



UNIVERSITY OF
South Carolina
UNION

A Regional Palmetto College

FO Minutes
January 17, 2025 – 11:00 AM
Whitener Building, Community Room

Online attendance:

Caroline Wilson
Sarah Carter
Niell Hance
Joe Anderson
Steve Lowe
Sandy Phillips-Long
Ashley Rabanal
Christine Sixta-Rinehart
Tekla Johnson
Katie Klik
Jennifer Triplett
Emily Schafer

In-person attendance:

David Mitra
Sarah Heuss
Maggie Aziz
Randy Lowell
Carolyn Conley
Andrew Kettler
Steve Lownes
Lynn Edwards
Courtney Pinnell
Allan Charles
Debbie Hudson
Avery Fouts
Lee Morris
Randy Ivey

Future meeting dates:

February 28th at 11 am

March 21st at 11 am

May 2nd at 9 am

Dr. Avery Fouts performed Dr. Pisano's duties for the meeting and called the meeting to order at 11:00 AM.

Minutes from October 11 meeting:

A motion was made to approve the October 11 minutes and was passed with all in favor.

Dean's Report: Dr. Randy Lowell

Dr. Lowell's report is attached to these minutes.

A discussion was held regarding the proposed plan for a Civic Center. It was noted that the center would be used for graduation ceremonies, vocational purposes, sporting events, and for providing office space and recreational use. Dr. Lowell pointed out the center would also benefit Union County.

Education Coordinator, Cari Conley: opportunity with a local school

Dr. Aziz introduced Dr. Conley. Dr. Conley then gave her remarks regarding the 2+2 fast track teaching program in education. Items of note are:

- This program has students study at the Union Campus for two years and finish their education degree at the Upstate campus for the last two years.
- Dr. Conley suggested that the program be expanded to other schools in the Upstate.
- The goals of the program include bringing more students to the Union campus and providing qualified teachers for Union County.
- The faculty was asked to recommend good students for the program.
- It was proposed to give workshops for local teachers in the Summer and that Summer camps be held for students.
- Foster Park Elementary needs tutors. We (our students) are already tutoring in Jonesville.
- PCAM 299 was suggested as a course for our students to take.
- It was brought up that USCU would pay for exams that education majors must take only for those doing the last two years at Upstate.
- It was asked if USCU courses would serve as adequate prerequisite courses for a variety of schools. Dr. Aziz stated that no problems have been encountered with Upstate and that Upstate considered prerequisites on a case by case basis.

Academic Dean's Report: Dr. Maggie Aziz

Dr. Aziz's report is attached. Announcements and concerns raised after her report include:

- Recommendations for nursing students need to be submitted by March 1st, 5 pm.
- A concern was raised regarding dual enrollment students registering for class promptly.

Committee Reports and other Business

New course Survey Tool:

A discussion on the new survey tool was held. Shortcomings of the old tool were pointed out. These include the fact that the old tool counts all questions (including those that do not directly relate to instruction) towards the global index.

Announcement:

Dr. Schafer asked to mark our calendar for Liyi Noshi's visit during 2/24- 2/28.

Announcement:

Dr. Johnson announced that the Grievance Committee is working on their task and plan to give a new faculty survey concerning forming a grievance committee.

Announcement:

Dr. Lownes asked for two volunteers for reviewing applications for the PC awards. Dr. Carter and Professor Rabanal volunteered and were selected for the task. Dr. Klik plans to meet in mid February to discuss the results.

FO Secretary replacement for Spring:

Dr. Mitra volunteered and was selected to perform the FO secretary's duties for the rest of the Spring semester.

Announcement:

In the interest of saving time, Dr. Aziz suggested that faculty accomplishments be put in the minutes as an addendum, rather than being read in the meeting.

Announcement:

Lynn Edwards announced that the Medical Center is to open on May 11th.

Future FO meetings:

The times for future meetings in the Spring, as given on the first page of these minutes, were agreed upon.

At 1:02 PM the meeting was adjourned.

