AGENCY NAME:	University of South Carolina Aiken		
AGENCY CODE:	H290	SECTION:	20B

Fiscal Year 2025-26
Agency Budget Plan

FORM A - BUDGET PLAN SUMMARY

OPERATING REQUESTS (FORM B1)	For FY 2025-26, my agency is (mark "X"):
	X Requesting General Fund Appropriations.
	☐ Requesting Federal/Other Authorization.
	☐ Not requesting any changes.

NON-RECURRING REQUESTS (FORM B2)	For FY 2025-26, my agency is (mark "X"):
	☐ Requesting Non-Recurring Appropriations.
	☐ Requesting Non-Recurring Federal/Other Authorization.
	X Not requesting any changes.

CAPITAL REQUESTS (FORM C)	For FY 2025-26, my agency is (mark "X"):
	X Requesting funding for Capital Projects.
	☐ Not requesting any changes.
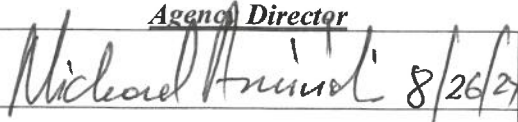
PROVISOS (FORM D)	For FY 2025-26, my agency is (mark "X"):
	☐ Requesting a new proviso and/or substantive changes to existing provisos.
	☐ Only requesting technical proviso changes (such as date references).
	X Not requesting any proviso changes.

Please identify your agency's preferred contacts for this year's budget process.

	Name	*Phone*	*Email*
PRIMARY CONTACT:	Kelly Epting	803-777-8411	eptingk@mailbox.sc.edu
SECONDARY CONTACT:	Kevin Russell	803-777-0781	russelkr@mailbox.sc.edu

I have reviewed and approved the enclosed FY 2025-26 Agency Budget Plan, which is complete and accurate to the extent of my knowledge.

	Agency Director	*Board or Commission Chair*
SIGN/DATE:	*[signature]* 8/26/24	*[signature]* 9/24/24
TYPE/PRINT NAME:	Michael Amiridis	Thad H. Westbrook

This form must be signed by the agency head – not a delegate.

Agency Name:	USC - Aiken Campus
Agency Code:	H290
Section:	20B

BUDGET REQUESTS			FUNDING					FTES				
Priority	Request Type	Request Title	State	Federal	Earmarked	Restricted	Total	State	Federal	Earmarked	Restricted	Total
1	B1 - Recurring	Tuition Mitigation	3,500,000	0	0	0	3,500,000	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
2	B1 - Recurring	Cyber/Engineering Program Enhancement	1,800,000	0	0	0	1,800,000	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
3	C - Capital	Cyber and Engineering Building	50,000,000	0	0	0	50,000,000	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
4	C - Capital	Penland Building Welcome Center	2,000,000	0	0	0	2,000,000	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
5	C - Capital	Pacer Collaborative Research Center	3,500,000	0	0	0	3,500,000	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
6	C - Capital	Nursing/Health Sciences Building Expansion	20,000,000	0	0	0	20,000,000	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
TOTALS			80,800,000	0	0	0	80,800,000	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00

Agency Name:	USC - Aiken Campus		
Agency Code:	H290	Section:	20B

FORM B1 – RECURRING OPERATING REQUEST

AGENCY PRIORITY	1

Provide the Agency Priority Ranking from the Executive Summary.

TITLE	Tuition Mitigation

Provide a brief, descriptive title for this request.

AMOUNT	**General: $3,500,000** **Federal: $0** **Other: $0** **Total: $3,500,000**

What is the net change in requested appropriations for FY 2025-2026? This amount should correspond to the total for all funding sources on the Executive Summary.

NEW POSITIONS	0.00

Please provide the total number of new positions needed for this request.

