Palmetto College Campuses Staff Senate

Meeting via Teams
February 4, 2026
2:30 PM-3:30 PM
Laura Faile-Presiding

Minutes

I. **Call to Order:**

A. The meeting was called to order at 2:33 PM by Chair Laura Faile. Number present: 53 (at first count, additional people joined) (Quorum of 20 was met).

II. **Approval of Minutes**

A. Correction/Approval of Minutes (November 5, 2025)

Motion to approve: Laura Faile
Corrections (if any): None
Result: Approved

III. **Recognitions**

A. December graduates

- Palmetto College: 28 (BLS 19 & BOL 9)
- USC Lancaster: 38
- USC Salkehatchie: 15
- USC Sumter: 49
- USC Union: 8

B. USC Lancaster health coach training gains national acclaim: 1st nationally recognized health coach training program in SC! Funded in partnership by the SC Center for Rural & Primary Health Care.

C. USC Lancaster students lead gift collection drive in Dec. And presented over 150 gifts to Brooklyn Springs Elem., Clinton Elem., & Southside Early Childhood Center. Congrats to the students from the OSP & the Student Nursing Association for a job well done!

D. USC Salkehatchie launches health services, partnering with Low Country Health Care System and Coastal Empire Community Mental Health Center to provide

vital services to its students, faculty, staff and community. This is on the Allendale campus via a mobile unit.

E. Two USC Union Soccer Students earn All-American honors; One of the highest honors in collegiate athletes, reflecting excellence skills, performance and dedication! Congratulations to Pablo Valverde and Max Manzelmann!

F. Welcome Tiffany P. Boyd, Palmetto College CFO; effective Jan 30, 2026. Tiffany has more than 18 years of progressive experience in higher education, government, and military financial management. We're looking forward to having Tiffany join us as a special guest soon!

IV. Consent Action Agenda

Items included: A–K written reports.

A. Academic and Student Affairs and Associate Provost -Written Report

B. Human Resources-Written Report

C. Enrollment Management & Student Success-Written Report

D. USC Lancaster-Written Report

E. USC Salkehatchie-Written Report

F. USC Sumter-Written Report

G. USC Union-Written Report

H. Palmetto College Central Financial Aid-Written Report

I. Palmetto College Development-Written Report

J. Palmetto College Information Technology-Written Report

K. Palmetto College Staff Senate Ad Hoc Committee-Written Report

Items removed from Consent Agenda (if any): Chelsea Corbett made a motion to move the Human Resources written report to an action item.

Approval of Remaining Consent Agenda: yes
Motion: Chelsea Corbett
Second: Majority approved
Discussion: Yes
Result: Approved

V. Reports of Officers

A. Chancellor of Palmetto College-Craig Wilson, J.D., Ph.D.

Summary of remarks or submitted report:

- Dr. Wilson briefed everyone, stating he and the Deans were at a meeting last week, putting forth their budget requests and President Amiridis represented everyone, highlighting the needs of the campuses.
- Dr. Wilson spoke on the AI era and informed us that we did not get the 3.9 million grant to teach the AI, but we are ready to move forward by setting up new goals and a task force.
- Within the next ten days, he will be establishing an Office of Corporate and Community Engagement whose sole purpose is to go out and engage corporations to aid with our recruitment and going after employees who are working for various corporations, all sizes.
- Investiture was to be May 12th at Lancaster.
- Working on a grant for rural workforce in collaboration with CHE; in the early stages.
- Rural Education: Several professors are recruiting students from the areas we serve; very good to coordinate and collaborate with this group.
- Gave a visual report on the enrollment numbers across the state of SC; emphasis on non-traditional students, as that is where our growth comes from.

VI. Action Agenda

A. Nominations and Election of Parliamentarian

Nominees: Amy Crotzer
Nominated by: Amber Novotny
Seconded by: Laura Faile
Additional nominations? No
Vote result: Motion passed.
Elected Parliamentarian: Amy Crotzer

B. Human Resources-Written Report: Discussion of Items Removed from Consent Agenda

Item discussed: Dual Employment and paperwork

Key points raised:

- Timeline when paperwork is due: at least ten days prior. The earlier, the better.
- Who is the paperwork submitted to? Local HR
- Motions arising from discussion (if any): None

- Discussion summary: Tracey Mobley Chavous explained key factors of dual employment within the USC System. A temporary employee is to be paid for every hour that they work, so they do not fill out the form in question. Discussion needs to be held between the primary campus supervisor and the dual campus supervisor and needs to be discussed what the employee is doing, where they are going and any permissions they need for it to happen. Anything over 40 hours in a week is paid overtime. Supervisors need to be aware of employee's status so not to negatively impact a budget.
- Thank you to Tracy for her time and explaining the new form!

VII. Comment/Participation (2 minutes per person)

- Speaker: Tyrie Rowell | Topic: Market pay grade structure change: Talk to their HR director, because each person has tailored information. USC market has their own pay structure now. Check yours out by logging into PeopleSoft.
- Speaker: Laura Faile | Topic: Adhoc committee has designed a survey to address questions around communication and how we get information from administration, so we can better answer questions.

VIII. Other and Future Business

A. PCC Water Cooler Chats: 3rd Friday, 9:30 -10:00AM (Teams)

B. PCC Executive Committee Meeting: May 20, 2026, 11:00AM (Columbia)

C. PCC Staff Senate Meeting: June 3, 2026, 2:30-3:30PM (Teams)

IX. Adjournment

Motion to adjourn: Laura Faile
Second: Tyrie Rowell
Meeting adjourned at: 3:26 PM

Minutes submitted by:

Name: Jennifer Breland
Date submitted:
2/5/26

UNIVERSITY OF
South Carolina
PALMETTO COLLEGE

Dr. Walter Collins
Executive Vice Chancellor/Associate Provost

Report to the Palmetto College Campuses Staff Senate
February 2, 2026

The following are items that occupy my time:

- **Regular attendance or representation at standing and special called meetings**—OIRAA, Provost, EMT, Academic Programs, SC CHE, and USC Policy Advisory Council.

- **Academic Blueprint:** Campus point people have begun composing each respective campus's Academic Blueprint document which is to be submitted to the Office of the Provost by early March 2026.

- **REACH Act syllabi collection**—We are currently in the process of collecting all associated syllabi for Spring 2026. They are due to Mrs. Jean Carrano by February 6, 2026. Thanks for your assistance with compliance for this requirement.

- **Reminder about teaching resources**:
  - The **Center for Teaching Excellence** offers resources for Palmetto College faculty and staff. Find out more about what is happening there at this link: https://sc.edu/about/offices_and_divisions/cte/
  - I continue to work with PCCFS leaders to address concerns about a faculty ombudsman resource. More to come as we continue to problem-solve related to this issue.

- **Commission for Public Higher Education** – Standards and Procedures Working Group – Dr. Michael Sonntag and I are participating in this group, as well as Dr. Patrick Lawrence, USC Lancaster, who was chosen by the PCCFS Executive Committee to represent the faculty. Twenty-one standards have been developed through input shared from far and wide, including those sent by our Palmetto College Faculty Organizations. We now have a draft of the evidentiary

documentation in support of the 21 standards, and a meeting was held on Wednesday, January 28 to discuss further. There will be a period for public comment scheduled in the coming days. More will be shared as it becomes available. Please see accompanying PowerPoint slides prepared by the USC OIRRA, detailing the activities of the group and timeline as well as the PowerPoint and draft pdf document related to the evidentiary standards as of the end of January.

- **Academic Program Review –** The BOL/BLS degrees, as well as the AA and AS degrees, will undergo Academic Program Review in accordance with policy ACAF 2.20 in CY 2026. We will need several Palmetto College faculty members to participate on the review teams.

- **Explorance Blue** – Instructors can access a recorded training session on Explorance Blue, available at the following link on the Office of the Provost's Student Course Experience Surveys webpage: https://sc.edu/about/offices_and_divisions/provost/faculty/support_for_teaching_excellence/course-experience-surveys/

COMMISSION FOR PUBLIC HIGHER EDUCATION
ROUGH DRAFT EVIDENTIARY GUIDANCE FOR ACCREDITATION STANDARDS

The Commission for Public Higher Education (CPHE) adopted accreditation standards on October 1, 2025, after careful consideration of comments and suggestions submitted by stakeholders and members of the public regarding draft standards that were issued on August 19, 2025. Many of the comments and suggestions regarding the draft standards informed evidentiary guidance, which is offered here in the form of a rough draft.

CPHE welcomes comments and inquiries regarding this draft evidentiary guidance through INSERT DATE. Please email CPHE at contact@cphe.org. Constructive advice and suggestions for edits, ideally, will answer some or all of the following questions:

1. *What portions of the evidentiary guidance would benefit from clarification? How might revisions lend themselves to greater clarity?*
2. *What concepts are not addressed within the evidentiary guidance that an institution might expect to see within the evidentiary guidance?*
3. *What forms of evidence are not addressed within the guidance that should be added?*
4. *Given CPHE's explicit goal to enable institutions to leverage existing data and reports in answer to CPHE accreditation standards, what forms of existing data or reports might be cited within the evidentiary guidance as appropriate for institutions to supply as evidence?*

After suitable revisions to this draft document, evidentiary guidance will be deployed in support of the first cohort of 10 colleges and universities that have entered into accrediting activity with CPHE. CPHE then plans to revise accreditation standards and evidentiary guidance again, later in 2026, after accrediting decisions have been issued for each institution in the initial cohort of institutions, before work with a second cohort begins.

The following introductory context applies to all CPHE accreditation standards or may be useful generally as an institution assembles evidence that demonstrates fulfillment of CPHE accreditation standards and submits an institutional self-study:

Motivating Assumptions

1. The unit of analysis—the thing being evaluated—for the purpose of accreditation is the institution. Although some references to governance at the level of any university system may be relevant for context, the system is not being accredited by CPHE. Likewise, data regarding an institution's disciplines and programs may illustrate institutional behavior, but disciplines and programs are not being accredited by CPHE; for this reason, CPHE will not request comprehensive data at the level of disciplines and programs, etc. More regarding expectations for comprehensiveness is addressed later in this document.

2. CPHE strives to streamline the accreditation process. For this reason, CPHE encourages institutions to repurpose existing data and existing reports as evidence in answer to CPHE accreditation standards. CPHE will refrain, whenever possible, from creating requirements for new data, new data definitions, or new reporting.

   Similarly, CPHE assumes that work products authored for due-diligence processes required of public colleges and universities by their respective states will often suffice for purposes of evidence. Therefore, CPHE will minimize requests to duplicate or to repeat with new requirements for detail any matters that have been inspected already at the levels of units, colleges/schools, institutional executive teams, institutional governing boards, system governing boards, state legislatures, and state advisory or governing boards.

Definitions of Terms and Phrases

1. The phrase "across its organization and [its] activities" appears in CPHE Accreditation Standards 1 and 5. This phrase should be operationalized as describing an institution comprehensively. At issue are all aspects of an institution and all aspects of its behavior. Likewise at issue are all associated organizations that operate in support of an institution or with authority delegated by an institution (e.g., 501[c] 3 foundations, online program managers, etc.).

2. Adjectives recurring across CPHE accreditation standards include "appropriate," which should be interpreted in most cases within the standards as guided (if not dictated) by law, by mission, by Carnegie type, and by institutional size. Although CPHE strives to treat institutions equitably, differences in governance and mission and size/scope should logically yield some latitude in requirements, expectations, and even evidence.

DRAFT

An institution's focus on mission will be integral to the institution's interpretation of CPHE accreditation standards and how fulfillment should be documented with evidence in an institutional self-study.

3. Definitions of other terms and phrases contained within the CPHE standards appear within this evidentiary guidance, typically beginning with a broad definition before focusing on an operational definition specific to CPHE accreditation.

Data and Evidence

1. CPHE's interests and authority apply to all aspects of an institution and its behavior; however, CPHE neither expects nor requires comprehensive evidence unless expressly noted in evidentiary guidance (often signaled by use of the word "all").

2. Evidence required for submittal within an institutional self-study relative to any standard will be outlined within evidentiary guidance in sections labelled "Required evidence." Furthermore, required evidence will be signaled by use of the verb "shall" within the evidentiary guidance.

   Evidence suggested but not required for submittal within an institutional self-study will be outlined in sections labelled "Suggested evidence." Any list of suggested evidence is not comprehensive. Institutions are welcome and encouraged to supply forms of relevant evidence other than those listed, in response to standards.

3. CPHE encourages institutions to supply data at the level of the institution. Other, more detailed data regarding units and departments will be relevant in many circumstances, however. Any samples of evidence should illustrate compliance at levels more specific than the institution in a logical fashion. To the degree that purposeful sampling is useful and repeated across evidence submitted to CPHE by an institution, recurring patterns of purposeful sampling may be sufficient and may be instructive for peer evaluators/readers. For example, supply of evidence regarding academic matters may include some but not all evidence from each of an institution's colleges and schools. To the degree that evidence might illustrate variation within an institution, such evidence may be useful as well.

4. CPHE suggests that longitudinal data may benefit from reasonable time horizons. Data and evidence from the previous three academic years will generally suffice. If,

however, a longer time horizon lends itself to illustrating important or pronounced changes, a longer time horizon is of course useful and welcome.

5. Some guidance in the following pages will cite an April 23, 2025 Executive Order that directs the U.S. Secretary of Education to "take appropriate steps," many of which have not been enacted as of this writing. Among these "appropriate steps" is the anticipated requirement that institutions should "use data on program-level student outcomes to improve such outcomes, without reference to race, ethnicity, or sex." CPHE suggests that an institution should supply data to CPHE as if this anticipated Department of Education requirement is already enforced.

6. Data, evidence, and cell sizes should be supplied in accordance with industry and legal standards that protect individuals' identities. An institution should protect anonymity, confidentiality, and privacy. Appropriate redactions are encouraged.

Matters Not Addressed in CPHE Accreditation Standards

1. Some standards that appeared in the August 19 draft CPHE accreditation standards document have been combined with one another or deleted on the basis of advice from experts and stakeholders.

   Among the standards that have been deleted are the following, with some explanation as to rationale and as to alternate plans:

   - CPHE deleted a draft standard regarding federal and state regulations ("The institution complies with federal and state regulations. [In the event that the Commission's standards conflict with state law, all parties shall understand state law to take precedence.]"). The notion of rectifying any conflict between CPHE standards and law will be addressed instead in CPHE policies and procedures. Also, see text under the heading "Primacy of State Law in Questions of Authority Regarding Public Colleges and Universities" in the following pages.

   - CPHE deleted a draft standard regarding institutional self-reporting of non-compliance with CPHE standards ("The institution reports incidents of non-compliance with these standards to the Commission for Public Higher Education, upon receipt of reasonable evidence of such non-compliance."). This matter will be addressed in CPHE policies and procedures.

2. Feedback regarding the August 19 draft CPHE accreditation standards sometimes noted concepts that did not appear explicitly within the draft standards. In many

but not all cases, these concepts are addressed within the draft evidentiary guidance for applicable standards.

In other cases, however, concepts that do not appear explicitly within CPHE accreditation standards or evidentiary guidance are intended for description in CPHE policies and procedures. Among these, for example, is the concept of "substantive change."

Lapes in Compliance

CPHE encourages institutions, when supplying evidence in response to accreditation standards, to acknowledge and describe past challenges, lapses, and insufficiencies. The concept of compliance and self-study embraced by CPHE focuses on the present—not the past. Resolution of past lapses therefore will not suggest current non-compliance.

How a college or university manages challenges is often indicative of institutional maturity and of willingness and ability to improve. It may not be realistic that an institution will not experience challenges. Therefore, CPHE seeks information regarding lapses in the interest of promoting transparency and in the interest of understanding an institution's adaptability, its ability to manage problems through appropriate processes, and its desire to rise above adversity.

Notes Regarding CPHE Accrediting Processes

Although this document is not intended to describe CPHE, its governance, or its plans for accreditation processes comprehensively, readers may benefit from some practical descriptions here as to CPHE's anticipated processes for peer review and accreditation.

1. CPHE Peer Visiting Teams of 4 to 5 individuals will assess candidate institutions. Each of these Peer Visiting Teams will be chaired typically by an institutional Chief Executive or Chief Academic Officer and will include at least one faculty member. Members of Peer Visiting Teams will represent public institutions of enrollment size and Carnegie type similar to those of the institution being assessed, whenever possible. All members of visiting teams will participate in orientation and training. Members of visiting teams from a specific university system will not evaluate institutions from the same university system. CPHE Peer Visiting Teams will recommend findings as to accreditation status to the CPHE Accrediting Advisory Committee. (See below.) CPHE is currently accepting applications and nominations for Chairs and members of Peer Visiting Teams.

2. The CPHE Accrediting Advisory Committee will include institutional executives, subject-matter experts, and faculty. Each Committee member will participate in orientation and training. For purposes of CPHE accrediting activity for the first cohort of 10 colleges and universities, the Accrediting Advisory Committee will not include representatives from any of those 10 colleges and universities. Members of the CPHE Accrediting Advisory Committee will likely include representatives from the six university systems that founded CPHE, along with experts from institutions outside of the six founding university systems. In the event that a member of the CPHE Accrediting Advisory Committee represents a university system, said member will recuse herself or himself from discussion or action regarding any institution from said member's university system. The CPHE Accrediting Advisory Committee will recommend accreditation findings to the CPHE Board of Directors. (See below.)

3. The CPHE Board of Directors will make final determinations as to institutional accreditation on the basis of advice rendered by CPHE Peer Visiting Teams, which is then recommended by the CPHE Accrediting Advisory Committee to the Board of Directors. As the CPHE Board of Directors considers accreditation decisions, any Director who represents a university system will recuse herself or himself from discussion or action regarding any institution from said member's university system.

   Processes for appeals regarding accreditation decisions are being determined as of this writing.

   The CPHE Board of Directors includes seven members as of this writing: six members representing each of the founding university systems and one "public" member who is not currently associated with a potential CPHE institution. (That "public" member is Dr. Mark Becker, Immediate Past President of the Association of Public and Land-grant Universities, who was elected to the CPHE Board of Directors during September of 2025.) U.S. Department of Education regulations require the governing boards of accrediting agencies to include one "public" member for every seven members.[1] CPHE's Board of Directors therefore meets this standard. Nevertheless, it is CPHE's plan to recruit additional "public" members

[1] *The Secretary's Recognition of Accrediting Agencies*, 34 C.F.R § 602, states that an accrediting agency must be governed by a "decision-making body" and that "[a]t least one member of the agency's decision-making body is a representative of the public, and at least one-seventh of the body consists of representatives of the public. . . ."

for a ratio of public members to representative members that will exceed the Department's requirements.

CPHE's governing documents currently cap the membership of the CPHE Board of Directors at 11 members. As noted above, the Board of Directors plans to recruit additional "public" members. The Board of Directors may, at a future date, name members who represent university systems that may join CPHE's governance structure.

Primacy of State Law in Questions of Authority Regarding Public Colleges and Universities

It is common for creation and authority of a public college or university to be rooted in state law or statute. The state typically defines authority as resting with an institutional governing board. Other portions of law or statute may detail various authorities that the governing board may or shall delegate to other parties. Delegation of the governing board's authority is often detailed in institutional bylaws and policies. For example, the governing board typically delegates day-to-day management of the institution to the chief executive, and this delegation is often described in institutional bylaws or policies.

