



A Regional Palmetto College

FO Minutes

September 11, 2026 – 10:00 AM

Whitener Building, Community Room

In-person attendance:

Gale Ashmore
Maggie Aziz
Alan Charles
Lynn Edwards
Avery Fouts
Sarah Heuss
Ahmad Iftakhar
Andrew Kettler
Katie Klik
Steve Lowe
Randy Lowell
Steve Lownes
David Mitra
Cortney Pinnell
Andrew Pisano
Emily Schafer
Tracy Stapleton
Jennifer Triplett

Online attendance:

Joe Anderson
Walter Collins
Cari Conley
Michael Greer
Neil Hance
Randy Ivey
Al-Chandour Majed
Sandy Phillips-Long
Annie Smith
Jessica Wardlaw
Caroline Wilson
Craig Wilson

Future FO meetings:

October 23, 10 am.
December 4, 10 am.

Dr. Klik called the meeting to order at 10:03 am.

Update from Chancellor Wilson: Chancellor Wilson gave an update regarding reaffirmation for SACS accreditation: The Union campus does not have the required number of representatives to demonstrate shared governance; two department chairs need to be established. The appointed chairs need to be tenured and available in the Summer. Chancellor

Wilson asked the faculty to consider nominations for at least two chairs as soon as possible. They are to begin duties in the Spring. Recommendations should be sent to Dr. Aziz by October 15.

Dr. Kettler asked if non-tenured faculty could serve. Chancellor Wilson replied no.

Chancellor Wilson stated that compensation could be negotiated.

Dr. Klik asked if assistants for the chairs could be provided. Chancellor Wilson indicated this may be possible in the future.

It was asked if a chair position could be created for DE/Adjuncts, with possibly non-tenured faculty serving. Dr. Aziz stated she would not be opposed to having a faculty liaison for DE/Adjuncts.

Dr. Schafer inquired about possible reductions of service loads for chairs.

Chancellor Wilson emphasized the importance of having leaders on campus. He stated serving as a chair would count towards service and that a three-year term would apply.

A discussion was held after Chancellor Wilson's update:

Dr. Aziz emphasized that the chairs need to be formed. A Humanities department is to be created with Drs. Lownes, Pisano, Lowe, and Fouts eligible to be chair. A Mathematics, Sciences, Social Sciences, and Nursing department is to be created with Drs. Klik, Schafer, and Sixta-Rinehart eligible to be chair.

Dr. Klik suggested pushing the discussion to after FO and then setting up a voting system to select chairs. She asked that non-tenured faculty consider filling service roles made vacant by Chair duties.

Dr. Klik asked for interested Adjuncts to let her know if they wish to be a voting member of FO.

Dr. Lownes mentioned that it is likely that the SACS shared governance requirement will also be part of the CPHC requirements.

A call to approve the August 23 minutes was made and passed.

Dean's Report: Dr. Randy Lowell

Dr. Lowell gave his report. The report is attached to these minutes.

Of note: The Research Club will give presentations on October 26 and November 30.

Academic Dean's Report: Dr. Maggie Aziz

Dr. Aziz made the following remarks:

- Early alerts start now; please submit your reports. All reports will be submitted in a single system after this semester.
- The Social Work pathway with USCB is completed. Forms are available in the drive. Please promote the program to students.
- Steve Hudson is offering two courses in business and entrepreneurship, for everyone, in the AI lab.
- International student athletes must return to campus after the Thanksgiving break. Exceptions may be made only with a valid, documented reason. She emphasized that the faculty needs to take responsibility for this and should stand as one with regards to this. A discussion was held regarding this, with general agreement that adherence to this policy is for the greater good.

Report from Dr. Kettler

Dr. Kettler gave the following remarks and updates:

- Questions regarding early alerts should be addressed to Dr. Kettler.
- A discussion should be held in FAC concerning AI use.
- The Champion team has new members.
- Vector has started. Students should have received emails. Emails will be sent every two weeks.
- The deadline for Digital ADA was pushed back to August 27.
- Courses on Blackboard older than two years will be archived in a to be deleted folder. Consult Andrew, Bob, or Jean about retaining your course.
- The library is receiving more books.
- Two ARC grants are available. Committee volunteers are needed. See Dr. Kettler if interested.
- Presentations in the Athlete Workshops will be made in November. Emails will be sent.
- Anyone with students who are interested in Medical School should be referred to Dr. Kettler. DE students are welcome.
- A walk in the Mushroom Fields will be made in the Spring. Presentations will be made there.
- The Faculty Research Conference will be held in Salk. on Oct. 9. Carpooling is requested. Posters and creative works are welcome.
- The First Gen meeting is forthcoming. Let Dr. Kettler know if you wish to join.