	Mark "X" for all that apply:	
FACTORS ASSOCIATED WITH THE REQUEST	X	Change in cost of providing current services to existing program audience
		Change in case load/enrollment under existing program guidelines
		Non-mandated change in eligibility/enrollment for existing program
		Non-mandated program change in service levels or areas
		Proposed establishment of a new program or initiative
		Loss of federal or other external financial support for existing program
		Exhaustion of fund balances previously used to support program
		IT Technology/Security related
		HR/Personnel Related
		Consulted DTO during development
		Related to a Non-Recurring request – If so, Priority #

	Mark "X" for primary applicable Statewide Enterprise Strategic Objective:	
STATEWIDE ENTERPRISE STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES	X	Education, Training, and Human Development
		Healthy and Safe Families
		Maintaining Safety, Integrity, and Security
		Public Infrastructure and Economic Development
		Government and Citizens

ACCOUNTABILITY OF FUNDS	This request supports multiple Goals, Strategies and Objectives contained in the annual Accountability Report, but primarily Goals 1 and 2 related to Education, Training and Human Development. Excellence is measured through regular reaffirmation of accreditation with the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges, along with program- and discipline-specific accreditation reviews. Factors associated with The University's ability to attract, recruit, retain and educate students in today's competitive higher education market are also detailed in the university's annual Accountability Report.

What specific strategy, as outlined in the most recent Strategic Planning and Performance Measurement template of agency's accountability report, does this funding request support? How would this request advance that strategy? How would the use of these funds be evaluated?

	These funds will benefit the University of South Carolina Aiken, its student body of

RECIPIENTS OF FUNDS	over 3,600, and the faculty/administrative staff who serve them. The University only conducts a small percentage of its work through payment of services rendered by outside contractors, vendors, grantees, individual beneficiaries, etc. In those instances, the University adheres to all applicable State Procurement requirements.

What individuals or entities would receive these funds (contractors, vendors, grantees, individual beneficiaries, etc.)? How would these funds be allocated – using an existing formula, through a competitive process, based upon predetermined eligibility criteria?

JUSTIFICATION OF REQUEST	The University of South Carolina Aiken requests $3.5 million in new recurring funding to enhance access and affordability for in-state students by offsetting inflationary and mandated cost increases associated with the provision of higher education services. Consistent with the University of South Carolina System, these funds provide a mechanism for USC Aiken to continue its mission of creating a more educated South Carolina and strengthening workforce outcomes in the region by maximizing its investment in student support services, new and enhanced degree and certificate programs, and the recruitment of accomplished faculty researchers and instructors. USC Aiken has worked to maximize its current resources to offer a high-caliber education at a price far lower than the national average. In fact, 50% of USC Aiken students pay no out-of-pocket costs for tuition after scholarships and other financial aid. And, with approximately 45% of our students having a family income of $60,000 or less, 36% of our students are Pell eligible and 22% are first-generation. In alignment with our strategic plan, these funds would allow for calculated investment in the priorities identified through our campus strategic planning process, including: delivering a flexible and relevant curriculum; addressing the pressing needs of the region; improving student support and auxiliary services; enhancing the campus experience; and bolstering a sustainable foundation. With approximately 60% of incoming University of South Carolina Aiken students choosing to major in STEM fields including cybersecurity and engineering, the University of South Carolina Aiken requests recurring funds for cyber and engineering program enhancements. While new funding previously received helped offset mandated increases and partially mitigate tuition increases, it did not fully account for inflationary costs of maintaining operations, new programming, or a push toward academic and research excellence. This progress must continue and this budget request, while modest, will work to advance access, affordability, and excellence in public higher education across South Carolina. Higher education is the key to our state's future economic and overall prosperity. Our state needs 70,000 additional baccalaureate degree holders above current graduation rates to meet the needs of business and industry by 2030. As the state's largest education provider, the USC System is meeting those needs for highly educated, in-demand and employable graduates in high need areas. With appropriate investment and partnership from the state, South Carolina can have the most cost-efficient and cost-effective higher education sector in the country. Located at the center of academic and government partnerships critical to the nation's cyber security and technology enterprise, including Savannah River Site, the Department of Energy, U.S. Army Cyber Center of Excellence, and the U.S. Army Cyber Command – USC Aiken must invest in additional programs that enhance student preparedness and meet regional workforce needs. With these funds, USC Aiken would have the ability to build programs to support the career and skill needs of our partners, as well as purchase the necessary lab and specialized computer and diagnostics equipment to ensure USC Aiken graduates are contenders for the state's fastest growing and highest paying careers. Funds would support the following industry partnerships and initiatives already underway: **Advanced Manufacturing Collaborative** The Advanced Manufacturing Collaborative (AMC) currently under construction on the USC Aiken campus will be an innovation hub for manufacturing, fostering modern industrial practices, advancing new technologies and training the future manufacturing workforce with a focus on chemical and materials manufacturing. The AMC is a true public-private partnership, combining the unique capabilities of the U.S. Department of Energy's (DOE) National Laboratories, industrial enterprises and educational institutions to drive the long-term sustainability of the U.S. manufacturing sector. The 60,000-square-foot facility will not only provide new laboratory, office and conference space suitable for advanced manufacturing research and development, but more importantly, it will house collaborative and research and development

spaces for launching innovative technologies into the commercial sector.