The state has broad authority to define or limit institutional behavior of public colleges or universities, even in cases that may be central to matters that otherwise might be deemed within the parameters of the academic freedom that belongs to the institution. For example, although institutional academic freedom is most often defined to include "who is admitted for study," a state may exercise authority to require a public college or university to award admissions preferences to state residents. Relatedly, a state may exercise authority to limit the percentage of out-of-state students that may be admitted to a public college or university.

The state's authority may extend to matters related to governance, curriculum, and other matters for public colleges and universities.

Organization of This Document

In the text that follows, CPHE offers evidentiary guidance for each CPHE accreditation standard. Guidance is provided *in italics*, as a complement to standards, which are enumerated and in **bold text**:

Integrity, Transparency, and Compliance

1. The institution demonstrates integrity across its organization and its activities.

   "Integrity" is a common expectation among standards employed by U.S. accrediting agencies. Among the Oxford English Dictionary *'s definitions of "integrity" is the following: "Soundness of moral principle; the character of uncorrupted virtue, esp. in relation to truth and fair dealing; uprightness, honesty, and sincerity." CPHE suggests to institutions that an operational definition of "integrity" in relation to accreditation should focus on honesty and fair dealing in an institution's behavior, including supply of evidence to demonstrate fulfillment of CPHE accreditation standards and including interactions with CPHE generally.*

   The expectation for integrity therefore applies to each CPHE accreditation standard.

   The phrase "across its organization and [its] activities" appears in CPHE Accreditation Standards 1 and 5. This phrase should be operationalized as describing an institution comprehensively. At issue are all aspects of an institution and all aspects of its behavior. Likewise at issue are all associated organizations that operate in support of an institution or with authority delegated by an institution (e.g., 501[c]3 foundations, online program managers, etc.).

   As is common among U.S. accrediting agencies, however, fulfillment of CPHE Accreditation Standard 1 does not require supply of evidence. Rather, CPHE will note any alleged incidents that may not demonstrate integrity for an institution to address through communication with and documentation supplied to CPHE. Institutions will find descriptions of this process regarding alleged lapses of integrity in CPHE policies and procedures.

2. The institution is transparent in, publishes accurate information regarding, and complies with its own policies and practices.

   Among the Oxford English Dictionary *'s definitions of "transparent" are the following: "Frank, open, candid, ingenuous" and "Easily seen through, recognized, understood, or detected; manifest, evident, obvious, clear." CPHE suggests to institutions that an operational definition of "transparent" in relation to accreditation focuses on openness, clarity, and ready availability.*

DRAFT

In response to CPHE Accreditation Standard 2, CPHE suggests therefore that an institution should demonstrate transparency with evidence that policies and practices are published, readily available, and readily noticed upon revision. Policies and practices at issue are across the institution and its activities.

Accuracy of information regarding policies and practices hinges on to the degree to which enactment of policies and practices adheres to those policies and practices as published—along with the degree to which published policies and practices are current. As such, CPHE suggests that institutions supply evidence in the form of records of enactment that adhere to current descriptions.

Required evidence

- *An institution shall supply, describe, and evidence statutes and other governing documents regarding institutional policy-making authority and, if relevant, the degree to which policy-making authority is delegated within the institution. If system-level policies and policy-making are at issue, these shall be supplied, described, and evidenced as well.*

- *An institution shall supply, describe, and evidence institutional structures or bodies responsible for management, revision, and dissemination of policies and practices—including the degree to which stakeholders are involved in these.*

- *Regarding an institution's compliance with its own policies and practices, an institution shall outline any policies, practices, and structures within the institution that monitor and ensure compliance with institutional policies and governing documents—along with resulting practices. Evidence of the implementation of these policies, practices, and structures will be essential.*

- *An institution shall list and produce (via hyperlinks) all institutional policies and governing documents in relation to Standard 2. If relevant, all system-level policies and governing documents regarding policy authority shall be listed and produced similarly. Evidence of transparency of, accuracy of, and compliance with all of these policies and governing documents will not be required, however. See below for additional guidance.*

- *An institution shall provide its policies and practices, as required by 34 C.F.R § 602.16, along with evidence of transparency of, accuracy of, and compliance*

with policies and practices regarding the following. Evidence may be restricted to the current academic year:
  - *recruiting and admissions practices,*
  - *academic calendars,*
  - *catalogs,*
  - *publications,*
  - *grading, and*
  - *advertising.*

- *In addition, an institution shall provide its policies and practices, along with evidence of transparency of, accuracy of, and compliance with policies and practices regarding the following similarly consequential matters, although not required by 34 C.F.R § 602.16. Evidence may be restricted to the current academic year:*
  - *tuition and fees;*
  - *student discipline, adjudication, and appeals processes;*
  - *hiring and employment processes for all employees;*
  - *promotion and tenure processes for faculty;*
  - *discipline, adjudication, and appeals processes for all employees; and*
  - *grievance procedures for all students and all employees.*

- *An institution shall provide its policies and practices, as required by 34 C.F.R § 602.17, along with evidence of transparency of, accuracy of, and compliance with policies and practices regarding the following. Evidence may be restricted to the current academic year:*
  - *"processes. . . through which the institution establishes that a student who registers in any course offered via distance education or correspondence is the same student who academically engages in the course or program;" and*
  - *"processes that protect student privacy and notify students of any projected additional student charges associated with the verification of student identity at the time of registration or enrollment."*

<u>Suggested evidence</u>
Regarding transparency of, accuracy of, and compliance with institutional policies and practices, CPHE suggests that the institution should supply evidence across the three most recent academic years of review and revision of policies in accordance with any scheduled cadence of assessment; transparency of these policies, accuracy of these policies, and compliance with these policies

across the three most recent academic years; and evidence of management and resolution of incidents requiring correction for insufficient transparency of, inaccuracy of, or non-compliance with policies and advertised practices. CPHE suggests that the same standard should be applied to any system-level policies and practices.

Continuous improvement
CPHE Accreditation Standard 5 regarding continuous improvement applies to the periodic review and revision of institutional policies and practices. At issue are any structures, bodies, and committees charged with the review and revision of policies and practices—along with the cadence by which these reviews and revisions are scheduled.

3. **The institution documents its compliance with Title IV of the Higher Education Act, as required by federal regulations.**

U.S. Department of Education regulations regarding standards required of accrediting agencies include this requirement:

> Record of compliance with the institution's program responsibilities under title IV of the Act, based on the most recent student loan default rate data provided by the Secretary, the results of financial or compliance audits, program reviews, and any other information that the Secretary may provide to the agency[.]

Required evidence
An institution shall outline policies, practices, and structures (e.g., units or committees) within the institution that monitor and ensure compliance with Title IV of the Higher Education Act.

Evidence of the implementation of these policies, practices, and structures (e.g., units or committees) within the institution that monitor and ensure compliance with Title IV of the Higher Education Act shall be provided as well. Documentation that illustrates compliance over the last three academic years should suffice.

Continuous improvement
CPHE Accreditation Standard 5 regarding continuous improvement applies to the periodic review and revision of institutional policies, practices, and structures

(e.g., units or committees) within the institution that monitor and ensure compliance with Title IV of the Higher Education Act. The institution should evidence the review and revision of these policies, practices, and structures—along with the cadence by which these reviews and revisions are scheduled.

4. **The institution employs conflict-of-interest policies and requires regular declarations regarding conflicts of interest from appropriate personnel.**

A complement to CPHE Accreditation Standard 1 regarding integrity generally is CPHE Accreditation Standard 4's focus on conflicts of interest and the appearance of potential conflicts of interest among individual employees, agents, and members of governing boards.

Use of the word "appropriate" in CPHE Accreditation Standard 4 signals the expectation that some institutional personnel conduct work that may present potential for conflicts of interest while other institutional personnel may not. As such, it is neither appropriate nor necessary for some institutional personnel to complete regular conflict-of-interest declarations.

CPHE will not impose an operational definition of the adjective "regular" in relation to declarations, although annual declarations are the norm. Passage of additional time between required completion of declarations will increase the likelihood that new conflicts or potential conflicts have become at issue during time periods between required declarations.

Required evidence

- *An institution shall demonstrate how it determines which personnel must complete conflict-of-interest declarations—while demonstrating also that this determination is enacted as intended. Inclusion of all members of governing boards and all senior executives will be essential.*

- *An institution shall supply, describe, and evidence relevant policies and practices, provide evidence of implementation, and supply samples of conflict-of-interest declarations—with attention to legal limitations regarding such supply and/or the wisdom of redacting relevant documents.*

- *An institution shall supply, describe, and evidence officers and structures (e.g., units or committees) responsible for oversight of conflict-of-interest matters.*

- *An institution shall provide evidence of management or adjudication of conflicts of interest or potential conflicts of interest—with attention to legal limitations regarding such supply and/or the wisdom of redacting relevant documents.*

- *To the degree that institutional conflict-of-interest matters are managed at the level of the university system or the state, documentation of these will suffice, with no expectation that these will be duplicated at the level of the institution.*

- *Supply of evidence regarding the above conflict-of-interest matters over the previous three academic years should suffice.*

Continuous improvement
CPHE Accreditation Standard 5 regarding continuous improvement applies to policies and practices regarding conflicts of interest or potential conflicts of interest. The institution should evidence the review and revision of these policies and practices—along with the cadence by which these reviews and revisions are scheduled. If, however, conflict-of-interest matters are managed at the level of the university system or the state, institutional control over continuous improvement of these matters will not be relevant.

Continuous Improvement

5. The institution enacts processes for continuous improvement across its organization and activities, assessing outcomes versus goals, applying lessons learned to the improvement of policies and actions, and then repeating this cycle at appropriate intervals.

The expectation that an institution employs and demonstrates continuous improvement is one that applies to an institution generally and to many of the notions addressed explicitly within CPHE accreditation standards. As such, regular assessment and implementation of lessons learned from assessment should be interpreted as a sub-category for documentation within many CPHE accreditation standards as well as within CPHE Accreditation Standard 5 specifically. As such, recommendations for descriptions and evidence of continuous improvement are provided within this document, for relevant standards. An institution's citing or restating texts regarding continuous

improvement within its self-study may be efficient in answer to CPHE Accreditation Standard 5 and other standards.

Although CPHE Accreditation Standard 5 refers to the notion of repeating continuous improvement cycles "at appropriate intervals," CPHE will not dictate the timeline for repeating cycles. An "appropriate" interval may vary according to category of items to be assessed and according to other relevant variables.

Required evidence
An institution shall address continuous improvement generally in answer to CPHE Accreditation Standard 5. In particular, an institution shall cite, describe, and evidence centralized strategic planning, institutional assessment/effectiveness, and similar structures for assessing performance versus goals. Equally important will be institutional practices and structures for applying lessons garnered from assessment to current and future institutional plans and actions.

Suggested evidence

- *To the degree that continuous improvement is executed at the level of units or departments—as complements to centralized/institutional continuous improvement—CPHE suggests that citation, description, and evidence may be deployed selectively but not comprehensively.*

- *CPHE suggests that an institution should address continuous improvement in relation to CPHE accreditation standards, as suggested within the evidentiary guidance for those standards.*

- *Institutional practices that illustrate continuous improvement that may reasonably be cited, described, and evidenced relative to CPHE Accreditation Standard 5 and to other CPHE accreditation standards include but are not limited to the following (in alphabetical order):*
  - *budgeting and fiscal plans,*
  - *curricula,*
  - *governance,*
  - *master facilities plans,*
  - *mission statements,*
  - *personnel (performance of personnel via periodic evaluations, for example),*
  - *policies,*

- *post-tenure reviews,*
- *program reviews,*
- *promotion and tenure reviews, and*
- *strategic plans.*

- *It is common for institutions to assess institutional performance versus the performance of peer institutions. As such, CPHE suggests that institutions should supply information regarding peers, how peers were selected, and the measures for which performance against peers are assessed.*

Governance and Leadership

6. The institution's governance structures and practices demonstrate sound fiduciary oversight and sound executive management.

At issue regarding CPHE Accreditation Standard 6 are the authority by which an institution is established and governed; the authority enacted by system (if applicable) and institutional governing boards; the means by which authority is delegated by the board(s) to other bodies or persons; the management provided by institutional executives; and the degree to which all of these adhere to statute and policy, are ethical, and are aligned with accepted best practices in governance and management.

Similarly at issue are the fiduciary behavior of governing board(s) as corporate bodies, the fiduciary behavior of individual members of governing boards, the management effectiveness of the executive team as a whole, and the management effectiveness of individual executives.

The phrase "sound executive management" should be interpreted by an institution to refer to leadership at the level of the chief executive down and through the institution's organizations and activities. As a practical matter, commentary and evidence of sound executive management need not detail leadership any lower in the chain of command than at the level of deans of institutional colleges and schools, along with senior leadership of all associated organizations that operate in support of an institution or with authority delegated by an institution (e.g., 501[c]3 foundations, online program managers).

Required evidence

- *34 C.F.R § 602.28 states that "an accrediting agency. . . may not accredit or preaccredit institutions that lack legal authorization under applicable State law to provide a program of education beyond the secondary level." As such, an institution—as a public entity—shall supply, describe, and evidence laws or statutes that provide legal authority from the state to the institution.*

- *Furthermore, in answer to CPHE Accreditation Standard 6, an institution shall describe and cite applicable statutes, bylaws, and policies that relate to system (as applicable) and institutional governance—noting powers and responsibilities possessed by a system (as applicable) and institutional governing board; how any of those powers and responsibilities may be delegated to the chief executive and other persons/bodies; and how powers, responsibilities, and behaviors—in the form of evidence—reflect delegated authorities. An organizational chart will be useful but insufficient to demonstrate specific authorities and evidence of adherence to authorities.*

- *Regarding "sound fiduciary oversight," an institution shall demonstrate policies and practices fulfilled by governing boards and individual members of governing boards. Documentation and evidence of the board's fulfillment of the following, based on best practices in fiduciary behavior,[2] shall be provided as well:*

---

[2] An abundance of resources is available regarding the proper roles of governing boards and of individual members of governing boards. The observations and opinions and suggestions across these resources overlap with one another or echo one another in significant ways.

Among the resources that may assist an institution in understanding and evidencing the proper roles of governing boards are the following, with the caveat that this list is not intended to be comprehensive:

American Council of Trustees and Alumni. (2014, August 14). Governance for a New Era.

Association of Governing Boards of Universities and Colleges. (2023). AGB Board of Directors' Statement on Influences Impacting Governing Board Independence and Leadership.

Association of Governing Boards of Universities and Colleges. (2018). An Anatomy of Good Board Governance in Higher Education.

Association of Governing Boards of Universities and Colleges. (2021). Principles of Trusteeship.

Bowen, W. G. (2012). The board book: An insider's guide for directors and trustees. *W. W. Norton & Company.*

Chait, R.P. (2003). How to help your board govern more and manage less. BoardSource, Inc.

Chait, R.P., Ryan, W.P., & Taylor, B.E. (2005). Governance as leadership: Reframing the work of nonprofit boards. *John Wiley & Sons and BoardSource, Inc.*

Eckel, P.D. & Kezar, A. (2006). The challenges facing academic decision making: Contemporary issues and steadfast structures. In P.D. Eckel (Ed.), The shifting frontiers of academic decision making *(pp. 1–14). American Council on Education and Praeger.*

- *Hiring, evaluating, and—as necessary—terminating the employment of the chief executive officer.*
- *Executing fiduciary responsibilities.*
- *Operating as a corporate body, without unauthorized attempts by individual trustees or subsets of trustees to exercise the board's power.*
- *Protecting the institution from undue external influence.*
- *Providing strategic oversight.*
- *Serving as the institutional policy-making body.*
- *Delegating to the chief executive the management of the institution.*
- *Delegating other appropriate authorities to other persons or bodies in a manner consistent with policy.*

Continuous improvement

Regarding the sound fiduciary oversight by a governing board, the following continuous-improvement efforts may be at issue:

- *Assessment and continuous improvement of a board's governance and performance generally.*
- *Orientation programs provided for new members of the governing board.*
- *Continuing education programs for the governing board and/or individual trustees.*
- *Professional development and/or leadership training for trustees.*

Regarding the sound executive management conducted by executives, the following continuous-improvement efforts may be at issue:

- *Evaluations of individual executive personnel.*

Eckel, P.D. & Trower, C.A. (2019). Practical wisdom: Thinking differently about college and university governance*. Stylus Publishing, LLC and Inside Higher Ed.*

Freedman, J.O. (2004). Presidents and trustees. In R.G. Ehrenberg (Ed.), Governing academia: Who is in charge at the modern university? *(pp. 9-27). Cornell University Press.*

Ingram, R.T. (2003). Ten basic responsibilities of nonprofit boards. BoardSource, Inc.

Mortimer, K.P., & Sathre, C.O. (2007) The art and science of politics in academic governance: Relations among boards, presidents, and faculty. American Council on Education.

Sweezy v. New Hampshire*, 354 U.S. 234 (1957).*

Trow, M. (1998). On the accountability of higher education in the United States. In W.G. Bowen & H.T. Shapiro (Eds.), Universities and their leadership *(pp. 15-61). Princeton University Press.*

- *Professional development and/or leadership training.*

- *Fulfillment of strategic priorities.*

7. Institutional decision-making is characterized by shared governance in appropriate processes and as documented in appropriate policies.

   One acceptable definition of shared governance is articulated in the 1966-67 "Statement on Government of Colleges and Universities" issued by the American Association of University Professors, the American Council on Education, and the Association of Governing Boards of Universities and Colleges. The "Statement" describes the roles of various parties in determining how U.S. institutions of higher education operate in "appropriately shared responsibility and cooperative action among the components of the academic institution." [3]

   An "interdependence" and "joint effort" among an institution's governing board, executives, and faculty properly characterize institutional governance and decision-making, according to the "Statement." The governing board ("the final institutional authority") delegates "ultimate managerial responsibility" to the institution's chief executive. Faculty exercise primary responsibility "to determine the appropriate curriculum and procedures of student instruction" (although this responsibility is typically delegated by the governing board to the faculty and may be limited by state law or statute).

   In CPHE Accreditation Standard 7, uses of the adjective "appropriate" should be interpreted to allow for the effects of mission, Carnegie type, and institutional size. Furthermore, "appropriate" should be interpreted to suggest latitude—because the manner in which shared governance manifests itself or may be specified in institutional governance may vary reasonably across institutions and even within institutions, depending on occasions, tasks, and processes. That is, there is no single manner in which shared governance must be enacted. As the 1966-67 "Statement on Government of Colleges and Universities" notes, "Joint effort in an academic institution will take a variety of forms appropriate to the kinds of situations encountered."

---

[3] *The 1966-67 "Statement on Government of Colleges and Universities" is advisory but not controlling. In fact, the "Statement" announces explicitly that it is not "a manual for the regulation of controversy among the components of an academic institution." Worth noting, also, is that the "Statement" explicitly omits descriptions of governmental and other authorities that affect the governance of U.S. institutions of higher education.*

Required evidence
An institution shall cite, describe, and evidence relevant statutes, bylaws, and policies that define shared governance and how it is enacted at an institution. In addition, an institution shall provide evidence of shared governance in circumstances not dictated by statutes, bylaws, and policies, if any.