- A job fair will be held 9/22 from 10-1 at the Junction.
- Mental Health day is coming up on Constitution day. Dr. Kettler will host a table.
- A speaker on sexual assault and violence prevention will be here on 12/4.

Dr. Klik asked to vote Caroline Wilson in as a voting member. Rules were suspended, and Caroline Wilson was voted in as a voting member with all in favor.

Dr. Klik mentioned that two new faculty members were added to the Faculty Welfare committee.

Committee Reports

Dr. Klik and Dr. Lownes gave an update on the Executive Committee: Chancellor Wilson reported at their meeting that PC is losing money on DE students. ROI 1 looks rough. Opportunities in recruiting post-traditional students from industry are being made. Dr. Lownes mentioned that a company in Newberry is already onboard. He also mentioned that non-credit models are being considered by the Executive Committee. The committee is interested in creating "digital classes". An entrepreneurship program is to be given in Salk.

A discussion was held concerning curricula overlap with technical schools.

A discussion was held regarding DE revenue. Dr. Lowell clarified how DE rates are determined.

The AOE committee has their first meeting coming up. They scheduled their Day of the Dead celebration on Oct. 26.

The Latin American Film festival starts 9/14. Dr. Pisano will give the first talk.

Other Business

Prof. Stapleton reported that her Study Abroad had their first meeting. Six students are currently interested. A second meeting will be held soon. Blake was consulted regarding transfer credit.

Announcements

Dr. Kettler expressed his thanks to the veterans in the room.

Prof. Pinnell stated there are 7 NCLEX takers and passers so far. She stated she should complete her Doctorate in December.

Dr. Iftakhar has his Doctoral defense in October.

Dr. Klik asked faculty to put their accomplishments in the Excel spreadsheet.

Adjournment

A motion to adjourn was made and passed. The meeting adjourned at 11:37 am.

Attachments: Dean's Report

Prepared by: David Mitra, FO Secretary

Randy Lowell, USC Union
Dean's Report
September 11, 2026

- Overall headcount enrollment is down from 1,628 to 1,527 YTD, but FTE enrollment is up from 916 to 919 YTD. These overall numbers include being up in every student type except for dual enrollment, including change-of-campus students, continuing students, new freshmen, nondegree, readmit, and transfer students. The overall traditional student headcount of over 330, and new freshman around 160, both appear to be campus highs for those categories. Overall headcount deficit accounted for by being down in dual enrollment students from last year, with no Greenville High or Fountain Inn High this year due to district wide change in policy. Other high schools have had some increases in their dual enrollment numbers, but not to the extent that they completely offset the two high schools that we are no longer in.
- I had an initial onboarding call with representatives from BetterMynd yesterday. We are aiming to have that launched by the end of September for students to begin using that new mental health resource. Keep an eye out for more details as they work with us on that implementation process.
- I will be submitting a grant proposal next week for a Spencer Foundation Vision Grant. These Vision Grants are planning grants that are intended to allow for collaborative planning of initiatives that can create more equitable educational experiences. In this case, the proposal is for the development of an AI literacy framework with input from our campus, Union County schools, Union Uplifted, USC Lancaster, and Lancaster County schools. If awarded this grant, the planning process would start next summer and go through the next year and a half. Receiving this planning grant also serves as a prerequisite for applying for one of Spencer Foundations larger grants that could allow for broader implementation and scaling of the plan that is created during the Vision Grant process.
- The McNair Institute for Entrepreneurism and Free Enterprise will hold their next Intercampus Alliance to Advance Entrepreneurship on October 29th and 30th in Lancaster, SC, in case you or anyone you know might be interested in learning more about their work.
- Chef Rob Patterson out at our USC Union Laurens Location will be running another continuing education cooking course in the teaching kitchen there. This time it will be a two-session Thanksgiving themed offering around the holidays.
- Research Club identified its student officers for this year, including EmmaLea Brown as President, Salim Janna as Vice President, Leah Baldwin as Secretary, and Gavin Tessnear as Treasurer. At this point, they have two Lunch & Learns on the calendar, including Dr. Triplett and Leah on October 26, and Peter Habib on November 30. They will also have a Bake Sale fundraiser this Fall on October 28. Other activities and plans are still in the works.

- Facilities Projects in Progress:
 - Art Studio building has had doors installed in place of the old rollup door and continues to get closer to being ready for paint and finishes later this semester.
 - Student Services Building remediation of materials underneath the old roof has been completed and new roof will be ready to be installed as they finish putting on the new supportive layer that they are currently working through.
 - Jonesville gym locker rooms and roof project passed its inspection yesterday and received its CO.
 - Student lounge had its new HVAC system installed, and Bookstore unit is awaiting a new compressor to get it operational again until a new unit can be procured at a later date for that space.
 - Main Building bathroom issues are being worked through in coordination with Jon the Plumber and Columbia project management.
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