The location of the facility was set up through a no-cost land lease agreement between the Department and the Aiken County Commission on Higher Education. Construction of the facility is expected to be completed in 2024.

National Guard Cybersecurity Collaborative

The National Guard Cybersecurity Collaborative is a partnership between the South Carolina National Guard and USC Aiken to create a cybersecurity facility to enhance cybersecurity initiatives and attract industry to the state of South Carolina.

The state-of-the-art facility, slated for 18 acres of land adjacent to Savanah River National Lab's Advanced Manufacturing Collaborative on the university's campus and in close proximity to Fort Gordon, will serve as an ecosystem for cyber experts in private, government and academic sectors and include space for classes, training areas, and operational and administrative suites.

The Cybersecurity Collaborative will also include a 43,000 square-foot "Readiness Center," supporting training and logistics for two South Carolina Guard units and providing USC Aiken students with mentorship and real-world experience.

Construction is expected to begin in 2025.

Regional Security Operations Center

This investment in cyber and engineering programs also means USC Aiken can extend the impact of its student-run Security Operations Center into a Regional Security Operations Center that will provide small businesses and municipalities access to advanced cyber threat detection and recovery services. With experiential learning serving as a pillar of USC Aiken programming, the inclusion of students in running the center provides real-world experiences that further enhance the value of their degree.

A primary objective of the SOC is to provide cybersecurity students with Tier 1 SOC Analyst work experience. Having this experience will allow students to enter the workforce with the qualifications to perform Tier 2 Analyst work. In fact, students who work in the SOC have a job placement rate of more than 90% upon graduation.

Students selected to work in the SOC will be provided with practical work experience that compliments what they are learning in their courses, making them in-demand with local employers including the Savannah River Site.

Please thoroughly explain the request to include the justification for funds, potential offsets, matching funds, and method of calculation. Please include any explanation of impact if funds are not received. If new positions have been requested, explain why existing vacancies are not sufficient.

Agency Name:	USC - Aiken Campus		
Agency Code:	H290	Section:	20B

FORM B1 – RECURRING OPERATING REQUEST

AGENCY PRIORITY	2

Provide the Agency Priority Ranking from the Executive Summary.

TITLE	**Cyber/Engineering Program Enhancement**

Provide a brief, descriptive title for this request.

AMOUNT	**General: $1,800,000** **Federal: $0** **Other: $0** **Total: $1,800,000**

What is the net change in requested appropriations for FY 2025-2026? This amount should correspond to the total for all funding sources on the Executive Summary.

NEW POSITIONS	0.00

Please provide the total number of new positions needed for this request.

FACTORS ASSOCIATED WITH THE REQUEST	**Mark "X" for all that apply:**	
		Change in cost of providing current services to existing program audience
		Change in case load/enrollment under existing program guidelines
		Non-mandated change in eligibility/enrollment for existing program
		Non-mandated program change in service levels or areas
	X	Proposed establishment of a new program or initiative
		Loss of federal or other external financial support for existing program
		Exhaustion of fund balances previously used to support program
		IT Technology/Security related
		HR/Personnel Related
		Consulted DTO during development
		Related to a Non-Recurring request – If so, Priority #

STATEWIDE ENTERPRISE STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES	**Mark "X" for primary applicable Statewide Enterprise Strategic Objective:**	
	X	Education, Training, and Human Development
		Healthy and Safe Families
		Maintaining Safety, Integrity, and Security
		Public Infrastructure and Economic Development
		Government and Citizens

ACCOUNTABILITY OF FUNDS	This request supports multiple Goals, Strategies and Objectives contained in the annual Accountability Report, but primarily Goals 1 and 2 related to Education, Training and Human Development. Excellence is measured through regular reaffirmation of accreditation with the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges, along with program- and discipline-specific accreditation reviews. Factors associated with The University's ability to attract, recruit, retain and educate students in today's competitive higher education market are also detailed in the university's annual Accountability Report.

