

USC Lancaster Faculty Meeting Minutes October 3, 2025

Please note: Faculty Organization meetings are recorded. To access the recordings of previous Faculty Organization meetings, follow these steps:

1. Log into Blackboard and go to Organizations.
2. Select USCLFO.
3. Click FO Documents on the left-hand menu.
4. Click on the folder labeled "FO Meeting Documents and Recordings"
5. Select the date of the meeting.
6. View recording in browser or download mp4 file.

Please note that chat messages are preserved in the Teams meeting record but are not necessarily reported in the minutes. Minutes are not verbatim and as such, pronouns may be mixed in the comment sections.

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Faculty Meeting Minutes

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USC Lancaster Faculty Meeting Minutes
October 3, 2025

CALL TO ORDER: 12:30 PM by Elizabeth Easley

CORRECTION/APPROVAL OF MINUTES: The minutes of the September 5 faculty organization meeting and of the emergency meeting on September 12 were approved.

REPORTS OF OFFICERS:

Dean of the Campus – Dr. Courtney Catledge, report submitted (**Appendix 1**).

Highlights from her report, including:

- Enrollment update
- Multiple searches are open
- Upcoming campus local events
- The current Clery report is available

Questions and/or Comments: None

Associate Dean for Academic and Student Affairs – Dr. David Roberts report submitted (**Appendix 2**).

Highlights from his report including:

- Encouraging faculty to attend the scholarship luncheon and to be patient with participating students who may be late to class because of the luncheon.
- Upcoming campus events
- Registration reminders (and notes that the summer session schedule is coming soon)
- Faculty searches and accomplishments

Questions and/or Comments:

S. Penuel – I see that only one open position is eligible for tenure. This is concerning, given the subject areas are potential targets for public outcry. Is there a way we can make these roles tenurable?

D. Roberts – I can speak with the division chair(s) and campus dean. The need for a master's degree versus PhD was an important factor in that decision. If you share notes with your concerns, that will help inform my investigation.

Academic Success Center – Written report (**Appendix 3**).

Human Resources – Tracey Mobley-Chavous, report submitted (**Appendix 4**)

Highlights from her written report, including:

- Emphasizing reminder to make needed changes for Open Enrollment:
 - Dental changes may be made this year, and the next opportunity will be in 2027.
 - Optional life insurance can be increased (up to \$50,000) without medical evidence this year.
- Reminder of the new pharmacy benefits manager, and to ensure contact information is correct for mailing new pharmacy benefits card.
- We will have a new process for Gregory YMCA membership renewal.
- Flu vaccine clinic 10/8/2025
- Reminder of Employee Assistance Program (EAP) benefits
- Reminder of holiday closures

Questions and/or comments: None

Information Technology – Blake Faulkenberry, report submitted (**Appendix 5**)

One addition to his written report: New IT staff member Sam Johnson will be working at the support desk as a new point of contact.

Questions and/or comments: None

Lancaster Promise Neighborhood – Written Report (**Appendix 6**)

Medford Library – Written Report (**Appendix 7**)

Student Success and Retention – Written Report (**Appendix 8**)

TRiO – Written Report (**Appendix 9**)

REPORTS OF COMMITTEES:

USC SYSTEM COMMITTEES:

Rights and Responsibilities Committee – Dr. Dana Lawrence, report submitted (**Appendix 10**).

Highlights from her report, including:

- Changes to Instructor rank
- The committee has asked if Palmetto College will speak on academic freedom and free speech to no comment.

Questions and/or comments:

T. Mobley-Chavous – Regarding the evaluation systems (point 3 on report): Will this also apply to adjunct faculty?

D. Lawrence – Unsure; will investigate.

PCCFS System Affairs Committee – S. Penuel.

Highlights from her report including:

- The committee is working on procedures for progressive discipline and incivility. Please let Suzanne or Stephen Criswell know if you have questions or would like a copy of the current drafts.

Questions and/or comments: None

Welfare Committee – Written Report (**Appendix 11**)

LOCAL COMMITTEES:

Academic Advisory Council – Written report (**Appendix 12**)

Athletics Advisory Committee – Written report (**Appendix 13**)

Free Expression and Academic Freedom Committee – Dr. Patrick Lawrence, report submitted (**Appendix 14**).

Updates on the work of the new committee and highlights from his report, including:

- The committee is now staffed. There is still room for staff and student representatives if there is interest. They will be drafting local procedures for the committee moving forward.
- Shared background committee's work in response to current events (see report for details).

Questions and/or comments:

N. Lawrence – Comments that [in light of recent events] it seems best to watch what we as faculty share online (regardless of individual rank or tenure status).

D. Roberts – Comments that faculty should not feel like they are alone. As Interim, he will protect faculty as much as he can. Free speech is important, so please reach out if you need support.

C. Catledge – Echoes David's remarks and expresses thanks to the committee for their work in this area. Notes the challenge of balancing open dialog with obligations as administrators.

OTHER SYSTEM COMMITTEES: None

UNFINISHED BUSINESS: None

NEW BUSINESS: None

SPECIAL ORDERS: None

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

- S. Sellhorst – The Health & Wellness Coaching program is officially happening! Scholarships will be available to cover the certification exam for qualified students. Shout out to Lauren Thomas for her work bringing this to fruition.
- J. Yarosh – The annual Palmetto College Tenure & Promotion workshop will be this spring semester. Those interested in volunteering (ex: Leading a workshop) should contact him ASAP.
- M. Lemhouse – Medford Library will have several Freedom to Read activities on campus for Banned Books Week
- S. Criswell – The NASC has multiple events coming up, including hosting activities for the Humanities festival, Pop-up Markets (October 18 and November 15, and Lunch and Learns (October 24 and November 20).

ADJOURNMENT: 1:21 PM

ATTENDING:

Sahar Aghasafari, Shemsi Alhaddad, Connor Austell, Li Cai, Steven Campbell, Jill Castiglia, Courtney Catledge, Stephen Criswell, Susan Cruise, Annette Duker-Golonka, Elizabeth Easley, Rebecca Freeman, Garane Garane, Amy Gerald, Darris Hassell, Claudia Heinemann-Priest, Alissa [Kate] Holland, Jason Holt, Ernest Jenkins, Mary [Allison] Jobe, Dana Lawrence, Nicholas Lawrence, Patric Lawrence, McKenzie Lemhouse, Tamika Lewis, Lynette Martek, Fernanda Marques Burke, Angela Neal, Franklin [Evan] Nooe, Bettie Obi-Johnson, Allan Pangburn, Phillip Parker, Suzanne Penuel, Kim Richardson, David Roberts, Deborah Rowell, Peter Seipel, Sarah Sellhorst, Anita Sharma, Nahid Swails, Richard Vanhall, Jerrod Yarosh, Andrew Yingst

ABSENT:

Marybeth Berry, Dwayne Brown, Christopher Bundrick, Logan Cocklin, Mark Coe, Walter Collins, Kimberly Covington, Maxie [Ron] Cox, Lucius [Stan] Emanuel, Lisa Hammond, Christopher Judge, Howard Kingkade, Vincent Lewis, Brandon Newton, Leigh Pate, Michael Sherrill, Suzette Taylor, Brittany Taylor-Driggers, Tania Wolochwianski

Faculty Secretary: Document submitted by M. Lemhouse on October 13, 2025, for faculty and staff review.



UNIVERSITY OF
South Carolina
LANCASTER

Dr. Courtney B. Catledge
Regional Palmetto College Dean

Report to the Faculty Organization of USC Lancaster October 4, 2025

People

Enrollment

We are experiencing a strong Fall 2025 enrollment. **As of October 1, we are at 2,498 for headcount enrollment.** Thanks to all who assisted with efforts to enroll students.

Staff searches:

Director of Security

Faculty searches:

Nursing Instructor/Simulation Coordinator

Assistant Professor of Biology

Instructor of HPEB and Director of Health Coaching Program

Athletics

Women's and men's soccer seasons as well as volleyball season are underway. **Check out their schedules here:** <https://usclathletics.com/> Gratitude to the members of the Athletics Advisory Committee for their ongoing work.

USC Lancaster in our Communities

- USC Lancaster's Dr. Pat Lawrence and Dr. Dwayne Brown will provide an **ACT/SAT Workshop for LHS students** as part of the Lancaster Promise Neighborhood program. The sessions, scheduled for October and November, will be offered on 4 Saturdays on campus.
- USC Lancaster will be competing in the **United Way's Bed Race Fundraiser**. USCL will be recognized as the Grand Marshal this year because last year we were recognized as the people's choice award winner. The race will take place on Saturday (10/4) at 1:30 on the 700 block of S. Main St. Join us for the fun.

- We will participate in **Give Local** on National Philanthropy Day: Friday, Nov. 14, 2025. Please consider a donation to the Educational Foundation of USC Lancaster during this annual day of giving. More information will be shared via email soon.

Other items...