Submitted by:

David Mitra, interim FO Secretary

Attachments:

- Dean's Report
- Academic Dean's Report
- AI Education Press Release (referenced in Dean's Report)

Randy Lowell, USC Union
Dean's Report
January 17, 2025

Spring enrollment, as of yesterday, is well ahead of last year's record high headcount for a Spring semester, at 1,301 (compared to 1,244 at freeze last Spring, up 4.58%), and 6 behind last Spring's FTE, at 727 (compared to 733 at freeze last Spring). Freeze this semester will be sometime in March, so we still have an opportunity to add to this enrollment number for Spring, primarily with any new students starting with us for the Spring II session.

We are a higher education affiliate of the Western Piedmont Education Consortium (WPEC) of school districts in this region of the upstate. WPEC held their annual High School Academic Challenge competition finals at Clinton High School back in November, as they prepare to host the statewide tournament this Spring at Lander. For the competition in November, I had the honor of presenting the trophies to the competition winners that night, as we had also served as sponsor for that competition by covering the cost of those trophies.

Shout out to our Education Coordinator, Cari Conley, for her work on a \$300,000 grant proposal to the Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC) to partner with the Union County School District on the creation of a STEM bus that could serve kids county-wide. The pre-application was successful and ARC invited submission of the full application to be submitted next month.

Welcome to some of our other recent hires, including new full-time Quality Assurance Technician in our IT Department, Brian Smith; our new Women's Soccer Head Coach, John Mills; and our new Women's Volleyball Head Coach, Kristie Kendall. We are also talking to a candidate this afternoon for the Cross Country Head Coach position this afternoon, in addition to the active searches in process for multiple faculty positions.

USC Columbia's College of Information and Communications have developed two 90-minute AI-related courses to deliver for free at iCarolina Labs around the state, including here in Union at the Carnegie Library iCarolina Lab. On 1/27 from 6:00-8:00pm it will be Generative AI for Beginners, and on 1/29 from 6:00-8:00pm it will be Utilizing AI in Your Business. See attached press release for more details and contact Sarah Nardi (nardis@sc.edu) if you have any questions. This is open to anyone to sign up for, but they are looking for participants to register ahead of time. The more we can help to fill the seats on these first couple, the more likely that they will continue to develop and deliver more of these types of free trainings right here in Union in the future.

On 2/28 and on 3/14, from 10am until 2pm, we are partnering with United Way of the Piedmont and VITA to have them on campus in the Family Life building's Art classroom, where they will provide free tax preparation services for anyone from the campus or community who signs up for an appointment with them during those hours. There is a household income cap on this free service, which in the past has been around \$60,000, I believe. This may be a great resource for some of our students who are looking to get some help with their taxes right here on campus. Once they have provided additional information about how to sign up for an appointment, or have created a flyer to share, we will get that out to campus as well.

As we get the semester going, the Research Club will get some meetings and activities onto the calendar for the Spring. If you would like to be included on all of the planning communications and meeting invites for the club, send me a message so that I can remember to copy you on those.

Some campus project updates include the following:

Main Building renovation continues to make progress, still looking to have that put-back work completed sometime toward the end of the Spring semester.

The softball field has recouped some of the time that had been lost to the hurricane last semester, working quickly to have much of the new above-ground infrastructure and facilities fairly far along, and aiming to be ready mid-Spring for the team to use.

Some improvements have been made at the Laurens Location in Clinton, including some new classroom furniture, a new weight room, a new student study/success center space, and some other aesthetic updates around the space that we are utilizing. Additional capital project money is ready to spend there as we move forward this semester, including in the kitchen/cafeteria for our new HRSM partnership, bathrooms, gym for boat storage, fire safety, and golf facilities.

The Truluck Gym capital project will be getting started in early February, after the Sankofa event. This will include putting in a brand new gym floor and creating an office space in the gym. The estimated timeline on this work is approximately 4 months.

Preservation SC had contracted with Bennett Preservation Engineering to do a series of studies on the Dawkins House to determine feasibility of restoration and, once they had deemed that to be possible, they then created a stabilization plan for the house's structure. They have now contracted Huss to initiate that stabilization work, which will begin soon. The long-term plan is still for that house to be restored and converted into an Alumni House for the campus.