What specific strategy, as outlined in the most recent Strategic Planning and Performance Measurement template of agency's accountability report, does this funding request support? How would this request advance that strategy? How would the use of these funds be evaluated?

	These funds will benefit the University of South Carolina Aiken, its student body of

RECIPIENTS OF FUNDS	over 3,600, and the faculty/administrative staff who serve them. The University only conducts a small percentage of its work through payment of services rendered by outside contractors, vendors, grantees, individual beneficiaries, etc. In those instances, the University adheres to all applicable State Procurement requirements.

JUSTIFICATION OF REQUEST	With approximately 60% of incoming University of South Carolina Aiken students choosing to major in STEM fields including cybersecurity and engineering, the University of South Carolina Aiken requests $1.8 million in recurring funds for cyber and engineering program enhancements.
	Located at the center of academic and government partnerships critical to the nation's cyber security and technology enterprise, including Savannah River Site, the Department of Energy, U.S. Army Cyber Center of Excellence, and the U.S. Army Cyber Command – USC Aiken must invest in additional programs that enhance student preparedness and meet regional workforce needs. With these funds, USC Aiken would have the ability to build programs to support the career and skill needs of our partners, as well as purchase the necessary lab and specialized computer and diagnostics equipment to ensure USC Aiken graduates are contenders for the state's fastest growing and highest paying careers.
	Funds would support the following industry partnerships and initiatives already underway:
	Advanced Manufacturing Collaborative
	The Advanced Manufacturing Collaborative (AMC) currently under construction on the USC Aiken campus will be an innovation hub for manufacturing, fostering modern industrial practices, advancing new technologies and training the future manufacturing workforce with a focus on chemical and materials manufacturing.

Agency Name:	USC - Aiken Campus		
Agency Code:	H290	Section:	20B

FORM C – CAPITAL REQUEST

AGENCY PRIORITY	3

Provide the Agency Priority Ranking from the Executive Summary.

TITLE	Cyber and Engineering Building

Provide a brief, descriptive title for this request.

AMOUNT	$50,000,000

How much is requested for this project in FY FY 2025-2026? This amount should correspond to the total for all funding sources on the Executive Summary.

CPIP PRIORITY	PENDING

Identify the project's CPIP plan year and priority number, along with the first year in which the project was included in the agency's CPIP. If not included in the agency's CPIP, please provide an explanation. If the project involves a request for appropriated state funding, briefly describe the agency's contingency plan in the event that state funding is not made available in the amount requested.

OTHER APPROVALS	With the inclusion of this project in the University's CPIP, the concept of this project has had vetting within the USC System. Further approvals would be required of the USC Board of Trustees, CHE and as applicable the JBRC and SFAA.

What approvals have already been obtained? Are there additional approvals that must be secured in order for the project to succeed? (Institutional board, JBRC, SFAA, etc.)

LONG-TERM PLANNING AND SUSTAINABILITY	This project is intended to support State and University initiatives and is not intended to result in any additional requests for capital or operating funds in the future (beyond those requested for the renovation.) The existing operating budget will continue to provide funding for operations.

What other funds have already been invested in this project (source/type, amount, timeframe)? Will other capital and/or operating funds for this project be requested in the future? If so, how much, and in which fiscal years? Has a source for those funds been identified/secured? What is the agency's expectation with regard to additional annual costs or savings associated with this capital improvement? What source of funds will be impacted by those costs or savings? What is the expected useful life of the capital improvement?

ABOUT USC AIKEN

The University of South Carolina Aiken is a top-ranked regional university in the University of South Carolina System that has been providing high-quality education to students in over 60 bachelor's and master's programs for 62 years. With its focus on experiential learning, innovative research, and community engagement, USCA has become an essential part of the region's educational landscape and a critical driver of workforce development.

The university enrolls approximately 3,700 students and awards approximately 800 degrees annually. USCA is committed to educating South Carolinians, which account for 86% of the university's enrollment. Further, 9% of students are veterans or active members of the military, 22% are first-generation, and 36% are minorities.

