University of South Carolina Beaufort

USCB
UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH CAROLINA BEAUFORT

Chancellor

Position Prospectus

FUNK
ASSOCIATES

The Opportunity

The University of South Carolina seeks a Chancellor for the University of South Carolina Beaufort (USCB), a public four-year university of 2,293 students on three campuses in the South Carolina Lowcountry. The new Chancellor will succeed Dr. Al M. Panu, who will step down on June 30, 2027 after nearly 12 years as USCB's second chancellor.

USCB is a young university with deep roots. It has been a four-year institution only since 2004, but its history in Beaufort reaches back more than two centuries. Enrollment reached a record this fall. The university serves a region that is adding residents faster than almost any other part of the state, and it is the only public four-year university in the southern Lowcountry.

The next Chancellor will inherit real momentum: rising enrollment and rankings, new graduate programs, a newly appointed provost, and strong community support. The work ahead is to turn that growth into lasting strength, by improving student retention and completion, building philanthropy, expanding programs that meet the region's needs, and keeping three distinct campuses working as one university.

History

USCB grew out of the region's own push for a university. Beaufort College was chartered in 1795 to educate local families. In the 1950s, the University of South Carolina was expanding across the state, and Beaufort residents formed the Beaufort County Higher Education Commission to bring a campus home. USC opened a two-year branch on the old Beaufort College site in 1959.

For decades, Beaufort, Jasper, Hampton and Colleton counties had no four-year degree-granting institution. With the support of community leaders, the USC Board of Trustees and the South Carolina Commission on Higher Education, USCB won approval to become a comprehensive four-year university and awarded its first bachelor's degrees in 2004. Dr. Jane T. Upshaw served as founding Chancellor. Dr. Panu succeeded her in 2015 and was the first African American chancellor in the USC System.

USCB Today

Fall 2026 enrollment	2,302 (record)
New first-year and transfer students, fall 2026	755
Enrollment growth since 2004	More than 79%
Student-to-faculty ratio	14:1
Bachelor's degree programs	About 20
Master's degree programs	2
Campuses	3
Annual economic impact	$141 million
Athletics	NCAA Division II, Peach Belt Conference

Three campuses

Bluffton (main campus). Opened in 2004 on a 200-acre site, the Bluffton campus holds most academic programs, including nursing, psychology, public health and the sciences. It is home to student housing, the library, the student center and athletics. Niche.com ranks USCB's student housing first in South Carolina.

Historic Beaufort. Located on the water in downtown Beaufort's historic district, this campus is home to student housing, the Beaufort College Honors Program, studio arts, history, marine biology and the Center for the Fine Arts.

Hilton Head Island. Opened in 2018 about a mile from Coligny Beach, this 40,000-square-foot campus houses the hospitality, resort and tourism management program. It includes a demonstration kitchen, a beverage lab and event space, and is home to the Center for Lowcountry Hospitality Education. Hospitality students spend their final two years here, working closely with the island's resort and tourism industry.

Academics

USCB offers some 20 bachelor's degree programs across the humanities and social sciences, science and mathematics, and the professions, including business administration, nursing, public health, psychology, education, computational science, hospitality management and human services, with concentrations in fields such as cybersecurity and marine biology. Graduate programs include the M.S. in Computational Science and the M.Ed. in Literacy. USCB owns and manages Pritchards Island, an undeveloped barrier island that serves as a living research laboratory for the natural sciences and other programs. The Beaufort College Honors Program enrolls high-achieving students across majors. USCB is accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC) as a master's-level institution.

Students

USCB draws most of its students from the Lowcountry and the rest of South Carolina, with a growing number from out of state. Its student body is diverse in age, background and experience, and includes many first-generation and military-affiliated students. About 80 percent of students take part in an internship, undergraduate research, study abroad or another hands-on learning experience.

Athletics

The USCB Sand Sharks compete in NCAA Division II as members of the Peach Belt Conference. The university completed its move to Division II during Dr. Panu's tenure and added men's and women's basketball.

The next Chancellor will arrive at a university in good health. Since 2015, USCB has:

Recent Accomplishments

- Grown enrollment 27.8 percent and the number of graduates 43 percent.
- Nearly doubled its annual economic impact on the region, from $75 million to $141 million.

- Launched the Beaufort College Honors Program, its first graduate degrees, three new bachelor's degrees and concentrations in cybersecurity and marine biology.
- Risen to No. 7 among Top Public Schools in the South in the *U.S. News & World Report* 2027 rankings, up from 11th the year before, and ranked as the second-highest regional college in South Carolina.
- Twice been named a Top Producer of Fulbright Scholars.
- Opened the Hilton Head Island campus and invested in student housing, athletics facilities, the library and the student center in Bluffton.
- Secured more than $15 million in additional state appropriations and $15.9 million in federal grants and sponsored research.
- Established the USCB Education Foundation, which has raised more than $8 million.
- Joined NCAA Division II and the Peach Belt Conference.
- Grown the Osher Lifelong Learning Institute to more than 1,800 members and expanded the audience and endowment of the 47-year-old Chamber Music Series.
- Revitalized undergraduate research programs on Pritchards Island.

Governance and the USC System

USCB is one of the senior campuses of the University of South Carolina System, alongside USC Columbia, USC Aiken and USC Upstate. The System also includes Palmetto College and its regional campuses. The University of South Carolina Board of Trustees governs the System, and Dr. Michael Amiridis serves as President.

The USCB Chancellor reports to the USC President and serves as the university's chief executive. The Chancellor works with System leadership on budget, policy and state relations, while leading USCB as a distinct institution with its own accreditation, faculty, academic programs and community identity.