Continuous improvement
CPHE suggests that an institution should produce, describe, and evidence how shared governance is assessed and revised on the basis of evidence.

Mission, Public Purpose, and Academic Excellence

8. The institution fulfills an appropriate mission.

For public colleges and universities, institutional mission is most often dictated by statute and/or by other state/system governing documents. In answer to CPHE Accreditation Standard 8, an institution is required first to supply and describe relevant statutes and governing documents. An institution is required then to evidence the manner in which relevant statutes and governing documents have been interpreted to yield an institutional mission statement. The process by which an institutional mission statement is developed, reviewed, revised, and approved shall be evidenced as well. Stakeholders involved in this process shall be described and evidenced, too.

An "appropriate" mission should be interpreted to denote an institutional mission statement's alignment with statute and governing documents, subsequent development and approval, institution type (Carnegie classification being a suitable category of type), and institution size (e.g., student body, employees, physical plant).

At issue, then, is the process by which an institutional mission statement is evaluated to demonstrate efficacy and then to inform subsequent revision. CPHE suggests that an institution should demonstrate that each discrete facet of a mission statement should be assessed through continuous improvement—and that evidence of continuous improvement should be supplied in response to CPHE Accreditation Standard 8.

DRAFT

Required evidence

- *An institution shall cite and describe relevant statutes and governing documents that define and/or guide the institution's mission.*

- *Further, an institution shall evidence the manner in which relevant statutes and governing documents have been interpreted to yield an institutional mission statement.*

- *An institution shall describe and evidence the process by which an institutional mission statement is developed, reviewed, revised, and approved. Stakeholders involved in this process shall be described and evidenced as well.*

- *An institution shall describe and evidence the process by which an institutional mission statement is evaluated to demonstrate efficacy and then to inform subsequent revision.*

Continuous improvement
CPHE suggests that an institution should demonstrate that each discrete facet of a mission statement is assessed through continuous improvement—and that evidence of continuous improvement is supplied—in response to CPHE Accreditation Standard 8.

9. The institution, as a state entity, furthers the public good.

As a complement to CPHE Accreditation Standard 8, CPHE Accreditation Standard 9 focuses on public benefits yielded in execution of mission or as corollary benefits of mission.

The Oxford English Dictionary *defines the phrase "public good" as "[t]he welfare of the community as a whole. . . ." As such, CPHE suggests that an operational definition of "public good" relative to accreditation should denote the benefits that a college or university generates for persons and groups both inside and outside the boundaries of the institution. That is, an institution furthers the public good through opportunities and services available to the community, along with actions that yield benefits for the community.*

In answer to CPHE Accreditation Standard 9, an institution may cite or restate evidence provided relative to CPHE Accreditation Standard 8.

Suggested evidence
CPHE suggests that an institution should provide evidence of fulfillment of public wants, needs, and opportunities. Metrics may include, for example, economic impact, job creation, production of graduates for workforce needs, research advances in health and other fields, lifelong learning opportunities, community engagement projects and outcomes of these, the work of extension faculty, etc.

Furthermore, an institution's partnerships with the state, with state agencies, and with companies/organizations promoting public benefits may be at issue—especially if direct evidence of successful outcomes may be evidenced.

If applicable, an institution may demonstrate that metrics of success in fulfilling public needs are communicated to the public, to government, and to stakeholders.

Continuous improvement
An institution should measure its effects on the community and assess periodically how these effects may be improved.

10. The institution strives for and demonstrates its pursuit of academic excellence.

An institution's definition of academic excellence depends on institutional mission, as derived from state statute, Carnegie type, and institutional size. Particularly at issue are the facets of academic life and inquiry that may exhibit excellence—depending on mission—for faculty, for students, and for staff involved in teaching and in generating new knowledge: teaching, research, creative endeavor, community engagement, etc.

An institution may define "excellence" according to its own definition(s) and/or according to system, state, national, and international measures.

Furthermore, achieving and documenting excellence should be fueled by institutional aspirations for greater excellence, in terms of both quality and quantity.

Required evidence
- *An institution shall document its own definitions of academic excellence and how the institution recognizes excellence among faculty, students, and staff.*

- *An institution shall document indicators of academic excellence as measured by external bodies for faculty, students, and staff.*

Suggested evidence
To the degree that an institution measures its performance versus institutional peers, the institution should provide evidence of measures of academic excellence versus peers.

Longitudinal data provided over the three most recent academic years will generally suffice.

Some measures of academic excellence relative to students may be cited or restated relative to CPHE Accreditation Standard 16.

Likewise, some measures of academic excellence relative to faculty may be cited or restated relative to CPHE Accreditation Standard 11.

Continuous improvement
Institutional aspirations for more and greater academic excellence among faculty, students, and staff will likely be reflected by institutional resources expended to assess and support academic excellence. These may include, for example, specific advising and research opportunities for students; grant, award, and peer support for faculty and staff; and analytical tools that support the measurement of academic excellence's impact.

Faculty

11. The institution employs faculty of appropriate number and qualifications to support academic programs.

Parameters for "appropriate" numbers and qualifications of faculty to support academic programs should flow naturally from institutional mission; institution type (Carnegie classification being a suitable category of type); programs, disciplines, and colleges/schools; and student enrollment.

CPHE will not dictate student-to-faculty ratios, although an institution may cite fulfillment of programmatic or discipline-specific accreditation or certification standards regarding student-to-faculty ratios.

Required evidence

- *An institution shall supply institution-level data on the population of faculty by rank.*

- *An institution shall supply, describe, and evidence the following:*
  - *policies and practices for assessing faculty effectiveness in teaching, research, service, and creative endeavor;*
  - *policies and practices for hiring faculty;*
  - *promotion and tenure policies and practices, if any;*
  - *policies and practices for post-tenure reviews, if any;*
  - *policies and practices for faculty development;*
  - *policies and practices for faculty grievances;*
  - *policies and practices regarding faculty teaching loads; and*
  - *student-to-faculty ratios.*

- *An institution shall supply, describe, and evidence policies and practices regarding how the institution defines and determines the appropriate number of its faculty—along with how the institution defines and determines the appropriate number of faculty within categories such as full-time, part-time, tenure and tenure track, adjunct, etc. The degree to which teaching and other responsibilities may be fulfilled by graduate students should be supplied, described, and evidenced as well.*

- *An institution shall supply, describe, and evidence policies and practices regarding how the institution defines and determines the appropriate qualifications of its faculty. Policies and practices may vary reasonably by faculty type, discipline, program, and/or college/school.*

- *Regarding federal regulations in 34 CFR § 602.18, an institution should articulate how it manages matters related to "[i]nstructors who do not meet. . . typical faculty standards, but who are otherwise qualified by education or work experience, to teach courses within a dual or concurrent enrollment program, as defined in 20 U.S.C. 7801, or career and technical education courses. . . ."*

- *An institution shall supply, describe, and evidence how its faculty manual and/or similar policy documents anticipate the matters listed above, along with other relevant faculty matters.*

Suggested evidence
Evidence that an institution may consider citing includes the following:

- *student demand for courses versus faculty capacity to teach,*
- *credit and degree production as a function of faculty size,*
- *measures of faculty productivity individually and in the aggregate, and*
- *class sizes and scheduling capacity by day of the week and time slot.*

An institution should supply contextual information regarding the size and qualifications of faculty versus those of peer institutions whenever possible.

Continuous improvement
Rather than simply listing data, an institution should consider and demonstrate how matters of faculty capacity and qualifications are measured and implemented in institutional decision-making and continuous improvement. Data that drive these decisions will be relevant and illustrative.

At issue is the continuous improvement of the faculty generally, of faculty qualifications generally, and of the effectiveness and performance of faculty. An institution should demonstrate how issues of faculty size and capacity are assessed and managed, how issues of faculty qualifications are assessed and managed, how faculty effectiveness and performance are assessed, and how the institution offers methods to improve the effectiveness and performance of faculty.

Academic Freedom and Intellectual Diversity

12. The institution's policies and practices support the academic freedom of the institution and its faculty.

Academic freedom belongs both to the institution and to faculty.

At the level of the institution, the definition of "academic freedom" is generally understood to align with the Supreme Court's 1957 decision in Sweezy v. New Hampshire*: that an institution determines who teaches, what is taught, how it is taught, and who is admitted for study. As a practical matter, authority to make*

these determinations is often delegated within an institution, with curricular and pedagogical matters delegated to faculty collectively and individually.

Not to be conflated with an individual faculty member's First Amendment rights as an employee of a public institution, faculty at both public and private institutions are generally understood to determine for themselves their teaching and research agendas due to the protections provided by academic freedom.

Academic freedom is arguably the cornerstone of U.S. higher education. Mature institutions of higher education will have and leverage policies and practices that support and protect academic freedom. These may include explicit expectations of governing boards, according to statutes and bylaws; explicit institutional policies; tenure and promotion policies and procedures; and even grievance or disciplinary procedures for faculty. Furthermore, the roles of faculty and of faculty bodies in defining and safeguarding academic freedom likely manifest in faculty manuals and policies and should be evidenced.

Required evidence

- *An institution shall supply, describe, and evidence all policies and practices regarding academic freedom.*

- *An institution shall supply, describe, and evidence any policies and practices regarding tenure—although citing or restating these as leveraged in response to CPHE Accreditation Standard 11 may suffice.*

- *An institution shall supply, describe, and evidence how academic freedom at the level of the institution is delegated, managed, and protected. How the institution and the governing board protect themselves from undue external influence will be essential.*

Continuous improvement
An institution should assess periodically the state of academic freedom at the institution and how the state of academic freedom may be improved.

13. **The institution's policies and practices support the intellectual diversity of its faculty and students in academic and co-curricular life.**

An April 23, 2025 Executive Order directs the U.S. Secretary of Education to "take appropriate steps," many of which have not been enacted as of this writing.

Among these "appropriate steps" is the anticipated revision to requirements of accrediting agencies that "accreditation [will] require[e] that institutions support and appropriately prioritize intellectual diversity amongst faculty in order to advance academic freedom, intellectual inquiry, and student learning."

A December 2005 report entitled "Intellectual Diversity: Time for Action," published by the American Council of Trustees and Alumni, states the following:

> In simplest terms, intellectual diversity means a multiplicity of ideas. In the college setting, it is the foundation of a learning environment that exposes students to a variety of political, ideological, and other perspectives. As the American Council on Education, in a statement joined by 29 other higher education organizations, has acknowledged: "Intellectual pluralism and academic freedom are central principles of American higher education."

Ohio law defines "intellectual diversity" as "multiple, divergent, and varied perspectives on an extensive range of public policy issues," while South Dakota law defines "intellectual diversity" as "a learning environment that exposes students to and encourages exploration of a variety of ideological and political perspectives." A 2006 law adopted by the South Dakota legislature defines intellectual diversity "as the foundation of a learning environment that exposes students to a variety of political, ideological, and other perspectives."

CPHE suggests that an operational definition of "intellectual diversity" relative to CPHE Accreditation Standard 13 refers to institutional curricula, developed and enacted by faculty and thereafter experienced by students—along with co-curricular opportunities for students. Institutional policies and practices for curricular and co-curricular activities should purposefully introduce students to varied (and even contradictory) perspectives for analyzing, interpreting, understanding, and—in some cases—solving academic, societal, and public-policy matters. The varied perspectives brought to bear may be ideological, methodological, political, theoretical, etc.

Required evidence
An institution shall supply, describe, and evidence institutional policies and practices that support intellectual diversity, including, for example, in hiring, promotion, and, if applicable, granting of tenure; course development; academic

program review and approval; and the designation of courses that meet general education and academic program core requirements.

An institution shall supply, describe, and evidence any interventions devised and enacted to improve support for intellectual diversity.

Suggested evidence
An institution may supply results of institutional assessments devised to measure intellectual diversity and/or perceptions of intellectual diversity on campus.

Curricula

14. Institutional curricula are appropriate to mission and designed with rigor appropriate to degree level and/or credentialing requirements.

CPHE Accreditation Standard 14 leverages the word "appropriate" in relation to institutional curricula as dictated by mission, by Carnegie type, by degree level, and/or by credentialing requirements. As such, CPHE suggests that an institution should demonstrate curricular alignment with mission, institution type, degree level, and/or credentialing requirement. Because programmatic curricula may be shaped by programmatic or discipline-specific accreditation requirements, these may be relevant as well.

Required evidence

- *An institution shall supply, describe, and evidence policies and practices that govern institutional authority for curricular matters.*

- *An institution shall supply and describe the comprehensiveness of a course catalog (and/or other, readily available curricular resources) for the current academic year for denoting clearly the following:*
  - *Degree, major, and program requirements*
  - *General education requirements within the undergraduate curriculum*
  - *Policies and practices for approving new degrees, majors, programs, and colleges/schools*
  - *Policies and practices for monitoring viability of degrees and programs*
  - *Policies and practices for awarding credit for experience-based learning*
  - *Policies and practices for awarding transfer credit*

- *Consistent with 34 CFR § 602.17, an institution shall supply, describe, and evidence that it "[m]aintains clearly specified educational objectives that are consistent with its mission and appropriate in light of the degrees or certificates awarded. . . ." An institution shall supply, describe, and evidence the role of faculty and/or other professionals in assessment of curricular effectiveness versus goals—that is, that the institution "[i]s successful in achieving its stated objectives at both the institutional and program levels. . . ."*

- *Consistent with 34 CFR § 602.17, an institution shall supply, describe, and evidence that it "[m]aintains requirements that at least conform to commonly accepted academic standards, or the equivalent, including pilot programs in [34 CFR] § 602.18(b). . . ."*

- *An institution shall supply, describe, and evidence policies and practices for ensuring consistency and rigor of curricula, regardless of modality of delivery.*

- *An institution shall supply, describe, and evidence policies and practices for ensuring consistency and rigor of curricula if offered by or in collaboration with third-party providers such as online program managers.*

- *An institution shall supply, describe, and evidence policies and practices for program review.*

Suggested evidence
An institution should supply data regarding practices of peer institutions when possible and practical in answer to the matters listed above.

Continuous improvement
Continuous improvement relative to curricula may take the form of program review, periodic assessment of general education requirements, periodic inspection of credit requirements across the entire curriculum, credit and degree production, and program/major viability. These and other institutional assessment efforts should be evidenced, with particular focus on the manners in which assessment results—including evidence of student learning—affect curricular revisions and improvements.

Measures of Program Length

15. Institutional program lengths are appropriate to degree level and/or credentialing requirements.

CPHE Accreditation Standard 15 leverages the word "appropriate" in relation to institutional curricula as dictated by mission, by Carnegie type, by degree level, and/or by credentialing requirements. As such, CPHE suggests that an institution should demonstrate alignment of program lengths with mission, institution type, degree level, and/or credentialing requirement. Because programmatic curricula may be shaped by programmatic or discipline-specific accreditation requirements, these may be relevant as well.

Required evidence

- *An institution shall supply, describe, and evidence policies and practices that govern institutional authority for institutional program lengths.*

- *An institution shall supply and describe the comprehensiveness of a course catalog (and/or other, readily available curricular resources) for the current academic year for denoting program lengths.*

- *Norms in U.S. higher education define program lengths in terms of credit hours for the following degrees:*
  - *60 credit hours for an associate's degree*
  - *120 credit hours for a bachelor's degree*
  - *30 credit hours for a master's degree*

  If an institution implements a unit of measure other than the credit hour to define program lengths, then the institution shall define and justify use of said unit of measure clearly. Furthermore, an institution shall cite, describe, and evidence adherence to the above program lengths for associate's, bachelor's, and master's degrees. In the event that program lengths deviate from the above standards, the institution shall justify said deviation.

- *For doctoral programs and any other credentials, an institution shall cite, describe, and evidence adherence to published program lengths.*

- *An institution shall cite, describe, and evidence adherence to published program lengths for general education programs.*

- *An institution shall cite, describe, and evidence policies and practices for awarding credit for work completed at an institution other than the institution awarding the degree or credential.*

Suggested evidence
Information submitted by an institution in response to items above may benefit from comparison data that portray the practices of peer institutions.

Continuous improvement
An institution should assess degree requirements periodically, with special attention to norms and trends. In addition, institutions should be mindful of credit requirements in excess of accepted norms, in that these exacerbate problems related to the time required for students to complete degrees. Prolonged time to degree entails additional/unnecessary tuition prices paid by students and families, along with opportunity costs associated with students' postponed entry into the labor market.

Student Success and Student Support Services

16. The institution employs best practices to measure and improve both student learning and student success as assessed by varied methods.

CPHE deems prioritization of student outcomes as a primary quality that differentiates CPHE from other accrediting agencies. At issue is a focus on outputs rather than inputs—coupled with a continuous, concerted effort to model and leverage best practices in terms of tactics and measurement that will further student success and the improvement of relevant assessments.

CPHE suggests, therefore, that an institution should adopt a ceaseless attention to student success: tactics, programs, experiments, pilot programs, measurement (both qualitative and quantitative), and improvement.

CPHE recognizes that different states have access to and leverage different data, that data capabilities may vary by institution, and that data definitions likely vary as well. As such, CPHE will enable latitude in expectations and methodologies for measuring student success and student learning.

Rates of persistence and completion may employ federal data definitions; however, rates of persistence and completion that account for transfer students,

part-time students, and other enrollment dynamics not captured by federal data definitions will be a useful complement to traditional measures.

CPHE will not dictate a methodology for measuring return on investment—because institutional access to data sources may vary, along with data definitions.

Measures of graduates' salaries versus tuition and fee prices should be disaggregated by majors/programs and by degree level. Longitudinal data regarding this return on investment should anticipate variation in the number of years required for some programs to yield returns.

Special attention to production of degrees and credentials that support particular state workforce needs will be appropriate, as will special attention to production of degrees and credentials that yield important societal impact while perhaps yielding small (or even negative) salary returns to students.

Tactical efforts in support of student success and measurement of student success should be outlined, with evidence provided selectively and with no expectation of comprehensiveness.

An April 23, 2025 Executive Order directs the U.S. Secretary of Education to "take appropriate steps," many of which have not been enacted as of this writing. Among these "appropriate steps" is the anticipated requirement that institutions should "use data on program-level student outcomes to improve such outcomes, without reference to race, ethnicity, or sex." CPHE recommends strongly that institutions should submit data regarding student outcomes as if this anticipated requirement is enforced currently.

Required evidence

- *An institution shall supply, describe, and evidence participation in IPEDS reporting for completion and retention rates and graduate earnings data. Similarly, an institution shall supply, describe, and evidence tactics for improvement or stability in those IPEDS metrics over time.*

- *If an institution is part of a state university system or state higher education commission that has selected and defined student success metrics as part of its academic program application, academic program review, performance funding computations, or similar processes, the institution may demonstrate*

that it employs best practices to "measure" student learning and student success by evidencing that it participates in such a framework. To demonstrate that it employs best practices to "improve" student learning, the institution shall supply, describe, and evidence tactics for improvement or stability in those metrics over time.

