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February 4, 2014

Dr. Harris Pastides
President
University of South Carolina
Osborne Administration Building, Suite 206
Columbia, S.C. 29208

Dear Dr. Pastides:

I hope that the new year finds all well with you, your family and the University. Action has resumed at the Statehouse, but in the midst of the proposed legislation that requires our attention, there is another matter that concerns existing state law that I need to address with you.

In 1998, Act 322 became law. It requires that our state educational institutions give instruction regarding this nation's foundational documents, such as the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution. Pursuant to the passage of this law, Section 59-29-120 (A) reads as follows:

"All high schools, colleges, and universities in this State that are sustained or in any manner supported by public funds shall give instruction in the essentials of the United States Constitution, the Declaration of Independence, and the Federalist Papers, including the study of and devotion to American institutions and ideals, and no student in any such school, college, or university may receive a certificate of graduation without previously passing a satisfactory examination upon the provisions and principles of the United States Constitution, the Declaration of Independence, and the Federalist Papers, and, if a citizen of the United States, satisfying the examining power of his loyalty thereto."

In Section 59-29-130, further direction is given concerning this matter:

"The instruction provided for in Section 59-29-120 shall be given for at least one year of the high school, college and university grades, respectively."

Recently, it was reported to me that the core curriculum requirements of the University do not reflect the provisions of the law quoted above. Even requirements for US History courses do not include the elements of this nation's beginnings that are enumerated in 59-29-120(A), above.

Please advise me if I am improperly informed on this matter. Nothing would make me happier than to know that the training of tomorrow's leaders does indeed include these documents that are the building blocks of our form of government.

However, if what I am told is correct, please advise me of the corrective measures. If this is the case, it is no doubt simply an oversight and can probably be remedied in an expeditious manner.

Thank you so much for taking the time to hear this matter of concern. Thank you, also, for your leadership in taking the University of South Carolina to greater heights of academic excellence and service to the people of this state.

Sincerely,



Danny Verdin
SC Senate, District 9
Laurens & Greenville Counties
Chairman, Agriculture & Natural Resources