



A Regional Palmetto College

FO Minutes

March 20, 2026 – 10:00 AM

Whitener Building, Community Room

In-person attendance:

Lynn Edwards
Avery Fouts
Katie Klik
Randy Lowell
David Mitra
Courtney Pinnell

Online attendance:

Majed Al-Ghandour
Joe Anderson
Gale Ashmore
Sarah Carter
Neill Hance
Sarah Heuss
Tekla Johnson
Andrew Kettler
Steve Lowe
Sandy Phillips-Long
Andrew Pisano
Megan Rabanal
Jennifer Triplett
Caroline Wilson

Future FO meetings:

May 1, 9 am (Final committee reports due.)

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

Approval of minutes from February 13th meeting

A motion was made to approve the Feb. 13 minutes and was passed with all in favor.

Dean's Report: Dr. Randy Lowell

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

Of note:

- Student volunteers are needed to plant trees in May.
- Research club presentations will be made on March 30th.
- Prof. Rabanal will host a lunch and learn on April 7th.

Academic Dean's Report: Presented by Dr. Katie Klik

Dr. Klik presented Dr. Aziz' report. The report is attached to these minutes.

Of note:

- Awards night is April 17th.
- Students should be encouraged to complete the CCSSE survey, available until April 10th.
- Advising begins March 23rd. Refer to the sent email.

Committee Reports

- Professor Rabanal gave a PC Faculty Welfare update: \$250 is to be awarded to the Lancaster, Salkehatchie, and Columbia campuses for awards. \$600 is reserved for student hardships. Funds will start in July 2026. The timeline for PC awards is being revised. The committee is considering a timeline with nominations open in March and applications due in September.

Other Business

Dr. Klik discussed plans for the final FO meeting of the year:

- Votes for committee positions need to be made.
- Votes for PC award nominees need to be made (after we know this year's winners).
- A form will be emailed to see who will attend the meeting in person.
- Committee chairs should prepare reports on their committee's activities this year.

Dr. Lowe announced that two positions for Columbia Senate need to be filled. An email will be sent regarding this.

Announcements

- Dr. Triplett: announced that there was a PURE Grant research presentation at SC State. Future presentations will be held at the Southern Sociological Society's Annual Meeting in Jacksonville on April 1th1 and at Discover USC in Columbia at the end of April.
- Dr. Fouts related that candidates for the Computer Science Instructor search will give teaching demonstrations in early April. Attendance is encouraged.
- Professor Pinnell announced a lunch and learn and that there are 13 new Nursing students incoming.
- Dr. Johnson thanked Professor Rabanal for work on the Women's day event.

Adjournment

A motion was made to adjourn and was passed.

The meeting adjourned at 10:57 pm.

Prepared by David Mitra

FO Secretary

Academic Dean's report:

1. [Congratulations](#) to Tracy Stapleton for being named Distinguished Teacher of the Year for 2025–2026, and to Dave Hudson for receiving the Part-Time Faculty Teaching Excellence Award! Also, thank you to Dr. Sarah Carter for her leadership in chairing the awards committee.
2. Awards Night will be held on April 17, 2026, at 6:00 p.m. at the Main Street Junction. We hope everyone can attend and celebrate the achievements of our students, faculty, and staff. Amber and Nikki have reached out to presenters with additional information.
3. The CCSSE (Community College Survey of Student Engagement) is now open for students and will remain available until April 10. Students have been notified and sent a link to the survey via their USC email, personal email, and text message. Completion is quick and easy; students simply use their USC email address as their access code. Please encourage your students to complete the survey. Your support in reminding and motivating students to participate is greatly appreciated. High participation helps us better understand student experiences and improve programs and services across our campus. Please note: Dual enrollment students are not eligible to participate. Thank you for helping make this effort a success!

To incentivize participation:

- Students who complete the survey are entered into prize drawings.
- On March 26, we will host an event where students can receive a Chick-fil-A sandwich for completing the survey.

As of 3/18/26, 78 out of 269 students have completed the survey!

4. The PURE Grant will run again this summer, but at a reduced total funding level, meaning fewer projects will be supported than usual. I will share additional information next month, along with the application. Applications will open on April 27 and close on May 28. If you are interested in applying, I encourage you to submit your application as early as possible. As usual, priority will be given to students and faculty who have not received prior funding.
5. Advising for Summer and Fall 2026 will begin on Monday, March 23. Please carefully review the email sent on March 18, 2026, which includes important advising information. If you need assistance with the transition from the printable advising schedule to Self-Service, please contact Amber Ivey, Nikki Cromer, or me. We are happy to help through this transition. As a reminder, we no longer have a contract with Calendly and are transitioning to Reframe Engage. However, we will not be using Reframe Engage (the Calendly replacement) just yet. When I tested it a few weeks ago, I noticed it lacks Outlook integration. I have informed PC Central, and they are working with the company to resolve this issue. Unfortunately, this will not be fixed by the start of advising on Monday, but I will notify you as soon as it is ready. In the meantime, please reach out to your advisees via email, phone, or text to schedule advising appointments. If

you have not yet set up your Reframe account (Bob Dyer sent an email earlier this semester with a 10-day window to register), please let me know so I can ask him to resend that information to you.