On Tuesday next week, I will attend the USC System Budget Request presentation to the House Ways & Means Higher Education Subcommittee by President Amiridis on behalf of the system campuses. The USC Union portion of that budget request for the upcoming 25-26 fiscal year includes reoccurring operating tuition mitigation funding to offset not raising tuition for students, as we have done as a system for the last 6 years now. It also includes a request for around \$7.5 million to put toward a variety of capital projects in Union and Clinton to continue to make needed campus improvements, and a request for \$11 million to put toward Phase I of a special project to build a new Civic Center on campus in Union. This budget request will be considered by HWM before going to the full House, and then on to Senate Finance and the full Senate, and finally to the joint Conference Committee to negotiate any discrepancies between the two. We will know the outcome of our request sometime this summer, possibly into July.

Boudreaux is finalizing their final draft of our updated Campus Master Plan, so we should have that from them in the coming weeks to begin distributing.

Start of the Semester Information
Academic Affairs
Spring 2025

IMPORTANT CONTACT INFORMATION

Majdouline Aziz: azizma@mailbox.sc.edu
Amber Ivey: ai1@mailbox.sc.edu
Nikki Cromer: auton@email.sc.edu

SPRING 2025 ACADEMIC CALENDAR

Event	Date
Classes Begin	Jan. 13, Monday
Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Service Day (no classes)	Jan. 20, Monday
Last day to change/drop a course without a grade of "W" being recorded (Part of Term 30)	Jan. 21, Tuesday
Midpoint in Semester	March 6, Thursday
Spring Break (no classes)	March 9 - 16, Sunday - Sunday
Last day to drop a course or withdraw without a grade of "WF" being recorded (Part of Term 30)	March 31, Monday
Awards Day	April 11, Friday
Last Day of Classes	April 28, Monday
Reading Day	April 29, Tuesday
Final Examinations (includes exams on Saturday)	April 30 - May 7, Wednesday - Wednesday
Commencement Exercises in Union	May 3, Saturday

UPDATES

Advisor Training will be held on Friday, February 21 at 9:00 am. Location to be determined. Light breakfast and boxed lunch will be provided.

Awards Night will be held on Friday, April 11 at 6:00 pm at Main Street Junction. If a time change is warranted, I will let the faculty know ASAP.

Teacher of the Year Voting will be organized by Dr. Steve Lownes. Voting dates will be announced soon.

Welcoming New Staff:

Cari Conley, Education Coordinator

Cari recently joined USC Union as the Education Coordinator, where she is spearheading the development of our new partnership with USC Upstate, the 2+2 Fast-Track to Teaching program and building our education department from the ground up. With a strong focus on community engagement, Cari is passionate about creating pathways for aspiring educators and fostering connections between programs across all education levels. She brings a wealth of experience in strategic planning, program development, grant writing, and educational leadership, with a

vision to empower students and professionals alike. With experience spanning multiple fields in and adjacent to education, Cari brings a unique perspective and innovative approach to creating impactful programs. Cari envisions a future where Union County grows leaders in education who inspire and empower the next generation.

REAL Center Literacy Clinics: Revolve around Science of Reading. Great for any USCU student interested in becoming a teacher or just wanting a part-time job working with kids

\$12/hour

T/R 3-5pm

Feb 4-April 3 (not spring break)

8 Hours mandatory training

*Must let me know asap

PCAM 299- Independent Study: Great for students pursuing education or leadership degree or wanting to work with kids

In-person course Wednesdays at 9:30-10:50am

Field Experience in YMCA Afterschool program

Partnership with SC Afterschool Alliance

Foster Park Elementary Tutoring- volunteer opportunities are open to students or faculty/staff if available

Varying timeslots and age groups available

Start as soon as possible

45 min/week commitment goes a long way!

Summer Opportunities

Union County Teacher Workshops

Would love some ideas/input from faculty about workshops we may be able to provide our local teachers for continuing ed.

REAL Center Literacy Clinics likely to extend through summer

TWR 9-11am

Carnegie Library

Opportunities at YMCA Summer Camps

Part-time jobs

Math and English Literacy focus

Athletes leading some sports programming?

**More to come

Welcoming New Faculty:

Dr. Reginald O'Dell, Adjunct Instructor of History

Dr. O'Dell grew up in Ware Shoals, SC, and was a traveling musician in the 90s. They worked in the optical industry until 2016 and pursued higher education, earning an associate's degree in 2016, a bachelor's in political science from Clemson University in 2018, a master's in military history from SNHU in 2020, and a Doctorate in Education from the University of Phoenix in 2024. They are married with two children attending USC Upstate and are passionate about animals, particularly rescue dogs and cats.