- The next **Lunch and Learn at the Native American Studies Center** is scheduled for October 24 at noon with a talk entitled “Building from Consultation to Collaboration in SC Archaeology,” by Dr. Nina Schreiner, Associate Director and NAGPRA Coordinator South Carolina Institute of Archaeology and Anthropology. To attend via Zoom, register via this link: <https://bit.ly/3kwSXCI>
- USC Lancaster has partnered with **MUSC Health to provide a Flu Vaccine Clinic** to all USC Lancaster employees and students. Dependents of USC Lancaster employees are also welcome to attend. The clinic will be held on Wednesday October 8, 2025, from 10:00 am – 1:00pm in The Hubb (Hubbard Hall Room 214). Appointments are not required, just drop in between the designated hours.
- The **USC Lancaster Performing Arts Series** will be hosting a free performance by **North State Grass** on Sunday November 16, 2025, at 3:00 pm in Bundy Auditorium.
- The **Lancaster Players** will be performing “The Children's Hour” in *Stevens* Theatre on October 17th & 18th @ 8:00pm; October 19th @ 2pm.
- USCL is hosting a **Meet and Greet for Dr. Craig Wilson**, the new chancellor of the University of South Carolina’s Palmetto College on Wednesday October 15, 2025, noon-1:30 pm in the John R. “Pete” Arnold Special Events Room, Bradley Building. Lunch will be provided. Please RSVP by Friday October 3, 2025.
- The annual **Richard Gannaway Scholarship Luncheon** is scheduled for Wednesday, November 5 at noon in the Arnold Special Events Room. Invitations for faculty will be emailed.
- The faculty/staff **Holiday Luncheon** is scheduled for Tuesday, December 9 from 11:30 to 1:30 in the Arnold Special Events Room. The call for RSVPs is forthcoming.
- USC Lancaster’s annual **Clery Report** has been completed and submitted. Many thanks to **Dr. John Rutledge** for his dedication in completing the report and to various faculty and staff who assisted with data and information collection. Updated information has been posted to the USC Lancaster website.

Enjoy your upcoming Fall Break!



UNIVERSITY OF
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LANCASTER

David Roberts, Interim Associate Dean for Academic & Student Affairs

REPORT TO THE FACULTY ORGANIZATION
October 3, 2025

- 1. Scholarship Updates.** Faculty are invited to attend our **Scholarship Luncheon** on November 5 at noon in the Arnold Special Events Room in the Bradley Building. This special event honors the recipients of USCL's most prestigious scholarships and includes many donors from the community. Invitations should have already been distributed. Please RSVP by Monday, October 20; 803-313-7008; drysf@sc.edu. **Students who are being honored that day might be late for their 1:00 classes. Thanks in advance for being patient with these students.**
- 2. Junior Scholars Day** will be Thursday, October 23. Our activity will be Mad City Money, which is put on by Founders Credit Union. We will also be doing campus tours. It will be from 9:30-1:00.
- 3. Class Cancellation.** Just a friendly reminder that if you need to cancel a class, please contact Pam Ellis in the Academic Affairs Office pellis@mailbox.sc.edu and your Division Chair.

Also, please clean up after yourself before leaving your classes (e.g., erase the boards, throw away trash, etc.).
- 4. Spring 2026 Registration** will begin on October 13. **Fall 2 courses begin** on October 20. If you know of students who might benefit from dropping a full semester class while recovering in the second eight weeks, please encourage them to talk with their advisors.

The **Division Chairs will be requesting your Summer 2026 Schedules soon.** I have attached a copy of the Summer Sessions to the email that includes my FO Report. There are some significant changes to Summer D and E Sessions, which will allow students to finish sequences of classes during the summer (D and E will no longer overlap). We have also added a 9-Week Session for those who want a longer semester.

Spring 2026 schedules are up, so please **carefully** check your schedule. Registration begins on October 13, and we want to make sure the schedule is correct before students are added to classes. Thanks for your diligence in this important step for Spring registration.

5. Faculty Searches.

Current Searches

- *Assistant Professor of Biology*: Committee membership:
 - i. Jill Castiglia (MSNPH)
 - ii. Annette Golonka (MSNPH)
 - iii. Jerrod Yarosh (BBCEL)
 - iv. Allison Jobe (Humanities)

- *Instructor of HPEB and Director of Health Coaching Program*: Committee Membership:
 - i. Sarah Sellhorst (MSNPH)
 - ii. Li Cai (MSNPH)
 - iii. Garane Garane (Humanities)
 - iv. McKenzie Lemhouse (BBCEL)

- *Instructor and Simulation Lab Coordinator*: Committee Membership:
 - i. Dr. Leigh Pate: USC Lancaster
 - ii. Phillip Parker: USC Lancaster
 - iii. Antonio Mackey: USC Lancaster
 - iv. Suzette Taylor: USC Lancaster
 - v. Lisette Cline: MUSC Health Lancaster Medical Center
 - vi. Rachael Drake: MUSC Health Lancaster Medical Center
 - vii. Dr. Aravind Raghaven: MUSC Health Lancaster Medical Center
 - viii. Tanna Warrin: MUSC Health Lancaster Medical Center

Upcoming Searches

- Instructor of Psychology
- Instructor of Sociology
- Computer Science

Division Chairs will be reaching out to you for members to serve on these committees.

6. Recent Faculty Accomplishments.

- **Phillip Parker** was featured in WalletHub's recent article, Compare Car Insurance Rates. It can be found here:
[https://wallethub.com/edu/ci/compare-car-insurance/93611#expert=Phillip T. Parker](https://wallethub.com/edu/ci/compare-car-insurance/93611#expert=Phillip_T._Parker)

- **Stan Emanuel** was featured in WalletHub’s recent article, Best Credit Cards. It can be found here:
https://wallethub.com/best-credit-cards#expert=Stan_Emanuel
- **Debbie Rowell** has been selected to head the Case Processing Work Group by the Executive Committee of the Lancaster County Criminal Justice Coordinating Council. The goal of this work group is to suggest ways to improve prosecution from arrest to trial.

Debbie has also been asked to serve on the city’s Community Violence Intervention Project by Chief Roper of the Lancaster Police Department. This is a DOJ grant-funded initiative to address gang violence and other issues the city is currently facing.
- **Marybeth Berry’s** most recent directing job for Town Theatre is *Kiss Me, Kate*. You can find a review of this show here:
<https://towntheatre.com/town-theatres-kiss-me-kate-a-show-within-a-show-that-has-all-the-right-moves/>
- **Sahar Aghasafari** has signed a book contract with STAR Scholars Press for the edited Volume *AI, Art, and Technology in STEM Education* (Editors: Sahar Aghasafari & Jeremy Blair). Call for Chapters:
<https://press.starscholars.org/press/announcement/view/32>

Sahar has an accepted presentation at Octoberbest: Teaching Symposium (University of South Carolina, Columbia): *Unfolding Proteins: A ChemArtistry Approach to Molecular Storytelling* (Aghasafari & Cai, 2025).

Sahar has an accepted panel presentation at STAR Global Conference 2025 – Virtual/Online, hosted from Istanbul, Türkiye. *Heartbeats and Molecules: Integrating AI, Media Arts, and Graphic Storytelling in STEAM Education*; Panel: *Art and Technology in STEM Education: A Transformative Dialogue* (curated by Aghasafari & Blair).

Sahar was invited to talk at the Medford Library 50th Anniversary (USC Lancaster, Oct. 2025). *From Fandom to Creativity: Exploring Graphic Storytelling in STEAM*.
- **Patrick Lawrence** has an essay coming out, “It’s 2025,” in *Inks: The Journal of the Comics Studies Society*, vol. 9, no. 2, 2025, pp. 208-212. This is a short, scholarly editorial piece putting contemporary censorship in the context of historical examples from the early and the late twentieth century.
- **Andy Yingst** had another Cryptic puzzle published in the *Wall Street Journal* with Jess Shulman. You can find the puzzle here:
<https://www.wsj.com/articles/boxes-saturday-cryptic-puzzle-august-23-c9d5530f>

- **Logan Cocklin and McKenzie Lemhouse** have a poster accepted for presentation at the South Carolina Library Association’s annual conference in October.
- **Evan Nooe** was elected Director of the *Disney, Culture and Society Research Network*.

Evan has signed an advance contract with Oklahoma University Press for a co-edited volume with Dr. Jeff Washburn (UT Permian Basin) titled *More Than Lost Causes: Settler & Indigenous Memory in the American South*.

- **Erin Moon-Kelly Announces: The Musical Mastery of John Williams**

Saturday, October 11, 2025 | 4:00PM
 Palisades High School
 15221 York Road
 Charlotte, NC 28278

OVERVIEW

Join the Charlotte Concert Band for an unforgettable afternoon celebrating the iconic soundscapes of one of the greatest film composers of our time. This powerful program showcases the emotional depth, heroic themes, and cinematic brilliance that define the legendary career of John Williams. From stirring fanfares to poignant melodies, experience the music that has shaped generations and stirred imaginations around the globe. Let the band transport you on a journey of masterful storytelling through the transcendent music of John Williams.

Program

- CURNOW (arr.): Liberty Fanfare
- BOCOOK (arr.): Lincoln
- LAVENDER (arr.): Jurassic Park Soundtrack Highlights
- LAVENDER (arr.): Hymn to the Fallen
- CURNOW (arr.): Olympic Fanfare and Theme
- CUSTER (arr.): Theme from Schindler’s List
- BOCOOK (arr.): Young Person’s Guide to John Williams
- BOCOOK (arr.): Symphonic Suite from Stars Wars: The Force Awakens

Ticket Pricing

- AT THE DOOR: \$15.00
- IN ADVANCE ONLINE (CLICK HERE FOR LINK)
- General Admission: \$14.00
- Seniors (ages 65+): \$12.00
- Students (18 years of age and younger): \$5.00
- Ages 5 and younger admitted free

- **Erin's** concert with the Lancaster County Council for the Arts, the Stardust Swing Band, and Faith Presbyterian Church (Indian Land) raised \$1,200 in donations. The concert was titled, "Jazz, Jam, and Jive."



