 focuses on expanding specialized tools and keeping pace with emerging technologies. She confirmed that both areas of focus will generate new faculty appointments equipped with this specialized expertise. Chairman Prosser noted prior international experiences and praised Pillar 2's path toward broader global expansion. Dr. Thomas noted that preliminary research is underway to identify inclusive international opportunities for every interested student. Chairman Prosser inquired of the appropriate classification for required faculty positions and Dr. Thomas confirmed the necessity of state-funded FTE appointments to guarantee ongoing stability and operational consistency.

Pillar 1 – Global Experiential Learning Discussions:

- Gerald Witt inquired about specific international destinations, and it was confirmed that there are established partnerships and study abroad programs for various art departments already active in central Italy, specifically in Tuscany and Arezzo, providing a strong foundation to expand curriculum and programming into new destinations based on student learning outcomes.
- Carly Porter – Phinizy commended the extensive scope of Pillar I while recommending some research into the collegiate-level infrastructure to tailor study abroad programs for secondary school students.
- Raye Felder suggested integrating criteria for behavioral excellence and fundraising potential into the initial planning framework.
 - Irv Welling stated that the existing disciplinary structures and the Foundation partnership for student financial assistance demonstrate high operational efficiency.
- Kim Lee inquired about the recruitment of students throughout the state of South Carolina.
 - Dr. Matthew Burns noted that international expansion could enhance recruitment, as students would value the unique opportunities unavailable at their home institutions.
- Chairman Prosser inquired about the possibility of a Faculty Residency program for a semester or a year, and Dr. Adderley stated that a Faculty Residency is aligned with the current Guest Artists program. Dr. Adderley explained that the established partnerships with international institutions and key individuals can ensure cost-effective and viable growth in this program. Chairman Prosser stated this is worth exploring.
- Irv Welling acknowledged that the information discussed highlights how these initiatives will elevate the school and its students by creating new opportunities for exposure, which will further build upon the strong foundation established over the past 25 years.

- Sandy Ayers offered that she established an institutional partnership between Columbia College and international schools that allowed undergraduate students in their third year to complete professional placements. She shared that this may offer students an additional way to engage with the international arts. Chairman Prosser inquired about international school associations for further information gathering. Mrs. Ayers stated she is familiar with a Mediterranean conference and will verify the details and make some connections.
- Katherine Barnett-Pinillos highlighted that, because of her background in international primary and collegiate study abroad programs, she is very excited about the opportunity for students to expand their global perspectives through international travel.

Board members held a discussion highlighting potential international opportunities, driven by the expansion of global companies in South Carolina, which may include funding for growing programs. Irv Welling recommended exploring state-level resources, as South Carolina provides many valuable international programs and support networks. Chairman Prosser noted that reviewing the collegiate study abroad program infrastructure would be valuable, and discussed international exchange programs, while acknowledging that the specific program may fall outside our direct governance.

Board members deliberated on the establishment and funding of the faculty position, considering state-funded FTE pathways, foundation support, philanthropic contributions, and cooperative university models

Pillar 2 – Interdisciplinary Artistic Research Center:

Chairman Prosser reflected on the lessons learned from the previous strategic plan's focus on the Film department and acknowledged the challenges encountered along the way. He then commended the proposed new plan for its forward-looking commitment to integrating emerging technologies.

Mrs. Betsy Beam confirmed the existing \$1 million for Phase I of the Gallery/Flexible Instructional Space to support the proposal. Chairman Prosser and Dr. Adderley outlined the designated uses for the spaces and verified that technological capabilities will be fully supported within the area. Chairman Prosser emphasized that this information supports multiyear fundraising campaigns and legislative budget requests.

Chairman Prosser invited attendees to contribute ideas for new interdisciplinary programs.

- Dr. Thomas proposed two distinct programmatic concepts: a Production-focused program tailored for students inclined toward the technical dimensions of the arts, and a comprehensive, interdisciplinary program spanning all departments. The discussion evaluated whether the current framework encompasses these concepts and outlined program prerequisites, specifically addressing integration with existing real estate and student accommodation.
 - Irv Welling recommended integrating these concepts to enhance the current programs, highlighting the Drama department's interdisciplinary play as a successful model. He advocated for a collaborative culture.
- Kim Lee asked if anyone could identify a school that effectively facilitates interdisciplinary collaboration despite scheduling constraints.
 - Dr. Adderley noted that current research limits collaboration to standalone events or performances, whereas ultimately the goal is for

SCGSAH to become a state, national and international leader in curriculum-embedded interdisciplinary collaboration.