USCA prides itself on affordability, with half of students paying nothing out of pocket for tuition and fees, and three-quarters paying half or less than half. In addition, the

university is a critical economic driver for the region, producing an annual economic impact of more than $350 Million.

As a research hub supporting South Carolina's business community and growing workforce, the university produces a high level of undergraduate research and economic and entrepreneurial expertise, with many projects funded externally through grants and contracts. USCA's business school also provides economic outlook and development services on behalf of regional employers including Aiken County, Savannah River Nuclear Solutions, and local municipalities.

As a community pillar, USC Aiken has cultivated critical partnerships with government and industry including Savannah River National Laboratory, Savannah River Nuclear Solutions, Department of Energy, Fort Eisenhower, and more – where students can participate in co-ops and internships that lead directly to full-time employment post-graduation.

USCA cultivates a strong sense of belonging, with approximately 73% of alumni remaining in South Carolina. In addition, many alumni choose to return to the university as employees, open local businesses, work in regional politics, or advance their education.

CSRA Engineering and Cybersecurity Ecosystem

USCA is located in the growing cybersecurity and STEM hub of the Central Savannah River Area and South Carolina. Bringing together key partners to create a science, engineering, and cybersecurity ecosystem – the university is leveraging the missions of Fort Eisenhower, Savannah River National Laboratory, Savannah River Mission Completion, Savannah River Nuclear Solutions, South Carolina National Guard, and leading industry – to create a workforce development and applied research foundation unparalleled in the region.

The South Carolina National Guard is constructing two new facilities on USCA's campus: a Cybersecurity Innovation Collaborative and Readiness Center. The university will enhance its partnership with the Guard and be involved in the training and preparation of its Cyber Battalion. The region is also home to Fort Eisenhower, which hosts the U.S. Army Cyber Center of Excellence; the Georgia Cyber Center; and cyber-related businesses and government contractors.

In addition, the United States Department of Energy (DOE) is constructing Savannah River National Laboratory's Advanced Manufacturing Collaborative (AMC) on the university's campus, facilitating collaborative efforts between the university and SRNL in the areas of engineering, materials science, cyber sciences, and high-skill workforce development. Along with groundbreaking applied research applicative to regional industry and DOE facilities, this partnership will offer students world-class education and workforce development opportunities in engineering and cybersecurity. The AMC will be one of only seven national lab facilities located on a university campus in the United States.

As for engineering, the region is home to Savannah River Nuclear Solutions, which employs approximately 11,000 people, many of whom are engineers, and stewards more an $2 Billion in federal investment annually. Savannah River National Laboratory employs an additional 1,100 engineers, scientists, and staff, licensing patented technologies to private companies for commercialization. Additional industry partners include Rolls Royce, Bridgestone, Longnecker & Associates, and ADP, which rely on fielding a competitive engineering and computing science workforce (see partner table below).

CURRENT STATUS OF USCA CYBER AND ENGINEERING PROGRAMS

Currently, USCA has bachelor's degrees in process engineering and mechanical engineering, along with a bachelor's degree in chemistry with a concentration in engineering. These programs have active industry advisory boards to promote industry alignment and collaborative workforce opportunities.

USCA's engineering and computer science programs, which in include bachelor's degrees in process engineering and mechanical engineering, are focused on providing the engineering and computer science workforce needed to continue the economic and technological aspirations of the region's unique infrastructure and economy. USCA is building workforce-focused engineering programs with multiple points of contact with industry professionals across the curriculum, including undergraduate research, capstones, mentorships, and internships.

Enrollment in the university's engineering programs increased more than 25% in 2022 and is expected to continue growing at this rate for the next several years. USCA's Engineering Advisory Board has strongly encouraged the university to provide a bachelor's degree in electrical engineering for the western region. After meetings with the subcommittee on electrical engineering, the university has begun the curriculum process for the adoption of a bachelor's in electrical engineering to start in Fall 2025.