UNIVERSITY OF
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LANCASTER

A Palmetto College Campus

David Roberts, Ph.D.
 Interim Associate Dean for Academic & Student Affairs

CALENDAR & FINAL EXAM SCHEDULE
SUMMER 2026

3-Week Sessions – 4A, 4B, 4C

Time Blocks	Classes Meet Monday - Friday (5 days per week)								
	8:00am – 10:30am 10:45am – 1:15pm 1:30pm – 4:00pm 4:15pm - 6:45pm								
	Summer 4A			Summer 4B			Summer 4C		
Class Days	5-11	5-18	5-26	6-02	6-09	6-16	6-23	6-30	7-08
	5-12	5-19	5-27	6-03	6-10	6-17	6-24	7-01	7-09
	5-13	5-20	5-28	6-04	6-11	6-18	6-25	7-02	7-10
	5-14	5-21	5-29	6-05	6-12	6-19	6-26	7-06	7-13
	5-15	5-22		6-08	6-15		6-29	7-07	
Final Exams	Monday, June 1			Monday, June 22			Tuesday, July 14		
Grades Due	Tuesday, June 2 by 12:00 PM			Tuesday, June 23 by 12:00 PM			Wednesday, July 15 by 12:00 PM		

Summer 4A, 4B, 4C:
2.5hrs. - 2100 minutes

6- Week Session I – May 11 – June 18

- *No classes Monday, May 25*
- *Exams June 19 and 20*

Days	Times
MTWR	8:30 - 10:10 a.m.
MTWR	10:30 a.m. - 12:10 p.m.
MTWR	12:30 - 2:10 p.m.
MTWR	2:30 - 4:10 p.m.
MTWR	4:30 - 6:10 p.m.
MTWR	6:30 - 8:10 p.m.

6-Week Session II – June 22 – July 30

- *No classes Friday, July 3*
- *Exams July 31 and August 1*

Days	Times
MTWR	8:30 - 10:10 a.m.
MTWR	10:30 a.m. - 12:10 p.m.
MTWR	12:30 - 2:10 p.m.
MTWR	2:30 - 4:10 p.m.
MTWR	4:30 - 6:10 p.m.
MTWR	6:30 - 8:10 p.m.

9-Week Session: June 1 – July 28

- *No classes Friday, July 3*
- *Exams July 31 and August 1*

Days	Times
MTWR	8:30 - 9:35 a.m.
MTWR	9:55 - 11:00 a.m.
MTWR	11:20 a.m. - 12:25 p.m.
MTWR	12:45 - 1:50 p.m.
MTWR	2:10 - 3:15 p.m.
MTWR	3:35 - 4:40 p.m.
MTWR	5:00 - 6:05 p.m.
MTWR	6:25 - 7:30 p.m.

Report to the USC Lancaster Faculty Organization

Academic Success Center

Pat Lawrence, Director

Announcements

- The ASC will begin dedicated exam prep sessions for NURS 216 in October. These events are coordinated with faculty and reflect newly updated course content.
- The ASC will be closed on Thursday October 9th for fall break.

Recent and Upcoming Events Overview

In September, the ASC hosted the library's two **fandom talks**. Dr. Evan Nooe presented his research on Disney Studies on 9/17, and Dr. Dana Lawrence presented her research on literary tourism on 9/30. These talks are coordinated by library faculty, but we are pleased to host them in the ASC Studio. We will also host future talks on 10/14, 10/28, and 11/11.

We held two **new supplemental instructional sessions** for students in Nursing 312 and 324 in September and anticipate having three in October. This program, provides important support for difficult and intensive upper division courses in the nursing program, filling a gap in local student success services compared to the Columbia campus. Nine students attended the first session on 9/5, and eight attended the second on 9/26/25.

For the first time in September, the ASC was able to hold **two events simultaneously** thanks to our newly refurbished and furnished room, ML 221 (name TBD). On Tuesday, Sept. 20th, we hosted Dr. Lawrence's fandom talk at the same time as our regularly scheduled Math Lab service. Having expanded facilities will ensure we can continue to hold ongoing tutoring-oriented studio services while also offering enrichment activities.

Summary of Tutoring Data

Year-to-year trends: In September, we served 63 students through 106 sessions, representing strong support for the USCL student body. However, lower-than-usual demand for Math 111/111i, a sharp decline in demand for BIOL 243, and a reduction in appointment availability created challenges through the second half of the month. This resulted in somewhat lower totals compared to previous years. We are working to drive demand with promotion and outreach and look to bounce back in October.

Session distribution trends: Distribution of services was atypical in September. Studio services saw higher-than-average attendance, and studio services were a higher proportion of overall use. We are also pleased that athlete and dual-enrollment visits climbed substantially. Course distributions are also atypical, with a substantial tilt toward upper-division and away from lower-division courses in Math and very little demand for BIOL 243, which is usually a big driver of student visits.

(See charts below for data breakdown.)

Contact Information

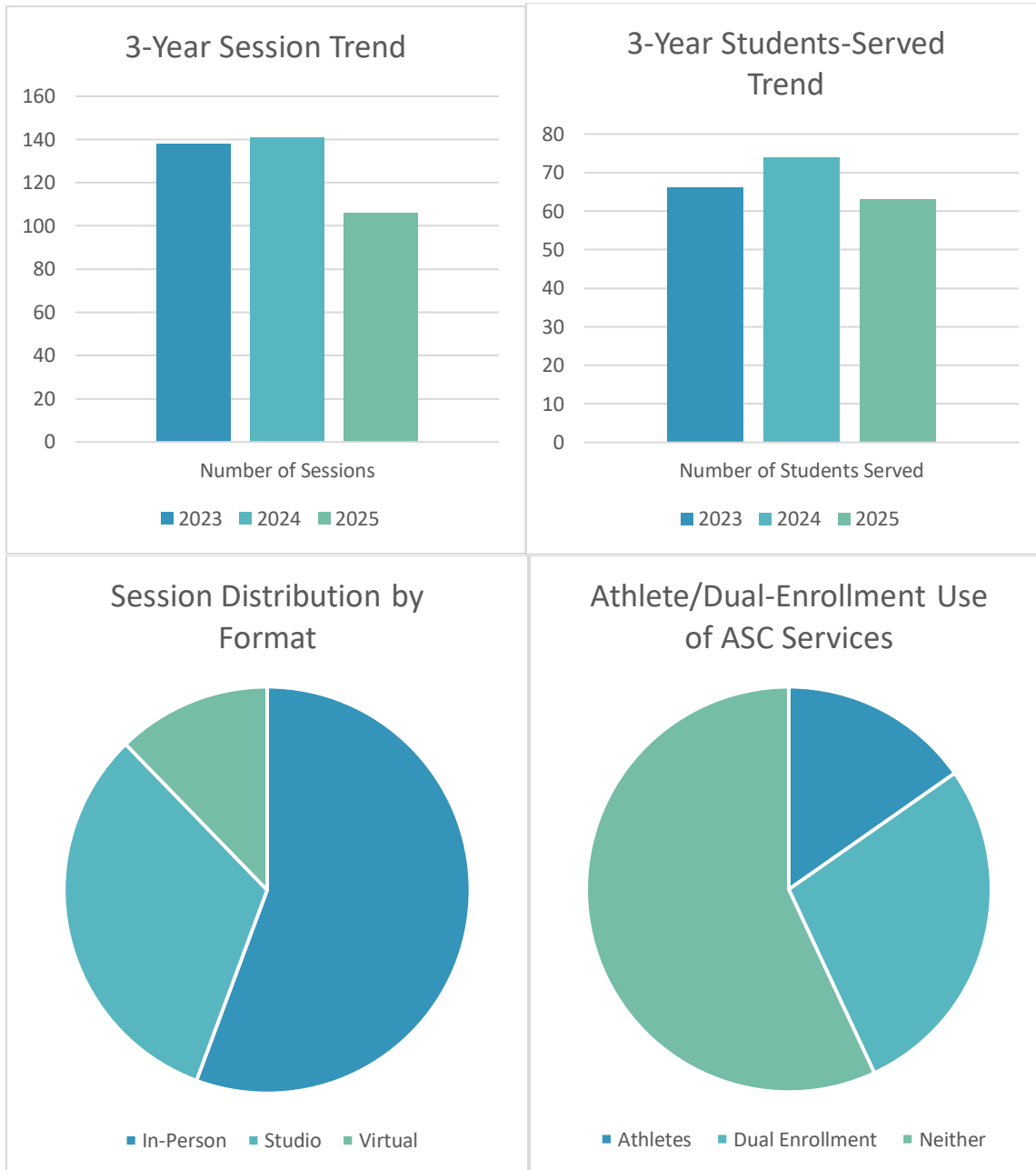
Phone: 803-313-7113

Web: sc.ed/lancaster/asc

Patrick Lawrence, Director: pslawren@mailbox.sc.edu

Elaine Connor, Academic Success Coordinator: etconnor@mailbox.sc.edu

Appendix: September Tutoring Data



¹ Note that the student-athlete and dual-enrollment data is only collected for conventional tutoring appointments, not for studio services. For this reason, the total number of sessions listed here excludes studio numbers.