Lee Chambers, Adjunct Instructor of Criminal Justice

Lee was born and raised in Union and is married with two daughters, one in college and one in high school. After graduating from Union High School in 2000, they joined the U.S. Navy at 17 and served during 9/11. They became a police officer in 2011, rising to Patrol Sergeant and serving on the Special Response Team. They earned a master's degree in criminal justice from

Columbia College in 2020. In 2019, they joined the Jonesville Police Department, where they currently serve as both the Town Administrator and Police Department Training Officer. They are also an adjunct instructor at USC Union.

Lauren Carrier, Adjunct Instructor of Biology

Lauren has been teaching for about 12 years and is excited to be teaching at USC Union.

Faculty Accomplishments:

Sarah Heuss

January 2025 Presentation - Led a panel presentation with 2 faculty and 3 undergraduate student collaborators for the Joint Math Meetings. Spectra Workshop: Accessibility & Inclusivity in a Math Classroom: Union & Intersection of LGBTQ+ and Disability

January 2025 Presentation - Participated as a panelist highlighting diverse career opportunities in mathematics at the Joint Math Meetings. Spectra Career Workshop

January 2025 Presentation - Delivered an invited talk as part of a special session honoring my frequent collaborator Pete Johnson on the occasion of his retirement. Representatives of special families

December 2024 Publication - Edited 290-page volume as part of a team, additionally served as a corresponding editor with the publisher. Springer Proceedings in Mathematics & Statistics (PROMS, volume 489)

Randy Ivey

November 2024 Publication - The Gift of Gab and Other Stories, a collection of short fiction from Green Altar Books (upcoming November 2024)

November 2024 Presentation - Podcast on the Gift of Gab with Leah Baldwin for the Bantam Gazette

November 2024 Presentation - Podcast on The Gift of Gab with Jerry McKee

December 2024 Publication - Story in Union County News published on The Gift of Gab

December 2024 Publication - Upcoming Publication in Raven Review - the poem "Vampire"

Andrew Kettler

November 2024 Book review of "Tempest" - For Journal of World History: Review of Tempest: The Royal Navy and the Age of Revolutions, by James Davey. Vol. 35 (3), 2024, p. 502-504.

November 2024 Book review of "Philosophy of the Tourist" - For Aigne – Journal of the College of Arts, Celtic Studies and Social Sciences, University College, Cork: Review of Philosophy of the Tourist, by Hiroki Azuma, Volume 10, 2024, 132-134.

November 2024 Book review of "Captivity's Collections" - For Environmental History: Review of Captivity's Collections: Science, Natural History, and the British Transatlantic Slave Trade, by Kathleen Murphy. Vol. 29 (4), p. 755- 756.

November 2024 Presentation - Chaired the Panel, "Film & Television II: Religion and Philosophy," at the Popular Culture Association of the South Conference, Greenville, SC.

November 2024 Presentation - "Mining the Infinity War: Disney, Warner Brothers, and the Agency of Stones," Presented at the Popular Culture Association of the South, Greenville SC.

November 2024 Presentation - "I'll Make You Shit!": Olfactory Othering, Bourgeois Percepticide, and the Necropolitics of Colonial Prisons," Presented at the North American Conference on British Studies, Denver, CO.

November 2024 Presentation - Chaired and Commentated on the Panel, "Biography and Latin American History," for the Southern Historical Association, Kansas City, MO.
November 2024 Presentation - Chaired and Commentated on the Panel, "British Remembering of Conflict: Stories of Forgetting and Selective Memory," for the Southern Conference on British Studies, Kansas City, MO.
December 2024 Blind Reviewer on MS for *Renaissance and Reformation*
December 2024 Nominated for USCU Shaw Award
December 2024 Presented at USCU Research Group - "Deny the Future"
January 2025 Starting Term as President of H-Net - <https://networks.h-net.org/>
January 2025 Book Review Editor - Edited Reviews for Sound Studies 10.2
January 2025 Published Review Essay on "Communicology" - "Communicology, the Technical Image, and the Threat of Authoritarian Impulses" - For H-JHistory: Review of Communicology: Mutations in Human Relations?, by Vilem Flusser
January 2025 Funded Grant - "Remembrance of the Bicameral Mind: Sensory Worlds at the Interface," Presented at the Modern Language Association Conference, New Orleans, LA.

