

To: The Honorable Nikki Haley
Office of the Governor
1205 Pendleton St.
Columbia, SC 29201

To: Mr Eugene Warr Jr., Chairman
USC Board of Trustees
Osborne Administration Building
University of South Carolina
Columbia, SC 29208

To: Mr. Tim Hofferth, Chair
SC Commission on Higher Education
260 Edgewood Dr.
Chapin, SC 29036

To: Dr. Harry Pastides, President
Osborne Administration Building
Suite 206
University of South Carolina
Columbia, SC 29208

To: Dr. Thomas Moore, Ph.D., Chancellor
University of South Carolina Upstate
800 University Way
Spartanburg, SC 29303

To: Dr. James Clements, President
Clemson University
Clemson, SC 29634

To: Dr. Elizabeth Fleming, President
Converse College
580 E Main St.
Spartanburg, South Carolina 29302

To: Dr. Nayet Samhat, President
Wofford College
429 North Church St.
Spartanburg, SC 29303-3663

To: Dr. Richard Cosentino, President
Lander University
320 Stanley Ave.
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To: Mr. Steve Petit, President
Bob Jones University
1700 Wade Hampton Blvd.
Greenville, SC 29614

To: Mr. Dave DeCenzo, President
Coastal Carolina University
PO Box 261954.
Conway, SC 29528-6054

To: Ms. Sandra Jordan, Chancellor
USC Aiken
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Aiken, SC 29801

To: Mr. Luther Carter, President
Francis Marion University
PO Box 100547
Florence, SC 29502

To: Mr. Glenn McConnell, President
College of Charleston
66 George St.
Charleston, SC 29424

Memo

From: Dan Reider
Cell: 803-730-7186
Date: 12/7/15

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Mr. Dennis Pruitt
Vice President for Student Affairs
Vice Provost and Dean of Students

I appreciate your recent response to my letter of 10/23/15 in which I tried to summarize some of my frustrations with the way I view how the University of South Carolina (USC) addresses the problems of drugs on campus and particularly in the dorms and fraternities. I realize that my observations are from my perspective and are probably a little skewed from my personal experiences with USC. I will not continue to copy the other addressees but I did want to respond to your letter and copy them this one time.

Your response include a very detailed list of statistics and information that summarize the unfortunate state of drug and alcohol use in this country. Although everyone is aware or should be aware of the information in your response, similar information was the basis of one of my first letters to USC- to Ms. Cooney, Behavioral Intervention Department. To be frank, my concerns were not very well received by Ms. Cooney as I was told that this statistical information did not apply to USC and that these problems were more prevalent on college campus out west and in the north. My follow up letter to Ms. Cooney expressed some disagreement with her position but was then told that if my son could not handle the drugs and alcohol in the dorms, he should move out. However, I do not want this to be about my son. He has a long road ahead of him and, while he is doing a little better, he may or may not ever become a productive member of society. I have written many letters over the past 2 years at first trying to get him some help while he was in school and then trying to get others like him help after he was no longer in school. We could spend many hours talking about how he and kids like him are not getting help and how the parents are consistently kept in the dark while the student is struggling with all types of issues while living on campus but that is not the purpose of this letter.

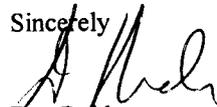
After a while I realized that I was never going to get anyone at USC to seriously address my concerns. The best I could get from anyone I wrote or discussed these issues with was, other than if my son cannot handle the drugs and alcohol he needs to move out of the dorms, was the typical response that this is "just the way it is" on college campuses and "it's no different than if the student was living off campus". Those responses to me, as a parent of a student who is going to a school where the school makes a commitment to provide a safe environment, are not acceptable responses. At that point I changed my tactics and instead of trying to discuss issues related to my son, I asked that USC address my specific concerns about the lack of any real deterrent to students selling and using drugs on campus and how that lack of action by USC contradicted USC's commitment to providing a safe campus environment. You might respond stating that USC has a lot of issues to address, that USC thought they were addressing my issues, that USC had met with me on several occasions, etc. and, while some of these are true, I can tell you that there was not and still has not been any attempt to address the specific concerns I have laid out in various correspondence to USC. After 6 months, Dr. Pastides had me meet with Mr. Gene Luna. Mr. Luna seemed to understand my concerns but he reiterated USC's official response which was basically that this is the way things are on campus and the University is doing what it can and that I had some good ideas that maybe the University could look at. I had also met with Ms. Lisa Jerald, Student Ombudsman. She appeared to be more concerned than others I spoke with but I sensed that drugs on campus was not an issue she was very involved with. I contacted Coach Spurrier and Coach Tanner. Not sure why other than when growing up playing sports, my coaches always seemed to very concerned about younger persons relationships with drugs and alcohol. Never got any responses from either of those two and never got responses from the Disabilities Department. Never got a response from USC Public Safety. This was particularly baffling as when I wrote the other schools in the State and mentioned my general concerns with drugs on campus, almost every one of the heads of their school's Public Safety Department called me up within two weeks. I spend a lot of time with each one of them on the phone. Most told me off the record that there were some

