

Governor Nikki Haley,

Last Thursday evening, on November 6th, College of Charleston president Glenn McConnell, and athletic director Joe Hull, made the decision to cut the school's varsity swimming and diving program, a team that started 40 years ago, with no warning... the team was never even part of the conversation. It is one of two division one programs left in the state of South Carolina. Why? The dated pool's ventilation system needs to be repaired, and instead of spending the \$1.5 million needed to fix this, the athletic department made the decision to cut the entire program, swim-related classes, and all activities pertaining to the pool, tearing down the Stern Center to make way for additional offices and meeting spaces. The Stern Center Pool serves the whole student population and is the only pool accessible to students, faculty, and staff at the College. Closing the pool would not only dissolve a team, but also alleviates a fitness and educational opportunity for many.

As a member of this community, I am writing you today to ask for your support.

There is an effort going on right now to save this program and we know it's a big, up-hill battle. When these types of decisions are made they are very rarely overturned. However, we can't go down without a fight.

The swimming and diving team not only boasts some of the top GPA's in the entire athletic department and has a 100% graduation rate, but is a team of givers, not takers. They give their summers to be first responders at community beaches and teach over 2,000 children every summer through coaching in the Coastal Carolina Aquatic Association. This program's reach far exceeds the depth that the College initially assumed, and if this program were to remain cut, its effects would ripple throughout the state of SC.

There are short-term plans, which involve the College giving the program more time until another facility becomes a viable option. This leads into our long-term plan of collaborating with the City and building a new facility, a world-class natatorium that this community has desperately needed for many years. This would not only increase aquatic education and competitiveness, but would be a huge economic boost to the area as well. Just think if Charleston could host national caliber swim meets... Athletes and their families would fill our hotels, eat at our restaurants, and shop our local businesses – putting money back into our economy. The advantages are huge.

Imagine the College of Charleston, a school surrounded by water and built in a port town, existing without a world-class swim team. Swimming is an Olympic sport, it's a life-saving sport, and its elimination in the Lowcountry would be devastating for the community.

I'm reaching out because we're trying to get advocates to help make our case. Ted Stern was an Olympic swimmer, and when he was the president of the College he was a big advocate for swimming on campus. I know that he would be terribly upset to learn of this administration's lack of support for a program that meant so much to him. They are neglecting the needs of the students, tearing down Mr. Stern's legacy, and putting their own agenda above the student body's. Being an elected official that represents the people in your state, you've shown your dedication to supporting our community and I am asking for your support in this matter.

Thank you for your time,

A Bailey Clark

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College of Charleston Swimming and Diving 2006-2010