- *If an institution is <u>not</u> a part of such a state university system or state higher education commission, to demonstrate that the institution employs best practices to "measure" student outcomes, the institution shall select and define student success metrics consistent with its mission. Such metrics should ordinarily include measures of retention, completion, post-completion earnings, and return on investment, and may include measures such as professional licensure exam pass rates, post-completion employment rates, and evidence of students continuing their education. An institution may use data created for other purposes, such as IPEDS reporting, to demonstrate compliance with this standard. An institution demonstrating compliance with this standard may demonstrate that it employs best practices to improve student learning by providing evidence of improvement or stability in its student success metrics over time.*

- *If not included among the data outlined above, an institution shall supply, describe, and evidence data regarding student debt, along with tactical efforts to alleviate student debt.*

- *If not included among the data outlined above, an institution shall supply, describe, and evidence its assessment of student learning, governance and management responsibility for student learning, and tactical efforts to improve student learning. Measurement of student learning may entail institutionally designed and normed assessments and/or nationally normed assessments.*

<u>Suggested evidence</u>

- *An institution may supply data regarding rates of persistence, completion, and postgraduate attendance that account for transfer students, part-time students, and other enrollment dynamics not captured by federal data definitions.*

- *An institution is encouraged to consider, supply, describe, and evidence selectively its holistic approaches to improving student success and student*

learning—especially as these may be varied and may include the following. Citing or restating text relative to CPHE Standard 17 may be sufficient:

- *programs correlated with improvements to student success and return on investment, including apprenticeships, co-ops, and internships; career services and graduate/professional school advisement; mentoring and tutoring programs; etc.*
- *tactics for easing transfer processes*
- *tactics for informing students regarding return on investment*
- *tactics for speeding time to degree*

- *An institution may supply data regarding students' performance on institutional or system exit examinations.*

Continuous improvement
Continual improvement of data quality, representative quality, and objective results should be evidenced.

Continuous improvement of assessments and tactics intended to improve student success and student learning should be evidenced as well.

17. **The institution provides student support services of appropriate variety and scope, for both academic and co-curricular purposes.**

CPHE suggests that an institution may achieve partial fulfillment of CPHE Accreditation Standard 17 by citing or restating text regarding tactical efforts enacted to improve student success and student learning relative to CPHE Accreditation Standard 16.

Again, an April 23, 2025 Executive Order directs the U.S. Secretary of Education to "take appropriate steps," many of which have not been enacted as of this writing. Among these "appropriate steps" is the anticipated requirement that institutions should "use data on program-level student outcomes to improve such outcomes, without reference to race, ethnicity, or sex." CPHE recommends strongly that institutions should submit data regarding student outcomes as if this anticipated requirement is enforced currently.

Required evidence

- *An institution shall supply, describe, and evidence student support services for both academic and co-curricular services.*

- *An institution shall supply, describe, and evidence staffing of student support services for both academic and co-curricular services. Citing or restating text relative to CPHE Standard 18 may suffice.*

Continuous improvement
Documentation of continuous improvement of methods to bolster student success, student learning, academic services, and co-curricular services may entail citing or restating text supplied in answer to CPHE Standard 16.

Fiscal and Administrative Capacity

18. The institution maintains fiscal and administrative capacity sufficient to fulfill its mission.

U.S. Department of Education regulations (especially 34 CFR 668.171[g][1]) differentiate the requirements for demonstrating fiscal stability for public, not-for-profit institutions versus for private, for-profit and private, not-for-profit institutions. As such, CPHE enacts requirements for public colleges and universities that leverage this differentiation.

Required evidence
- *An institution shall demonstrate fiscal capacity through evidence supplied regarding audit and regarding budget oversight.*
    - *Audit: An institution that is subject to regular audit by its state auditor, equivalent office, or independent auditor will ordinarily demonstrate compliance with CPHE's fiscal requirements by furnishing the most recent such audit that is not disclaimed, adverse, or qualified, and that does not express doubt about the institution's fiscal stability. If such an audit contains findings, the institution shall demonstrate that it has resolved those findings or has a concrete, actionable plan for doing so.*

    - *Budget oversight: An institution demonstrates compliance with CPHE's fiscal requirements by demonstrating that the institution maintains a coordinated, comprehensive, and flexible financial plan for the institution's long-range financial health.*

- *If not detailed in answer to audit and budget oversight matters outlined above, an institution shall cite, describe, evidence fulfillment of state laws and*

system or institutional policies and procedures regarding financial planning and budgeting.

- *Regarding the relationship between institutional costs and institutional tuition prices charged to students, CPHE recognizes that some public institutions may not exercise direct control of tuition prices and fees. For example, tuition prices and fees may be determined at the level of the system or the state rather than at the level of the institution. In cases such as these, an institution should describe how tuition prices are set and how the institution leverages input into these price-setting processes.*

  Regardless of any circumstance regarding an institution's authority to set tuition prices, each institution possesses mechanisms for controlling costs. Oversight of costs, cost savings, process improvement, retirement of outdated or unnecessary infrastructure, and other relevant matters should be described and evidenced in terms of institutional efforts to control costs that may result in higher tuition prices.

- *An institution shall demonstrate administrative capacity by evidencing that it is organized to provide efficient and effective administrative, program, and resource support for the attainment of institutional mission.*

Suggested evidence

- *CPHE suggests that an institution should address the following in response to CPHE Accreditation Standard 18, if these are not addressed directly in answer to required evidence regarding audit and budget oversight as outlined above:*
  - *Data and narrative detail regarding institutional debt, along with debt carried by any associated entities*
  - *Data and narrative detail regarding institutional endowments, endowments held by institutional subsidiaries, and endowments held by associated entities for the purpose(s) of benefitting the institution*
  - *Data and narrative details regarding institutional bond rating(s)*

- *CPHE suggests that data regarding administrative capacity should include the following:*
  - *Evidence of executive leadership qualifications, from the level of college/schools deans up to the chief executive*
  - *Evidence of formative personnel evaluations*

- *Evidence of leadership and management training*

Continuous improvement
An institution should demonstrate periodic assessment and improvement of fiscal and administrative capacity. Comparative data regarding the practices of peer institutions may be relevant and useful.

Facilities and Other Resources

19. The institution maintains facilities, equipment, supplies, and infrastructure sufficient to fulfill its mission.

Required evidence

- *An institution shall evidence that it operates and maintains facilities that are adequate to serve the needs of the institution's educational programs, support services, and mission-related activities. Doing so shall entail the following:*
  - *Compliance with safety and health laws. The institution shall comply with all ordinances and laws relative to the safety and health of persons on the campus. In lieu of citing and addressing all relevant safety and health laws, the institution shall supply information regarding any alleged lapses in compliance over the three most recent academic years, with evidence as to how any alleged lapses in compliance have been resolved.*
  - *Laboratories and equipment. The institution shall demonstrate adequate laboratories and equipment for supporting the particular program of instruction and for enhancing student-learning outcomes.*
  - *Experiential learning sites. The institutions shall demonstrate assurances that sites used in field placement, internships, externships, clinical rotations, and similar experiential learning activities are safe and adequate.*
  - *Housing. The institution shall demonstrate that housing for students owned, leased, maintained, or approved by the institution are appropriate, safe, and adequate.*
  - *Capital maintenance: An institution shall demonstrate adherence with laws and institutional policies and procedures regarding how capital maintenance is maintained.*
  - *Equipment. An institution shall demonstrate that equipment required to fulfill the institution's mission is operational and in an adequate state of repair.*

- *Infrastructure: An institution shall demonstrate sufficient scope of infrastructure for fulfillment of mission. Information technology and its support of the academic mission will be essential—especially as these are sufficient to support current needs as well as the evolving advances of technology and the related, evolving needs of stakeholders.*

Suggested evidence

- *CPHE advises that, in answer to CPHE Accreditation Standard 19, an institution should describe and cite governance and management authority regarding facilities, equipment, supplies, and infrastructure individually.*

- *Similarly, CPHE suggests that an institution should describe the scope of an institution's facilities, equipment, supplies, and infrastructure generally—with no expectations regarding comprehensiveness. Data regarding inventory, value, depreciation, and annual budgets will be useful—as will institutional determinations of sufficiency.*

- *CPHE suggests further that an institution should supply the following:*
  - *A master facilities plan*
  - *Data on deferred maintenance and any backlog of deferred maintenance*
  - *Data on the facilities condition index of institutional buildings*

Continuous improvement

An institution should assess periodically its resources and its capacity for fulfilling institutional mission. Supply of detailed studies for future action, based on current circumstances, such as a facilities master plan will be illustrative.

20. The institution maintains access to scholarly collections, materials, and tools sufficient to fulfill its mission.

At issue relative to CPHE Accreditation Standard 20 are library facilities, library collections, and research tools—along with the institution's ability to evolve in the face of changing technologies—all in support of institutional mission. As such, some relevant matters may not be controlled by a library or by library personnel per se and may be distributed and controlled across an institution.

Required evidence

- *An institution shall describe and evidence scholarly collections, materials, and tools as these exist across the institution. Similarly, an institution shall describe and evidence access to these.*

- *An institution shall describe and evidence knowledgeable stewardship of these resources, along with knowledgeable guidance that enable access, in the form of qualified personnel.*

Suggested evidence

Descriptions supported by data regarding collections, utilization, and faculty/staff support are suggested—along with management and advisory policies, practices, and structure (e.g., units or committees) for budgeting, management, and planning for the future.

Continuous improvement

An institution should demonstrate how it maintains adequate scholarly resources and how it maintains tools and infrastructure sufficient to keep pace with technological change.

Records of Student Complaints

21. Upon the Commission for Public Higher Education's request, the institution will supply records of student complaints—as required by U.S. Department of Education Regulations—and will demonstrate adherence to regulations, policies, and practices for management of student complaints.

U.S. Department of Education regulations regarding standards required of accrediting agencies include this requirement: "Record of student complaints received by, or available to, the agency." It is the responsibility of CPHE to maintain student complaints received by CPHE and to report these to the U.S. Department of Education as requested. Student complaints that are "available to" CPHE should be interpreted by an institution as student complaints received and managed by the institution, which must in turn be supplied to CPHE as requested by CPHE.

DRAFT

Required evidence

- *An institution shall supply, describe, and evidence institutional policies regarding student complaints, along with evidence of compliance with these policies over the three most recent academic years.*

- *An institution shall supply a log of student complaints that indicates, at minimum, the nature of each complaint, any investigative steps completed, and the resolution of the complaint. Data should be redacted as appropriate. Data from the three most recent academic years should suffice.*

DRAFT

COMMISSION FOR PUBLIC HIGHER EDUCATION

ROUGH DRAFT CPHE EVIDENTIARY GUIDANCE

Consultations with Faculty for Responsible Education and Accreditation (FREA) on Monday, January 26 at 12:00 p.m. EST and 2:30 p.m. EST

Consultation with CPHE Standards and Procedures Working Group at 9:00 a.m. EST on Wednesday, January 28

ROUGH DRAFT CPHE EVIDENTIARY GUIDANCE

Agenda

- Introductions
- Updates
- Goals for Consultations
- Discussion of Rough Draft CPHE Evidentiary Guidance
- Forecasted Next Steps
- Other Topics and Discussion

INTRODUCTIONS

- Name
- Institution
- Department / Discipline
- Faculty Assembly / Senate Role (in applicable)

UPDATES

- October 1, 2025: CPHE Board of Directors adopts accreditation standards.
- October 22, 2025: CPHE issues call for nominations and applications for members and Chairs of CPHE Peer Review Teams.
- November 14, 2025: CPHE announces the 10 colleges and universities in the first cohort to be accredited by CPHE.

UPDATES

- December 31, 2025: U.S. Department of Education awards $1M FIPSE grant to CPHE.
- February 17, 2026 at 2:00 p.m. EST: *Chronicle of Higher Education* to host a webinar regarding accreditation featuring CPHE Board Chair Mark Becker, Under Secretary of Education Nicholas Kent, and SACSCOC President Stephen Pruitt. Other participants TBA.

UPDATES

- CPHE Board of Directors considering option to name other “public” (i.e., not “representative”) members of the Board.
- Compositions of CPHE Accreditation Advisory Committee and CPHE Peer Visiting Teams developing.
- Interest among public institutions and systems in joining CPHE continues.
- CPHE plans to file for recognition from the U.S. Department of Education during 2027.

UPDATES

- Refreshed logo
- Refreshed website
- Email newsletters for stakeholders

GOALS FOR CONSULTATIONS

1. Conduct robust discussion regarding the current state of CPHE evidentiary guidance.
2. Arrive at consensus regarding primary matters at issue within rough draft of CPHE evidentiary guidance.
3. Position CPHE to revise evidentiary guidance accordingly.

DISCUSSION

- What are the top three to five matters within the rough draft evidentiary guidance that must be resolved before a revised draft is issued for public comment?
- What is the general state of the rough draft evidentiary guidance?

Detailed feedback welcome via email to lchowell@cphe.org by 12:00 p.m. EST on Friday, January 30.

FORECASTED NEXT STEPS

- Week of January 26: Consultations and revisions
- Week of February 2: Draft evidentiary guidance to be issued for public comment over a four-week period
- Week of March 2: Consultations with FREA and CPHE Standards and Procedures Working Group
- Timeline TBD: Revisions
- TBD: Further consultations
- TBD: Adoption of evidentiary guidance by CPHE

CPHE

OTHER TOPICS AND DISCUSSION

- Trends in the accreditation marketplace
- Department request for feedback regarding Accreditation Handbook (through January 26, 2026)
- Forthcoming: negotiated rulemaking

Cameron Howell
lchowell@cphe.org | 803-724-8011

CPHE UPDATES

CP★HE

Commission for Public Higher Education

PUBLIC Feedback and Comments

CPHE received 117 comment submittals totaling 457 pages (408 pages, once duplicates were removed). The 117 submittals do not represent just 117 individuals; many submittals contain the opinions of multiple people.

CPHE Evidentiary Guidance (Draft in-process)

Work continues drafting the evidentiary documentation that will supplement the CPHE standards. The goal of the evidentiary documentation is to provide guidance and clarity while also maintaining flexibility for institutions to document compliance.

Goals for CPHE Evidentiary Guidance Document

- **Provide guidance and clarity while maintaining flexibility by mission**
- **Provide introduction regarding operating assumptions and definitions**
- **First edition is for guidance of first cohort of 10 institutions, and guidance will be updated in 2026 for second cohort.**

CPHE Board of Directors adopt set of accreditation standards

The CPHE Board of Directors adopted a set of accreditation standards, and those standards have been posted to the CPHE website.

Integrity, Transparency, and Compliance

1. The institution demonstrates integrity across its organization and its activities.

2. The institution is transparent in, publishes accurate information regarding, and complies with its own policies and practices.

3. The institution documents its compliance with Title IV of the Higher Education Act, as required by federal regulations.

4. The institution employs conflict-of-interest policies and requires regular declarations regarding conflicts of interest from appropriate personnel.

Continuous Improvement

5. The institution enacts processes for continuous improvement across its organization and activities, assessing outcomes versus goals, applying lessons learned to the improvement of policies and actions, and then repeating this cycle at appropriate intervals.

Governance and Leadership

6. The institution's governance structures and practices demonstrate sound fiduciary oversight and sound executive management.

7. Institutional decision-making is characterized by shared governance in appropriate processes and as documented in appropriate policies.

CPHE Board of Directors adopt set of accreditation standards

Mission, Public Purpose, and Academic Excellence

8. The institution fulfills an appropriate mission.

9. The institution, as a state entity, furthers the public good.

10. The institution strives for and demonstrates its pursuit of academic excellence

Faculty

11. The institution employs faculty of appropriate number and qualifications to support academic programs.

Academic Freedom and Intellectual Diversity

12. The institution’s policies and practices support the academic freedom of the institution and its faculty.

13. The institution’s policies and practices support the intellectual diversity of its faculty and students in academic and co-curricular life.

Curricula

14. Institutional curricula are appropriate to mission and designed with rigor appropriate to degree level and/or credentialing requirements.

Measures of Program Length

15. Institutional program lengths are appropriate to degree level and/or credentialing requirements.

CPHE Board of Directors adopt set of accreditation standards

Student Learning, Student Success, and Student Support Services

16. The institution employs best practices to measure and improve both student learning and student success as assessed by varied methods.

17. The institution provides student support services of appropriate variety and scope, for both academic and co-curricular purposes.

Fiscal and Administrative Capacity

18. The institution maintains fiscal and administrative capacity sufficient to fulfill its mission.

Facilities and Other Resources

19. The institution maintains facilities, equipment, supplies, and infrastructure sufficient to fulfill its mission.

20.The institution maintains access to scholarly collections, materials, and tools sufficient to fulfill its mission.

Records of Student Complaints

21. Upon the Commission for Public Higher Education’s request, the institution will supply records of student complaints—as required by U.S. Department of Education regulations—and will demonstrate adherence to regulations, policies, and practices for management of student complaints.

Timeline

STEP1	STEP2	STEP3	STEP4	STEP5
Two or Three weeks of revising evidentiary guidance by CPHE staff	Revised draft evidentiary guidance offered to CPHE Standards and Working Group and FREA.	Video meeting with CPHE Standards and Procedures Working Group and FREA.	Call for Stakeholder/public comment on evidentiary guidance document; four –week comment period.	More revision, as necessary and then reviewed by CPHE Board of Directors.

UNIVERSITY OF
South Carolina

Human Resources

Victoria Hollins
Vice Chancellor of Human Resources

Report to the Palmetto College Campuses Staff Senate
February 4, 2026

What's Changing

The Division of Human Resources is implementing an updated staff market pay structure effective Feb. 1. The updated structure ensures USC remains competitive and aligned with both current market data and the state's recent change to its market framework.

- This update does not change job duties, expectations or reporting relationships. No employee's pay will be reduced as a result of this change.
- Most employees will see no immediate change to pay while a limited number of employees may receive an increase if their current salary falls below the new minimum of their assigned range.
- USC is implementing updated market pay ranges and aligning with the state's new market pay structure. While State classifications will continue to be maintained for compliance purposes, USC's market structure — which is based on market titles and internal hierarchy — will continue to guide compensation and pay administration.

- New market ranges have been created to account for best practices and allow for increased flexibility
- Range spreads, the width between minimum and maximum, begin at a 45% spread at the lowest ranges and increase gradually to recognize the broader range of values present in the market with increase growth in the complexity and scope of responsibility. Currently ranges are 50% wide.
- Midpoint differentials are currently 10% between all ranges and in the new structure they will increase slightly as the ranges increase allow for more graduated growth in the structure
- Pay bands tied to the State system are being discontinued and are no longer aligned to the new USC market structure
- USC's market structure will continue to guide pay practices, with State classifications mapped for compliance
- USC market title codes will change to a 6-digit numeric code replacing the current smart code that includes State classification, job function, and level
- Research positions that do not currently have a market range will be assigned a market range within the new market structure

What's Next

Beginning Feb. 1, employees can view their market range in Employee Self-Service → My Profiles → USC Profile.

We understand that changes related to pay structures can raise questions. Additional information and support are available through your campus HR representative.

Additional Information

- The new dual employment paperwork process, including contracting for internal dual employment, expectations for time reporting, and how employees are expected to make up time. Where and when to access this paperwork and insight into the approval process. See attached Dual Employment Policy, Email correspondence, and the Dual Employment Form (this form is specific to PC Columbia) Each campus has their version of this form, and employees should contact their HR Campus Director.