FROM: Tracey Mobley Chavous, PHR -Director of Human Resources

MEETING: Faculty Organization Meeting – October 3, 2025

DATE: October 1, 2025

ATTACHMENTS: zero (0)

INFORMATION ITEMS:

1) Open Enrollment

Open Enrollment for 2026 benefits begins October 1, 2025, and ends on October 31, 2025. Any changes you make during Open Enrollment take effect January 1, 2026. Life insurance changes are effective January 1, 2026, or when MetLife approves coverage, whichever is later.

If you are satisfied with your current coverage, no action is required. Your current insurance coverage will continue in 2026.

However, you must re-enroll in Medical Spending, Limited-use Medical Spending, and Dependent Care Spending accounts each year.

Changes Allowed During 2025 Open Enrollment

- Enroll in, change, or cancel **health** coverage for yourself and/or eligible dependents.
- Enroll in, change, or cancel **dental** coverage for yourself and/or eligible dependents.
(Changes to existing dental coverage can be made during open enrollment only in odd-numbered years. If you do not make changes this year, your next opportunity to make a change will be October 2027.)
- Enroll in or cancel the **State Vision Plan** for yourself and/or your eligible dependents.
- Enroll in or increase **Optional Life Insurance** coverage (up to \$50,000 without medical evidence; more than \$50,000 requires medical evidence).
- Enroll in or increase **Dependent Life-Spouse** coverage (medical evidence required).
- Decrease or cancel Optional Life and Dependent Life-Spouse Insurance Coverage.
- Enroll in or cancel **Dependent Life-Child** Insurance coverage.
- Apply for **Supplementary Long-Term Disability (SLTD)** coverage (medical evidence required).
- Change your Supplementary Long-Term Disability (SLTD) waiting period (180 to 90 days with medical evidence, or 90 to 180 days without medical evidence).
- Cancel your Supplementary Long-Term Disability (SLTD) coverage.
- Enroll in or drop the **Pretax Group Insurance Premium** feature.
- Enroll in or re-enroll in **flexible spending accounts (FSAs)** (Medical Spending Account, Limited-use Medical Spending Account, or a Dependent Care Spending Account). You can carry over up to \$660 of unused Medical Spending Account and Limited-use Medical Spending Account funds into the next plan year.

- Enroll in, change, or stop contributions for a **Health Savings Account (HSA)**. (available only to Savings Plan members).

Open Enrollment Resources

- **2026 Insurance Summary:**
https://www.peba.sc.gov/sites/default/files/2026_insurance_summary.pdf
- **PEBA Open Enrollment webpage:** <https://www.peba.sc.gov/oe>.
- **MyBenefits website** (for making enrollment changes): <https://mybenefits.sc.gov/>

2) New Pharmacy Benefits Manager Effective January 1, 2026

The South Carolina Public Employee Benefit Authority (PEBA) has announced that **CVS Caremark will replace Express Scripts as the pharmacy benefits manager for the State Health Plan, effective January 1, 2026.**

To ensure a smooth transition:

- **New prescription benefits ID cards** will be mailed to all subscribers, including Medicare-eligible members, prior to December 31, 2025.
- Once received, please present your new ID card at your network pharmacy to continue filling prescriptions without interruption.

For more details about the transition, please visit PEBA's dedicated webpage:
<https://www.peba.sc.gov/pbm>

3) USCL Employee YMCA Membership Process

USCL employees receive a complimentary membership to the Gregory Family YMCA.

Dr. Courtney Catledge and Troy Love, District Branch Director, Gregory Family YMCA & Marion Boan YMCA, developed a new enrollment process for both new memberships and renewals for employees.

Employee memberships expire on December 31 and July 31 each year. Enrollment forms will be distributed to new hires and emailed to current employees prior to renewal periods. Completed forms must be submitted in person at the Gregory Family YMCA membership office.

Employees who have not yet enrolled and wish to do so before January are encouraged to contact me and request the enrollment forms.

Please note: This enrollment process is exclusively for current employees and should not be shared outside the University.

4) Flu Vaccine Clinic – October 8, 2025

USCL has partnered with MUSC Health to provide a Flu Vaccine Clinic for all USC Lancaster employees and students. Dependents of USC Lancaster employees are also welcome to attend.

Date & Time: Wednesday October 8, 2025, from 10:00am – 1:00pm

Location: The Hubb (Hubbard Hall Room 214).

Format: No appointment required – drop in anytime during the scheduled hours.

What to Bring:

- Insurance card for billing purposes (employees, dependents, and students)
- \$35.00 if uninsured
- Complete Vaccine Consent Form, which was emailed to all employees and is available online https://sc.edu/about/system_and_campuses/lancaster/internal/current_students/campus_health/

5) Employee Assistance Program (EAP)

Please remember that the Employee Assistance Program (EAP) is a confidential resource provided by the University to support employees and members of their immediate household through times of need.

Our EAP vendor, McLaughlin Young Group (MyGroup), provides access to the following services: Counseling, Online Services, Legal and Financial Assistance, Savings Center, and Online Seminars.

Except for fees associated with the purchase of legal documents, EAP is free to university faculty, staff, and their immediate household members.

Employees and their dependents have access to counselors 24 hours a day 365 days a year by calling 1-800-633-3353 or 704-529-1428. More resources may be found on the vendor website www.mygroup.com using the username “USC” and password “guest.” You may also download the MYgroup app which is available at the Apple App Store and Google Play Store.

For more details about our Employee Assistance Program, please visit this website https://sc.edu/about/offices_and_divisions/human_resources/benefits/wellbeing-and-support/eap/

6) Campus Closure – Holiday Schedule

Our campus will observe the following closures:

- Thanksgiving Holiday:
Thursday, November 27, and Friday, November 28, 2025.

Operations will resume Monday, December 1, 2025.

- Christmas and December Holiday:
Wednesday, December 24 through Wednesday, December 31, 2025.

- New Year's Day:
Thursday, January 1, 2026.

Operations will resume Friday, January 2, 2026.

Time and Absence Reporting

- Faculty and FTE Staff should not submit any entries related to these holidays.
- Student and temporary employees should only record hours in the Time and Absence System if they are scheduled and work on the listed dates.

USC Lancaster Faculty Organization

Campus Technology Update

October 3, 2025

Highlights

- **Telephone Server Upgrade:** After an unexpected delay, USC Lancaster is tentatively scheduled to upgrade the campus telephone system server hardware and software starting at 4:30 PM Thursday, October 23, 2025. Voicemail messages and voicemail box information will not migrate to the new version of the server software and voicemail boxes will need to be set up once the software upgrade is complete. Individual Voice Mailbox setup instructions will be sent out via email Friday, October 24, 2025. Those e-mails will also include reference information for the updated voicemail system. If you have messages stored in the system that need to be saved indefinitely, please let me know and I will facilitate getting those saved to a location where they can be accessed. Once the schedule is confirmed, additional information and reminder e-mails will be sent starting 2 weeks before the cut-over date.
- **Windows 10 End of Support:** End of support for the Windows 10 operating system is set for this Fall. Campus IT Staff is actively working to deploy Windows 11 installed computers to all faculty and staff with Windows 10. Faculty laptops that were issued for working remotely during the COVID Pandemic are Windows 10 and will need to be updated.
- **Lancaster iCarolina Lab:** The Lancaster iCarolina Lab announces AI-4-SC Fall 2025 sessions. Two sessions are offered, Tuesday, November 11, 2025 **AI for your Business will be** presented by Marcia Purday from 6:00 – 8:00 PM. and Wednesday, November 12, 2025 **Generative AI for Beginners will** be presented by Glen Caruso from 6:00 – 8:00 PM. The registration link will be posted on the USC Lancaster iCarolina lab webpage.
- **USC Lancaster IT Support Services:** Non-emergency IT requests should be submitted via e-mail to uscltech@mailbox.sc.edu or by visiting <https://scprod.service-now.com/sp> to submit a requests online using the ServiceNow support platform. Login using your credentials, then click **Service Catalog** at the top, then click on **College/School/Dept IT Services**. Under *From whom are you seeking assistance, search and select **USC Lancaster**, fill in the request form below and click the **Submit** button. Both methods create a trackable support ticket this is visible to all members of the campus IT Staff.

Respectfully Submitted,

Blake Faulkenberry
USC Lancaster, Director of Information Technology



**Mark Ammons, Principal Investigator
Lancaster Promise Neighborhood**

REPORT TO THE FACULTY ORGANIZATION Friday, October 3, 2025

PROJECT SUMMARY

Lancaster Promise Neighborhood (LPN) encompasses a continuum of programs from early childhood to career readiness, catering to residents within the attendance boundaries of **Clinton Elementary School, A. R. Rucker Middle School, and Lancaster High School.** Situated in the most economically disadvantaged area of Lancaster County, LPN aims to address the needs of this community comprehensively.

USC Lancaster is LPN's HEI partner. Through our partnership, USCL serves LPN participants through a series of strategic initiatives designed to make higher education more accessible to this population. Our shared goal is to ensure that more participants from the LPN attendance zone not only enroll in college but persist and graduate with the tools they need to thrive.

UPCOMING INITIATIVES

Fall 2025 ACT / SAT Test Preparation Workshops

- These upcoming workshops are scheduled for October 18, October 25, November 1, and November 8. Each session will be held from 12:00 Noon to 4:00 p.m. in the Bradley Arts & Sciences Building.
- Instruction will include an overview of content and test formats, practice drills, and test-taking strategies and tips.
- **Dr. Dwayne Brown** and **Dr. Pat Lawrence** will once again serve as lead facilitators.
- A copy of the flyer with the QR code is below.

