

TO: The Coastal Carolina University Faculty Senate

FROM: Michael T. Benson

DATE: February 8, 2024

I'm sorry I cannot be with you in person today to give my report but am required to be in Columbia for a meeting with other SC institution presidents and a dinner with our Horry County legislative delegation.

There are a few items I wanted to update you on relative to activities at the State House.

First, our federal request for support of the CCU pedway across 544 is making progress. Our project is included in the Transportation, Housing and Urban Development (T-HUD) Fiscal Year 2024 Appropriations Bill as a Congressionally Directed Spending Request was submitted by Senator Lindsey Graham. The amount that the T-HUD Subcommittee approved for the Project is \$5 million. The T-HUD Appropriations Bill passed the Senate as part of a combination of three (3) Appropriation Bills that is referred to as a "minibus." Under Regular Order, once the House Version of the T-HUD Appropriations Bill has been passed, the Senate and House Bills are to be reconciled in a Conference Committee, which will then produce a Conference Report. The Conference Report is to be voted on by the Senate and the House, and after being passed by both, is sent to the President for his signature into law.

The good news is that Politico reported a few days ago that these appropriation measures are poised to be passed during the month of February.

Packaging matters — Congress is staring down two March shutdown deadlines. But House Republicans are aiming for more than two funding packages to get all 12 of the fiscal 2024 spending measures enacted over the next month. "I think there will be several minibus — several being three or four," says Rep. Mike Simpson. The Idaho Republican and the House's other "cardinals" kicked off the week by meeting with Speaker Mike Johnson about next steps in funding the government. The speaker's instructions, according to Simpson: "Get busy."

During our presentation to the SC House Higher Education Appropriations Subcommittee, we were encouraged to seek a state match for the \$5 million federal request at the state level. We have made that request of our delegation and will keep you apprised of any developments. We are also awaiting word on what the Legislature intends to do with COLA this year. Our CCU Board of Trustees will be meeting in Columbia at the end of the month for the Myrtle Beach Chamber of Commerce event followed by their quarterly meeting.

Second, thanks to everyone who participated in the various presentations and meetings with our four Provost finalists, and especially to all those who submitted their feedback on the candidates. We are nearing the end of the process and look forward to presenting our new Provost and VP for Academic Affairs to our entire campus community in the near future. Also—and as I relayed to campus in my message a few weeks ago—we appreciate the efforts to complete both our strategic plan and campus master plan. Additional details about planned projects will be forthcoming.

And finally, if you'll allow me a brief "dad brag," I'm very pleased to report that my oldest son, Samuel, will be participating on a panel with some of our distinguished faculty to discuss media and politics and the 2024 campaign. Sam is the national correspondent for the Deseret News and will be in town for the South Carolina Primary. Below is information about the event.

COASTAL CAROLINA UNIVERSITY

DEPARTMENT OF POLITICAL SCIENCE

Covering Campaign 2024: A Conversation about Media and Politics

Samuel Benson
is the national political correspondent for the Deseret News, the oldest continually operating news publication in the western U.S. His biweekly newsletter, *On the Trail 2024*, reaches thousands of readers and provides the latest updates and insights related to the presidential race.

Wendy Weinhold
is an associate professor of communication, media, and culture at Coastal Carolina University. A former journalist for over a decade, her award-winning research focuses on the role of journalists in today's digital age.

Drew Kurlowski
is an associate professor of political science at Coastal Carolina University, where he also serves as faculty senate chair and co-director of the Cincinnatus Center. As an expert on political campaigns and elections, he is a frequent source and contributor to media coverage of South Carolina politics.

Justin Vaughn
is an associate professor of political science at Coastal Carolina University. An expert on the American presidency, he has been published widely on presidential politics and serves as the co-director of the Presidential Greatness Project.

Free and open to the public.

For more details, contact Justin Vaughn, Ph.D., at jvaughn@coastal.edu or 843-349-5016

📍 E. Craig Wall Sr. College of Business Administration, Room 116

📅 Feb. 21, 2024

🕒 4:30-6 P.M.

Thank you for your continued service to our students and community.