6. I have recently received approval from the SCCHE and SACSCOC for Lake Wylie High School to become an official dual enrollment site. We will begin offering courses there in Fall 2026. We currently serve about 400 dual enrollment students at Clover High School, but with the opening of Lake Wylie High School, these students will be split evenly between the two schools. To maintain equitable access and continuity, we will continue to offer more than 50% of the associate degree coursework at the new Lake Wylie site.
7. HTMT Transfer Pathway at the Laurens Location: I have successfully identified an instructor to teach HTMT courses at the Laurens Location. Rob Patterson has extensive experience in the field, both as a chef and management in restaurants and private clubs/resorts. This fall, Rob will teach two courses: HTMT 270: Introduction to Food Production Management and HTMT 110: Introduction to Hospitality Industry. I've been working with him to identify the equipment needed to successfully run these courses, while Keith is coordinating the required inspections. Rob will also offer a continuing education course in the fall. The course will be tailgating and BBQ themed, that will run over a 4-week period. I will share the details when they are available. Dr. Lowell and I met with him to tour the facility, and through our discussions about the program's long-term plans, Rob will not only teach but also assist with coordinating, marketing, and recruiting efforts. He will help build awareness of the program among current and prospective students and strengthen the pipeline into the Laurens location.

Randy Lowell, USC Union
Dean's Report
March 20, 2026

- Enrollment reached a new record for Spring, with a headcount of 1,569 (up 19.9% from 1,308 last year), and FTE of 904 (up 21.8% from 742 last year), with increases from last Spring in dual enrollment and traditional student populations.
- The recent fire out at Times Boulevard was certainly a difficult sight to see. Tradd Bruce has put a lot of work over the past few years into making that project come to fruition, however, and fortunately he is adapting under the circumstances by shifting focus to the three buildings on the property that did not burn and were almost ready. He will have those finished for our students to rent this July, so still on track with that original timeline. He has started rebuilding the burned unit and will have it ready by the end of the year. This will be critical for our continued campus growth.
- The FY27 state budget process has kicked off earlier this year with the Governor putting out his initial Executive Budget draft, and then House Ways and Means, and then the full House versions, coming out more recently. The latter versions did include some mandatory pay increases, at 2%, along with some tuition mitigation funding and \$500,000 of one-time capital project funds for the Civic Center special project. As it moves over to Senate Finance next, we are hoping to see the tuition mitigation funding increase closer to the requested amount, as well as to see the capital project funding expand to include some general maintenance, renovation, and repair funding. President Amiridis will appear in front of Senate Finance to make the case for the USC System's request later this month.
- Discussions with the Canadian fiber optic infrastructure company, Intus Smartcities/CUTI, have continued to progress. As we work to finalize an MOU with them, we are weighing options for a continuing education model of their training program that would allow them to use our classroom and have them provide all of the trainers and curricula, while sharing the revenue. There will also likely be an opportunity as part of this to have our students complete internship work through their company in this area.
- We have also continued to discuss a tree-planting initiative with Tanya McKay, from the Youth Biodiversity Collective non-profit organization. The current idea is to plant a few pear or persimmons trees near the pecan grove here on the Union campus, and plant more than a dozen red oaks at our location in Clinton, lining the border of the property along the golf driving range area. She will also be looking at some research options related to this initiative, and will begin to think about ways to recruit students to help with the tree-planting project that will occur sometime in early May, after the final frost.
- We connected with the Wild Pines Sanctuary in Union by having some Research Club students go there with me to spend some time meeting their animals and helping out with some chores on the property. We will also be a sponsor for their second annual Wild Pines Fest fundraiser event in September, with a USC Union table at that event. We look forward

to continuing to find ways to collaborate, including the possibility of some goat yoga there at some point with our Strength and Conditioning Coordinator.