ACT/SAT Test Preparation Workshops

Register today!



Workshop dates:

October 18 and 25

November 1 and 8

Note: For full program experience students must attend all four sessions.

12:00 PM - 4:00 PM

BRADLEY BUILDING AT USC LANCASTER

Content includes:

- Overview of test formats and content
- Test-taking strategies and tips
- Practice Drills

**Snacks and
lunch included!**

For more information, contact
Dwayne Brown at 803-313-7037
or dwayneb@mailbox.sc.edu



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South Carolina
LANCASTER



USCL Pathways to Possibilities

- The Pathways to Possibilities initiative is being modeled after the University of South Carolina's "University of Possibilities," and seeks to strengthen Lancaster through boosting economic potential and education for underrepresented students residing in LPN's service area. Our purpose is to promote higher education as an accessible option and provide support for those interested in a USC education to ensure they not only know how to prepare, but graduates prepared for well-paying jobs in their chosen fields. Educational activities, engaging interactions, as well as helpful information and resources will be provided for each participant.
- We met with **Principal Arthur Bridges** last month and were targeting LPN participants in the 8th grade at **A. R. Rucker Middle School** for a campus-wide event on Friday, November 14.
- Due to unavailability of campus facilities on that date and other scheduling conflicts with A. R. Rucker, we are planning to reschedule this initiative for a Friday in late January or sometime in February 2026. This will be part of USCL's 2026 agreement with LPN. More details will be forthcoming.
- **Matt Williamson** is serving as lead facilitator. Either he or I will be reaching out to many of you to assist with this initiative.

Medford Library Faculty Meeting Report

October 3, 2025

SERVICE STATISTICS AND PROGRAMS FOR SEPTEMBER 2025

- 3271 unique visits
- 1604 LibGuide views
- 158 Study and Lounge Area Reservations
- 10 Conference Room uses
- 10 Computer Lab uses
- 7 Community computer uses
- 4 Instruction Classes
- 4 Book a Librarian

CIRCULATION STATISTICS FOR SEPTEMBER 2025

- 126 General collection items
- 17 AV collection items
- 7 Reserve collection items
- 2 Graphic Novel items
- 8 Juvenile collection items
- 4 New Book collection items
- 6 Oversize collection items
- 6 On Display items
- 48 Special Collection items

SEPTEMBER ACTIVITIES

- Hosted the first two Fandom Talks with Dr. Nooe and Dr. D. Lawrence. Thank you to everyone who was able to attend.
- Started a trial for a potential new database – Digital Theatre+. Trial will run until the end of October.

UPCOMING EVENTS

- Banned Books Week
 - Banned Books Petting Zoo – October 6, 12:15 – 1:00 pm
 - Bookworm Social Read-In – October 7, 12:15 – 1:00 pm
 - Read Freely! DIY – October 6-8
- Fandom Talk with Dr. N. Lawrence – October 14, 12:15 – 1:00 pm
- Fandom Talk with Dr. Aghasafari – October 28, 12:15 – 1:00 pm

GENERAL AND ADMINISTRATIVE ACTIVITIES

- Medford Library's Library of Things items are available for checkout to faculty, staff, and students.
- Instruction classes are available in person and virtually. [Request a library instruction class](#) today.
- [Book a Librarian](#) is available for you and your students.

PUBLISHED? LET US KNOW SO WE CAN BUY YOUR BOOK!

- [Request we purchase materials.](#)

HELPFUL LINKS

- Place materials on [Reserve](#)
- Reserve the [library computer lab](#)
- Reserve the [library conference room](#)
- Document the impact of your scholarly activities with these [Tools for Tracking Tenure & Promotion](#).
- Check out [resources for faculty and staff](#).

Student Success and Retention

USCL Faculty Organization Report

October 3, 2025

STUDENT SUCCESS AND RETENTION AREAS

- Academic Success Center (*report provided by Pat Lawrence, Director of ASC*)
- Academic Advising
- Counseling Services
- Student Disability Resource Center
- Graduation with Leadership Distinction (GLD)
- Student-Athlete Success Initiatives
- Study Travel

IN THIS REPORT

- Academic Advising
 - Student Disability Resource Center (SDRC)
 - Student-Athlete Success Programming
 - Counseling Services
-

ACADEMIC ADVISING

Spring registration will begin on October 13th. We emailed students the name of their academic advisor and were encouraged to make an appointment with them.

Please help us to encourage students to meet with their academic advisor. Below is a blurb to share with your classes.

Spring class registration begins on October 13th. Students must meet with an academic advisor to register for classes. To find your advisor, sign into my.sc.edu, student tab, student profile, click on your advisor's name under the "Advisors" section to see their email. Send them an email to schedule an advising appointment. For questions, email USCLADVS@mailbox.sc.edu or call 803-313-7007.

Please note this is for traditional students only. For information about Dual Enrollment advising, go to [Dual Enrollment - USC Lancaster | University of South Carolina](#). Please refer non-degree seeking students to the Office of Admissions.

STUDENT DISABILITY RESOURCE CENTER

Disability Awareness Week

- October 20-22, 2025
- Focus this year will be on adaptive sports

STUDENT-ATHLETE SUCCESS PROGRAMMING

On September 22nd, Counseling Services and Athletics held a workshop with Ms. NeTarshia Williams, a licensed master social worker and former Division I Track student-athlete, in Bradley Building with over 50 student-athletes in attendance. Topics discussed were the following:

- Balancing the Demands: Stressors of Juggling School, Training and Competition
- Managing Performance Pressure and Expectations
- Impact of Injuries and Physical Setbacks
- Mental Health Stigma Surrounding Athletes

Student-Athletes continue to be encouraged to work with their professors regarding any missed classes due to games. Reminder, student-athletes should not be missing any classes due to practice.

If any faculty/staff member has any questions/concerns regarding a student-athlete, please do not hesitate to contact Natalie Calhoun, ncalhoun2@sc.edu

**Information provided by Natalie Calhoun, Student-Athlete Success Coordinator*

COUNSELING

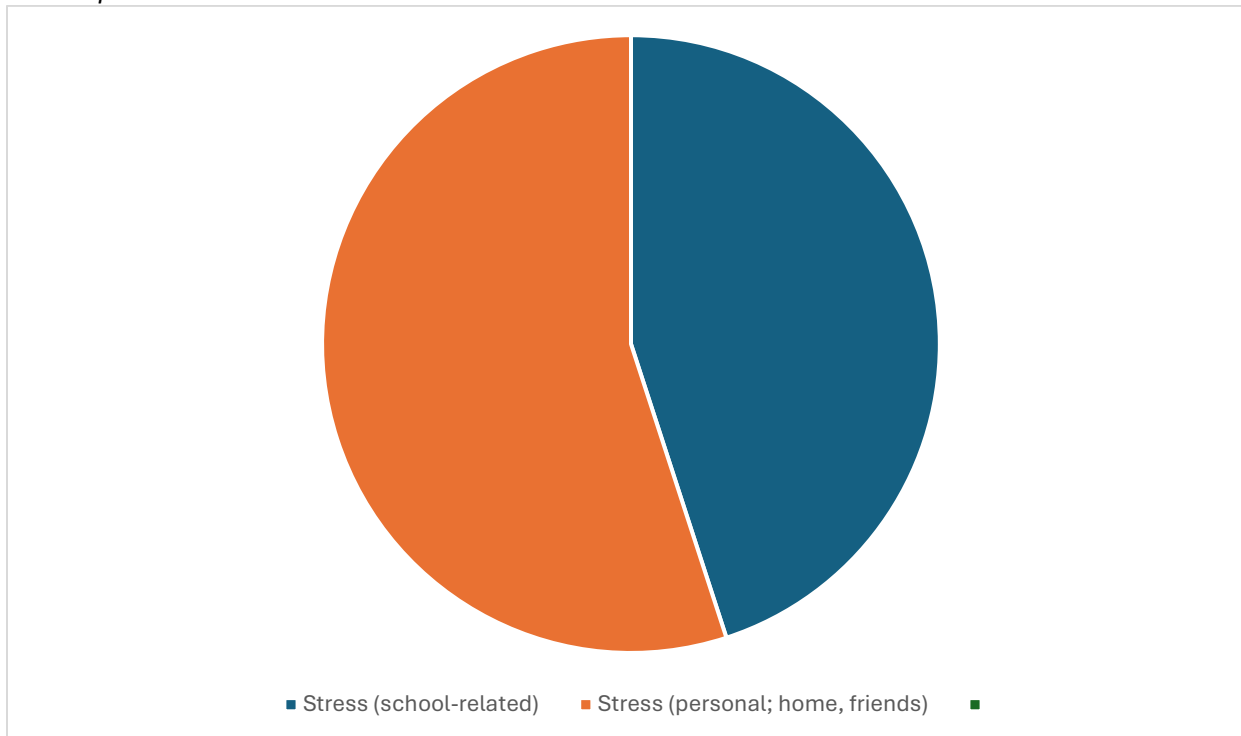
Monthly Status Report (September 2025)

Appointments

In-person: 11

Tele-health: 9

**no drop-ins*



**Students requesting individual counseling sessions desired to address both school and personal stress concerns.*

The start of Fall semester began with the USCL Mental Health and Wellness club hosting several events, such as Suicide Prevention Day, Transitioning from High School to College and De-Stress Game Day to focus on stress and anxiety management as well as provide student support. Along with these events, group therapy sessions for Nursing students as well as International students were offered.