Ashley Rabanal

October 2 – November 23 2024 Creative Work - Artwork featured in *PLY*, an exhibition examining the nuances of materiality in various media. The exhibition features the work of Zero Space Collective members, as well as additional invited artists (Lowe Mill ARTS, Huntsville, AL) <https://www.zerospacecollective.com/events>
November 2024 Publication - Three paintings published in Pile Press' ninth issue. Pile Press is a small independent press in Portland, Oregon. Issue 09. (2024). Pile Press, 27-28,59.
December 7 – January 4, 2025 Creative Work - Artwork was featured in *Porous*, an exhibition in Austin, TX, as part of an art exchange between Tiger Strikes Asteroid Greenville and ICOSA (both art collectives)
September 6 – October 26 2025 Creative Work - Paintings included in *Figures & Faces*, a group exhibition at the Good Art, Co. in Greenville, SC
January 2024-March 2025 Creative Work - Artwork exhibited in *THE NEW SOUTH 6*, a juried exhibition of artworks on paper at Kai Lin Art in Atlanta, GA

Dr. Tekla Johnson

2025 Publication - Short version of paper accepted for publication with revisions in National Council of Black Studies Annual Report.

Dr. Triplett

April 2025 Presentation - Paper accepted for presentation at the Southern Sociological Society meeting in April. Shedding the Reputation or Stacking Challenges?: Early Elementary Mobility Between School Types

Dr. Schafer

"I am excited to let you all know I received the Hubert H. Humphrey Fellows grant again this year, and we have officially made a match with our placement for the Fulbright Community College Residency Program for Spring 2025. Hopefully you remember our wonderful experience with the scholars from Africa last year, Florence and Sakhile. This year we have the honor of hosting Attorney Liyi Noshi of India. I'm particularly excited because we have such similar backgrounds with work in child trauma and racial discrimination."

Dr. Schafer and Dr. Klik

April 2025 Presentation - Evidence-based Faculty Engagement Initiatives as a Pathway to Student Success. American Association of Colleges and Universities (AAC&U) Conference on Learning and Student Success (CLASS). Round Table Format: Student success is closely tied to faculty engagement, with research showing that high-quality faculty-student interactions are critical to student retention, graduation rates, and overall well-being. However, while much focus has been placed on student factors, faculty engagement—particularly how it is shaped by the institutional climate—remains underexplored.

This session will present recent research on the relationship between faculty perceptions of their work environment, leadership, and their levels of engagement. Based on a 2023 survey of faculty members, the study highlights how campus social and work environments influence faculty well-being, organizational commitment, and ultimately student success. The findings reveal that faculty autonomy alters the direct influence of leadership, with campus climate and organizational identification playing pivotal roles in shaping engagement.

Athletic Accomplishments:

Golf

10/31/24 - The golf team traveled to Bristol Tennessee to compete in their third tournament of the season. They finished 9th out of 13 teams. Carson Williams finished 17th overall.

11/15/2024 - Finished up the gun rifle fundraiser.

5 out of 7 players had a 3.0 or higher GPA with the final team GPA being 3.56

Rifle

11/2/2024 - Keagan Dean took first place in her third ever Smallbore Metric Position match firing her first ever Smallbore Metric Position Outdoor Master score of 1089 out of a possible 1200, a "career best." 89% is the bottom line in the Metric Position shot outdoors.

11/2/2024 - Mekayla Baker fired a "career best" score of 1025 in her third-ever Metric Position Smallbore match.

Final team GPA was 2.5

Baseball

11/4/2024 - The USC Union baseball team started their calendar fundraiser.

11/9/2024-11/10/2024 - World Series Fundraiser began and parents were allowed to come out and support the team.

36 out of 52 players had a 3.0 or higher GPA with the final team GPA being 3.19

Softball

11/7/2024-11/11/2024 - Coach Royce and Kevin went over to Las Vegas to recruit. Talked to 5 different girls from out west that will possibly be coming on visits in the near future.