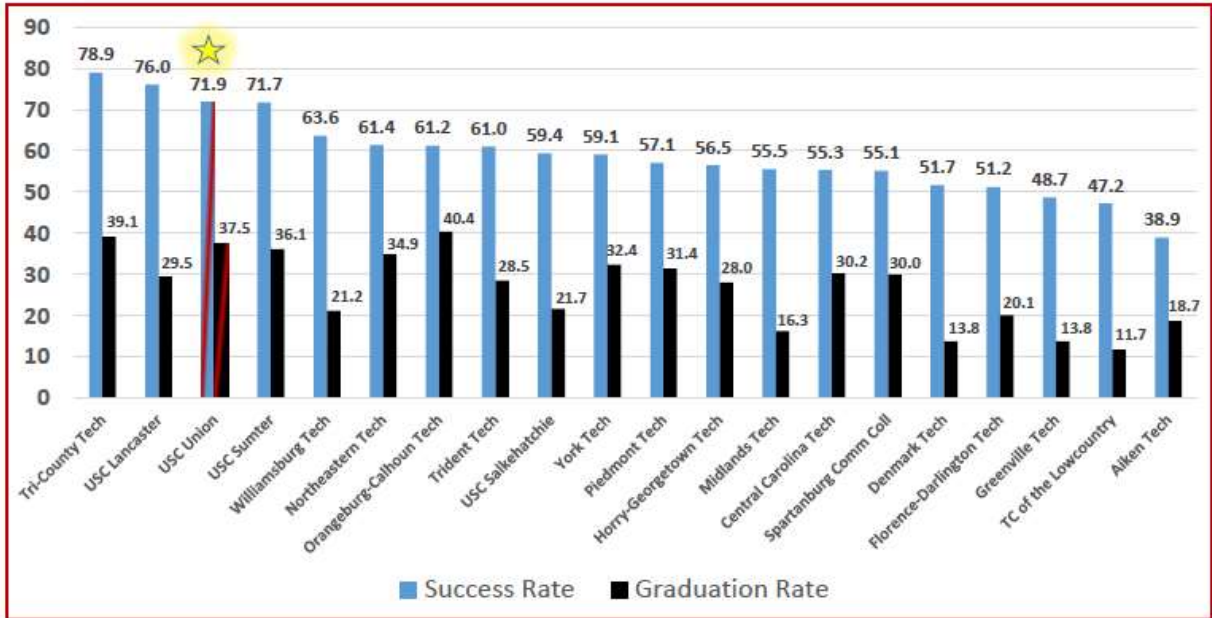
- In addition to the Wild Pines visit, I took a group of Research Club students up to the Alcatraz East Crime Museum in Pigeon Forge last week. Coming up on March 30, we will have a Research Club Colloquium in the Main Building, which will feature the research of one of our BLS alums, Dr. Christian Wood-Weddle, who recently completed his doctorate in History. Before/after that talk, we will have some students displaying some of their research that people can stop and chat with them about. We'll also have a Lunch & Learn on Tuesday, April 7th at noon in the Community Room, featuring Ashley Rabanal's work.
- The Catawba Council of Governments is continuing to work through a Catawba Regional Workforce Housing Study, which includes Union County. They will be having a Union-focused meeting here in Union at the Junction on Thursday, April 16, from 9:00-10:30am as well, if there's any feedback anyone else has for them.

Facilities Updates:

- Jonesville baseball field bathroom building is out of the ground with block work up over 4 feet. Underground lines are tied in for water, sewer, supply and vent pipe.
- Jonesville gym getting close to final inspection. Weight room is finished and should be able to set it up by end of the week. The locker rooms and bathrooms are 90% complete and the last interior part will be the epoxy floor at the rear door entrance. Roof replacement PO is in place and materials are on site.
- Student Services Building is getting its secondary ceiling removed after it was positive for lead, and then will be rebid for the roof replacement project.
- Art building ceiling has been foam sprayed for insulation. We have sent out 2 minor construction packages for HVAC and interior bathroom finishes. This is supposed to be ready by August.
- Laurens Location in Clinton is having architect design updates there and provide cost estimates for old classroom hallway renovations. The golf room is finished as well as the bass fishing boat storage area.
- Rippy Building panels will have to come off the exterior at some point, and will eventually get new windows and bricked or stucco on the exterior.

First-Time, Full-Time Undergraduates Entering in Fall 2020

Source: https://che.sc.gov/sites/che/files/Documents/CHE%20Data%20and%20Reports/Statistical%20Abstracts/2024_Statistical_Abstract-WEB.pdf



First-Time, Full-Time Undergraduates, Fall 2022 to Fall 2023

Source: https://che.sc.gov/sites/che/files/Documents/CHE%20Data%20and%20Reports/Statistical%20Abstracts/2024_Statistical_Abstract-WEB.pdf