The Role of the Chancellor

The Chancellor is the chief executive and academic officer of USCB and its public face across the Lowcountry. The Chancellor leads a cabinet that includes the Provost, Executive Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs, Executive Vice Chancellor for Finance and Operations, Vice Chancellor for Enrollment Management, Vice Chancellor for Student Development, Associate Vice Chancellor for Athletics, Associate Vice Chancellor for Community Outreach, and Chief of Information Technology.

The Chancellor will be expected to:

- Set the university's strategic direction and lead its next plan, with faculty, staff and community input.
- Support academic quality and the work of faculty, in partnership with the Provost.
- Lead enrollment growth and improve student retention and graduation.
- Manage a sound budget and plan facilities across three campuses.

- Lead fundraising and grow the USCB Education Foundation.
- Represent USCB to the USC System, the General Assembly, local governments, employers, the military community and donors.
- Build partnerships with health systems, businesses, school districts and the hospitality industry.
- Oversee a Division II athletics program that serves students and the wider community.
- Strengthen shared governance and keep the three campuses working as one university.

Opportunities and Challenges

Growing with the region. Beaufort and Jasper counties are among the fastest-growing in South Carolina, and Bluffton has been one of the fastest-growing towns in the Southeast for two decades. That growth brings more students, more employers and more demand for nurses, teachers and other professionals. The next Chancellor will need to decide where USCB should grow, which programs to add and how to keep pace with demand.

Student success. Enrollment is at a record high. The next step is to help more of those students stay and graduate. Retention and completion will be a central measure of the next Chancellor's success.

Philanthropy. The USCB Education Foundation is less than a decade old. Building a culture of giving among alumni, residents and businesses, including the region's many retirees and seasonal residents, is one of the largest opportunities ahead.

Graduate and professional programs. USCB began offering master's degrees in 2019. Thoughtful expansion of graduate and professional offerings, matched to the region's workforce needs, can raise the university's profile and revenue.

Three campuses, one university. Each campus has its own character, community and set of programs. The next Chancellor must invest in all three while keeping a shared identity and making good use of limited resources.

A new leadership team. Dr. Kim Dudas was named Provost and Executive Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs in May 2026. The next Chancellor will help shape a senior team that will lead USCB through its next stage.

Partnerships. Health systems, the hospitality industry, local governments, school districts and the military installations in Beaufort County are natural partners for internships, research, workforce programs and enrollment.

Qualifications and Attributes

Required

- Significant senior leadership experience in higher education, or comparable executive leadership in a complex organization.

- A record of managing budgets, people and facilities with sound judgment.
- Demonstrated success in enrollment growth, student success or both.
- Experience raising private support and working with donors and Boards.
- Growth-minded leadership skills.

Preferred

- An earned doctorate or other terminal degree.
- Experience at a regional public university, system institution, or an institution with more than one campus.
- Experience working within a university system and with state government.
- A record of building academic programs tied to workforce and community needs.
- Familiarity with NCAA athletics.
- Credentials suitable for appointment as a tenured faculty member.

Personal qualities

- Integrity, transparency and a commitment to shared governance.
- A visible, approachable leader who will be present on all three campuses and in the community.
- A genuine commitment to access and to students of every background, age and stage of life.
- The ability to listen, make decisions and explain them clearly.
- Demonstrates intellectual curiosity, openness to feedback, and a commitment to continuous learning and institutional improvement.
- An appreciation for the history, culture and natural setting of the Lowcountry.

The Lowcountry

USCB's three campuses sit within about 45 minutes of one another in Beaufort County, on the South Carolina coast between Savannah and Charleston. The region is known for its salt marshes, sea islands and beaches, its long history, and a mild climate that draws residents and visitors year-round.

Beaufort is the second-oldest city in South Carolina, with a historic district of antebellum homes and live oaks along the Beaufort River. It is home to Reconstruction Era National Historical Park and sits at the heart of the Gullah Geechee Cultural Heritage Corridor, including the Penn Center on nearby St. Helena Island. Marine Corps Air Station Beaufort, Marine Corps Recruit Depot Parris Island and Naval Hospital Beaufort make the military a central part of community life.

Bluffton has grown from a small river town into one of the fastest-growing communities in the Southeast, while keeping its historic Old Town on the May River. Its growth has brought new families, employers and health care facilities to the area around the main campus.

Hilton Head Island is a nationally known resort community, with miles of beaches, golf courses including the home of the RBC Heritage PGA Tour event, and a large hospitality and tourism industry that partners closely with USCB.

Savannah is about 30 minutes from Bluffton, and the Savannah/Hilton Head International Airport serves the region.

Nominations and Applications

Applications and nominations will be accepted until the Chancellor is selected; however, interested parties are encouraged to submit their materials by **February 15** for full consideration. Application materials should include a current CV and a letter of interest that addresses the opportunities and qualifications described in this prospectus. All inquiries, nominations and applications should be directed to:

USC Beaufort Chancellor Search
Funk Associates
2911 Turtle Creek Boulevard, Suite 300
Dallas, Texas 75219
Phone: 214-522-1222
Email: Krisha.Creal@funkassociates.com

The University of South Carolina is an Equal Opportunity employer. All qualified applicants will receive consideration for employment without regard to race, sex, gender identity, age, color, religion, national origin, disability, sexual orientation, genetics, protected veteran status, pregnancy, childbirth, or related medical conditions. All applications and nominations will be handled with the strictest confidentiality until the finalist phase.