1/8/2025 - 17 out of 18 players had a 3.0 or higher GPA with the final team GPA being 3.78

Soccer

11/13/2024-11/14/2024 - Marc began to take all new freshman international freshmen to get their social security cards so they would possibly have a chance to work at USC Union.

1/8/2025 - 17 out of 23 players had a 3.0 or higher GPA with the final team GPA being 3.14

Bass Fishing

11/15/2024 - Finished up the gun rifle fundraiser.

19 out of 24 players had a 3.0 or higher GPA with the final team GPA being 3.32

Volleyball

7 out of 8 players had a 3.0 or higher GPA with the final team GPA being 3.56
The New Head Volleyball Coach has accepted the position.

Nursing:

Received a \$10338 grant from the Chester Healthcare Foundation to purchase two new beds and additional lab supplies.

In Spring 2025, six seniors and 10 juniors will return for the upper division.

The upper division application cycle for Fall 2025 Nursing Students opened on January 1, 2025.

All application pieces are due to Lynn or Courtney by 5 p.m. on March 1st. Late applications will not be considered. Faculty, please send in any references to Lynn or Courtney before 5 p.m. on March 1st.

Andrew Kettler:

The Fresh Food Pantry deliveries are continuing in the spring, although are now monthly due to the lack of crops in the winter. A drop off was on Thursday the 16th for the list of students from the fall. The drop-off for February may expand to new students as well. Be on the lookout for e-mails if more students are needed to fill out quota.

Vector training for the spring was successful relative to other PC campuses. The closest number we can get to a final figure through the system offers that 34% of students at Union completed the training in the Fall. Thank you to those who assisted with getting students to complete their trainings.

The Spring extracurricular schedule will fill up quickly with events through Student Life. We are hosting a Job Fair, most likely in April, and please email if you know of any local businesses that might have interest in participating. We are looking to host an event for Denim Day on April 30 and are in contact with Safe Passage on setting up what that might look like for the campus.

If anyone has any students who have offered that they have interest in medical school, please let Andrew know, as he will be attending the P3 meeting in Greenville next week and can provide information to students on how to get on the track from Union to medical school in Greenville. The program provides significant funding for disadvantaged students.

The History Suite is becoming a Humanities Study Center over the next few months. As such, we have a television, films, and books for students already set up. We are bringing in new shelves and more desks and chairs, as well as a computer for students to have a specific study center in Central Building. Any professors who would like to donate books, journals, DVDs, or anything else students might enjoy using for their studies, feel free to drop them off in the history suite.

Hiring Committees: Biology, Political Science, Psychology, and Spanish searches are ongoing. If you are serving on any of these committees, please begin the process as soon as possible so that we can ensure to have candidates identified and hired by Fall 2025.

Transfer Pathways:

USC Union – USC Upstate: Fast Track to Teaching (Finalized)

USC Union – USC Columbia: HTMT (Finalized)

USC Union – USC Columbia: Pharm.D. (in-progress)

USC Union – USC Columbia: ENTR (in-progress). This pathway provides students with the opportunity to fulfill all, if not most, of the requirements for the Entrepreneurship minor before transferring to Columbia. The minor will be awarded upon completion of their bachelor's degree at Columbia, but they can complete all the requirements before transferring.

USC Union – USC Columbia: Management (in-progress). I met with the department chair of the Management Department at USC Columbia's Darla Moore School of Business to discuss transfer pathways in management, specifically in entrepreneurship and human resources.

First-Year Freshman Recovery Program:

Launched this semester with 15 students contacted. This program has four components:

Academic Success Plan

The student must meet with their academic advisor as soon as possible to develop an Academic Success Plan. This plan will be tailored to their individual academic needs and goals. After the meeting, the plan must be signed by the student and their advisor, and a copy must be submitted to the University Registrar at bentleyt@mailbox.sc.edu.

Monthly Academic Wellness Check

The Student will meet with their advisor once a month to check on their academic progress. These meetings will help ensure they stay on track with their success plan. After each meeting, their advisor will complete the Monthly Academic Wellness Check Form and submit it to the University Registrar by the end of the semester.

