



A Regional Palmetto College

FO Minutes

August 21, 2026 – 10:00 AM

Whitener Building, Community Room

In-person attendance:

Maggie Aziz
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

Online attendance:

Gale Ashmore
Sarah Carter
Cari Conley
Monica Coven
Neil Hance
Randy Ivey
Sandy Phillips-Long
Megan Rabanal
Annie Smith
Jennifer Triplett
Caroline Wilson

Future FO meetings:

September 11, 10 am.
October 23, 10 am.
December 4, 10 am.

Dr. Klik called the meeting to order at 10:06 am.

Faculty attendees introduced themselves to the assembly.

Teresa Adams: Travel updates and reminders

Ms. Adams gave the following updates:

- New travel forms are now used. Expenses should be paid up front and will be reimbursed later.
- Travel forms should be sent to Maggie first for approval.
- Give Teresa all receipts at once.
- There are new per-diem and mill sheets.
- Departmental travel cards are available. Invoices are needed. Airfare may be paid with these. If funds are needed for a student, please consult with Teresa.
- Dr Aziz added that new regulations concerning minors are forthcoming.
- The Fly America Act should be complied with for job-related funding.
- Mileage forms should be sent to Terasa monthly. They can also be self-done; Terasa can help with that.

Peter Habib: Mental health resources

Mr. Habib introduced himself and is available to provide free therapy for students, faculty, and staff. Dual enrollment and Aiken students are also welcome. He asked that students be encouraged to take advantage of his services. He will be available at Union on Tuesdays and can come on other days by appointment. Virtual appointments are also possible. His office is Central 207 and his contact number is 803-999-7176.

Approval of minutes from May 1st meeting

The minutes from the May 1 FO were approved with all in favor.

Dean's Report: Dr. Randy Lowell

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

Of note:

- The Wild Pine Sanctuary event will be held Sept. 19 from 10-3.
- A call for volunteers for data collection may be made.
- A discussion was held regarding the budget. Concerns were raised over the low amount allocated. Dr. Lowell emphasized our budget was not reduced; only requested increases were not given. Dr. Lownes suggested we use local people to advocate for us and that faculty should continue seeking grants. Dr. Klik emphasized that we should do our best to showcase ourselves and what USC-Union has accomplished. Dr. Aziz said we have full support from the board of trustees and that we should focus on what we've been doing.

Academic Dean's Report: Dr. Maggie Aziz

Dr. Aziz gave her report. The report is attached to these minutes.

Of note:

- The Blackboard Orientation class needs to be completed by all faculty.
- Let Blake know of any problems students may be having with Blackboard.
- Put Faculty Accomplishments in the Drive.
- Per University policy, the Outside Professional Activities form must be filled out and any outside professional activity must be reported to Dr. Aziz in advance for approval.
- A discussion was held regarding the previous item. Dr. Aziz will send more information/answers later.
- Dr. Klik should be contacted for Core Assessment matters and questions.

Report from Dr. Kettler

Dr. Kettler announced the following:

- Volunteers are needed for the Champion AI bot.
- Scores from the survey last year were very positive.
- Vector training has started. Emails will be sent out. Students must complete the training. Only 35% have completed it thus far. Please encourage students to complete it.
- Staff have been trained in the use of Narcan.
- By April, course materials in Blackboard should be ADA (Americans with Disabilities Act) accessible. An ADA percentage score for course items on Blackboard is visible. Ensure that the score is high. Scores less than 70% will be flagged.
- A new entry mechanism for grades is available. Final grades may now be rereported using Blackboard.
- Courses on Blackboard older than five years will be archived. Backup locally, if desired.
- The History Suite library and Dawkins house library are in need of book donations.
- The Dawkins House will be completed and named the "Jeffries Alumni Center".
- Athlete workshops will be held in the third week of November.
- Please refer students with an interest in attending medical school to Dr. Kettler.
- Volunteer presenters for Lunch and Learn are needed.
- A faculty research conference will be held on 10/9 at Salkehatchie.
- The First-Gen network needs volunteers.
- The Job Fair has suffered low student attendance. Please encourage students to attend.

Committee Reports

There were no committee reports.