ADMINISTRATIVE DIVISION	POLICY NUMBER
HR Division of Human Resources	HR 1.78
POLICY TITLE	
Dual Employment	
SCOPE OF POLICY	**DATE OF REVISION**
USC System	September 18, 2024
RESPONSIBLE OFFICER	**ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICE**
Vice President for Human Resources	Division of Human Resources

THE LANGUAGE USED IN THIS DOCUMENT DOES NOT CREATE AN EMPLOYMENT CONTRACT BETWEEN THE FACULTY, STAFF, OR ADMINISTRATIVE EMPLOYEE AND THE UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH CAROLINA. THIS DOCUMENT DOES NOT CREATE ANY CONTRACTUAL RIGHTS OR ENTITLEMENTS. THE UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH CAROLINA RESERVES THE RIGHT TO REVISE THE CONTENTS OF THIS DOCUMENT, IN WHOLE OR IN PART. NO PROMISES OR ASSURANCES, WHETHER WRITTEN OR ORAL, WHICH ARE CONTRARY TO OR INCONSISTENT WITH THE TERMS OF THIS PARAGRAPH CREATE ANY CONTRACT OF EMPLOYMENT. THE UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH CAROLINA DIVISION OF HUMAN RESOURCES HAS THE AUTHORITY TO INTERPRET THE UNIVERSITY'S HUMAN RESOURCES POLICIES.

PURPOSE

The Dual Employment policy delineates the requirements which must be met to allow university faculty and staff to accept additional, part-time, temporary employment within the university or with another state agency or state institution.

DEFINITIONS

Base Period: The period of time that defines the regular annual schedule of employment. Employees on an academic year appointment have a base period of nine months running from August 16 to May 15. Employees on a calendar year appointment have a base period of twelve months.

Dual Employment: An agreement by which an employee within an FTE position with an employing agency accepts temporary, part-time employment with the same or another agency which constitutes independent, additional duties distinct from the employee's primary duties.

Employing Agency: The agency which has the primary control over the services of the employee and the right to direct the employee in how the work is performed.

Faculty Overload: additional teaching assignment given to an FTE or RGP/TL faculty member beyond their standard load but within their discipline and within their home department.

Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA): The FLSA establishes minimum wage, overtime pay,

recordkeeping, and child labor standards affecting full-time and part-time workers in the private sector and in Federal, State, and local governments.

Full-Time Equivalent (FTE): A position authorized by the General Assembly which is expressed as a numerical value as a percentage of time in hours and of funds.

Nonexempt Employees: Employees of the University of South Carolina who are covered by the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) and who are subject to both the minimum wage and overtime requirements of the law.

Requesting Agency: The agency engaging the services of and providing compensation to any employee for services which are clearly not a part of the employee's regular job.

POLICY STATEMENT

This document sets forth the University of South Carolina policy on dual employment for faculty and staff, pursuant to regulations of the South Carolina Division of State Human Resources and applicable statutes.

A. Eligibility

1. Faculty and staff in full-time equivalent (FTE) positions may accept additional temporary, part-time employment with the same or another state agency or state institution, provided that prior written approval is obtained for each dual employment arrangement.

2. Employees in the following positions are not eligible for compensation for internal dual employment.

    a. Vice presidents

    b. Chancellors, vice chancellors

    c. Vice provosts

    d. Academic or campus deans

    e. Members of the President's Executive Council not specified above

    f. Chief Audit Executive

3. No agency head may be dually employed by another agency or institution of higher education without prior approval by both the Agency Head Salary Commission and the SC Department of Administration.

B. Restrictions

1. The practice of dual employment may not be used to provide continuing salaries higher than those approved by the South Carolina Department of Administration.

2. An employee engaged in dual employment must satisfy the established hours of work for the employing agency or institution except as noted in Section D.2. of this policy.

3. Dual employment must be limited to the specific time approved which may not exceed 12 months.

4. No state employee may accept any work or compensation that could be reasonably construed as a conflict of interest or a conflict of commitment according to the State Ethics Law and applicable university policies.

    a. Acceptance of dual employment without prior written approval that is determined to be a conflict of interest or conflict of commitment will be grounds for disciplinary action including termination.

    b. As necessary, the propriety of dual employment or compensation for services rendered will be considered by all parties concerned. Counsel from the Office of the Attorney General or the State Ethics Commission may be necessary to make such determinations; however, requests for counsel must be coordinated through the USC Division of Human Resources and the USC Office of the General Counsel.

C. Dual Employment between Two Agencies (External Dual Employment)

1. The requesting agency is responsible for coordinating and managing all dual employment arrangements with the employing agency prior to the beginning of the dual employment relationship.

2. The employing agency is responsible for taking timely action on any dual employment requests.

3. Scheduling External Dual Employment

    a. Generally, an employee's work schedule with the employing agency should not be altered or revised to provide time to perform dual employment for the requesting agency.

    b. However, an employee may be permitted to use annual leave or leave without pay to provide services during working hours for a requesting agency and may receive compensation from the requesting agency for services performed during the period of leave.

D. Dual Employment within the University (Internal Dual Employment)

1. Faculty and staff who perform services outside of their regularly scheduled work hours may be paid additional compensation if such services constitute independent, additional job duties separate from those of the employee's primary university position. Faculty may only engage in dual employment during their base period of employment, but outside of normally scheduled work hours.

2. However, upon prior written approval from the dean, department head, or appropriate administrator, faculty and staff may alter their normal work hours to teach University 101 or to engage in other unique opportunities. Written approval to alter the normal work hours must be included in the dual employment agreement that is sent to the USC Division of Human Resources.

3. Additional work performed by faculty outside of their contract in the same discipline and within their home academic unit is not considered dual employment. For additional courses, faculty may be compensated as a faculty overload. Other work may be compensated using a temporary salary adjustment if the duration is expected to be less than 12 months or special assignment pay if the duration is indefinite, pursuant to university policy HR 1.79.

4. Additional work performed by faculty outside of their contract in another discipline or outside their home academic unit is considered dual employment.

5. Sponsored research by faculty during the base period of employment is considered to have been compensated as part of the faculty member's base pay.

6. An employee shall not receive any dual compensation from the university while in a leave with pay status which includes all designated university holidays, annual leave, sick leave, and compensatory time.

7. Dual employment within the university should only exist when extraordinary circumstances exist based on the university's business needs and must be approved by the Division of State Human Resources prior to implementation.

E. Compensation for Dual Employment

1. Compensation for dual employment does not increase the base salary of any faculty or staff employee.

2. No compensation for dual employment may be earned or paid to an employee until a written dual employment agreement has been approved.

3. The maximum compensation an employee may receive for dual employment in a fiscal year may not exceed 30% of the employee's annualized salary for that fiscal year. The Division of State Human Resources may approve justified exceptions to the 30% limit upon written request by the Division of Human Resources.

4. Compensation for dual employment will be determined and paid by the requesting agency.

5. The employing agency is responsible for ensuring that dual employment payments made to its employees within one fiscal year do not exceed the 30% limitation.

6. All dual employment performed by employees whose positions are nonexempt from the provisions of the Fair Labor Standards Act must be compensated according to the requirements of the law. Compensation for dual employment must be in the form of wages paid directly to the individual.

7. Dual employment compensation is subject to tax and retirement deductions as required.

8. Payment of dual employment compensation must be made in a timely manner consistent with state law.

9. During dual employment, an employee is not eligible for additional benefits, including but not limited to annual leave, sick leave, military leave, state insurance, and holidays.

F. Recordkeeping

1. All dual employment transactions, including modifications to dual employment agreements, whether the university is the employing or the requesting agency, must be submitted to the USC Division of Human Resources, , prior to the effective date of each individual agreement.

    a. For all USC Columbia and Regional Palmetto College tenured and tenure-track faculty who receive compensation through dual employment, requests must be approved prior to the effective date by the USC Columbia Provost or their approved designee, regardless of the amount of compensation.

    b. For tenured and tenure-track faculty of the Comprehensive Universities who receive compensation through dual employment, requests must be approved prior to the effective date by the respective vice chancellors for academic affairs or their approved designee, regardless of the amount of compensation.

2. Each request for approval of dual employment must apply to only one specific dual employment agreement.

3. Dual employment agreements between state agencies must be approved by the respective agency directors or their designees prior to the effective date of the dual employment.

4. An approved dual employment form must be retained by both the employing and the requesting agency.

5. For external dual employment approvals contingent upon appropriate leave being taken, accountability for the leave is the responsibility of the employee and the employee's home department. All leave and payroll records are subject to audit.

PROCEDURES

Procedures, forms, and general guidance related to this policy can be found on the Division of Human Resources website at http:/hr.sc.edu/.

RELATED UNIVERSITY, STATE AND FEDERAL POLICIES

Fair Labor Standards Act
SC Code of Laws Section 8-13-100 through Section 8-13-1520 (Ethics Act)
State Human Resources Regulations 19-713
ACAF 1.50 Outside Professional Activities for Faculty
BTRU 1.18 Conflict of Interest
BTRU 1.20 Dishonest Acts and Fraud
HR 1.02 University of South Carolina Ethics Policy
HR 1.79 Salary Adjustments Outside of Base Pay
HR 1.81 Summer Compensation for Faculty
RSCH 1.06 Disclosure of Financial Interests and Management of Conflicts of Interest Related to Sponsored Projects (Research)

HISTORY OF REVISIONS

DATE OF REVISION	REASON FOR REVISION
January 31, 2019	Updated to new format Updated duration limit (no longer constrained by the fiscal year end) Clarified that all paperwork must be completed prior to the beginning of the employment relationship
February 7, 2020	Add faculty overload as appropriate type of additional pay for teaching beyond standard load.
September 18, 2024	Updated to comply with the new State Human Resources Regulations.

Dual Employment Request for Palmetto College Columbia FTE Employees

This form is required to request dual employment for Palmetto College FTE employees who are being hired in an additional part-time, temporary capacity within the University. Any dual employment hours that overlap with the employee's regular work schedule for their primary position must include an approved agreement/plan outlining how the employee will make up the missed hours in their primary role. All time spent during regular work hours related to dual employment must be made up. This includes, but is not limited to, preparation time, travel to and from the dual employment location, teaching, and any duties performed for the dual employment assignment. The completed form must be submitted to the Palmetto College Vice Chancellor for Human Resources to accompany the hiring request. Completed forms should be submitted well in advance of the dual employment effective date to allow for approval by Palmetto College, the USC Division of Human Resources, and the State Office of Human Resources. Submission at least two weeks prior to the effective date is strongly recommended.

Name:

USC ID:

Primary Position Title:

Scheduled Hours of Primary Position:

From/To:

Provide a clear explanation of how the expectations and responsibilities of the primary role will continue while participating in dual employment:

Dates of Dual Employment:

Start/End Dates:

Time of Services to Be Performed (From/To):

Total Number of Hours to Be Worked Per Week:

Dual Employment Request for Palmetto College Columbia FTE Employees

Description of Services to Be Performed as Dual Employment:

Agreement/Plan to Make Up Hours Missed in the Primary Position:

*If more space is needed, please attach additional pages as necessary.

Employee Confirmation: Please check the appropriate box.

☐ I acknowledge that preparation time, travel time, and all duties related to the dual employment assignment occurring during regular work hours must be made up.

Employee's Signature: Date:

Supervisor Confirmation: Please check the appropriate box.

☐ I confirm that the employee's participation in dual employment will not interfere with the performance expectations of the primary position and that the make-up plan outlined above is acceptable and workable.

Supervisor's Signature: Date:

Palmetto College Human Resources Review:

☐ Approved ☐ Not Approved

Comments (if any):

HR Representative Name:

HR Representative Signature: Date:

What the New Market Structure Means to You

As we move forward implementing the new market structure, I want to acknowledge that change—especially when it involves job titles and compensation frameworks, can naturally raise questions and concerns. One of the most common concerns we've heard is whether the new structure might result in a demotion or a reduction in pay.

Let me be clear: this is not the intent, nor the outcome of this transition.

We are approaching this initiative with fresh eyes. Our current structure has evolved over time, built on legacy Title Codes and classifications that may no longer reflect the realities of today's roles or the external market. The new structure gives us the opportunity to start anew, aligning roles with current market data, organizational needs, and future growth.

Here's what this means for staff:
- No one is being demoted. A change in title or classification does not equate to a reduction in status or responsibility. It's a realignment to better reflect the work being done and how it compares to similar roles in the market.
- No one is losing pay. Compensation will be preserved, and in many cases, the new Market Ranges will provide greater transparency and opportunities for growth over time.
- This is about clarity and equity. The new structure helps us ensure that roles are consistently defined, fairly compensated, and aligned with both internal expectations and external benchmarks.

We are committed to making this transition as smooth and transparent as possible. If you have questions about your specific role or how it fits into the new framework, we encourage you to reach out. We want every member of our team to feel valued, supported, and confident in the path ahead.

Analysis of Research Job Family

When the University first implemented the market pay structure on January 1, 2023, many of the unclassified market titles in the research job family were not assigned market ranges. This was due to additional work that was needed to create a career path for staff researchers, additional job analysis to determine actual work being performed by the employees, and to appropriately analyze market value for each role.

With the new market structure, all research market titles will be assigned to a market range. To ensure the alignment is appropriate for each position, it will be necessary to ensure the market title assigned is the best fit for the work being performed. A cost to minimum or a note stating "Class/Comp Recommends Job Analysis" may mean a better market title exists for the position. In these situations, the market title should be addressed swiftly, so this may be updated prior to the December break.

Market Structure Effective July 1, 2025

Market Range	Minimum	Midpoint	Maximum	Pay Band
M01	33,339	39,525	47,430	B04
M02	34,532	43,165	51,798	B04
M03	37,735	47,168	56,602	B04
M04	41,258	51,572	61,887	B05
M05	45,133	56,416	67,699	B05
M06	49,396	61,745	74,094	B06
M07	54,165	67,707	81,247	B06
M08	59,581	74,477	89,371	B07
M09	65,539	81,924	98,308	B07
M10	72,093	90,116	108,139	B08
M11	79,302	99,127	118,953	B08
M12	87,231	109,039	130,846	B09
M13	95,954	119,942	143,931	B09
M14	105,550	131,936	158,325	B10
M15	116,104	145,129	174,156	B10
M16	127,714	159,641	191,571	B00
M17	140,485	175,605	210,727	B00
M18	154,534	193,165	231,801	B00
M19	169,987	212,481	254,980	B00
M20	186,986	233,729	280,479	B00
M21	205,684	257,101	308,526	B00
M22	226,252	282,811	339,378	B00
M23	248,877	311,092	373,315	B00
M24	273,764	342,201	410,646	B00
M25	301,141	376,421	451,711	B00
M26	331,255	414,063	496,882	B00
M27	364,380	455,469	546,570	B00
M28	400,818	501,015	601,227	B00
M29	440,899	551,116	661,348	B00

USC Market Structure Effective February 1, 2026

Market Range	Minimum	Midpoint	Maximum	Range Spread	Midpoint Differential
M01	33,280	40,768	48,256	0.45	
M02	36,608	44,845	53,082	0.45	0.10
M03	40,269	49,330	58,390	0.45	0.10
M04	44,296	54,263	64,229	0.45	0.10
M05	48,726	59,689	70,653	0.45	0.10
M06	52,526	65,658	78,789	0.50	0.10
M07	57,779	72,224	86,669	0.50	0.10
M08	63,557	79,446	95,336	0.50	0.10
M09	69,913	87,391	104,870	0.50	0.10
M10	76,904	96,130	115,356	0.50	0.10
M11	84,820	108,146	131,471	0.55	0.125
M12	95,423	121,664	147,906	0.55	0.125
M13	107,351	136,872	166,394	0.55	0.125
M14	120,769	153,981	187,192	0.55	0.125
M15	135,866	173,229	210,592	0.55	0.125
M16	149,910	194,883	239,856	0.60	0.125
M17	168,648	219,243	269,837	0.60	0.125
M18	189,729	246,648	303,566	0.60	0.125
M19	213,445	277,479	341,512	0.60	0.125
M20	240,126	312,164	384,202	0.60	0.125
M21	270,935	358,989	447,043	0.65	0.15
M22	311,575	412,837	514,099	0.65	0.15
M23	358,312	474,763	591,215	0.65	0.15
M24	412,058	545,977	679,896	0.65	0.15
M25	473,867	627,874	781,881	0.65	0.15

*Note: Market ranges for M26 – M29 no longer exist in the new market structure.

UNIVERSITY OF
South Carolina
PALMETTO COLLEGE

Amber Novotny, Ed.D.
Vice Chancellor of Enrollment Management and Student Success

Report to the Palmetto College Campuses Staff Senate
February 4, 2026

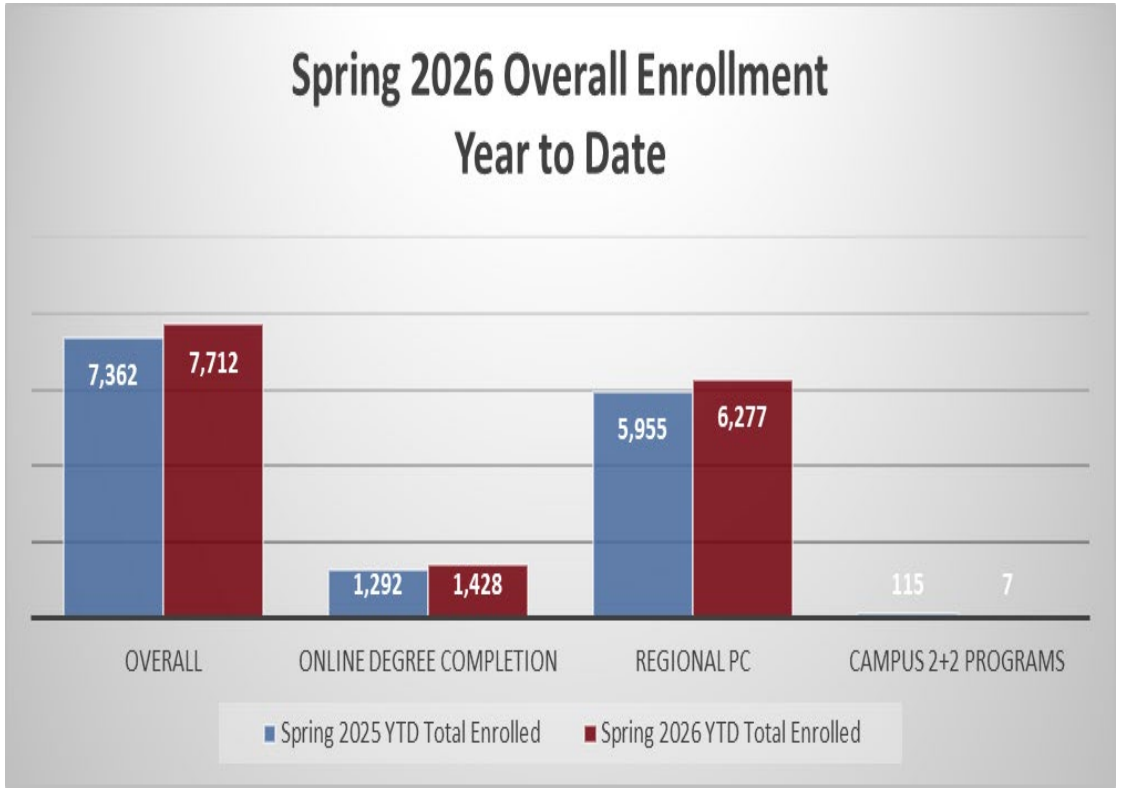
- Leading a comprehensive revamp of marketing for online programs, including print and digital collateral, paid social and digital media, organic social strategy, and video/commercial messaging.
- Refreshing the Palmetto College Central website to align with the updated look, feel, and branding of the university's main webpages.
- Continuing enhancements to the CRM and its applications, including development of faculty early alerts, retention and student success tools, and updates to communication plans, reports, and dashboards.
- Supporting the launch of AI Innovation Labs across the state; successfully launched the Fort Jackson Innovation Lab on January 21, featuring new branding (photos attached).
- Interviewing candidates to hire a new four-year online recruiter for the Sumter campus and actively recruiting for the same role at the Fort Jackson location.