Mid-Semester Progress Report (Faculty Evaluation)

The student is required to have each of their professors complete a Mid-Semester Progress Report for each course they are taking. These reports are to be submitted to their advisor by the second Monday following Spring Break. It is their responsibility to collect these reports from their professors and ensure they are submitted on time.

Professor-Student Check-In

The student must schedule at least two meetings (one before Spring Break and the other before the last day of classes) with each of their professors during the semester (either in-person or virtual, if applicable). During these meetings, the professors will complete a Professor-Student Check-In Form, which the student will then submit to their advisor before the last day of finals.

If students complete all the requirements outlined in their Academic Success Plan, they will be eligible for a \$500 scholarship, which will be applied towards tuition for the Fall 2025 semester at USC Union.

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 that 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.

CCSSE:

This spring, USC Union will be participating in the Community College Survey of Student Engagement (CCSSE), a national survey of institutional practices and student behaviors. CCSSE is an initiative of CCSSE at the University of Texas Austin. This assessment tool will provide information on student engagement and is comprised of items that assess institutional practices and student behaviors that are highly correlated with student learning and retention. Survey data will be used for feedback to the campus and faculty/staff related to how our students are engaging with the campus, which contribute to learning, retention, and successful completion of degree requirements. Results will assist our campus in strategic planning and SACSCOC accreditation and allow us compare engagement across the PC campuses.

The survey will be administered during the spring academic term (March through April). Note: depending on timely receipt of survey packets from UT-Austin, it may be possible to administer surveys prior to the start of spring break.

It will be administered in the classroom as a pencil-and-paper survey to students in randomly selected credit courses.

Faculty are not responsible for administering the surveys. The administration of the surveys will be handled by designated staff on campus. I will reach out to those selected as staff administrators in a separate email.

Historically, the survey has taken up to 45 minutes for students to complete within the classroom. Therefore, survey administration will take up an entire class period for selected course sections. Should your course section(s) be selected, faculty are not required to participate, although they are strongly encouraged so that the campus receives useful student data for reasons stated above. Faculty teaching full-term F2F courses may choose to build in "wiggle-room" in their syllabi in case one or more of their sections are selected and/or record and upload lectures for selected sections as they are notified. If faculty choose to have their selected sections participate, there is no need to inform students that it will be taking place to ensure maximum attendance during those class periods.

Faculty of selected course sections will be notified shortly after the first add/drop period of the spring semester (mid-January).

PURE Grant:

The Palmetto Undergraduate Research Experience Grant will be offered again this summer. Please begin identifying a student whom you would like to work with on this paid research experience during Summer 2025. More details to come.

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.

We will begin offering dual enrollment at Fountain Inn High School Fall 2025

We will begin with our first cohort of early college students with Clinton High School Fall 2025.

Courses will be taught at the Laurens location.

We will begin offering courses at Gray Collegiate Academy's new location Fall 2025.

We are planning on hosting a dual enrollment ceremony next academic year.

General Changes:

Changes are coming to course evaluations. More details will be provided later.

Changes to the Teacher of the Year process will be discussed with the Faculty Advisory Committee/Faculty Welfare Committee.

Course Scheduling and Advising for Summer and Fall 2025:

Scheduling to begin immediately

Advising to begin March 24, 2025

SCHEDULE CHANGES

If a situation arises that requires a change in your schedule, you must get prior approval from the Associate Dean

for Academic and Student Affairs.

SICK LEAVE

If you cancel class for any reason, please contact Amber Ivey to inform her immediately. Also, reach out to your classes directly to inform them of your absence. If you are out, you are required to submit leave in the Time and Absence System.

OFFICE HOURS

Faculty members will hold one hour of office hours for each course taught each semester, up to five hours per week.

ATTENDANCE POLICY

Please be aware of the [attendance policy](#) and incorporate this policy into your syllabi. Your individual attendance policy may not conflict with the official university policy statement.

PLAGIARISM STATEMENT

Please include a plagiarism statement in your course syllabi including the specific sanctions that will be applied for violations of the policy.

FACULTY ACTION ITEMS

USC Union 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/

Academic Affairs:

Send a copy of your syllabi to Amber Ivey or Nikki Cromer by Jan. 17.

Send a copy of your office hours form to Amber Ivey or Nikki Cromer by Jan. 17.