Other Business

- Dr. Lownes: Faculty manual updates.
The procedure for obtaining a Senior Instructor position passed at the PC level. The proposal concerning the grievance procedure was vetoed.
- Dr. Lownes: vote for senate position.
A Faculty Senator for PC is needed. Dr. Lowe volunteered to fill the position. A vote was held to instill Dr. Lowe in the position and was passed.
- Dr. Pisano: Discussion of AI Lab's purpose.
The discussion was held during the Dean's report. Dr. Lowell stated that the lab is available to the Union community at large as is intended to give training in the use of computer related technology and the responsible use of AI. Dr. Kettler raised concerns regarding student misuse of AI (to falsify video evidence, e.g.). Dr. Aziz has received a document from Columbia for USC employees that gives USC's policy for AI use. Dr. Pisano stated he will reevaluate and will clarify his concerns later.
- Dr. Pisano: HVAC noise in main building.
Dr. Lowell and Dr. Aziz have been made aware of the noise.

Announcements

- Dr. Aziz: Steve will coordinate a discussion on giving teaching evaluation summaries for tenure purposes.
- Dr. Klik: Chairs of committees should let Dr. Klik know they are chairs.
- Dr. Klik: Union AOE and Faculty Welfare positions need to be filled.
- Dr. Klik will be an advisor for the PC Faculty Welfare survey.
- Prof. Stapleton: reminder of her 4- week study abroad program in the Summer.
- Dr. Lownes: The Latin America Film Festival is Sept. 13. More info will be given later.
- A bowling event at Underpin is to be scheduled for next month (October).
- Dr. Kettler: We need to be aware of concerning trends in academia.
- Dr. Kettler: Dr. Charles' surgery went well.
- Dr. Lowe: The Spring schedule is forthcoming.
- Dr. Klik: called for a reassessment of the due date for nominees for PC awards.
- Dr. Klik: the soccer players are doing very well.

Adjournment

A motion to adjourn was made and passed. The meeting adjourned at 12:50 pm.

Attachments: Dean's Report, Academic Dean's report

Prepared by: David Mitra, FO Secretary

Randy Lowell, USC Union
Dean's Report
August 21, 2026

- Enrollment is up from 275 to 332 YTD in Traditional (non-duals) headcount.
 - o Up in Change of Campus by 1, in continuing by 14, in new freshmen by 26, in nondegree by 3, in readmits by 3, in transfers by 10.
 - o Down in duals from 1,333 to 664 YTD (by 669), but still more of those to get entered. No Greenville High or Fountain Inn High this year due to district wide change in policy, but other schools have increased, and Clover has added Lake Wylie site.
- Budget bill from the state was just signed into law by the governor this week after an extended delay past the start of the new fiscal year on July 1. For our USC Union portion of the budget request, in addition to carrying over funding levels from the previous fiscal year, new funding for us this year includes:
 - o \$304K of \$413K tuition mitigation funding that we requested (recurring)
 - o \$500K of \$11M requested for Phase 1 of Civic Center capital project (one-time)
 - o \$1.25M of \$6.98M requested for multiple maintenance/renovation capital projects (one-time)
 - o \$800K for Dawkins House restoration that was not part of original campus request (one-time)
 - o Budget bill includes reinstated statewide technology funding after a number of years of it having been removed, of which our campus will receive a portion
 - o Budget bill maintained \$10M nursing funding statewide, of which our campus will receive a portion
 - o Budget bill includes a general increase of 2%
- Mental Health Resources Updates
 - o MyGroup Student Assistance Program: The MyGroup website provides a variety of free resources and services for USC Union students. They can call 800-633-3353 to access their 24/7/365 crisis line or receive assistance in navigating their services. Or visit mygroup.com > LOGIN to access their online portal (MY PORTAL). To access MY PORTAL, first-time users enter **care4bantams** for the organization code. Then set up their account with their email address and a password. If they have previously logged in and have forgotten their password, they can use the "Forgot Password" feature to have it reset. They need to be sure to use their USC Union student email address to gain free access to all of these resources.
 - o Peter Habib, from USC Columbia's Psychological Services Center (PSC), is available for free in-person appointments on campus in Union, as well as telehealth availability beyond that, for students and employees. To schedule an appointment or get more information about his counseling services, contact him at PGHABIB@email.sc.edu, or text him at 803-999-7176.
 - o BetterMynd 24/7/365 platform is coming soon!