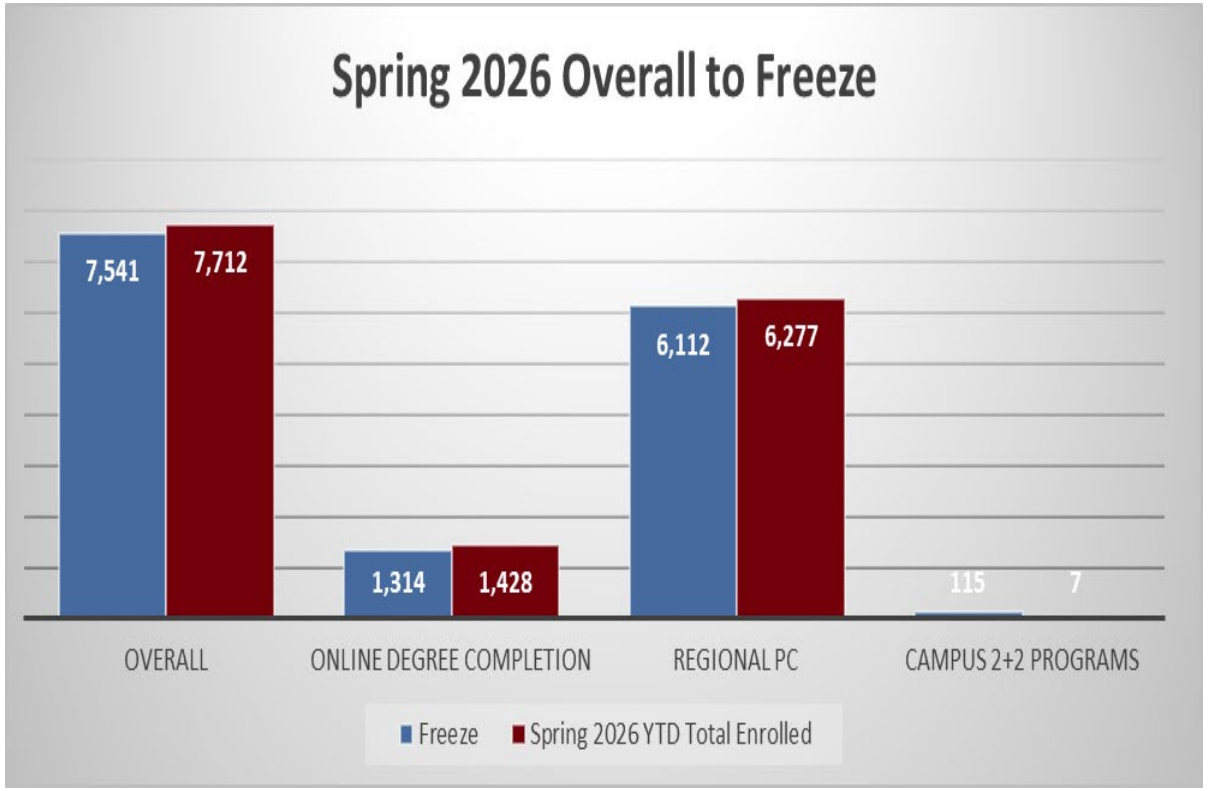
UNIVERSITY OF
South Carolina
PALMETTO COLLEGE

Palmetto College
Enrollment Report

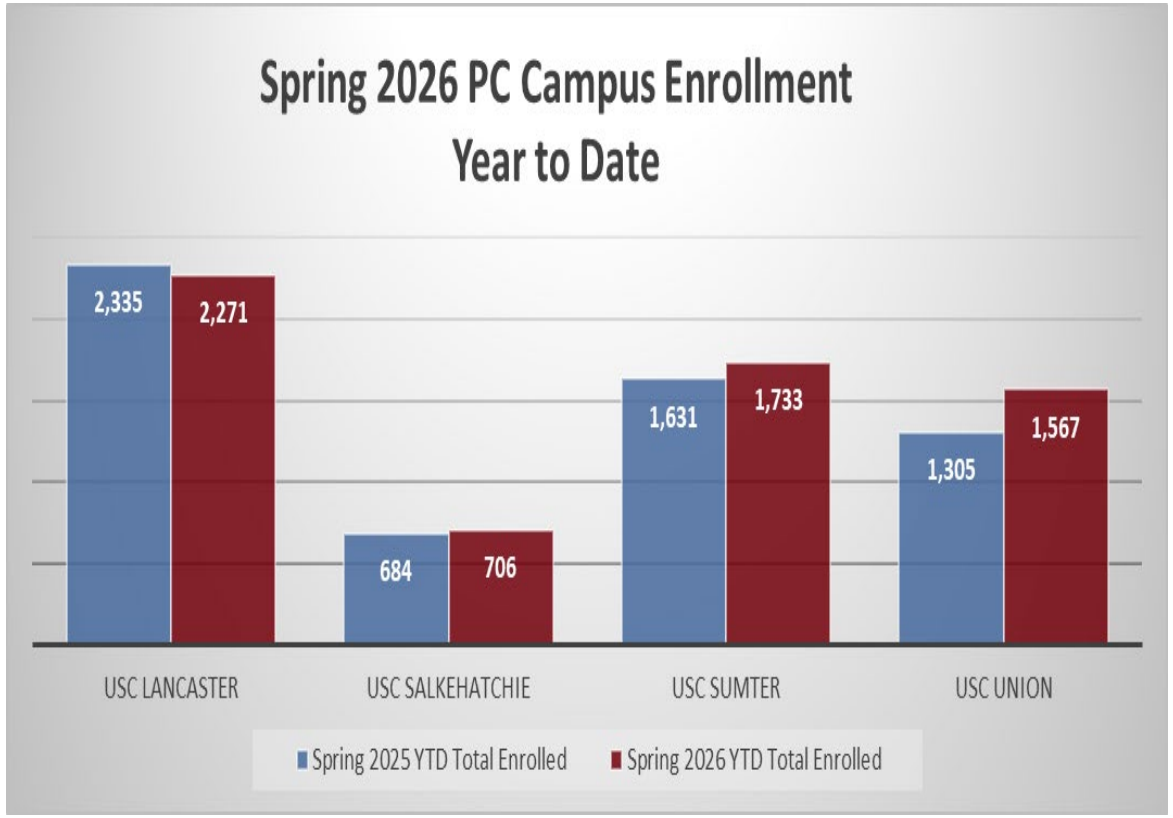
January 27, 2026

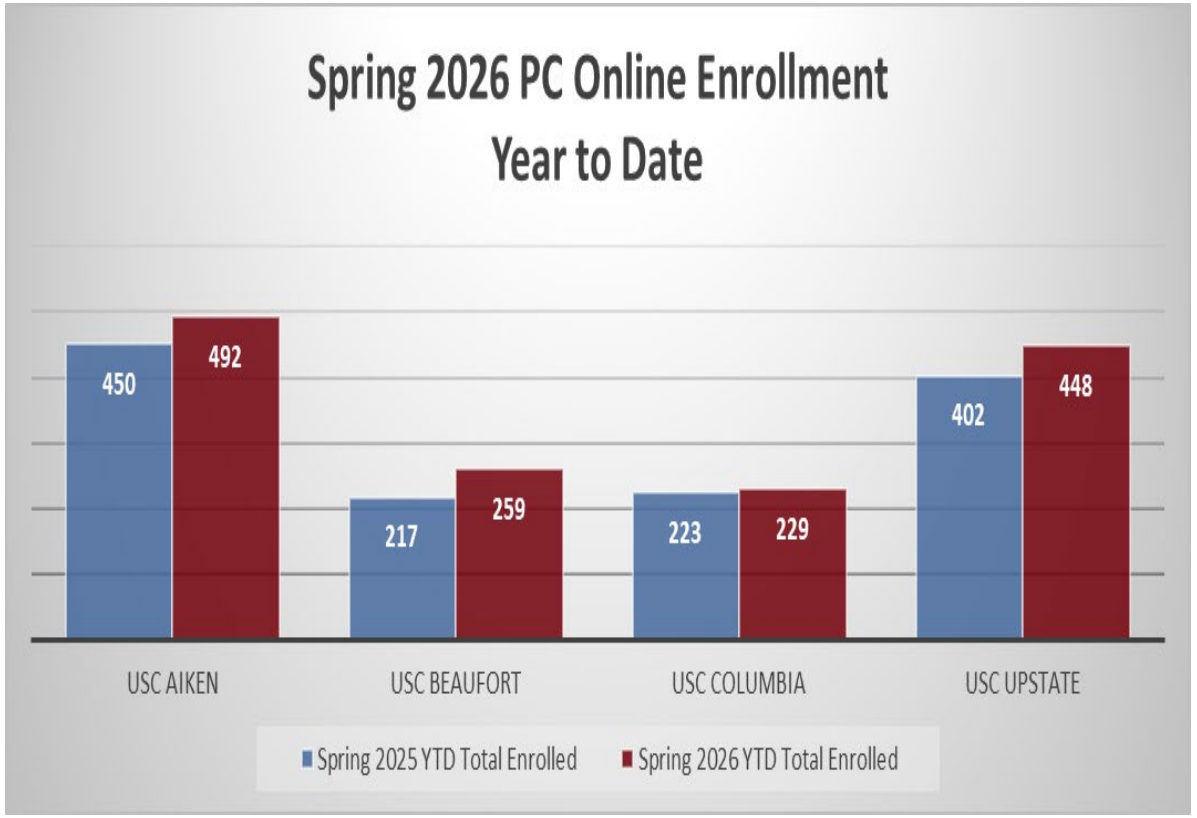
Spring 2026 Overall Enrollment Report





Spring 2026 Overall Enrollment Report





UNIVERSITY OF South Carolina PALMETTO COLLEGE

Spring 2026 Regional Campus Enrollment Data

Spring 2026 Current, 01/27/2026

Campus	Applications	Admits	Cancels & Withdrawals	New Enrolled	Continuing Enrolled	HS Concurrent Enrolled	Total Enrolled
USC Lancaster	713	616	29	61	560	1,589	2,271
USC Salkehatchie	146	103	10	44	225	299	706
USC Sumter	388	298	4	61	535	1,128	1,733
USC Union	494	444	5	30	239	1,298	1,567
Regional PC Total 25	**1,741**	**1,461**	**48**	**196**	**1,559**	**4,314**	**6,277**

Spring 2025 YTD, 01/28/2025

Campus	Applications	Admits	Cancels & Withdrawals	New Enrolled	Continuing Enrolled	HS Concurrent Enrolled	Total Enrolled
USC Lancaster	974	893	16	59	526	1,698	2,335
USC Salkehatchie	191	146	8	50	207	297	684
USC Sumter	384	316	4	78	568	975	1,631
USC Union	418	371	2	13	238	1,052	1,305
Regional PC Total 24	**1,967**	**1,726**	**30**	**200**	**1,539**	**4,022**	**5,955**

Variance -- Spring 2026 (01/27/2026) vs. Spring 2025 (01/28/2025)

Campus	Applications	Admits	Cancels & Withdrawals	New Enrolled [1]	Continuing Enrolled [2]	HS Concurrent Enrolled	Total Enrolled [3]
USC Lancaster	-261	-277	+13	+2	+34	-109	-64
USC Salkehatchie	-45	-43	+2	-6	+18	+2	+22
USC Sumter	+4	-18	0	-17	-33	+153	+102
USC Union	+76	+73	+3	+17	+1	+246	+262
Regional PC Total	-226	-265	+18	-4	+20	+292	+322

Variance -- Spring 2026 (01/27/2026) vs. Spring 2025 (01/28/2025)

Campus	Applications	Admits	Cancels & Withdrawals	New Enrolled [1]	Continuing Enrolled [2]	HS Concurrent Enrolled	Total Enrolled [3]
USC Lancaster	-26.8%	-31.0%	+81.3%	+3.4%	+6.5%	-6.4%	-2.7%
USC Salkehatchie	-23.6%	-29.5%	+25.0%	-12.0%	+8.7%	+0.7%	+3.2%
USC Sumter	+1.0%	-5.7%	0.0%	-21.8%	-5.8%	+15.7%	+6.3%
USC Union	+18.2%	+19.7%	+150.0%	+130.8%	+0.4%	+23.4%	+20.1%
Regional PC Total	**-11.5%**	**-15.4%**	**+60.0%**	**-2.0%**	**+1.3%**	**+7.3%**	**+5.4%**

Spring 2026 Regional Campus Enrollment Data

Spring 2026 Current, 01/27/2026

Student Type	USC Lancaster	USC Salkehatchie	USC Sumter	USC Union	Regional PC Total
Change of Campus-System	3		1	1	**5**
Continuing	560	225	535	239	**1,559**
Dual Enrollment	1,589	299	1,128	1,298	**4,314**
New Freshman	23	9	13	11	**56**
Nondegree	66	155	11	3	**235**
Other Nondegree	2				**2**
Readmit, Returning	3	10	7	2	**22**
Transfer	23	8	36	13	**80**
Visiting Transient	2		2		**4**
Total Enrolled	**2,271**	**706**	**1,733**	**1,567**	**6,277**
Traditional Total (Duals Removed)	*682*	*407*	*605*	*269*	**1,963**

Spring 2025 YTD, 01/28/2025

Student Type	USC Lancaster	USC Salkehatchie	USC Sumter	USC Union	Regional PC Total
Change of Campus-System	0	0	0	1	1
Continuing	526	207	568	238	1,539
Dual Enrollment	1,698	297	975	1,052	4,022
New Freshman	15	12	16	4	47
Nondegree	56	152	13	3	224
Other Nondegree	2	0	0	0	2
Readmit, Returning	6	2	5	4	17
Transfer	31	14	53	3	101
Visiting Transient	1	0	1	0	2
Total Enrolled	**2,335**	**684**	**1,631**	**1,305**	**5,955**
Traditional Total (Duals Removed)	*637*	*387*	*656*	*253*	*1,933*

Spring 2026 Regional Campus Enrollment Data

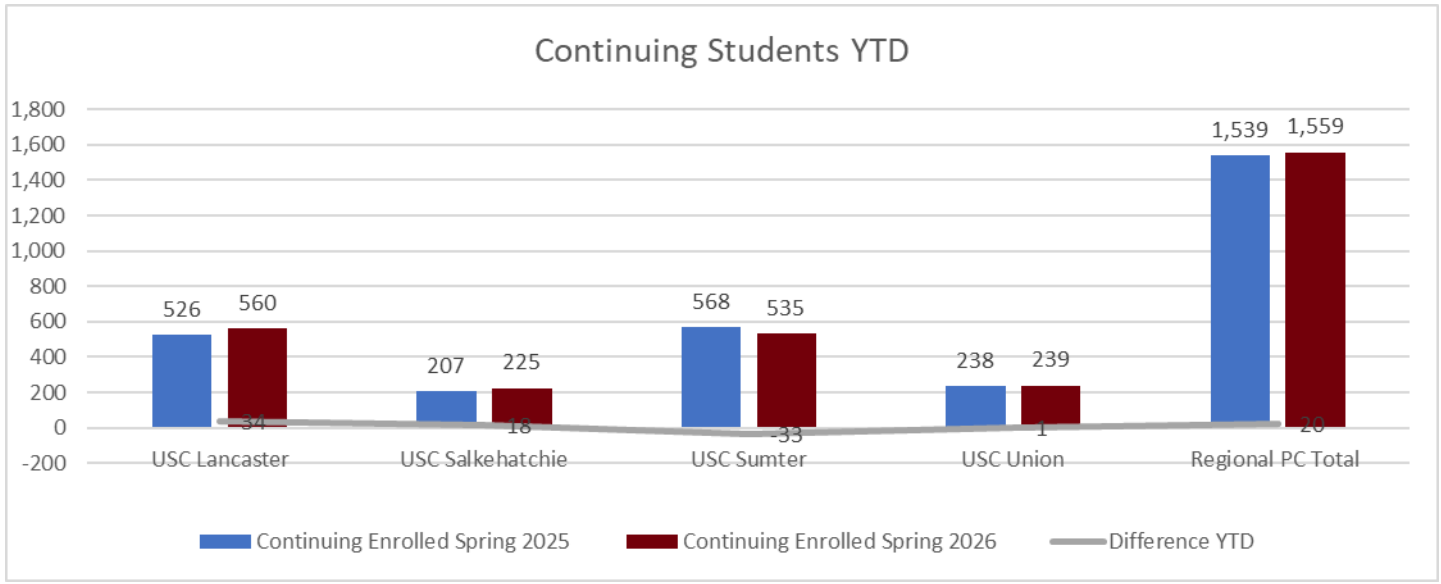
Variance -- Spring 2026 (01/27/2026) vs. Spring 2025 (01/28/2025)

Student Type	USC Lancaster	USC Salkehatchie	USC Sumter	USC Union	Regional PC Total
Change of Campus-System	+3	0	+1	0	+4
Continuing	+34	+18	-33	+1	+20
Dual Enrollment	-109	+2	+153	+246	+292
New Freshman	+8	-3	-3	+7	+9
Nondegree	+10	+3	-2	0	+11
Other Nondegree	0	0	0	0	0
Readmit, Returning	-3	+8	+2	-2	+5
Transfer	-8	-6	-17	+10	-21
Visiting Transient	+1	0	+1	0	+2
Total Enrolled	-64	+22	+102	+262	+322
Traditional Total (Duals Removed)	+45	+20	-51	+16	+30

Variance -- Spring 2026 (01/27/2026) vs. Spring 2025 (01/28/2025)

Student Type	USC Lancaster	USC Salkehatchie	USC Sumter	USC Union	Regional PC Total
Change of Campus-System	#DIV/0!	#DIV/0!	#DIV/0!	0.0%	+400.0%
Continuing	+6.5%	+8.7%	-5.8%	+0.4%	+1.3%
Dual Enrollment	-6.4%	+0.7%	+15.7%	+23.4%	+7.3%
New Freshman	+53.3%	-25.0%	-18.8%	+175.0%	+19.1%
Nondegree	+17.9%	+2.0%	-15.4%	0.0%	+4.9%
Other Nondegree	0.0%	#DIV/0!	#DIV/0!	#DIV/0!	0.0%
Readmit, Returning	-50.0%	+400.0%	+40.0%	-50.0%	+29.4%
Transfer	-25.8%	-42.9%	-32.1%	+333.3%	-20.8%
Visiting Transient	+100.0%	#DIV/0!	+100.0%	#DIV/0!	+100.0%
Total Enrolled	-2.7%	+3.2%	+6.3%	+20.1%	+5.4%
Traditional Total (Duals Removed)	+7.1%	+5.2%	-7.8%	+6.3%	+1.6%