Fall Upcoming Events:

All events from 12-1pm

October 14th: Coping with Stress: the Good, the Bad, and the Ugly

November 18th: Protecting my Peace (Social media, Screen time, and Social circles)

Group Therapy Sessions:

Students looking for community? And to talk about some of the stressors they are experiencing? JOIN US!

Nursing: October 13th, 12 - 1 pm

Pre-Nursing: October 16th, 12 - 1pm

International Students: October 23rd, November 13th 12 - 1 pm



Matt Williamson
Director and Principal Investigator
Office of Federal TRiO Programs

REPORT TO THE FACULTY ORGANIZATION

Friday, October 3, 2025

OPPORTUNITY SCHOLARS PROGRAM

Funding Status

- After extended delays at the federal level, we received our long-awaited Grant Award Notification (GAN) for a new five-year grant **totaling over \$1.5 million** on September 26. This grant award will be through the period ending August 31, 2030.
- A huge thank you to the members who served on the Proposal Development Committee back in 2024 for making this award possible: **Dr. Shemsi Alhaddad; Mark Ammons; Dr. Courtney Catledge; Ken Cole; Shana Dry; Dr. Pat Lawrence; Dr. Todd Lekan; McKenzie Lemhouse; Dr. Kim Richardson; Lauren Thomas; and Matt Williamson.** We also greatly appreciate **Dr. Maggie Aziz** (USC Union), **Amy Hood, Dr. Tamika Lewis, Asheley Schreyer, Aubrey Stewart, and Chuck Wright** (USC Sumter) for their invaluable contributions to this process.

Enrollment Update

- We ended our FY25 project year on September 30, having served **166** total students from low-income and first-generation (LIFG) backgrounds, as well as students with disabilities. We are required to serve a minimum of 165 eligible students each year.
- We were able to successfully recruit and serve an **additional 27** eligible students during the final month of the grant cycle. Special thanks to **CoSonja Allen** and **Andrea Campbell** for leading this incredibly successful recruitment effort.

OSP Superlatives

- We're so proud of the following OSP students who are serving as officers in the Student Government Association (SGA) for 2025-26: **Erika Vancampenhoudt** – President; **Alicey Yang** – Vice President; and **Peyton Wunderley** – Secretary.
- The three of them are seen here with sophomore standout **Olan Jones** (Treasurer) at their "Meet the SGA" event on September 16.



Careers in Science (CIS) Lecture Series

- The first CIS Lecture of the Fall 2025 semester was held on September 23. **Dr. Johnny Dukes** presented “Not Just for Your Eyes Only” on his professional journey and career opportunities in the field of optometry (see below). A total of **56** students attended the presentation.



- Upcoming CIS Lectures will be in TRiO on October 14, October 29, and November 19.

Constitution Day Quiz Challenge

- Our annual Constitution Day Quiz Challenge was held on September 17. **127** total students participated in this year's event.
- Quiz winners are listed below.
 - First Place: **Greysen Lowery** – scored a perfect 20 out of 20
 - Second Place: **Chuck Prasath**
 - Third Place: **Constanza Fuentealba** and **Veronique Ruiz Echevarría** (tie)
 - Fourth Place: **Ann Kaela Rugina**, **Alicey Yang**, and **Elizabeth Young** (tie)

Disability Awareness Week

- We will host the Disability Awareness Week practice session with **Amy Hood** and **Dr. Bettie Johnson** on Monday, October 13.
- Disability Awareness Week activities will be held in TRiO on October 20-22.

Other Upcoming Activities and Events

- October 5-11: **Freedom to Read Celebration** with Medford Library
- October 7: **Careers in Business Seminar** with **Steve Sherrill**, Lancaster County Natural Gas Authority | 12:20 p.m. | Bradley 121
- October 9: **SC Works Workshop** | 10:00 a.m. – 12:00 Noon | Indian Land Campus
- October 9: **College Goal SC** | 2:00 – 7:00 p.m. | TRiO Learning Resource Center
- October 10: **SC Works Job Fair** | 10:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m. | Indian Land Campus
- October 14: **Fandom Talks** with **Dr. Nick Lawrence** | 12:15 p.m. | ASC Studio
- October 15: **Lunch with Chancellor Wilson** | 12:00 Noon | Arnold Special Events Room
- October 16: **Careers in Business Seminar** with **John McCain**, Lancaster County Chamber of Commerce | 12:20 p.m. | Bradley 121
- October 23: **Junior Scholars Day**
- October 27: **National Society of Leadership and Success** Presentation | 12:15 p.m. | TRiO LRC
- October 28: **Fandom Talks** with **Dr. Sahar Aghasafari** | 12:15 p.m. | ASC Studio
- November 4: **“What Employers Are Looking For” HR Panel** | 12:15 p.m. | Bradley 121
- November 11: **Fandom Talks** with **Dr. Connor Austell** | 12:15 p.m. | ASC Studio
- November 18: **SGA Discussions with Deans** | 12:15 p.m. | Founders 104

UPWARD BOUND

Enrollment Update

- We are in the fourth year of our current grant cycle. The reporting period for the current year will close on May 31, 2026. At present, we are officially serving 55 participants from grades 9-12 at Andrew Jackson, Buford, and Lancaster High Schools. We are required to serve a minimum of 62 participants each year.

Target School Updates

- **Mark Ammons** and **Matt Williamson** had a very productive meeting with **Principal Shuntay Miller** and school counselors **Haylea Bowers, Kelsie Threatt, and LaTasha Thompson** at Andrew Jackson High School on September 11.
- We also had a successful meeting with **Interim Principal Mari McTamney** and **Lead School Counselor Jaclyn Rose** at Buford High School on September 18.
- Recruitment of qualifying 9th and 10th graders, sessions for existing participants, and upcoming events were discussed. Both schools are excited to continue their partnership with USCL and are seeking additional ways to further cooperate with us as we move forward.

College Spirit Week at South Middle School

- Thank you to **Mark Ammons** for representing us in our continuing recruitment efforts targeted at 8th graders. He participated in College Spirit Week at South Middle School on September 12.

College Goal South Carolina

- College Goal SC is a statewide initiative sponsored through the **South Carolina Commission on Higher Education (SCCHE)** as an opportunity for both college and high school students and their parents / guardians to receive free assistance while completing and submitting the FAFSA. This is a partnership which extends through the **South Carolina Association of Student Financial Aid Administrators (SCASFAA)**, the **SC Technical College System**, the **South Carolina TRiO Association (SC TRiO)**, and the **South Carolina Higher Education Tuition Grants Commission**.
- As noted above, we will be hosting this year's event in the TRiO LRC on Thursday, October 9 from 2:00 to 7:00 p.m.
- All senior participants and their parents will be encouraged to attend.

Fall 2025 Open House

- Juniors and seniors are being asked to register for USCL's Fall 2025 Open House, which will be held on Saturday, October 18.

ACT / SAT Test Preparation Workshops

- Senior participants will be strongly encouraged to register for these test prep sessions – facilitated by **Dr. Dwayne Brown** and **Dr. Pat Lawrence** via USCL's partnership with **Lancaster Promise Neighborhood** – on October 18, October 25, November 1, and November 8.

STUDENT CLUBS AND ORGANIZATIONS

D.E.F.I.N.E.

- D.E.F.I.N.E. exists to provide academic support, mentoring, and other higher educational opportunities for those who support female students enrolled at USCL. Its goal is to enhance academic achievement, improve retention, and promote unity for those working towards their college degree.

- On September 25, the students pictured below were elected as officers for 2025-26: **Geneva Multanen** – President; **Zoe Wells** – Vice President; **Meredith Faircloth** – Secretary; and **Jessica France** – Assistant Secretary.



G.E.N.T.S.

- The purpose of this organization to provide academic support, mentoring, and other higher educational opportunities for those who support male students enrolled here at USCL. The group’s goal is to enhance academic achievement, improve retention, and promote unity for those pursuing their college degree.
- G.E.N.T.S. held its first two meetings of the semester on September 10 and 30.
- Officers elected for 2025-26 were: **Greysen Lowery** – President; **Chris Enireb** – Vice President; **Giovanny Torres Jimenez** – Secretary; and **Rusean Gaither** – Assistant Secretary.
- The group is working on plans for an upcoming fundraiser as well as a potential visit to the **Lancaster Children’s Home**.

USCL Research Club

- We were thrilled to host the Research Club’s first meeting on September 9. **Dr. Janet Obi** – sister of our own **Dr. Bettie Johnson** – presented “Why Musicology Matters: Listening to Dutillex” to a packed house (see below). A total of **97** students were in attendance.



- We are also scheduled to host “Structuring Science Through Story: Visual and Animated Narratives of Protein Folding in Undergraduate STEAM Research” on October 27 and “Epistemic Trespassing: The Importance of Intellectual Modesty in an Age of Expertise” with **Dr. Peter Seipel** on November 11.

USCL Rotaract Club

- Rotaract is a worldwide service organization affiliated with Rotary International and is open to all USCL students who are interested in community service and professional development.
- The USCL Rotaract Club held its initial meeting of the semester on September 16.
- The following students were elected as officers for 2025-26: **Jadyn Jamison** – President; **Maria Gonzalez** – Vice President; **Mariel Mata-Hernandez** – Secretary; and **Emily Alcaraz** – Treasurer.