- Kristie Roberson finalized an agreement with the Save the Children organization to provide tuition support each year moving forward for up to two associates students per year who have a child development focus.
- Chef Rob Patterson out at our USC Union Laurens Location wrapped up the final session of his 4-part series of continuing education BBQ classes last night in Clinton, utilizing the renovated teaching kitchen and equipment and providing that location some great exposure among attendees who came in from the local community and some from even further. Of the four sessions over the past four weeks, registrations ranged from the low teens to the mid-twenties.
- We had a visit from representatives of USC Columbia's Brain Health Network earlier this week. They are in the preliminary planning stages of expanding their network of rural clinics to add a new one on our campus in Union. It would likely be housed in the Rippy building on campus, where the county's Veterans Affairs Office had previously been. It will likely be into the new year before they would begin setting up that space, which would provide free cognitive assessments and cognitive care planning for people in the community to be referred to them to receive. They would also want to involve any of our students, particularly our nursing students, in any way that they could in those services.
- We are continuing our planning efforts with the CUTI Division of INTUS Smartcities to facilitate continuing education course here in Union related to the fiber optic industry. They visited earlier this week and are hoping to pilot their first 4-week intensive offering later this semester, which is entitled "Fiber-to-the-Home (FTTH) Deployment & Management Training," hopefully launching more formal offerings in the Spring semester. This initial pilot offering is designed for engineering and technician students. The primary objective is not to mold students into hyperspecialized tactical operators in very single sub-discipline, but to provide a comprehensive, holistic understanding of the entire Fiber-to-the-Home (FTTH) deployment lifecycle. Students will master the operational necessity, cross-functional dependencies, and managerial touchpoints required to successfully oversee modern broadband infrastructure projects. If you know of any students who might be interested in participating in the pilot curriculum, let me know.
- On August 17 we had our AI Innovation Lab (formerly referred to as our iCarolina Lab) ribbon cutting event at the Union County Carnegie Library. This refresh of the branding of the space will retain the same general purpose of it, as a campus and community resource for accessing high speed internet, advanced technology, and free trainings and workshops for people to learn how to use the technology and in some cases integrate AI effectively and responsibly. Grant funding will also continue to be pursued to help fund some of these training efforts and software licenses. The Laurens County libraries in Laurens and Clinton have opted to no longer house iCarolina Labs in those spaces, so we are in the preliminary stages of considering options for a new AI Innovation Lab at our Laurens Location.
- A member of our security staff, Mike Gregory, has begun some medical leave for some time this semester. However, we have just added a new member to our security staff, Donny Williams, who also works part time for the fire department.

- The Wild Pines animal sanctuary in Union will be holding their annual Wild Pines Fest fundraiser event on Saturday, September 19, from 10:00-3:00. I had emailed out a flyer recently to the campus with more details. USC Union is one of the sponsors of this event. If you're interested in checking out this event, you can purchase a ticket from them ahead of time to ensure that you get a chance to meet their animals.
- With no cross-country student athletes having been recruited for this year, our coach has opted to pursue another job opportunity elsewhere. We are in the process of assessing whether to continue to pursue this sport for our campus with a new coach or not. Also, we no longer have Rifle Team as a sport at USC Union, as it was becoming financially unsustainable to remain competitive with that program with such a small roster.
- Next week on August 27, the Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC) will put on an informational session from 10:00-3:00 for their grant funding that is available to Union County for workforce development initiatives. A few of us from campus will be in attendance for that as we look to apply for new funding from them after Cari Conley had successfully applied for funding for the STEM Bus project two cycles ago.
- Research Club student organization will have a planning meeting on Monday next week at 12:30 here in the Community Room in case anyone wants to join us. If you would like to receive regular updates on that club's activities, let me know so that I can be sure to add you onto the email list for that group.
- I am working on a new experiment with two students, Gavin Tessnear and EmmaLea Brown, who will be ready to begin collecting data in the next few weeks. If you happen to be willing to offer your students extra credit for participating in this experiment this semester, let us know.
- Over the course of this academic year, I will be participating in the National Association of Branch Campus Administrators (NABCA) 9th annual Branch Campus Leadership Institute (BCLI), along with branch campus administrators from across the country.
- Facilities Projects in Progress:
 - Art Studio building continues to make progress, having had the A/C unit installed and getting closer to be ready to use for classes later this semester.
 - Student Services Building roof project still in progress.
 - Baseball field restroom project near completion.
 - Jonesville gym locker rooms and interior work was completed, and new roof project is beginning.
 - Soccer field has had cement pad removed and is being prepped so that the chain link fence around the field can eventually be removed.
 - Plans for Rippy building exterior work in planning, and interior redesign drawn up as we look for funding to execute that work at a later date

