

Title: **USC eyes Cuba ties; Lander weighs tuition cut**  
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# USC eyes Cuba ties; Lander weighs tuition cut

Flagship school wants academic, student exchanges with island nation

Also on lookout for potential business for SC companies

Lander University boss wants to cut tuition bills by up to 10 percent, if possible

Gov. Haley named a top world leader by magazine

BY ANDREW SHAIN  
 ashain@thestate.com

The **University of South Carolina** is charting a course to Cuba. Meanwhile, **Lander University** surprised lawmakers last week with word of a possible tuition cut.

A week after President **Barack Obama** became the first sitting president to visit the island nation in 88 years, USC will send four administrators and professors over the Florida Strait to explore student and academic exchanges in tourism and international business.

During the five-day trip, starting Wednesday, the USC representatives will visit the University of Havana, University of Cienfuegos, and ministries of higher education and tourism, said **Allen Miller**, USC's director of international affairs.

The USC trip could lay groundwork for more visits by S.C. officials.

USC President **Harris Pastides** is expected to visit

in May at the invitation of the Cuban government.

Miller said the USC group also was asked to watch for opportunities for the S.C. Department of Commerce in the agriculture, forestry and medicine sectors.

The United States has eased travel and business restrictions, started in the 1960s after diplomatic relations were broken off following the Castro communist government's takeover of the island.

U.S. colleges already are seeking opportunities in the newly reopened nation.

**Clemson University** sent scientists to Havana in December to discuss partnerships to help preserve historic buildings. Clemson officials plan to return later this year to work with architects and archaeologists to

launch a pilot project to preserve sugar mills.

The **College of Charleston** has sent a dozen

students to Cuba in a study-abroad program since 2000.

USC is looking for more formal arrangements in Cuba. It was the only S.C. college that took part in a forum held in Cuba in October that included representatives from 50 U.S. universities, Miller said.

"I'd compared it to China in the mid-1980s," he said. "You're deeply rooted there if you went at that time. If you waited until it was obvious about what going to happen there, you missed the boat."

USC's foreign trips are paid by the university departments that send professors and administrators, and

with fees charged to international students, Miller said. The USC foundation also helps with costs.

Pastides' trip to Cuba would be the sixth nation that he has visited as president to explore partnerships. The others were South Afri-

ca, Brazil, Taiwan, Mexico and Oman.

USC has exchange agreements with universities in 55 countries. Some are in countries that have drawn protests for their human rights records, including China, Russia and the United Arab Emirates.

Obama's Cuba trip, along with the easing of business restrictions, drew criticism because of the island nation's slow reforms under its communist government.

"It's a reality that these relations (between the countries) are happening," Miller said. "The university would be negligent to ignore that."

## A LOWER COLLEGE BILL?

You don't hear this everyday around the State House: A college president telling a state Senate budget panel that he is considering lowering tuition.

"Maybe you can be our laboratory in the state," Sen.

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**Darrell Jackson**, D-Richland, said last week to **Richard Cosentino**, the new president at Greenwood's Lander.

Cosentino told The Buzz that he is looking at shrinking the school's \$10,752-a-year tuition cost by between 1 percent and 10 percent. He said he is studying how much of a cut the school can afford before taking it to his board.

He also wants to offer unused beds in dorms for free to needy students.

"Some really great kids cannot afford college," said Cosentino, who was hired at Lander last year after working on the finance side of the University of North Carolina-Pembroke, George Washington University and Johns Hopkins University. "Something like a bed given

to a student would be a big difference between going to college or not."

Colleges dropping their tuition rates are rare across the country.

A few private colleges, including **Converse College** in Spartanburg, have lowered tuition to reflect what most students pay after receiving financial assistance. Also, Washington state lawmakers ordered tuition cuts of 15 percent to 20 percent at public colleges there last year.

The closest any S.C. public college has come is **Coastal Carolina University** in Conway, which froze its tuition in 2013 and 2014.

Cosentino hopes smaller bills will help bolster enrollment at Lander, one of the state's smallest four-year

colleges.

He wants to grow the school's student body, now about 2,700, past 3,000 in 2017. Cosentino thinks he can take advantage of Lan-

der's popular nursing and exercise science programs, and hopes to start new majors in cyber security, forensic studies, emergency management and government administration.

"We have been passive," he said.

A tuition break might work.

The number of undergraduates at Converse has grown by 13 percent in the two years since the women's college lowered its tuition.

#### BUZZ BITES

● Gov. **Nikki Haley** was named one of Fortune magazine's "50 World's Great-

est Leaders" last week. "Haley is proving that Trumpism isn't the only way," the magazine wrote. The Republican was listed near NBA star **Stephen Curry** and "Hamilton" composer **Lin-Manuel Miranda**.