Spring 2026 Regional Campus Continuing Student Enrollment Data



Campus	Continuing Enrolled Spring 2025	Continuing Enrolled Spring 2026	Difference YTD
USC Lancaster	526	560	34
USC Salkehatchie	207	225	18
USC Sumter	568	535	-33
USC Union	238	239	1
Regional PC Total	**1,539**	**1,559**	**20**

Spring 2025 Online Enrollment Data

Spring 2025 YTD, 01/28/2025

Major	Applications	Admits	Cancels & Withdrawals	New Enrolled	Continuing Enrolled	PC Concentration Code	Online Majors (Not PC Concentration)	Total Enrolled [3]
App. Computer Science, Cybersecurity - Aiken	24	16	0	9	46	57	12	69
Business Administration, Acct - Aiken	24	14	0	9	64	74	0	74
Business Administration, Finance - Aiken	9	7	0	6	12	18	0	18
Business Administration, Mgmt - Aiken	34	23	1	10	77	87	64	151
Business Administration, Marketing - Aiken	7	7	0	3	25	28	0	28
Communication - Aiken	6	4	0	1	16	17	7	24
Communication, Public Relations - Upstate	5	3	1	5	18	23	27	50
Criminal Justice - Upstate	9	7	0	6	61	67	18	85
Criminal Justice, Crime Analysis - Upstate	0	0	0	0	6	6	0	6
Elementary Education - Columbia	13	7	2	5	56	62	2	64
Emerging Media - Aiken	6	5	0	4	8	12	2	14
Engineering Technology Mgmt - Upstate	17	11	0	6	37	43	0	43
English - Upstate	9	9	0	7	28	35	5	40
Health Informatics - Upstate	6	2	1	2	10	12	2	14
Hospitality Management - Beaufort	6	4	0	2	8	10	5	15
Human Services - Beaufort	17	9	1	2	19	21	12	33
Information Mgmt and Systems - Upstate	7	6	0	2	19	21	9	30
Liberal Studies - Columbia	33	25	4	17	79	98	0	98
Nursing RN to BSN - Upstate	70	61	3	31	86	118	0	118
Organizational Leadership - Columbia	24	18	2	8	53	61	0	61
Political Science - Upstate	19	8	2	4	12	16	0	16
Psychology - Aiken	22	12	1	7	25	33	6	39
Psychology - Beaufort	36	21	0	14	36	50	39	89
Public Health (BS) - Beaufort	19	10	1	4	18	22	39	61
Public Health (BA) - Beaufort	7	6	0	1	4	5	1	6
Sociology - Beaufort	6	5	0	0	8	8	5	13
Special Education - Aiken	17	8	0	2	23	25	8	33
Degree Completion Total 23	452	308	19	167	854	1,029	263	1,292

Spring 2026 Online Enrollment Data

Spring 2026 Current, 01/27/2026

Major	Applications	Admits	Cancels & Withdrawals	New Enrolled	Continuing Enrolled	PC Concentration Code	Online Majors (Not PC Concentration)	Total Enrolled [3]
App. Computer Science, Cybersecurity - Aiken	23	14	1	5	67	72	13	85
Business Administration, Acct - Aiken	36	25	0	14	57	71	0	71
Business Administration, Finance - Aiken	16	12	0	8	26	34	0	34
Business Administration, Mgmt - Aiken	48	31	0	12	79	91	59	150
Business Administration, Marketing - Aiken	7	5	0	4	26	30	0	30
Communication - Aiken	6	4	0	3	10	13	10	23
Communication, Public Relations - Upstate	5	3	1	1	24	25	31	56
Criminal Justice - Upstate	7	6	1	6	50	56	38	94
Criminal Justice, Crime Analysis - Upstate	4	2	0	1	8	9	0	9
Elementary Education - Columbia	22	15	5	4	52	56	2	58
Emerging Media - Aiken	5	5	1	4	5	10	4	14
Engineering Technology Mgmt - Upstate	14	11	1	3	26	30	0	30
English - Upstate	9	6	2	4	37	41	5	46
Health Informatics - Upstate	6	2	0	0	10	10	8	18
Hospitality Management - Beaufort	4	3	0	1	11	12	13	25
Human Services - Beaufort	18	11	0	5	22	27	13	40
Information Mgmt and Systems - Upstate	9	8	0	3	15	18	0	18
Liberal Studies - Columbia	38	34	1	23	78	102	0	102
Nursing RN to BSN - Upstate	60	47	3	43	103	147	0	147
Organizational Leadership - Columbia	30	14	4	8	61	69	0	69
Political Science - Upstate	23	8	0	6	24	30	0	30
Psychology - Aiken	25	14	1	5	32	38	13	51
Psychology - Beaufort	43	24	3	8	53	61	42	103
Public Health (BS) - Beaufort	9	6	0	2	15	17	39	56
Public Health (BA) - Beaufort	7	4	0	2	8	10	7	17
Sociology - Beaufort	7	6	1	1	10	11	7	18
Special Education - Aiken	27	12	0	6	20	26	8	34
Degree Completion Total 24	508	332	25	182	929	1,116	312	1,428

Spring 2026 Online Enrollment Data

Spring 2026 YTD, 01/27/2026

Major [1]	Applications	Admits	Cancels & Withdrawals	New Enrolled	Continuing Enrolled [2]	PC Concentration Code	Online Majors (Not PC Concentration)	Total Enrolled [3]
App. Computer Science, Cybersecurity - Aiken	-1	-2	+1	-4	+21	+15	+1	+16
Business Administration, Acct - Aiken	+12	+11	0	+5	-7	-3	0	-3
Business Administration, Finance - Aiken	+7	+5	0	+2	+14	+16	0	+16
Business Administration, Mgmt - Aiken	+14	+8	-1	+2	+2	+4	-5	-1
Business Administration, Marketing - Aiken	0	-2	0	+1	+1	+2	0	+2
Communication - Aiken	0	0	0	+2	-6	-4	+24	-1
Communication, Public Relations - Upstate	0	0	0	-4	+6	+2	#REF!	+6
Criminal Justice - Upstate	-2	-1	+1	0	-11	-11	+20	+9
Criminal Justice, Crime Analysis - Upstate	+4	+2	0	+1	+2	+3	0	+3
Elementary Education - Columbia	+9	+8	+3	-1	-4	-6	0	-6
Emerging Media - Aiken	-1	0	+1	0	-3	-2	+2	0
Engineering Technology Mgmt - Upstate	-3	0	+1	-3	-11	-13	0	-13
English - Upstate	0	-3	+2	-3	+9	+6	0	+6
Health Informatics - Upstate	0	0	-1	-2	0	-2	+6	+4
Hospitality Management - Beaufort	-2	-1	0	-1	+3	+2	+8	+10
Human Services - Beaufort	+1	+2	-1	+3	+3	+6	+1	+7
Information technology - Upstate	+2	+2	0	+1	-4	-3	-9	-12
Liberal Studies - Columbia	+5	+9	-3	+6	-1	+4	0	+4
Nursing RN to BSN - Upstate	-10	-14	0	+12	+17	+29	0	+29
Organizational Leadership - Columbia	+6	-4	+2	0	+8	+8	0	+8
Political Science - Upstate	+4	0	-2	+2	+12	+14	0	+14
Psychology - Aiken	+3	+2	0	-2	+7	+5	+7	+12
Psychology - Beaufort	+7	+3	+3	-6	+17	+11	+3	+14
Public Health (BS) - Beaufort	-10	-4	-1	-2	-3	-5	0	-5
Public Health (BA) - Beaufort	0	-2	0	+1	+4	+5	+6	+11
Sociology - Beaufort	+1	+1	+1	+1	+2	+3	+2	+5
Special Education - Aiken	+10	+4	0	+4	-3	+1	0	+1
Degree Completion Total	+56	+24	+6	+15	+75	+87	+49	+136

Palmetto College Overall

Enrollment Trends | Spring 2013 - Spring 2026 (01/27/2026)

HEADCOUNT

Associate Degree Programs through Palmetto College Campuses(100-300 Level	2013*	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026
USC Lancaster	1,321	1,368	1,289	1,470	1,511	1,495	1,361	1,414	1,624	1,696	1,790	2,058	2395	2271
USC Salkehatchie	935	858	852	888	928	878	835	872	781	689	623	735	768	706
USC Sumter	824	734	796	777	683	815	912	1,090	1,148	1,212	1,366	1,449	1641	1733
USC Union	496	560	631	758	834	888	1,054	1,162	1,138	1,228	984	1,244	1308	1567
SUBTOTAL	3,576	3,520	3,568	3,893	3,956	4,076	4,162	4,538	4,691	4,825	**4,763**	**5,486**	**6,112**	**6,277**

2+2 Onsite Bachelor's Degree Completion Programs Offered by Palmetto College Campuses, Conferred by USC Flagship and	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026
Business - Aiken (Sumter)	38	32	21	22	31	28	17	10	4	1	0	0	0	0
Education - Aiken (Salkehatchie)	12	10	10	10	10	9	9	10	7	27	8	4	3	3
Education - Aiken (Sumter)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	26	18	16	24	18	0
Education - Upstate (Sumter)	44	21	21	22	32	19	6	0	-	-	-	-	0	0
Industrial Process Engineering - Aiken (Salkehatchie)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0	1	0	0	0
Nursing - Aiken (Sumter)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	7	15	19	23	0
Nursing - Aiken (Union)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	9	17	16	16	0
Nursing - Beaufort (Salkehatchie)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	16	30	41	30	25	13	4
Nursing - Columbia (Lancaster, Salkehatchie)	73	78	78	71	38	60	66	70	**	**	**	0	0	0
Nursing - Columbia (Lancaster)									52	39	49	58	42	0
Fort Jackson	9	19	19	10	12	6	9	9	**	**	**	**	0	0
SUBTOTAL	176	160	149	135	123	122	107	117	119	142	136	146	115	7

2+2 Online Bachelor's Degree Completion Programs	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026
Applied Computer Science, Cybersecurity - Aiken	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	11	30	39	60	69	85
Business Administration, Accounting - Aiken	-										94	80	76	71
Business Administration, Finance - Aiken												8	18	34
Business Administration , Management - Aiken		40	88	122	158	191	189	221	269	267	146	174	152	150
Business Administration, Marketing - Aiken												16	26	30
Communication - Aiken	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	16	23	27	21	26	23
Communication, Public Relations - Upstate											3	46	49	56
Criminal Justice - Upstate	-	23	70	78	82	105	99	101	113	102	83	97	85	94
Criminal Justice Crime Analysis - Upstate											3	5	6	9
Elementary Education - Columbia	-	11	25	40	47	37	35	41	44	52	57	63	62	58
Emerging Media - Aiken											7	7	13	14
Engineering Technology Management - Upstate	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	41	43	34	25	33	43	30
English - Upstate											15	27	41	46
Health Informatics - Upstate	-	-	-	-	-	15	24	30	49	47	20	13	15	18
Hospitality Management - Beaufort	-	-	-	-	5	18	24	27	34	38	16	16	15	25
Human Services - Beaufort	-	14	49	61	70	86	82	60	54	69	50	47	34	40
Information Management and Systems - Upstate	-	-	-	-	9	39	57	54	55	42	30	41	30	18
Liberal Studies - Columbia	-	186	205	216	191	181	184	155	146	118	93	116	99	102
RN-BSN Program - Upstate	-	150	138	123	157	172	163	152	165	159	112	140	130	147
Organizational Leadership - Columbia	-	118	130	118	124	122	148	145	144	133	103	82	64	69
Political Science - Upstate											0	4	18	30
Psychology - Aiken	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	22	33	36	40	40	51
Psychology - Beaufort	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	10	58	57	94	88	103
Public Health - BS Beaufort	-	-	-	-	10	24	30	37	39	42	32	69	63	56
Public Health - BA Beaufort											1	5	6	17
Sociology - Beaufort	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	14	11	15	13	18
Special Education - Aiken	-	-	-	-	1	12	11	12	22	24	27	32	33	34
SUBTOTAL	503	542	705	758	854	1,002	1,046	1,076	1,237	1,285	1,087	1,351	1,314	1,428

GRAND TOTALS	4,255	4,222	4,422	5,590	4,933	5,200	5,315	5,731	6,623	6,252	5,986	6,983	7,541	7,712

Artificial Intelligence:
The Toolmaker's Guide
USC PALMETTO COLLEGE
INNOVATION LAB
WHERE
INNOVATION
INNOVATION LAB

IMPORTANCE OF EDU PLANNING
Soldier
Combine the grit of a Soldier
Scholar
Develop the mind of a Scholar
Strategist
Become a master Strategist
Lifelong Learning
USC PALMETTO COLLEGE
INNOVATION LA
WHERE
INNOVATION
INNOVATION LAB

UNIVERSITY OF
South Carolina
LANCASTER

Dr. Courtney Catledge
Regional Palmetto College Dean

Report to the Palmetto College Staff Senate
February 4, 2026

People

Enrollment

As of January 30, 2026, Spring enrollment stands at 2276. These numbers reflect a strong enrollment for the Spring semester enrollment. Recruitment plans are underway for summer and fall 2026.

Faculty/Staff searches in progress:

- Accounts Receivable Manager
- Admission Counselor (Recruiter)
- Assistant Professor of Biology
- Instructor of Psychology
- Instructor of Sociology
- Assistant Professor/ Instructor of Computer Science

Athletics

The breakdown of fall 2025 grades for all USC Lancaster Athletes:

Men's Soccer: 17 players at a 3.0 or better, 2 of whom received a 4.0
Women's Soccer: 18 players at a 3.0 or better, 7 of whom received a 4.0
Volleyball: 4 players at a 3.0 or better
Baseball: 36 players at a 3.0, 5 of whom receive a 4.0

Baseball kicked off the season with an away game last weekend East Georgia State College. Upcoming game schedule can be accessed at this link.

Employee Support

Please remember that **the university offers work-life balance and wellbeing support** through our Employee Assistance Program (EAP). These services are helpful in times of stress and adjustment.

USC Lancaster in our Communities

USC Lancaster admissions, academic affairs, and financial aid will present at the Guidance Counselor luncheon on February 13, 2026.

We will connect with residents at **Sun City Carolina Lakes and Tree Tops later in February for registration for a second 8-weeks course.**

USCL leadership and students will be attending **Carolina Day** at the statehouse on **February 17th**.

Other items…

Horizon Education Grants were created to celebrate and support educators working with students PreK through college, in the communities of Great Falls and Fort Lawn, SC, and all of Lancaster County. They are designed with two primary goals in mind:

To tie innovative, collaborative teaching and learning to the goal of Building and Supporting a Healthy Community; To promote and support the development of our students' full potential to succeed as outlined in the "Profile of the SC Graduate."

Collaboration across grade levels, school campuses, and communities is highly encouraged. Every educator in our service area is eligible for both an individual classroom grant **AND** a team grant each year. The Spring 2026 deadlines include January 18th, February 15th, March 15th, and April 19th, 2026.

W. Brent Burgin Lunch and Learn on February 27 2026 at the NASC- a lecture by Prof. Deborah Rowell, Instructor of Criminal Justice at USC Lancaster, PhD Candidate. "The Dark Side of Women's History: How Female Serial Killers Defy the Narrative."

Pop-Up Art Market at the USC Lancaster Native American Study Center on Saturday February 21st from 10 am – 4 pm featuring, Blue Heron Group, Catawba Nation, and Amanda Wilson, Catawba Nation.

There is an upcoming production by the Lancaster Players- ***"Hairspray"*** *Come* out and support on **February 27th and 28th at 8 pm and March 1st at 2 pm**

Representing the system campuses, **President Amiridis presented FY 2026 budget requests to the House Ways and Means Higher Education Sub-committee** (Jan 29, 2026). The meeting went well with great dialogue between the University and the house members.

Representing the system campuses, **President Amiridis will present FY 2026 budget requests to the Senate Finance Committee Hearing later this month (February 2026)**

The inaugural meeting of the **USC Lancaster Staff Organization** took place on Friday January 30th, 2026, with good participation. It was offered in a hybrid format to promote participation. Lunch was provided and the discussion was centered around role and responsibilities of the organization as well as the structure and bylaws. Special thanks to the staff organization leadership team and all those who participated.

AssetWorks is now live for faculty, staff, and students to report maintenance and custodial concerns.

Save the date – Give 4 Garnet 2026

Give 4 Garnet is a one-day, eight-hour, and one-minute celebration of the University of South Carolina system that will begin at 5:59 a.m. on March 25 and end at 2 p.m. on March 26. It provides an opportunity for students, employees, alumni, family, and friends to come together virtually and demonstrate their support. Specific emphasis this year is USCL Soccer, Travel Study, and Shute Fund.

Commencement 2026: Planning is underway for an outdoor commencement ceremony on Saturday, May 2 at 11:00 am. This year's speaker is still being confirmed. The ceremony will take place just in front of the Crawford Rose Garden. The pre-ceremony and post-ceremony receptions will both take place in the Arnold Special Events Room in Bradley.

UNIVERSITY OF
South Carolina
SALKEHATCHIE

Palmetto College Staff Senate
February 4, 2026
Campus Dean's Report

Campus Highlights:

- Fall enrollment was 819 at freeze (October 17, 2025) with spring enrollment at 725 as of February 3, 2026.
- USC Salkehatchie's Leadership Institute hosted a Leadership Panel discussion on November 2025. Six (6) panelists from various backgrounds and organizations along with 50 students and community members participated. The Southern Palmetto Chamber of Commerce sponsored lunch.
- USC Salkehatchie held a successful scholarship luncheon and celebrated the launch of the USC Salkehatchie John Winthrop Sr. Legacy Society on October 3, 2025. Approximately 150 in attendance.
- To celebrate our 60th anniversary, USC Salkehatchie hosted an alumni, faculty, staff, student, and family day and softball alumni game on the Allendale campus in October. There were approximately 150 in attendance.
- The USC Salkehatchie Leadership Institute's Leadership Salkehatchie cohort began in January with 17 participants from surrounding counties.
- Aiming for Excellence Award winners:
    - September – Georgeann Williams
    - October – Jennifer Breland (inaugural)
    - November – Bernard Washington
    - December – Carmen Taylor
    - January – Rocshe Green
    - February – Gwyne Lacanin
- AI workshops in partnership with the College of Information and Communications were held in iCarolina Labs on both campuses in October.
- The Walterboro campus served as polling place for the November 4 election.
- We are currently working with 13 GLD students, a significant increase from last year's number of participants, which was four (4).
- USC Salkehatchie collected toys for children in the community this holiday season. We supported children through Allendale County DSS and sponsored seven boys, ages 1-8 years old, through Colleton County First Steps.