**Faculty Organization
Academic Dean's Report
Fall 2026**

IMPORTANT CONTACT INFORMATION

Majdouline Aziz, Associate Dean: azizma@mailbox.sc.edu
Amber Ivey, Administrative Specialist: ai1@mailbox.sc.edu
Nikki Cromer, Administrative Specialist: auton@email.sc.edu
Andrew Kettler, Director of Institutional Effectiveness and Academic Affairs:
kettlera@mailbox.sc.edu
Steve Lowe, Professor of History: lowesh@mailbox.sc.edu (course scheduling)

UPDATES

Tenure and Promotion:

Congratulations to **Dr. Emily Schafer** for being promoted to Full Professor!

Welcoming New Faculty:

- Jessica Wardlaw, Instructor of Biology
- Stephen Lawton, Adjunct Instructor of Criminal Justice
- Joey Haney, Adjunct Instructor of Education
- Blake Wilson, Adjunct Instructor of Business
- Rob Patterson, Adjunct Instructor of HTMT
- Dustin Allard, Adjunct Instructor of Mathematics
- Annie Smith, Adjunct Instructor of Business

Faculty Orientation:

This year I am excited to introduce two new resources that I have been working on to better support our faculty.

The first is the **USC Union Resource and Development Center**, a dedicated course in Blackboard that will serve as your central hub for professional development, training modules, and faculty resources throughout the academic year. This resource will continue to grow as I add new content, so I encourage you to bookmark it by clicking the star icon and check back regularly.

Housed within the Resource and Development Center is our first ever **Online Faculty Orientation**, developed specifically for AY 2026-2027. The orientation covers our campus mission and values, our students, faculty responsibilities and expectations, key policies, important dates, campus resources, and much more.

The orientation is a comprehensive course that takes approximately 30 to 45 minutes to complete. I have seen completion times, particularly for full-time faculty, that fall well below

that. I am asking you to invest the time because the information in this orientation matters. It covers things that will affect your day-to-day work, your students, and your standing as a faculty member here. There are policies you are expected to know and follow, resources you need to be aware of, and expectations that apply to you.

If you have not yet completed the orientation or if you clicked through without truly engaging with it, I ask that you go back and take the time to review it thoughtfully. If you have questions about anything covered in the orientation, my door is always open.

Syllabus Templates:

Also available in the USC Union Resource and Development Center are the updated **syllabus templates** for both in-person and online courses. As a reminder, all adjunct faculty are required to use the appropriate template. Full-time faculty are strongly encouraged to do the same.

Please remember that your syllabus must include all required components and must be submitted to my office by the first day of classes each semester. This is not optional. Syllabus submission is required for SACSCOC accreditation purposes.

If you are teaching a Palmetto College P01 section as an adjunct, full-time staff dual, or as an overload to your regular course load, the USC Union templates do not apply to you. Direct any questions about your P01 section to Ron Cox at roncox@mailbox.sc.edu.

If you have questions about the templates or are unsure whether your syllabus meets all required components, please reach out to me before the first day of classes.

Palmetto College Course Compensations:

Moving forward, adjunct faculty teaching PC courses, full-time staff duals teaching PC courses, and full-time faculty teaching PC courses beyond their regular course load will be hired and compensated directly by PC Central rather than through the Union campus.

If you fall into any of these categories, please watch for communication from PC Central regarding your courses. In the meantime, if you have any questions about this change or how it affects you, please do not hesitate to reach out to me.

PURE Grant Recipients:

Ross Dochterman and Kealy Carter

Mentor: Dr. Andrew Kettler

Project: Rediscovering the Dawkins House: Archival Roots in South Carolina

William Hunt

Mentor: Dr. Katie Klik

Project: Who Beat the Odds? Examining Science Olympiad Success Beyond Socio-Economic Status

Gavin Tessnear and EmmaLea Brown

Mentor: Dr. Randy Lowell

Project: Environmental Influences on Personality and Perceptions about Violence

Lilliana Shaw

Mentor: Dr. Steve Lownes

Project: Rewriting Roald Dahl: Authorship, Translation, and Censorship

Faculty Accomplishments

I have created a new Excel file for AY 2026-2027, located in the faculty drive. Please update with your accomplishments as they come in.