COMPUTER AND CYBER SCIENCES

USCA offers computer and cyber sciences programs focused on meeting the highest industry demand. Currently, the university offers bachelor's degrees in software engineering and applied computer science with concentrations in cybersecurity, data

SUMMARY	science, and simulation. The university also offers a master's degree in computer and information sciences with concentrations in information technology and cybersecurity. To further enhance the workforce development efficacy of our programs, the university has recently launched four undergraduate certificates in cybersecurity, network security and information technology, data science, and cloud computing and security. Cybersecurity Over half of USCA's computer science majors have selected the cybersecurity specialization, where they learn to defend data, programs, and networks by developing skills in machine learning, cryptography, digital forensics, ethical hacking, network security, and software engineering, among others. These students also receive extensive real-word training in either the university Security Operations Center or Regional Security Operations Center. USCA's applied computer science degrees are known for producing the next generation of makers, thinkers, and leaders for an increasingly digital world. USCA's programs equip aspiring professionals with the knowledge and skills to work with algorithmic design, data structures, information security, software engineering, and more. Advanced Manufacturing Collaborative The AMC, a 60,000-square-foot facility, is envisioned as a manufacturing innovation hub. It aims to promote modern industrial practices, advance new technologies, and train the future workforce, with a particular focus on chemical and materials manufacturing. This facility represents a public-private partnership, merging the expertise of the U.S. Department of Energy's National Laboratories, industry leaders, and educational institutions to bolster the long-term sustainability of U.S. manufacturing. The AMC will provide state-of-the-art laboratories, offices, and conference spaces, as well as collaborative environments for research and development, facilitating the transition of innovative technologies into the commercial sector. Secured through a no-cost land lease agreement between the DOD and the Aiken County Commission on Higher Education, the AMC's construction is scheduled for completion in 2024. **Pacer Makerspace and Machine Shop** The Pacer Engineering Maker Space and Machine Shop is an essential facility for training USCA engineering students. It will support all engineering and science capstone and research projects, including those in collaboration with industry and regional partners. Additionally, the space will serve as a maker space and fabrication area for the sciences and the Advanced Manufacturing Collaborative. The new machine shop facility will be an extension of the existing maintenance shop, measuring approximately 30x35 feet or 1,050 square feet. It will be designed to house large equipment, requiring a total area of 241 square feet, including space for egress and furniture. The facility will be equipped with power and water supplied from the greenhouse and include ample space for special project "laydown" areas. The construction – which includes power/lighting, water, sewer, ventilation, outfitting, clearing, and gradings – is estimated to cost around $183K. This estimate does not cover additional features like fans and heaters. The building's design includes a slab foundation, insulation, windows, doors, and a large roll-up door. Including architectural and general contractor fees, the total project cost is projected to reach $250K. The machine shop is built in modules that can be expanded to accommodate future industry request for programs and customized training. **Regional Security Operations Center** Having recently established a university wide Security Operations Center, USCA brings valuable experience in managing such environments. Its cyber programs are among the fastest growing at the university, with 254 computer science majors, including 134 cybersecurity majors, numbers expected to double in two years. Additionally, the College of Sciences and Engineering houses the Center for Cyber Initiatives and Awareness (CCIA), and USCA is designated a NSA Center of Academic Excellence in Cyber Defense NSA CAE-CD. The Regional Security Operations Center will provide essential cyber services like initial scans, maintenance, incident intervention, and recovery assistance, staffed by both professionals and students in cyber and IT fields. These services will be available to local industries, utilities, governments, school districts, and other regional institutions seeking to collaborate with the RSOC. **South Carolina National Guard Innovation Collaborative and Cyber and Readiness Center Facilities**

The South Carolina National Guard Readiness Center is enhanced with cutting-edge information technology and collaborative spaces and will serve as one of the primary training facilities for the South Carolina National Guard Cyber Battalion. This facility will further bolster South Carolina's cyber ecosystem. Designed for flexibility, it fosters an interactive environment where students, faculty, and leaders from military, industry, and government can collaborate to brainstorm and tackle complex challenges. The facility encourages innovation through education, partnerships, and engagement.

This Guard's Innovation Collaborative will feature versatile classrooms and meeting spaces, testing labs, data and operations centers, and a secure SCIF (Sensitive Compartmented Information Facility) area. The SCIF will provide a unique and highly sought after training platform for cyber soldiers. The facility will be constructed at USCA, near the Savannah River National Laboratory's Advanced Manufacturing Center. The facility is expected to be completed in the second quarter of 2025.