- Dr. Thomas commented that there are some higher education programs that are performing well in this area, which raises the question of how we are preparing our students for these programs.
- Chairman Prosser emphasized the need for ongoing dialogue regarding Artificial Intelligence applications.
- Chairman Prosser mentioned that students disperse into multiple industries upon graduation and some follow the entrepreneurship path and raised the question regarding the level of curriculum on entrepreneurship.
 - Dr. Burns acknowledged that students increasingly pursue hyphenated career paths, noting a former faculty member who taught art-career readiness and pointing to diverse entrepreneurship speakers featured in our co-curricular programming. He also shared that leadership continually discusses how to equip students with forward-looking life skills.

Chairman Prosser thanked everyone for their input on Pillar II and proposed a subsequent meeting to discuss embedding these concepts into the strategic framework. He inquired about the projected schedule for reviewing, voting on, and adopting the Strategic Plan.

- Dr. Adderley advised that adopting the Strategic Plan at the September board meeting is optimal for campus alignment. He explained this scheduling supports the preparation for legislative budget hearings and enables immediate engagement with the Foundation to mobilize resources. He stated the Strategic Horizon provides support to the proposed 2025-2030 Strategic Plan framework.

Strategic Plan Feedback

Chairman Prosser inquired of the attendees if they believe anything is missing from the strategic plan.

- Irv Welling expressed that he believes that the strategic plan development is heading in the right direction and further explained that the "Big Idea, Bold Vision" is a long-term proposition derived from these discussions.
- Andrew Saleeby inquired about the ability to participate in an international exchange program.
 - Dr. Adderley noted that while the school's founding legislation permits international student enrollment, no such requests have been received to date. He further clarified that admitting an international student would reduce the number of slots available for South Carolina residents.
 - Irv Welling suggested that the school keep this option available in the event that a strong case presents itself with further enhancement and improvement of the student experience.
 - Dr. Thomas offered the possibility of creating an international Extended Residency, Global Govies.
- Chairman Prosser introduced the goal of being the Creative Center: Thought Leader in the Arts on a national and state level. He reflected on the previous programs offered to teachers from around the state coming to campus during the summer for workshops and education.
 - Dr. Adderley stated that the Outreach program provides various opportunities for teachers, librarians, afterschool providers and other service providers throughout the state. He confirmed the state-funded program has changed over the years and has not worked with our programming in recent years.

- Chairman Prosser expressed appreciation for the Outreach program and its statewide impact utilizing federal funding. He inquired whether a comparable program exists that could be utilized to support the achievement of the Creative Center/Thought Leader goal. Additionally, he proposed establishing a formal Guest Faculty program to foster sustained institutional engagement beyond standalone events.
 - Dr. Adderley noted that outreach opportunities are expanding and that enrollment growth is a direct result of our broadening state network. He confirmed that with the statewide impact continuing to rise, both the outreach and admissions teams will be progressively scaled to support this growth.
- Sandy Ayers shared insights from her statewide experience, observing that early childhood providers often lack awareness of best practices for student learning. She reported that these providers responded enthusiastically to training on arts integration and she expressed her appreciation for the strategic plan's ongoing commitment to supporting early childhood education.

Board Members discussed researching collegiate models—including sabbaticals, faculty exchanges, and guest artist programs—to drive academic and professional advancement. Dr. Adderley emphasized that state legislation should support this because of the pre-existing programs at the college/university level.

- Joshua Dry reflected on his time in seminary and explained the significant value that visiting guest artists brought to his experience. He expressed confidence that students would welcome the opportunity to study under impactful artists and asked for clarification on how these guest artists are selected.
- Dr. Thomas clarified that the guest artists are chosen at the department chair level with some feedback from faculty and students.
- Dr. Thomas offered that a current faculty member had the opportunity to produce a play at the collegiate level and that was considered an Extended Residency. She confirmed that the process was scrutinized to ensure the faculty member's employment contract was honored but also the professional activity was productive and successful.
- Chairman Prosser concurred that faculty development is essential for academic advancement and enhancing the student experience.

Adjournment

Chairman Prosser called for a motion to adjourn the board meeting at 1:39pm. A motion to adjourn the board meeting was brought forth by Joshua Dry and seconded by Andrew Saleeby.