Accountability Report:

2025-2026 Results

Performance Measure	Base (2024-2025)	Target (2025-2026)	Actual (2025-2026)
Attract a highly qualified, appropriately sized and diverse student body	1355	1400	1627
Increase retention of first-time, full-time, degree seeking freshman	67.3%	48%	69.9%
Provide opportunities for faculty and students to showcase their scholarly and creative works to the campus community	13	4	6
Increase number of full-time faculty on campus available to serve students	22	23	24
Increase the number of full-time staff on campus available to serve students	33	34	36
Maintain a minimum of 70% success rate for first-time, full-time degree-seeking undergraduates	71.9%	70%	75.9%
Continue to offer and promote to students the opportunity to earn Graduation with Leadership Distinction and engage faculty in supporting students in their efforts to complete those requirements	2	2	3
Number of campus events dedicated to fostering a diverse and inclusive campus climate	22	6	10
Number of capital improvement projects to enhance campus infrastructure	8	6	18
Carry a 3-month reserve based on a 3-year average of expenditures	\$1,032.632	\$1,250,000	\$926,636

Number of fundraising opportunities and events.	7	3	4
Continue to make campus facilities available to the community and participate in and host community events, as conditions allow	23	10	22
Maintain a healthy number of dual enrollment relationships with high schools	16	16	17
Increase interest in Early College Programs	3	15	62
Increase number of students pursuing baccalaureate degrees at USC Union via Palmetto College (BOL/BLS) and via BSN partnership with Aiken	72	50	85
Increase partnerships with the community and local employers and industry	16	2	17

2026-2027 Development

Strategic Plan Priority	Performance Measure	Target (2026-2027)
Drive enrollment growth.	Attract a highly qualified, appropriately sized and diverse student body.	1500
Drive enrollment growth.	Increase retention of first-time, full-time, degree-seeking freshman.	48%
Promote teaching and research excellence.	Provide opportunities for faculty and students to showcase their scholarly and creative works to the campus community.	4
Foster staff development.	Increase number of full-time faculty on campus available to serve students.	25
Drive student success.	Increase number of full-time staff on campus available to serve students.	37
Drive student success.	Maintain a minimum of 70% success rate for first-time, full-time, degree-seeking undergraduates.	70%
Drive student success.	Continue to offer and promote to students the opportunity to earn Graduation with Leadership Distinction and engage faculty in supporting students in their efforts to complete these requirements.	2
Empower diverse students,	Number of campus events dedicated to fostering a diverse and inclusive campus climate.	4

staff, and faculty.		
Optimize services and processes.	Number of capital improvement projects to enhance campus infrastructure.	6
Promote organizational and financial health.	Carry a 3-month reserve based on a 3-year average of expenditures.	
Enhance giving and fundraising efforts across PC campuses.	Number of fundraising opportunities and events.	3
Impact our communities.	Continue to make campus facilities available to the community and participate in and host community events, as conditions allow.	10
Increase transfer pipeline partnerships.	Maintain a healthy number of dual enrollment relationships with high schools.	15
Increase transfer and pipeline partnerships.	Increase interest in Early College programs.	50
Increase transfer and pipeline partnerships.	Increase number of students pursuing baccalaureate degrees at USC Union via Palmetto College (BOL/BLS) and BSN (Aiken).	80
Expand workforce focused credentials.	Increase partnerships with the community and local employers and industry.	10

CCSSE Results:

I have received the results from the **CCSSE** report. I will set up a meeting with a group of faculty and staff to review those results and results will be shared with faculty at a later date.

Early Alert System:

This year we are launching a new **early alert system** through Target X. Target X allows us to identify at-risk students early in the semester so that we can intervene quickly and connect them with the support they need before small concerns become bigger problems.

Throughout the semester you will receive emails requesting that you complete a submission form for at-risk students in your courses. When you receive these requests, please take the time to complete them. The forms come directly to my office, and we will follow up with outreach to every student flagged. Your submissions are one of the most valuable tools we

have for supporting student success, and the earlier we know about a concern, the more we can do to help.

Outside Professional Activities:

Outside Professional Activities Disclosure Forms are Due January 31 Annually

Full-time faculty are required to disclose outside professional activities and financial interests annually through the USC reporting system. **This is not optional.** It is a university policy requirement and helps ensure transparency and the avoidance of conflicts of interest or commitment.