PLANNING FOR GROWTH

To accommodate the need for engineering and cyber professionals, especially those who want live and stay in our region, we are proposing an $50 Million engineering and cyber facility that can accommodate the rapid growth of the engineering and cyber programs at USCA and be the future home of the university's engineering and cyber sciences. The new building will not only provide ample classrooms, teaching laboratories, and offices, it also will facilitate extensive collaboration and mentoring opportunities for students and faculty with DOE, DOD, and industry stakeholders in applied research and workforce development.

The transformative applied cyber and engineering collaborative outcomes will further be realized in the External Collaborative Applied Research Center within the new facility. This center will provide labs and dedicated space to collaborate with external shareholders. This will be further enhanced with the collaboration from the Advanced Manufacturing Collaborative at USCA. We currently have several research associates at USCA that were former SRNL researchers and engineers who will be assisting and leading research groups at USCA on critical and relevant projects. The engineering and cyber science students will have the opportunity to obtain significant real-world applied research experience in the center. These industry and facility scientists will work alongside and mentor USCA students, providing a truly transformative education.

Facilities and spaces such as labs, makerspaces, and machine shops prepare students for the workforce. Employers increasingly seek graduates who are 'job-ready' and have practical experience. Our proposal for a 2-story facility that offers simulation and workspace, as well as labs and classrooms, ensures USCA graduates are ready to enter the workforce upon graduation.

The first floor will be dedicated to engineering lab space. Producing field-ready engineers requires space modeled on real-world environments. The second floor will be dedicated to cybersecurity and teaching space for both engineering and cyber disciplines.

Provide a summary of the project and explain why it is necessary. Please refer to the budget guidelines for appropriate questions and thoroughly answer all related items.

Agency Name:	USC - Aiken Campus		
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FORM C – CAPITAL REQUEST

AGENCY PRIORITY	4
	Provide the Agency Priority Ranking from the Executive Summary.
TITLE	Penland Building Welcome Center
	Provide a brief, descriptive title for this request.
AMOUNT	$2,000,000
	How much is requested for this project in FY FY 2025-2026? This amount should correspond to the total for all funding sources on the Executive Summary.
CPIP PRIORITY	PENDING
	Identify the project's CPIP plan year and priority number, along with the first year in which the project was included in the agency's CPIP. If not included in the agency's CPIP, please provide an explanation. If the project involves a request for appropriated state funding, briefly describe the agency's contingency plan in the event that state funding is not made available in the amount requested.
OTHER APPROVALS	With the inclusion of this project in the University's CPIP, the concept of this project has had vetting within the USC System. Further approvals would be required of the USC Board of Trustees, CHE and as applicable the JBRC and SFAA.
	What approvals have already been obtained? Are there additional approvals that must be secured in order for the project to succeed? (Institutional board, JBRC, SFAA, etc.)
LONG-TERM PLANNING AND SUSTAINABILITY	This project is intended to support State and University initiatives and is not intended to result in any additional requests for capital or operating funds in the future (beyond those requested for the renovation.) The existing operating budget will continue to provide funding for operations.
	What other funds have already been invested in this project (source/type, amount, timeframe)? Will other capital and/or operating funds for this project be requested in the future? If so, how much, and in which fiscal years? Has a source for those funds been identified/secured? What is the agency's expectation with regard to additional annual costs or savings associated with this capital improvement? What source of funds will be impacted by those costs or savings? What is the expected useful life of the capital improvement?

This project will create both a Welcome/Visitor Center along with a One-Stop Service Center for all those who visit and attend USC Aiken. The Welcome Center will serve as the starting point for recruitment of new students, family, community members, and others who we plan to entice to attend the university. By providing The Pacer Welcome Center, the university's recruitment presence and efforts will be greatly expanded and will allow USC Aiken to compete more effectively for outstanding South Carolina students. In turn, we anticipate this will help us grow the university, raise additional revenue, enhance our community presence, and provide a much more centralized place for the visitor experience.