things that they wanted to do on campus to make their campuses safer but their Administration would not allow them to do some of these things. My letter to USC Public Safety discussed my concern with the sale and use of such drugs as cocaine, heroin and synthetics on campus. I did not get any response from USC Public Safety.

My goal in spending so much time in trying to address this issue with USC (and maybe someone at the other schools in the State will take a different look at their schools practices) is that there might be a better chance of some of the 25% or so of students that don't ever make it through as a student at USC to succeed at USC. As Mr. Luna told me, maybe it would help, as I had suggested, if USC asked some of the students who were not returning why they might not be returning. But to me it really boils down to whether or not USC is going to provide a safe environment for the students as they have committed to the students and their parents. All these programs, online seminars, etc. are good, but what about enforcement? What about deterrents? What about real consequences? What about some of the programs that other colleges have put into place during the last 15 years? I sent copies of a dozen or so of these programs to various persons at USC- basically no response. Is it fair to the student, whether they are a top honors student or a student struggling with a difficult home life, to be placed in an environment where drugs and alcohol are freely sold and used in the dorms and fraternities? You can say this is not happening but it is- at USC and many other campuses all over the country. Some schools have made great efforts to let the students know that being on their own and being responsible young adults means they are going to have to take consequences like adults. Some schools excuse some of these behaviors and say this is the way college life has always been. But things are different, the drugs are different. Society is different. If nothing else, schools have the responsibility to provide a safe environment if for no other reason than this is what they are telling the parents and students they will do. If USC and other schools are not going to have real deterrents, real prevention and real enforcement of drug laws, the student who does not need to be or does not desire to be in that environment does not have a choice. They are placed in an environment that at their age and level of development where it may be very difficult for them to be successful. We all realize that when the student is not living on campus, they will be surrounded by all influences- both good and bad. The difference is again, the University has committed to providing a safe environment which is not something anyone is committing to outside of the campus.

I realize that no one I have spoken with at USC is going to take my concerns seriously or at least not as seriously as I think these issues deserve to be taken. When we read or hear about a student's death on campus as the result of drugs and alcohol, there is sometimes a reaction locally depending upon how far away the death occurs from your institution. The problem is, that even if there is a reaction and some discussion about how to better prevent things on your campus, the death is really an anomaly. The death is what gets all the attention but what is not getting the attention it deserves is how the drugs are already doing tremendous harm to many students- not just the student that dies. That they do not die on your campus is not a good indicator that the institution is doing a good job keeping the campus safe. If you want students to act like adults, treat them like adults. Let them know in no uncertain terms that certain behaviors are unacceptable. Furthermore, let them know what certain behaviors have certain consequences and that they can be very severe consequences. When a student dies, when a student becomes an addict, when a student can no longer do the things students need to do because of easy access to drugs, think about the institutions commitment to the student and their family- think about that student as your own child. I think if one did this, maybe then we would see real change at USC and other institutions that have not, in my opinion, taken this problem as seriously as they should. I do not think that we need to wait until we have students die as the result of drugs and alcohol until an institution meets its commitment to parents and the students.

Sincerely



Dan Reider

PS

1. I apologize for including names in this memo but I think this is a serious enough issue that the names are secondary to the issue. If you take the totality of the letters I wrote (and I have most or maybe all of them), no reasonable person would think that USC is adequately responding to a parents concern. I have no child at USC at this time but feel that many other students/parents are going through and have gone through similar issues and that is very unfortunate.