




COLLEGE of  
CHARLESTON

OFFICE OF THE PROVOST

## MEMORANDUM

TO: Godfrey Gibbison, Interim Dean, UCSC Graduate School  
Academic School Deans

FROM: Brian McGee, Provost, College of Charleston and UCSC 

DATE: September 3, 2018

SUBJECT: College of Charleston PUI Status and Divisional Policy

As you know, the National Science Foundation (NSF) provides funding opportunities for faculty teaching at predominantly undergraduate institutions (PUIs). PUIs are defined as “accredited colleges and universities (including two-year community colleges) that award Associate's degrees, Bachelor's degrees, and/or Master's degrees in NSF-supported fields, but have awarded 20 or fewer Ph.D./D.Sci. degrees in all NSF-supported fields during the combined previous two academic years.”<sup>1</sup>

Since 2014, the College of Charleston (hereafter, “College”) and its component, the University of Charleston, South Carolina, or UCSC, have had a state-approved mission statement allowing the institution to offer doctoral degrees. If and when such doctoral programs are sought, such degree offerings would require the College to seek a change in level with its regional accreditor, along with receipt of the necessary institutional, CHE, and accreditor approvals for each such program. Many, but not all, of the possible doctoral programs discussed as future possibilities for the College and UCSC have been in NSF-supported fields.

The College’s academic leadership and faculty are rightly proud of our record in supporting undergraduates and undergraduate research in NSF-supported fields. As we prepare for the possibility of considering new doctoral program proposals at the College, colleagues have rightly inquired if the College wishes and intends to preserve its PUI status. Separate from questions related to our service to undergraduates and our treatment of academic departments that do not offer doctoral degrees, roster faculty need the ability to predict whether and for how long our PUI status will be preserved as a matter of institutional planning and policy.

To ensure the predictability necessary to securing NSF funding in the relevant College of Charleston academic departments and programs, I now provide what I believe is the necessary direction, in accordance with my role as the College’s Provost and Chief Academic Officer.

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<sup>1</sup> [https://www.nsf.gov/funding/pgm\\_summ.jsp?pims\\_id=5518](https://www.nsf.gov/funding/pgm_summ.jsp?pims_id=5518)

**Specifically, and effective immediately, it is the policy of the Academic Affairs Division that no more than eight (8) doctoral students per academic year (including summers) shall be admitted to and matriculated in College of Charleston doctoral programs in NSF-sponsored fields and leading to the earned Ph.D. or D.Sci. degree. This limit of eight (8) students per academic year shall remain in effect without regard to the number of future doctoral programs created in NSF-supported fields. All employees assigned to the Academic Affairs Division ~ and especially the deans, the department chairs, the graduate program directors, and the employees of the UCSC Graduate School ~ have an affirmative duty to ensure compliance with this divisional policy.**

The intent of this divisional policy is to ensure that PUI status shall not be temporarily or permanently lost by the College of Charleston unless such a change in status is planned for and deliberately pursued as a byproduct of the deliberate and desirable growth of future doctoral programs in NSF-supported fields. PUI status should not be surrendered or compromised without good reason and considerable planning towards that end. Indeed, I think it possible that the College of Charleston will seek to preserve PUI status for many decades to come, even if the College eventually offers multiple doctoral programs, including programs in NSF-supported fields.

This divisional policy may be altered or eliminated only if the President or Provost provides a written directive to that effect.

The current directive does not limit the doctoral program admissions options of future College and UCSC doctoral programs offered in fields not supported by the NSF.

This directive will be immediately null and void if the NSF eliminates the PUI designation (or any successor designations devised by NSF for a substantially similar purpose). Should the NSF's PUI designation be substantially revised or modified in the future, it should be the expectation of all relevant parties that the divisional policy announced in this memorandum will be timely altered to ensure consistency with the updated NSF definition for PUIs.

The current directive and divisional policy shall expire on June 30, 2039, unless it is renewed in writing by the College's Provost or President.

cc: Stephen C. Osborne, Interim President  
Kendra Stewart, Sr. Advisor to the President  
Liz Jurisich, Speaker of the Faculty  
Debbie Hammond, Senior Executive Administrator to the President  
Lynn Cherry, Associate Provost for Curriculum and Inst. Resources  
Deanna Caveny, Associate Provost for Faculty Affairs  
Lynne Ford, Associate Vice President for the Academic Experience