COMMUNITY OUTREACH AND SERVICE OPPORTUNITIES

Cooks for Christ Benefit for Scott Meadows

- Scott Meadows is a former OSP student who also worked for the Office of the Dean. He was diagnosed with incurable throat cancer last year. His grandmothers are involved in Cooks for Christ, a Florence-based ministry which hosts statewide benefits to raise essential funds to cover the high costs of medical care for area residents struggling with illnesses and injuries. Their September 2025 benefit was dedicated to the **Scott Meadows Medical Fund**.
- On September 11, several USCL representatives (pictured below) assisted with this benefit at First Baptist Church in Lancaster – serving chicken bog plates to local companies, individuals, or organizations who purchased them.



- An amazing total of 5,400 plates were sold across South Carolina on that date. That equals \$54,000.00 raised at \$10.00 a plate.
- Scott said of the benefit, “This will truly help in the future for my medical expenses, and I will never have enough words to say thank you for your part in this event.”
- We were so pleased to give back to one of our own.

USCL Cares Back-to-School Campaign

- This year’s campaign concluded on September 19 and was a huge success!
- Through this initiative, we collected school supplies for children at **A. R. Rucker Middle School, Brooklyn Springs Elementary School, Clinton Elementary School, and Southside Early Childhood Center.**
- Deliveries will be made to these schools sometime early this month.

2025 Bed Race Fundraiser for United Way of Lancaster County

- Kudos to **Mark Ammons** and **Jeff Rammage** for spearheading this year’s USCL team, which will be competing in the Fun Prix Division at this year’s Bed Race on Saturday, October 4.
- This year’s theme is “Broadway Blitz,” and with the help of our SGA, USCL will be competing as the Broadway musical *Hamilton* – complete with themed bed decorations and costumes.
- USCL is the defending champion in the Fun Prix Division and won the People’s Choice Award last year for most funds raised as well as the award for Best Costume and Design. This year’s event promises to be a fun and spirited opportunity to engage with the community and represent our campus.

- All proceeds from the Bed Race go to the United Way of Lancaster County, an organization whose mission is to improve lives by bringing citizens and resources together to identify and respond to human service needs in Lancaster County.

The 19th Annual United Way of Lancaster





UNITED WAY
Lancaster County, Inc.

Saturday • October 4, 2025
 700 Block of Main Street • Lancaster, SC
 Check-in is across from Founders Federal Credit Union

Team check in
2:00 PM

Parade of Beds
3:00 PM

Races start after
Parade of Beds

BROADWAY

BLITZ

Bring out your best Broadway themed costumes and bed decorations for a chance to win great prizes!

FAMILY FUN FOR EVERYONE

- KID ZONE with inflatables
- Kids Events between races
- Local Vendors

REGISTRATION



3 Divisions Available

Youth - Competitive 15-18 years old

Adult - Competitive 18+ years old

Fun Prix All ages welcome

INFORMATION



YOU MUST HAVE A SIGNED WAIVER TO RUN THE RACE!

USCL Cares Annual Food Drive

- This year's Annual Food Drive will commence in mid-October. Canned and dry goods may be brought to the TRiO LRC. More details will be forthcoming.
- Faculty, staff, and students are encouraged to donate to this worthy cause.
- All donations will go to benefit the **Lancaster Area Coalition for the Homeless (LACH)** and the **USCL Student Food Pantry**.

LEGISLATIVE UPDATES

Notes Concerning the Government Shutdown

- Federal TRiO Programs are forward funded, so all our current operating funds are already secured. These funds for 2025-26 were included in the FY25 continuing resolution (CR) passed back in March 2025. In our most recent GANs, these funds are secured and committed to the University for the 2025-26 program year. Therefore, our Office of Federal TRiO Programs may continue operating as usual.
- Our G5 drawdown platform will continue to operate. Projects may continue to draw down funds as they usually do.
- Non-essential employees in the TRiO division of the Department of Education (ED) will be furloughed. It is recognized that the status of most federal government employees remains uncertain as the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) has advised federal agencies to develop plans to reduce their workforce if a shutdown were to occur permanently. However, recent reports indicate that most federal agencies intend to move forward with their typical shutdown plans for placing employees on furlough (as opposed to permanent layoffs). At a minimum, we should expect most ED staff to be furloughed during the government shutdown. That is, we won't be able to reach ED employees during the shutdown.

Supporting Federal TRiO Programs

- Members of Congress need to hear from you, their constituents, so they understand what is happening locally and its immediate, very real impact on the lives of the students we serve.
- Your advocacy for TRiO has and will continue to make a difference. If anyone is interested in learning how you may support bipartisan funding efforts to assist our TRiO grant projects at the USC Lancaster campus, please contact **Mark Ammons** at rmammons@email.sc.edu or **Matt Williamson** at mwilliam@mailbox.sc.edu.

Direct Financial Support

- Anyone interested in supporting TRiO initiatives here at USCL may contribute to our designated fund through the **Educational Foundation of the University of South Carolina Lancaster**. Financial donations may be made via the QR code on the slide listed below.
- Any amount is greatly appreciated.

SUPPORT USC LANCASTER'S OFFICE OF FEDERAL TRiO PROGRAMS



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TRiO

U S C L A N C A S T E R

#LancerNation

#TRiOWorks

**PCCFS Rights & Responsibilities Committee
Report to USCL Faculty Organization
October 3, 2025**

- The committee met on Friday, September 19, 2025.
- USCL Representatives: Claudia Heinemann-Priest, Dana Lawrence, Brittany Taylor-Driggers

The PCCFS Rights & Responsibilities committee has been asked to work on the following questions related to the faculty Tenure and Promotion and Instructor rank processes:

1. T&P File Length and Guidance

The length of T&P files is growing, with no clear limits in the current manual, making the review process increasingly challenging. Columbia's files, for comparison, are limited to 15 double-spaced pages.

The committee is considering whether to propose specific length requirements and to develop more standardized guidance for file preparation to ensure comparability and manageability for the T&P committee.

2. New Course Evaluation System (Explorance Blue)

The shift to the Explorance Blue course evaluation system presents a challenge for T&P committees due to anticipated changes in the quantitative and qualitative data provided.

The committee is discussing how candidates and T&P committees should handle this shift when preparing and evaluating files.

3. Evaluation System Questions

The R&R committee has been asked to propose two PC-specific questions for the Explorance Blue evaluations that will be included in the T&P evaluation.

Instructors may also choose two optional questions for surveying, but these are not part of the T&P evaluation.

4. Teaching Summary Clarifications for Tenure Files

There is significant variation in the quality and format of teaching summaries in tenure files, despite manual-dictated length limits which are not consistently followed.

The committee discussed standardizing the teaching summary format through official guidance and potentially offering a writing workshop for those who prepare these summaries.

5. Senior and Principal Instructor Definitions and Processes

The motion regarding new Instructor ranks from last year was not approved by the Provost, who requested revisions—specifically, the Provost’s concerns center on the following:

- reducing the time-in-rank for Senior Instructor promotion (to five years)
- establishing a new promotional tier (Principal Instructor/Lecturer)
- revising the promotion dossier requirements to focus on professional growth instead of mandatory annual reviews
- ensuring consistent appointment terms for professional-track faculty
- eliminating outdated "non-tenure track" terminology.

Many of these items come from recent changes put forth by Columbia Faculty Senate, of which the PCC R&R committee was unaware. The committee supports a three-level ranking system for Instructors (Senior and Principal Instructor ranks, where Principal Instructor is a rank at Columbia).

The committee plans to work with senate leadership on manual language. We need to confirm that administration on each campus agrees with and has funding for these positions and associated raises.

In addition to the charges coming from PCCFS Executive Committee, R&R discussed issues of Academic Freedom and Free Speech, which falls within the committee’s scope concerning “issues regarding faculty relations with administration and students” (PCCFM 96).

There is a lack of clarity regarding how current **Academic Freedom and Free Speech policies** are being upheld. The committee posed the following question:

“Will there be a forthcoming statement about Academic Freedom and Free Speech from the Palmetto College Administration. Specifically, we are interested in clarification about PC procedures for the defense of academic freedom and free speech.”

Thus far, there has been no response.

Faculty Welfare Committee Report – September 19, 2025

Dear Committee Members,

Here is the summary to present at your FO meetings:

- **Election of Officers**
 - Chair – Sahar Aghasafari
 - Vice Chair – Soumyadip Acharyya
 - Secretary – David Mitra
- **T&P Workshop**
 - The committee is planning the annual Tenure & Promotion Workshop.
 - Members are asked to solicit volunteers from their local FO meetings to serve as presenters (in teaching, scholarship, service, or third-year review) and send names to the Welfare Chair by **October 15**.
- **T&P Reviewer Training**
 - Potential trainers were identified, and the committee is considering including a breakout session for reviewers.
 - A template for Teaching Summaries was discussed; the consensus was to provide only general guidance.
- **Endowment Funds – Mitchell Fund Allocation**
 - The committee discussed how the funds should be distributed, with emphasis on maintaining equity across campuses.
 - The funds may be used for **faculty retention, supporting teaching awards, and providing support to students**.
 - An **ad hoc committee** will be formed to select scholarship and award recipients.
 - The committee also agreed that the process should be improved to ensure clarity and fairness moving forward.
- **Next Steps**
 - Finalize presenters for the T&P Workshop by the end of October.
 - Continue discussions on endowment fund distribution and the role of the Welfare Committee.

The meeting adjourned at 12:03 pm.