Governing Policies:

ACAF 1.50 Outside Professional Activities for

Faculty: <https://www.sc.edu/policies/ppm/acaf150.pdf>(opens in a new tab)

BTRU 1.18 Conflicts of Interest and

Commitment: <https://www.sc.edu/policies/ppm/btru118.pdf>(opens in a new tab)

RSCH 1.06 Disclosure of Financial Interests and Management of Conflicts of Interest Related to Sponsored Projects: <https://www.sc.edu/policies/ppm/rsch106.pdf>(opens in a new tab)

HR 1.78 Dual Employment: <https://www.sc.edu/policies/ppm/hr178.pdf>(opens in a new tab)

How to Report:

The Professional Activity and Financial Interest Reporting System, known as AIR, is a web-based system used to submit, review, and track reports related to outside professional activities and financial interests. AIR provides one comprehensive disclosure that collects all information necessary to comply with university policy and government regulations.

You can access AIR at outsideprofessionalactivity.provost.sc.edu(opens in a new tab)

Training Resources:

USC provides training videos to help faculty navigate the AIR system, including an overview of the annual disclosure process, examples of conflicts of interest and commitment, and FAQs for reviewers. These are available

at https://sc.edu/about/offices_and_divisions/provost/faculty/outside-professional-activities.php(opens in a new tab)

A Note on the Reporting System:

The system to report Outside Professional Activities will be changing and a training will be provided. More details to come.

A Note on Outside Professional Activities:

Before engaging in any outside professional activities, whether academic or non-academic in nature, all faculty are required to inform the Associate Dean for Academic and Student Affairs in advance. **Please reach out before committing to any outside activity so we can ensure it aligns with university policy and does not present a conflict of interest or commitment.**

Please email me all outside professional activities.

Tenure and Promotion:

Based on guidance from Palmetto College Central, **tenure-track faculty** are eligible to go up for tenure beginning at Year 6, with the earliest submission at Year 5.

Transfer Pathways:

1. USC Union – USC Upstate: Fast Track to Teaching (Finalized)
2. USC Union – USC Columbia: HTMT (Finalized)
3. USC Union – USC Columbia: ENTR (Finalized)
4. USC Union – Palmetto College ENTR (Finalized)
5. USC Union – USC Columbia: Pharm.D. (Finalized)
6. USC Union – USC Columbia: Social Work (In-progress)
7. USC Union – USC Aiken: Exercise science (In-progress)
8. USC Union – USC Aiken: Special Education (In-progress)
9. USC Union – USC Upstate: Physical Education (In-progress)

Carolina Core Assessment:

Dr. Katie Klik will serve as the primary point of contact for **Carolina Core Assessment** at USC Union.

Dual Enrollment:

- As a reminder, please be sure to review your final rosters after the add/drop date for each term. Admissions is working diligently on rosters, so please be patient.
- I am working on a Program Modification to grant us the ability to offer over 50% of the degree (Early College Program) with Oakbrook Preparatory Academy.

Nursing:

We had 9 students complete their BSN this summer with pinning on August 5. 8 of the students have accepted employment in the Union, Cherokee, Spartanburg area. There are 10 students returning for their senior year and 14 incoming juniors. We have received new nursing equipment from the last round of a Chester Healthcare grant. The Aiken School of Nursing is undergoing reaccreditation by the AACN and we may have a site visit in October as part of their BSN program.

Athletics:

Women's Soccer

First win in program history: Defeated Alice Lloyd College 4–0, marking the first victory in program history.

3.539 spring GPA / 3.304 yearly GPA, demonstrating strong academic performance.

Men's Soccer

Region Runner-Up: Finished as the regional runner-up with a 9-1-4 regular-season record.

National recognition: Ranked 6th in the nation defensively and 22nd overall nationally.

Six first-team All-Region selections, one honorable mention, Coach of the Year honors for Marc Curlee, and Player of the Year honors for Max Manzelmann.

3.410 spring GPA / 3.319 yearly GPA.

Volleyball

Won their first game of the season, defeating USC Salk 3–2.

Advanced to the Region Tournament, reaching postseason play.

3.586 spring GPA / 3.342 yearly GPA.

Softball

35–27 overall record and 11–14 conference record.

Won 6 of 8 games at the Fastpitch Dreams Spring Classic in Myrtle Beach.

Region 10 Player of the Year: Ariana Evans earned the honor; multiple players received First Team, Second Team, and All-Tournament recognition.

Finished top six nationally in JUCO team GPA, with a 3.777 yearly GPA.

June Heitman became the winningest pitcher in USC Union program history with her 26th career win.