● "God bless" was Haley's favorite passive-aggressive phrase last week. She used it first Tuesday in a Facebook tiff with state Rep. **Chris Corley**, after suggesting someone should run against the Aiken Republican, who often has criticized the governor. Then, she said "God bless" a day later at the end of a letter demanding that U.S. Energy Secretary **Ernest Moniz** halt a shipment of Japanese plutonium to South Carolina.

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REBECCA BLACKWELL AP

A Cuban fan uses a paper flag to shield his face from the sun during a baseball game between the Tampa Bay Rays and the Cuban national baseball team, in Havana, Cuba, last week at a game attended by President Barack Obama and Cuba's President Raul Castro.

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**THE BUZZ**

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**The College of Charleston**

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## BUZZ

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**SOME REALLY GREAT KIDS CANNOT AFFORD COLLEGE.”**

*Richard Cosentino, Lander University president*



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Title: **Haley's criticism of Finley was out of line**

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### **Haley's criticism of Finley was out of line**

I am appalled that Gov. Nikki Haley had the audacity to refer to Rep. Kirkman Finley as a bully and rude to Department of Juvenile Justice staff during public hearings. Sounds like the pot calling the kettle black.

Gov. Haley's code of conduct has been less than stellar. Our leaders have many challenges before them, and they should treat other leaders with respect. I pray for them daily.

I applaud Rep. Finley for taking the high road in response to Gov. Haley's criticism. I believe "criticize in private, praise in public" would serve her well.

*- Sandra Lorick  
West Columbia*

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**Title: The only one insulting people is Trump****Author:****Size: 6.82 square inch****Columbia, SC Circulation: 128564**

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### **The only one insulting people is Trump**

In his March 16 letter, “Don’t forget Haley, Graham insults,” Bill Groome suggested that by opposing Donald Trump, Gov. Nikki Haley and Sen. Lindsey Graham were insulting his supporters. Really? Did they use words like “liar,” “loser,” “idiot” and “pansy” to describe his supporters? No, they didn’t.

Donald Trump applies those words to anyone who disagrees with him. Why the double standard?

The more I hear from Trump, and from his supporters, the more glad I am that I voted for Ben Carson. The prospect of a Trump-Clinton presidential race is downright sickening.

*- Bill Foltz  
West Columbia*

Title: **Realtors convene at state capital**  
 Author: BY JEAN BECK [jean@hhrealtor.com](mailto:jean@hhrealtor.com)  
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# Realtors convene at state capital

BY JEAN BECK  
[jean@hhrealtor.com](mailto:jean@hhrealtor.com)

Realtors from across the state convened in Columbia this month to attend the South Carolina Realtors Legislative Meetings and Rally.

Hilton Head Area Association of Realtors president Michael Gonzalez and 30 members from Hilton Head Island, Bluffton and Jasper County met with lawmakers at the statehouse to discuss the critical issues facing the real estate industry and the quality of life.

At a full house at the Columbia Metropolitan Convention Center, Realtors had the honor of hearing from Gov. Nikki Haley, Sen. Tom Davis, Rep. Todd Rutherford and the National Association of Realtors Russell Grooms. The governor gave us a legislative update and took questions from the audience.

The Realtors urged the passage of License Law reform to update the South Carolina Real Estate Practice Act. Highlights of the changes include increasing continuing education, defining and regulating teams, adding

transactional brokerage language and defining limited function referral office. The proposed changes increase professionalism in the industry.

Accessible, reliable, and safe roads and bridges are a key component to a high quality of life and vital to a sound economy. Realtors support a plan that would provide a long-term funding mechanism to fix the road system and reconstruct the Department of Transportation. Realtors are committed to improving the current infrastructure system and ensuring it meets the needs of future growth and demands.

As the region's trusted voice of real estate, the Hilton Head Area Association of Realtors actively works with elected officials to protect and promote homeownership, property investments and the quality of life for the public and the consumers they serve.

*Jean Beck is executive vice president of the Hilton Head Area Association of Realtors. Contact her at [jean@hhrealtor.com](mailto:jean@hhrealtor.com).*





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Title: **Vote state leaders out if they don't fix roads**

Author:

Size: 8.06 square inch

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### **Vote state leaders out if they don't fix roads**

What is the agenda? Whose agenda is it?

It's strange that the folks we elect and send to Columbia can't organize their agenda. And it should be *our* agenda, anyway.

They seem to have plenty of time to raise taxes on cell phone users, discuss coal ash, debate methods of execution, etc. But there is no time to sit down and craft a meaningful solution to South Carolina's road and bridge issue. That's what most folks I know want to be addressed.

If Gov. Nikki Haley and all the members of the S.C. House and Senate cannot understand this, then we should vote every single one of them, irrespective of their party affiliation, tenure or leadership position, out of office in November.

Make the time! Sit down together! Get the job zone! Do what you were elected to do!

**Doug Barker**  
*Sunset*

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