- USC Salkehatchie has teamed up with Urban Edge Network (UEN) to enhance sports streaming access. This partnership marks USC Salkehatchie as the first NJCAA member to secure a streaming deal with UEN, offering fans, families, and alumni free access to live games and exclusive content.
- USC Salkehatchie has partnered with Coastal Empire Community Mental Health Center and Low Country Health Care Systems to bring their mobile units to campus to provide mental health and primary care services, respectively.
- USC Salkehatchie is partnering with SC Works to create connection points in the iCarolina Lab on both campuses. These will provide the campus and community with access to online workforce resources, unemployment insurance information, and career services offered through SC Works. We are working to schedule ribbon cuttings on both campuses, with days and times to be announced soon.
- Negotiations are ongoing with USCB leadership to reestablish the nursing partnership program. Donations from various sources have been secured and grants have been/are being submitted/written.
- USC Salkehatchie will be the host site for the South Carolina Tour of Americans exhibit in January 2027.
- A Skyview weather camera has been installed on the Student Services Center at the Allendale campus, offering a live view of the north end driveway, fountain, and flag pole.
- Hires since September meeting:
    - Onyx Barksdale – Admissions Counselor
    - Grace Cox – transitioned to Director of Educational Partnerships
    - Meagan Driggers – Recreation Assistant/Cheering Coach
    - Erik Ferguson – Weight Room Supervisor/Gym Monitor
    - Kimberlyn Fryar - STEM Teaching Assistant
    - William “Bill” Frye – Admissions Counselor
    - Rocshe Green – transitioned to Admissions Counselor
    - Beth Jenkins - STEM Bus Teacher
    - Renee Kinloch – Academic Advisor
    - Diana Diaz Lopez – Director of Student Support Services
    - Luke Mixson – Grounds/Maintenance
    - Isaac Robinson – transitioned to Academic Advisor
    - Janell Solomon - transitioned to Assistant Director of Financial Aid
    - Carmen Taylor – transitioned from temporary to FTE Maintenance Staff
- Currently accepting applications for the following positions:
    - Director of Communications, Marketing, and Alumni Relations

Respectfully submitted,

Dr. April Cone
Campus Dean

UNIVERSITY OF
South Carolina
SUMTER
A Regional Palmetto College

PC Staff Senate Report
February 4, 2026
Eric M. Reisenauer, Ph.D.

Staff

Five staff members reported significant professional and/or institutional accomplishments since the last report. Some accomplishments edited for report brevity.

Miguel A. Justiniano

- Softball Head Coach Miguel Justiniano earned his Doctor of Education in Leadership

Erika N. Canty

- I received my master's degree in Project Management and Supply Chain Management from USC Aiken at the end of the Fall 2025 semester.

Lisa Rosdail

- The Federal TRIO Student Support Services Grant at USC Sumter, the Opportunity Scholars Program, was successful in writing and being awarded another five-year grant. The $1.74 million grant was awarded through the Department of Education and will fund services for 150 students at $350,000 annually.

Jernitha Smith

- Jernitha has been formally accepted into the competitive SASFAA Community Engagement Leadership Pipeline (CELP). This is a significant accomplishment that recognizes her potential as a future leader in financial aid. The two-year program will provide her with comprehensive leadership development, mentorship, and opportunities to lead within our state and regional associations.

- Featured Guest on "Swoonpies & Money" podcast, "How I Got Here" Series (Season 2, Episode 11): Selected to share my professional journey and leadership insights as part of SASFAA's series, led by Emily Baldwin. The episode highlights my career path in financial aid administration and veteran services, offering guidance and inspiration to emerging and experienced SASFAA members navigating their own professional development.

Kris Weissmann

- The Fall 2025 USC Sumter Esports program competed in seven championships, winning four!

- NJCAAE Call of Duty 4v4 Division 1
- NJCAAE Call of Duty Warzone Division 1
- College Call of Duty League Warzone
- Eastern College Athletic Conference Call of Duty 4v4 Division 2

Campus/Accolades

- USC Sumter's Fall Enrollment reached another historic record with 1,912. This is a 6% increase over last year.
- The Anderson Library received a generous and extensive gift of 2,200 volumes from James T. Staskowski, Jr. Every volume in the collection will be labeled "From the collection of James T. Staskowski Jr. whose memory will live on in the literature he loved."
- Thanks to a handful of Halloween loving Fire Ants, USC Sumter's Fall Festival returned to campus this October. Over 100 students, faculty and staff volunteered to make this after-hours community event a possibility. Families enjoyed a trick or treat candy trail, vendors, food trucks, crafts, spooky story time, STEM activities, and two haunted houses.
- Student Life and the Bookstore organized a display in the Student Union to celebrate the Dia de los Muertos holiday.
- First Generation week on the USC Sumter campus was filled with several events and activities including a First-Generation panel with members of faculty and staff sharing their first gen experience, motivational speakers, community block party, and an ice cream social.
- A High School Counselor Luncheon was held for counselors from Sumter area high schools. This luncheon is held annually to honor the hard work and dedication of counselors that help students prepare for college.
- The Millpond Review, USC Sumter's literary magazine, held student writing events this fall to encourage students to get creative and share their stories. Events included a walk and write afternoon at Sumter's Swan Lake and spooky story readings at the Fall Festival.
- This year we awarded over $168,000 in scholarships and celebrated the student recipients and the donors that make the scholarships possible with a scholarship luncheon. We also honored 5 new endowments and all Philip L. Edwards Legacy Society members for their lifetime giving, including
- We were honored to participate in Sumter's Veterans Day parade. Blaze the Fire Ant was joined by students and staff as we paid respect to our military veterans and their service to our country
- The admission department hosted our Fall Sumter Scholar event in December. They honored nearly 20 students that are in the top 25% of their high school senior class and have qualified for free tuition from USC Sumter

Athletics

- Volleyball won the regular season and were Region 10 Tournament Champions. This earned the program its second bid to the NJCAA Atlantic District Championship in Fort Myers, FL where they faced three-time National

Champions Florida SouthWestern State College. Julia Hurd is ranked 2nd and 3rd in the country for digs and digs per set, respectively. Isabella Cocke is ranked #13 in the country in kills with 412.

- Men's Soccer finished 2nd in the regular season.
- Women's soccer finished 2nd in the regular season.
- Women's cross country had their first competitor in the Region Meet, and she finished 3rd.
- Fundraising efforts have been successful thus far raising over $30,000.
- Alumni Golf Tournament is November 17 raising money for Athletic scholarships.
- Will Thompson was named head coach for the baseball program.
- Dustin Smith is our new Track and Field head coach.
- JJ Lott is the new assistant softball coach.
- Nick Petit and Jackson Price are the new baseball assistant coaches.
- Baseball, softball, tennis, track and field, and golf are in season this spring.
- We are hosting the NJCAA Women's Tennis National Championships, in partnership with the City of Sumter and the PTC, in May.

Randy Lowell, USC Union
Dean's Report
February 3, 2026

- Spring enrollment is strong again this year. We have already surpassed our previous Spring record from last year, with headcount of 1,570 (up 20% from 1,308), and FTE of 902 (up 21.6% from 742). This includes increases from last Spring in dual enrollment and traditional student populations. We have additional time ahead of the start of Spring II classes in March to add to these enrollment numbers as well.

- The South Carolina Commission on Higher Education's most recent annual Statistical Abstract included a number of impressive metrics for our campus, including:

    - 121 degrees awarded for fiscal year 2023-2024 (up from 118 from the previous fiscal year, and up from 50 degrees awarded ten years ago in 2014-2015).
    - 47.6% Graduation Rate for first-time, full-time undergraduates entering in Fall 2021 (up from 37.5% for previous year; ranks #1 among all of the 4 Palmetto College Campuses and 16 Technical Colleges in South Carolina).
    - 75.9% Success Rate for first-time, full-time undergraduates entering in Fall 2021 (up from 71.9% for previous year; ranks #3 among all of the 4 Palmetto College Campuses and 16 Technical Colleges in South Carolina).
    - 69.9% Retention of first-time, full-time undergraduates from Fall 2023 to Fall 2024 (ranks #2 among all of the 4 Palmetto College Campuses and 16 Technical Colleges in South Carolina).
    - 50% LIFE Scholarship Retention for Freshmen in Fall 2023 retaining LIFE in Fall 2024 (ranks #1 among all of the 4 Palmetto College Campuses and 16 Technical Colleges in South Carolina).
    - 36.2% LIFE Scholarship Retention for Freshmen, Sophomores, and Juniors (combined) in Fall 2023 retaining LIFE in Fall 2024 (ranks #1 among all of the 4 Palmetto College Campuses and Technical Colleges in South Carolina).

- The FY27 state budget process has kicked off earlier this month with the Governor putting out his initial Executive Budget draft. His version does not include any increases to health insurance, retirement, or pay. For our campus in particular, it includes less than half of the requested new recurring operating funding, less than a tenth of the requested one-time capital project funding. Note, however, that the final version of this budget each year typically changes quite a bit from this initial draft after the House and Senate have had an opportunity to weigh in. The House Ways and Means Committee get it next, and President Amiridis will be presenting that USC System budget request on our behalf to them next week. From there, the full House will weigh in, followed by Senate Finance Committee and the full Senate, and finally the House getting it back one more time before the final version coming out of the Conference Committee during the summer. We had a couple of great visits on campus here in Union and out in Clinton with Senator Verdin, who represents Laurens and Union counties, so hopeful that he will help advocate for our budget requests along with Representative Gilliam who is from right here in Union.

- Two men from Intus Smart Cities have approached us about developing a partnership with us related to some grant funding they have received to work on a fiber optic project in this area, which would incorporate some form of training they would provide to our students and other members of the community to be able to be hired to do that work. We are in very preliminary stages of conversation on this, but it might be something that we are able tie into relevant academic coursework and internship opportunities.

- Tanya McKay, from the Youth Biodiversity Collective non-profit organization, reached out regarding the possibility of her non-profit doing some tree planting for their annual Earth Day project this year on a USC campus, potentially here in Union or over at our Laurens Location in Clinton. She's mentioned considering some type of native species or fruit trees, which might help with things like storm runoff, erosion control, or beautification, depending on what/where it was. I'm working on setting up a time for her to visit campus to talk through those options further, but it sounds like the non-profit would cover the costs associated with the tree planting project, and would want to incorporate students as well.

- The new Student Clothes Closet on campus is available to students to utilize this semester. It is located in the student lounge behind the Bookstore, near the Food Pantry. Spring hours are Wednesdays from 10:00-12:00 and Thursdays from 2:00-3:00. Students can call or text 864-424-8055 if they need to arrange an alternative time to utilize this resource. They will need to present their Carolina Card to access this free resource.

- Just before the holiday break, we had an opportunity to do a walkthrough of the new private student housing that Tradd Bruce is building out on Times Boulevard, which at that point was all framed up with a roof in place. He is confident that he will have that first building completed this summer for students to begin moving into in July or August. That building consists of 36 3-bedroom/3-bathroom apartments, which will come fully furnished for students, at a price point of $600/student/month and include all internet/utilities. By the time we get to the Fall 2027 semester, he should have additional apartment buildings completed at that site, as well as some of the Main Street units ready to rent out. The Fairforest Hotel portion of that project would likely be Fall 2028 before he finishes up the project with more renovated units completed there.

- The Catawba Council of Governments is working through a Catawba Regional Workforce Housing Study, which includes Union County. I had an opportunity to participate in one of their focus groups up in Chester last month to provide them with some feedback on what those housing options are here in Union, and some options that might be attractive to consider getting developers to create more of, such as more nicer apartments or townhouses, etc. I will likely reengage with that group again at some point as they work through the study and would be happy to pass along any additional feedback that anyone has on other housing needs or comments.

- This month, we will be welcoming two new maintenance staff to campus in Union and out at the athletic facilities in Jonesville and The Coop, Jason Fowler and Gene Dawkins. We still have an ad out for some maintenance work out at our Laurens Location in Clinton as well, in case you know of anyone who might be interested in applying for that job.

- In athletics, not only have our teams found success in competition this year, but they have also continued to excel in the classroom, as reflected in an overall Athletics GPA of 3.25 for Fall 2025. This included softball at 3.69, golf at 3.46, men's soccer at 3.28, bass fishing at 3.28, volleyball at 3.13, baseball at 3.12, and women's soccer at 3.01.

- The budget remains in good shape for the campus, with the mid-year budget review showing expenditures at just over 50% as we head into the second half of the fiscal year. In facilities and operations, here are some updates on those projects:
    - Main Building has opened back up for classes.
    - Laurens Location in Clinton has completed its kitchen and bathroom projects, and putting some finishing touches on the boat storage area. Thanks to the Commission funds, they have also installed new carpet and putting/chipping flooring in the golf room.
    - Art building project, Jonesville gym interiors, Jonesville gym roof replacement, and baseball field restrooms all in preparation or progress.

UNIVERSITY OF South Carolina PALMETTO COLLEGE

Financial Aid Offices
Lancaster, Salkehatchie, Sumter, Union

Bridget Blackwell
Director of Financial Aid

Report to the Palmetto College Campuses Staff Senate
February 4, 2026

Palmetto College Scholarships

We are pleased to announce that the Palmetto College scholarship application for the 2026-27 academic year is now available on our website. We kindly encourage you to share this information with students and colleagues across all campuses. Please note that the deadline for submitting applications is April 15th. If you have any questions, please feel free to reach out to the Palmetto College Central Financial Aid Office for assistance.

Palmetto College Scholarship

Financial Aid Satisfactory Academic Progress (FASAP) Standards

To maintain eligibility for federal, state, and some private educational loan funds, students must demonstrate satisfactory academic progress (SAP) toward their degree. SAP is evaluated at the end of each semester, to include fall, spring, and summer, as well as during periods when the student did not receive financial aid or was enrolled in a non-degree program. Additionally, a student's SAP may be assessed when they submit a Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) or apply for specific types of aid that require compliance with SAP standards.

The evaluation period will be based on attendance in **all prior semester(s)** and will **include all classes attempted** whether federal or state aid was received or not. The initial evaluation will include all previous institutions attended once the transcripts are received, evaluated, and posted to the student's record.

Satisfactory Academic Progress

Default Management

When a student chooses to borrow federal loans, they must understand their responsibility to repay these loans and avoid the risk of defaulting, which can have significant repercussions. Borrowers can proactively manage their finances by visiting https://studentaid.gov, to learn how much they owe, identify their servicer, and explore their repayment options.

To help support these student borrowers, the Financial Aid Offices at the Palmetto College Regional Campuses established a partnership with KHEAA, a group dedicated to help prevent loan default. Once a student graduates or drops below half-time enrollment, KHEAA will reach out to help them stay informed and on track with their federal student loan repayment. We hope students will take advantage of this resource to effectively manage their loan repayment journey by contacting KHEAA at 800-564-6068.

Federal Direct Loans

The upcoming school year will see big changes for the federal student loan programs. A new regulation will require schools to prorate federal loans for students who are enrolled less than half-time beginning with the 2026-27 academic year. This means that students who enroll in at least 6 hours, but less than 11 hours will be subject to a prorated annual limit. For example, if a freshman enrolls for 12 hours in the fall, they may receive up to $2750 in Direct Loans for that semester. If they enroll in 6 hours in the spring, then the amount they can borrow is reduced to $1375 for the spring. This change may affect a student's ability to pay for their educational expenses--not just tuition but books, rent, gas and food. We will be monitoring outcomes closely to learn how we can best support our part-time students.

To learn more about how the **One Big Beautiful Bill Act** will change the federal loan programs, visit this summary from the National Association of Student Financial Aid Administrators.

Loan Changes from the One Big Beautiful Bill Act: Brief for Campus Leadership

UNIVERSITY OF
South Carolina
PALMETTO COLLEGE

Chris DeWolf
Sr. Director of Development

Frank Terrapin
Assistant Director of Development

Report to the Palmetto College Campuses Staff Senate
February 4, 2026

Development

- PC has already surpassed its fundraising goal for FY'26 having raised $1.84M year to date. We're on pace for a potentially record-breaking year with over 5 months to go until the end of the fiscal year.

- The University is in the silent phase of an 8 year $1.5B capital campaign. Nearly $770M has been raised to date across USC toward this goal

- Give 4 Garnet (Giving Day) is coming up March 25-26 and will be an opportunity for our staff and faculty to help support PC. Donors can provide support for a wide range of needs including scholarships, student food pantries, staff/faculty excellence funds, unrestricted giving, etc. Frank is directing our Giving Day efforts and would appreciate having new staff volunteers to serve as social media ambassadors to help spread the word and promote Giving Day support for Palmetto College.

Scholarships

Across Palmetto College we have between 500-1,000 total endowed scholarships. Endowed meaning the donor funds are invested by the Ed Foundation and delivers a portion of the return each year, in perpetuity, in the form of student scholarship awards. Scholarships generally fall into one of the following categories:

- Needs based for students experiencing financial challenges
- Last dollar- generally intended to fill a gap in the student's scholarship support such as federal tuition assistance for military or veteran students
- Academic excellence scholarships- to reward to high academic performers
- Study Abroad
- Military scholarships- for active military or veterans
- Spendable scholarships- a pass through donation that is delivered directly to students on a one-time basis

Student Impact

- Since PC students at our regional campuses are often Pell eligible (meaning their family income falls below the poverty line) scholarships are crucial for them to attend school and experience access and success.
- Each campus and PC Central have scholarship committees that review the scholarship award requirements and select the student recipient who best meets the award criteria.
- Most of the scholarship applications can be found online, and in some cases the committee will identify a student who fits the requirements.
- One special opportunity of note is that USC Sumter has a scholarship matching fund that enables someone who is creating a new endowed scholarship at USCS to have their donation matched up to $25,000.

UNIVERSITY OF
South Carolina
PALMETTO COLLEGE

Bob Dyer
Director of Information Technology

Report to the Palmetto College Campuses Staff Senate
February 4, 2026

- **ADA Title II Final Rule** – USC has launched a multi-phase plan in response to the ADA Title II Final Rule to ensure that our websites, course materials, mobile apps, and other digital resources meet accessibility standards and reflect our shared commitment to inclusion and continuous improvement. The plan applies to all digital content created or maintained by USC, including websites, instructional materials, documents, forms, and applications used by faculty, staff, and students. Through this work, USC is advancing a system-wide effort to make accessibility part of every digital practice.

- **Cisco VPN Retirement** – The Cisco AnyConnect VPN software will be decommissioned in the coming months and replaced with Fortinet VPN. We are working with DoIT to ensure Palmetto College has a plan to deploy Fortinet and sunset Cisco VPN.

Palmetto College Staff Senate- Ad Hoc committee meeting Wednesday, January 7, 2026 at 10:00am, with Jessica Goodwin, Bridget Blackwell, Cari Conley, Chelsea Corbett, and Amy Crotzer

The purpose of our meeting was to establish a recurring meeting schedule, outlining action items, prepare a written update for executive officers meeting, identify needed support and resources, and identifying the issue(s) this committee will take up this year.

Agenda and discussion items:

1) Set recurring meeting schedule
    a) We discussed setting meeting times to a month before the PS Staff Senate meetings which are scheduled for February 4, 2026 and June 3, 2026.
    b) Our first meeting was today, January 7, 2026, and we plan to meet again at the end of April/beginning of May (date TBD a little closer to time).
    c) We will schedule any other meetings as needed in between those dates.
2) Choosing issue(s) this committee plans to focus on
    a) We discussed communication needs and why communication is the overall issue PC staff chose in the survey that went out. We think this is important since we have new leadership coming in, and staff wants clear communication about what to expect, goals, and direction PC plans to go, things what will impact staff working in Palmetto College, etc.
        i) We want to work on creating an organizational chart for Palmetto College (and who to go for different issues/questions). We need to find out if one has already been created/updated.
        ii) We want to get feedback from PC staff about what kind of communication they want and will find helpful, and how they'd like to receive that communication. We are working on getting questions together for a survey to go out.

Questions:

Who needs to approve a survey link and questions going out? How far in advance do we need to come up with questions and have them approved before we can send out to staff? Is there a specific process for this.