Baseball

32–24 overall record and 11–18 conference record.

Won three straight games against USC Salk, including victories of 14–1, 10–0, and 14–0.

Won all three games against USC Lancaster, including a 12–3 victory.

Josh Jackson was named Male Athlete of the Year.

Golf

Maddox Isbell finished 2nd overall at the Bantams Invitational with a two-round score of 149.

Travis Gosnell finished tied for 5th and earned All-Tournament Team honors at the Koala Classic.

Team finished 3rd out of 11 teams in an earlier tournament.

Bass Fishing

Caleb Hudson won his first professional invitational, earning an \$80,000 prize.

The program secured more than \$10,000 in jersey sponsorships.

Team earned a 3.478 spring GPA / 3.384 yearly GPA.

Education:

Cari is currently up to 20 active Education advisees, up from 18 last semester and several of my spring graduates moving on.

The partnership with Upstate is being revised.

The SCAA is receiving large grants to expand, and we would like to coordinate efforts by expanding our internship class to the Laurens campus if there is interest.

We will be adding the PRAXIS Core testing to our EDTE201 course to assist students in completing that requirement before entering into their bachelors program and to model what USC Columbia is doing in that course.

We are talking to USC Aiken about building a 2+2 program for Special Education.

We are working closely with USC Columbia to firm up our Elementary Education pathway, specifically the online option through Palmetto College.

We are working with Mary Hooker at the career center to push our internship course to the teacher cadets.

We will be setting up visits to the teacher cadet classes in the fall and trying to get into the middle schools and elementary schools as well. We are trying to expand our cradle to career efforts and strengthen teaching pathways alongside Union Uplifted.

Attendance Tracking in Blackboard:

To remain eligible for Federal Title IV Financial Aid funds, the University of South Carolina is required to verify that students who are receiving Title IV aid have attended or participated at least once in the courses for which they are enrolled.

To make this process easier, students and instructors will both be able to verify attendance with the “**Attendance Tracking for Title IV Aid Recipients**” system in Self-Service Carolina beginning in Summer 2024.

- For instructors, this will include a pre-designed attendance verification quiz in Blackboard. All courses will have this quiz, so please do not remove it.
- Using the quiz is a simple way to complete the attendance verification.
- If you offer students tests, quizzes, assignments, and discussion threads in Blackboard, the verification of attendance/participation will automatically be updated in Banner if a student completes the task.

If Blackboard options are not suitable, attendance can be manually updated by instructors in the Banner Attendance Tracker module.

- The module can be found in the faculty menu of Self-Service Carolina and has a similar look and feel to Banner Grade Entry, but it includes a calendar of class meetings on which faculty can easily mark participation.
- The system also has a “Select All” feature to indicate that all students on the Class Roll are participating on a given day.
- If a class has a laboratory or recitation led by a Graduate Assistant, an instructor can delegate Attendance Tracking to that individual. Attendance Tracking can be completed by graduate assistants who are assigned as secondary instructors.

Verification should occur within the first two weeks of a course in part of term 30 or within the first 12% of course meeting times in a shorter part of term.

Blackboard Final Grades:

Beginning in Fall 2026, instructors of record will be able to submit final grades from the Blackboard Ultra Gradebook to Banner through the new **Grade Passback** process. Please review the email sent by Patrick Saucier on August 5, 2026.

Books on Reserve:

Please email Taylor Atkinson. There are several options for placing books on reserve depending on the professor's preference. Do you want the material cataloged and placed in our USC Union section? This would allow the book to be checked out for up to 3 weeks at a time, like any book in their collection. Do you want the book to be placed behind the circulation desk to be checked out for 2-3 hours at a time and kept in the library? Are you providing the book(s) or is it something they need to purchase? Please communicate with Taylor to ensure that you have what you need.

Course Scheduling and Advising for Spring 2027:

Course scheduling will begin immediately. Advising for Spring 2027 will begin on October 26, 2026. As a reminder:

- Scheduling requires balancing the needs of students both on- and off-campus (dual enrollment courses, student-athlete schedules, pre-nursing courses, online associate degree programs, second eight weeks, adjunct availability, Laurens location, PC courses, transfer pathway courses, classroom availability, nature of the discipline, fairness, etc.).
- Accommodations for instructor preferences are made when possible.
- The number of course preps that a faculty member teaches depends on a variety of factors, including those listed above, as well as the instructor's request.
- Please feel free to contact Steve Lowe with any scheduling questions or concerns.