Academic Advisory Council Report to Faculty

October 1, 2025

Submitted by Nicholas Lawrence, Committee Chair

The committee has met twice: on Wednesday, Sept. 10 & Friday, Sept. 26

Completed Agenda Items:

- Worked with the Division Chairs and Academic Dean David Roberts to decide Wintermester offerings. These offerings are now in place through the Registrar's office.
- Advised Dean Roberts on forthcoming policy update concerning how many hours a student may take in a single Summer Session, and in the event we can reach faculty approval and also clearance from Administration on this question, to discuss what the protocol for putting a new policy in place would even look like;

The committee will meet again in November to address ongoing Agenda items. Faculty wishing to share ideas and/or concerns regarding either of the following items (or any other issue for which this committee seems the appropriate place to turn) are encouraged to reach out to your division representative:

- Discussing AI and brainstorming policy and resource ideas to help faculty to navigate the challenge posed by students' use of AI generative programs and tools in doing their coursework.
- Discussing ideas to help the effort to bring more students back to our campus.

Athletics Advisory Committee Report to Faculty

October 1, 2025

Submitted by Nicholas Lawrence, Committee Chair

The committee has met twice: on Friday, Sept. 12 & Thursday, Sept. 25

Items:

- In collaboration with our Educational Foundation, USCL administration remains in talks working to create more housing for the student athletes, as the number of these students currently outnumber the available residence slots affiliated with USCL.
- LARS has agreed to include school & university pickups and drop-offs as part of their service range.

Upcoming Events: USCL will hold two events in October, with the Committee working in Coordination with the Student Life Office. More specific information about each of these events will be forthcoming in the weeks ahead.

- **Thursday, October 16:** A pep rally on campus to honor the student athletes across the four teams, with a goal towards promoting attendance at the Women's Soccer game at noon on Saturday, Oct. 18th.
- **Halloween Weekend, Thursday Oct. 30 - Saturday, Nov. 1:** USCL Volleyball hosts the Region X Tournament at the Y. We are working to have a Halloween-themed event on campus that will promote attendance to the games.

Report of the Free Expression and Academic Freedom Committee To the USC Lancaster Faculty Organization

October 3rd, 2025

Committee members:

Kennedy Bumbrey
Logan Cocklin
Amy Gerald
Claudia Heinemann-Priest
Patrick Lawrence (chair)
Allan Pangburn
Mattherline Williamson

Background

Two recent incidents have caused concern over free expression and academic freedom among members of the USCL community.

First, a professor at Texas A&M University had a course canceled before it was complete after a student filmed a video of a classroom lecture on gender. The video went viral and was used by public figures in Texas to pressure the university for the professor's termination.¹ After initially appearing to defend the instructor's academic freedom to teach this material, the university did terminate her amid persistent pressure from state leaders. Two deans who had initially decided to forego any action against the professor were also removed from administrative roles. Subsequent to that, the system president also resigned.

Second, following the assassination of Charlie Kirk, there has been intense pressure from political figures and members of the public to punish individuals for responses to the murder on social media. The targeted responses include posts that could be perceived as celebrations of violence or callousness toward the victims of violence, but some individuals have been targeted for comments that are merely critical of Mr. Kirk's politics or his rhetoric. Reports indicate this has led to dozens of terminations of university employees across the nation.² These include several cases around the state of South Carolina, including both faculty and staff at Clemson University.³ In one notable case, an instructor at USC Union was relieved of teaching duties after posting criticism of a state representative who proposed renaming a road after Mr. Kirk. Similarly, a teacher and coach at Buford High School in Lancaster County was removed from duty pending an administrative investigation after significant public outrage at his posts condemning Mr. Kirk.⁴ In both cases the language used was vulgar, but the posts do not appear to condone violence. Additionally, while it is a misdemeanor in South Carolina to terminate someone's employment because of their political beliefs,⁵ the SC Attorney General has issued guidance indicating he does not think it proper to prosecute employers in these cases.⁶

¹ See [this story](#) from the Texas Tribune.

² See [this story](#) from NBC News.

³ See [this story](#) from the *Post and Courier*.

⁴ Subsequent [reporting](#) indicates this teacher has separated from the school district, but information is limited at the time of writing.

⁵ See [SC Code of Laws Section 16-17-560](#).

⁶ See Attorney General Wilson's [memo to Clemson University](#) on September 15th, 2025.

These actions have left members of the USCL community unsure of their ability to teach as their expertise and judgement direct them and uncertain how their private speech may affect their employment.

Assessment

Experts across the ideological spectrum generally agree that the free-speech environment in the U.S. today is unhealthy, with the above terminations representative of a trend toward restrictions on disfavored speech.⁷ This is an especially tenuous time for public-sector employees, particularly those affiliated with universities.⁸ It is unclear whether recent pressure from politicians, donors, activists, and members of the public will be short-lived or persistent, but in either case, recent events have demonstrated how vulnerable speech rights and job protections can be.

Faculty and staff should be aware that their political speech and advocacy may result in negative repercussions ranging from doxing and unwanted media attention through adverse employment actions up to and including termination. This applies even to speech that is nonviolent or that normally would be protected by the First Amendment. The SC Attorney General's guidance further suggests that the burden to remedy wrongful termination or the infringement of rights will fall to affected individuals.

Advice for Faculty and Staff

With respect to academic freedom: teaching material that may be controversial brings certain risks, and it is advisable to ensure that such work is undertaken thoughtfully. Faculty are in the best position to tackle controversy when squarely within their area of expertise, since expertise is a core component of academic freedom.⁹ It is a good idea to document the curricular justification for such material, including sharing it with students in advance. Faculty may want to consider the propriety of offering students alternative assignments. USCL's administration has indicated their support for academic freedom, but speaking in advance with the academic dean will help avoid potential issues and may help allay concerns.

With respect to free expression: faculty and staff should be aware that their online presence, including but not limited to social media, can be widely circulated in ways that strip it of context or distort its meaning. Strong use of restrictive privacy settings is encouraged, though this does not guarantee safety. As a committee, we regretfully acknowledge that in this climate some faculty and staff will opt to remain silent rather than exercising their civic rights and duties to comment on matters of public concern. Those without strong job protections may want to take special care.

For those who do want to engage in first-amendment activities, it is recommended that you do so in respectful and professional terms, emphasizing issues rather than individuals. Doing so is not a

⁷ For more on expert concern over the state of free speech in recent months, see this story from [Courthouse News Service](#), this commentary from the [Brookings Institute](#), or this [CBS News](#) story. Free speech organizations on both the right and left, including the [ACLU](#) and the [FIRE](#), have condemned the recent spate of firing and its effect on free speech.

⁸ For perspective on the state of free speech for higher-ed employees, see [this story](#) from *Inside Higher Ed*. Public institutions like USCL occupy a unique niche. Employees are bound to serve the interests of the state and reflect creditably on it, but the institution is an arm of the government and therefore bound by the First Amendment not to infringe employees' rights to comment on matters of public concern.

⁹ For a guide on the limits of academic freedom and its relationship to expertise and "extramural speech," see [this explanation](#) from the AAUP.

guarantee against unwanted attention but may make speech easier to defend while eliminating a pretext for adverse actions. It is also important to indicate that your views are yours alone and do not represent the institution.

Relevant Policies and Resources

Faculty and staff may want to consult relevant Human Resources policies to understand what protections they have or do not have, as well as grievance procedures that might apply. Such policies are generally governed by employee handbooks but HR 1.57 (on separations) and HR 1.39 (on disciplinary procedures) are also relevant.¹⁰ Individuals may want to know that states do have some leeway to restrict the speech of employees in the interest of maintaining efficient government operations, as outlined in *Pickering v. Board of Education*.¹¹

The university community's speech environment is also informed by two policies that were recently affirmed by the Board of Trustees. One is UNIV 6.00, which governs the conditions under which speech may be regulated on system campuses.¹² The other is the Chicago Principles, a statement outlining a commitment to diversity of viewpoints and toleration of speech even when its content or delivery is offensive.¹³

Finally, employees should know that there are resources available to them both before and after an incident occurs. Current events surrounding academic freedom and freedom of speech on campus are being monitored by national advocacy groups. Individuals may consider reaching out the AAUP, which provides resources to its members including representation in negotiations with employers and referrals to legal services.¹⁴ The ACLU and the FIRE both provide public-advocacy legal services for free speech issues.¹⁵

Next Steps

It is hoped that this tenuous free-speech environment will not last and that deeper principles of open debate and deliberation re-emerge. In the meantime, the FEAF Committee plans to continue monitoring and discussing this situation and considering further action.

The committee will also continue to defend the rights of faculty, staff, and students to engage with matters of public concern as they participate in political mobilizing and fundraising, public speaking and publishing, and membership in lobbying and advocacy organizations.

We also remind members of the campus community that we are a forum for expressing and deliberating over specific concerns on campus and encourage them to speak with committee members about free speech and academic freedom issues.

¹⁰ See the University's [Policies and Procedures Manual](#), the [PCC Faculty Handbook](#), [Employee Standards of Ethical Conduct](#), [HR 1.57](#), and [HR 1.39](#).

¹¹ [This explanation](#) from the US Congress can be useful in understanding the implications of *Pickering*.

¹² See policy UNIV 6.00 [here](#).

¹³ The Chicago Principles can be read [here](#).

¹⁴ The AAUP can be reached [here](#).

¹⁵ The ACLU can be reached [here](#), and the FIRE can be reached [here](#).