Maintain accurate attendance reports for each class. Please submit the online form by Jan. 22 (Spring I); Jan. 31 (Full); March 27 (Spring II).

Maintain accurate and up-to-date academic records/grades. Please submit the online form for students academically at-risk Jan. 30 (Spring I); Feb. 21 (Full); April 4 (Spring II).

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

Course evaluations dates: Spring I: Open on Feb 24/Close on Mar.6. ; Full and Spring II: Open on April 23/Close on May 7.

Faculty Peer Review:

Peer reviews will take place this semester. Review assignments are forthcoming.

Annual Administrative Reviews:

Full-time faculty are required to submit annual administrative reviews no later than January 31, 2025. Faculty will need to complete the Faculty Information Form and the Individual Annual Research, Scholarly Activity, and Service Report. Both forms are required of all full-time faculty, even if you went up for third-year review or tenure this cycle.

Outside Professional Activities:

Full-time faculty are required to submit the Outside Professional Activities Disclosure Form no later than January 31, 2025.

https://sc.edu/about/offices_and_divisions/provost/faculty/outside-professional-activities.php

SASC Workshops:

Robert Overton will be organizing academic workshops. If you would like to host a workshop (great for service) please let me know.

New Guidelines for AY 2025-2026:

New guidelines for teaching and learning will be in effect for Fall 2025. More details to come.

For Immediate Release

Jan. 16, 2025

USC Palmetto College and the USC College of Information and Communications partner to bring AI education to South Carolinians

UNION, S.C. — The University of South Carolina Palmetto College and USC Columbia's College of Information and Communications are joining forces to bring cutting-edge artificial intelligence (AI) education to South Carolinians.

Two separate 90-minute courses will be offered through the USC Palmetto College iCarolina Lab at USC Union.

[Generative AI for Beginners](#) (link to register)

Date: Monday, Jan. 27, 2025

Time: 6-8 p.m.

Location: Union County Carnegie Library, Rieta Drinkwine Resource Room

Description: This interactive seminar is designed to demystify AI and provide hands-on experience with Generative AI tools. Tailored for adult learners, including small business owners, job seekers and those with limited technical experience, the session will cover the basics of AI, live demos of time-saving AI applications and practical exercises using ChatGPT. Participants will also receive guidance on updating their resumes using AI.

[Utilizing AI in Your Business](#) (link to register)

Date: Wednesday, Jan. 29, 2025

Time: 6-8 p.m.

Location: Union County Carnegie Library, Rieta Drinkwine Resource Room

Description: This session is designed for small business owners and nonprofit leaders, providing hands-on experience with generative AI tools to address common business challenges. Participants will learn to discover AI solutions tailored to their specific needs, craft effective prompts, automate repetitive tasks and create actionable strategies to integrate AI into their daily operations.

These non-credit courses are open to all community members, students, faculty and staff. Participants who complete both courses will receive a completion certificate. The courses are free and open to the public; however, registration is required.

Why This Matters

Artificial Intelligence is transforming industries, from healthcare and education to business and entertainment. These courses are designed for beginners, offering practical skills to demonstrate how AI can assist with tasks such as enhancing written communication, crafting resumes and developing business plans.

What they're saying

"We are thrilled to partner with the College of Information and Communications to bring AI education to our communities," said USC Palmetto College Chancellor Susan A. Elkins. "These courses will provide valuable insights and practical skills that can drive economic growth and innovation in our region."

"AI is becoming an integral part of our daily lives, and it's essential that everyone has the opportunity to learn about and benefit from this technology," said USC College of Information and Communications Dean Tom Reichert. "We want to make a positive impact on our community by teaching participants how to use AI to enhance their personal lives and their businesses."

About USC Palmetto College iCarolina Lab Network

The [USC Palmetto College iCarolina Lab Network](#) provides free internet access, educational programming, and workforce development training to South Carolinians in rural broadband deserts. The network includes eight sites located within communities served by the four regional Palmetto College campuses within the University of South Carolina System, including Allendale, Clinton, Kershaw, Lancaster, Laurens, Sumter, Union and Walterboro.

Contact Information

For more information about the courses, please contact Sarah Nardi at nardis@sc.edu.

###