FACULTY ACTION ITEMS AND IMPORTANT DATES

Academic Calendar: The academic calendar can be accessed in two ways:

1. https://sc.edu/about/offices_and_divisions/registrar/academic_calendars/2026-27_calendar.php
2. Go to <https://my.sc.edu/>
Click "Faculty/Staff"
Click "View parts of term dates and deadlines."
Select campus: USC Union
Select term: Fall 2026
Select part of term:
70 – Union Full Term
7A – Union First Half Term
7B – Union Second Half Term

Office Hours:

Faculty members will hold **one hour of office hours for each course taught each semester**, up to five hours per week. We need to have this information in Academic Affairs to ensure that we can effectively support students who may require additional assistance from their professors, while also respecting your schedule.

Bookstore:

If you haven't submitted a book order, do so **immediately**. Double-check the ISBN for accuracy. Inform students that they need to make an appointment to buy new books or sell back old books (M-TH).

https://www.sc.edu/about/system_and_campuses/union/internal/faculty_and_staff/faculty_textbook_form/

REACH Act:

REACH Act courses must adhere to the REACH Act requirements. These requirements are set forth by the SC legislature, and therefore, deviation is not allowed. Deviation or failure to submit REACH Act-compliant syllabi can result in a 3-year audit for the campus.

REACH Act Courses:

- AFAM 200
- HIST 201
- HIST 111
- HIST 470
- POLI 201
- POLI 304
- POLI 450
- POLI 451

- POLI 452

REACH Act Requirements:

Your syllabi for each of the following courses must meet the requirements of the Reach Act as described below.

We need a separate syllabus for each section of the following courses that you are scheduled to teach.

Top of Syllabus:

- Include and highlight the course number, title, and section number (example: POLI 201 – 701)
- Include and highlight meeting days and times (example: MW 9:30-10:45)
- Include and highlight the number of credit hours for the course. (example: 3 credit hours)

Include and highlight the section below (identify each Federalist Paper by title and number, and identify the document foundational to the African American freedom struggle by title):

In accordance with the REACH (Reinforcing College Education on America's Constitutional Heritage) Act, students will read the following in their entirety. A copy of all readings will be provided to you.

Required Readings: The following will be read in their entirety:

- The U.S. Constitution
- The Declaration of Independence
- Five Federalist Papers (identify each by Title and Number)
 - Federalist Paper Title and No. #
 - Federalist Paper Title and No #
 - Federalist Paper Title and No #
 - Federalist Paper Title and No #
 - Federalist Paper Title and No #
- The Emancipation Proclamation
- Document that is foundational to the African American freedom struggle (identify by title)

Include and highlight required readings by name within the course schedule portion of your syllabus.

Please email Amber Ivey your compliant syllabi for Fall 2025 by **Friday, August 22**.

Attendance Reports: Attendance reports play a crucial role in supporting students' academic success by emphasizing the importance of regular class attendance. These reports also help in identifying at-risk students early, enabling timely interventions that can improve educational outcomes and enhance engagement and retention. Furthermore, they provide students with the option to withdraw from courses without academic penalty when necessary. Please submit your attendance reports when the request is sent from Amber/Nikki.

Progress Reports: Midterm progress reports are vital in our commitment to student success as they enable us to intervene proactively. By assessing students' progress midway through the term, we can identify any challenges they may be encountering and offer timely support and guidance. This proactive approach ensures that students receive the assistance they need to overcome obstacles and stay on track academically. Academic Affairs will actively reach out to students flagged in these reports, working closely with their advisors to tailor support strategies. Your input in this process is invaluable, as it helps us identify students who may benefit from additional resources or interventions. Please submit your progress reports when the request is sent by Amber/Nikki.

Supply Requests: Contact Amber Ivey to submit supply requests. Supplies are normally ordered twice a month (the 1st and 15th of the month). Submit orders promptly to allow enough time to place those orders and have them delivered on time, **preferably two weeks in advance**. If a special order, send Amber an email with the direct link and quantity.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

- Donuts with the Deans (Union) – September 8, 2026
- Donuts with the Deans (Laurens) – September 15, 2026
- First-Generation College Celebration Week – November 9 - 12
- Student-Athlete Workshops – Each year, the Office of Academic Affairs organizes workshops for Student Athletes for a week in the Fall. Dates TBD