Adjacent and importantly contiguous is the Pacer One-Stop Shop. The One-Stop will provide excellent, high-level student service in an environment staffed by experts from across the Division of Enrollment Management. As an aid to both recruitment and especially retention efforts, the One-Stop staff will be able to solve problems, answer

SUMMARY	questions, provide intake for paperwork, and walk students through any process at the university. At USC Aiken, this will allow to end "the higher education shuffle" which frequently occurs on college campuses as they are consistently referred around campus. The One-Stop staff will be empowered with space, technology, and authority to solve issues, intervene on students' behalf, and provide an overall excellent experience to resolve issues and provide critical support to retention efforts. The renovation of space is key to these endeavors as we need to provide environments which are both conducive and supportive of the missions of both The Welcome Center and the One-Stop Shop. Many other universities across the country have seen great results by providing dedicated services in one place with the space to conduct important learning and problem resolution. With the adjacent operations mentioned above, USC Aiken will be able to provide outstanding service to our students, the community, and perhaps mostly importantly, support the critical recruitment and retention efforts which are so critical to the future of the university.

Provide a summary of the project and explain why it is necessary. Please refer to the budget guidelines for appropriate questions and thoroughly answer all related items.

Agency Name:	USC - Aiken Campus		
Agency Code:	H290	Section:	20B

FORM C – CAPITAL REQUEST

AGENCY PRIORITY	5
	Provide the Agency Priority Ranking from the Executive Summary.
TITLE	Pacer Collaborative Research Center
	Provide a brief, descriptive title for this request.
AMOUNT	$3,500,000
	How much is requested for this project in FY FY 2025-2026? This amount should correspond to the total for all funding sources on the Executive Summary.
CPIP PRIORITY	PENDING
	Identify the project's CPIP plan year and priority number, along with the first year in which the project was included in the agency's CPIP. If not included in the agency's CPIP, please provide an explanation. If the project involves a request for appropriated state funding, briefly describe the agency's contingency plan in the event that state funding is not made available in the amount requested.
OTHER APPROVALS	With the inclusion of this project in the University's CPIP, the concept of this project has had vetting within the USC System. Further approvals would be required of the USC Board of Trustees, CHE and as applicable the JBRC and SFAA.
	What approvals have already been obtained? Are there additional approvals that must be secured in order for the project to succeed? (Institutional board, JBRC, SFAA, etc.)
LONG-TERM PLANNING AND SUSTAINABILITY	This project is intended to support State and University initiatives and is not intended to result in any additional requests for capital or operating funds in the future (beyond those requested for the renovation.) The existing operating budget will continue to provide funding for operations, which should be augmented by rental revenues paid by outside researchers using the laboratory space.
	What other funds have already been invested in this project (source/type, amount, timeframe)? Will other capital and/or operating funds for this project be requested in the future? If so, how much, and in which fiscal years? Has a source for those funds been identified/secured? What is the agency's expectation with regard to additional annual costs or savings associated with this capital improvement? What source of funds will be impacted by those costs or savings? What is the expected useful life of the capital improvement?
	As USCA grows in serving the region with an expanding cyber and engineering portfolio, we must also address the demand for wetlab collaborative research with regional industry and regional stakeholders in the areas of chemistry, toxicology, sustainability, analytical method development, production, and chemical engineering.

At this point, our facilities are not adequate to expand the number of collaborative projects and provide dedicated space for industry in a chemical environment on campus. A dedicated wet laboratory innovation space is required to facilitate productive day to day extensive collaboration between USCA students/faculty and regional stakeholders. The facility will host joint appointments and adjunct research professors from regional industry facilities.

The value-added proposition from this collaborative research center to the mission of the university and regional workforce would be incalculable. |

SUMMARY	This funding would be utilized to purchase, construct and equip the proposed Pacer Collaborative Research Center. The metal building addition with an Aiken Brick façade would be added to the existing science building to reduce costs. Two large laboratories would adjoin to the north external wall of the existing science building. The space would allow for two large chemical laboratories of approximately 30'x60' for collaborative work with industry and regional partners. The external scientists and companies would work collaboratively with the USCA faculty and students under the auspices of the university.

This project would create a world-class training environment, increase research deliverables and expenditures, and create a seamless industry collaborative research environment.

MISSION

>> To facilitate extensive collaboration between USCA, industry and regional partners

>> To increase USCA's participation in regional economic development and innovation

>> To produce a world-class science and engineering workforce and training facility

>> To provide laboratory space for industry and university scientists to work side by side |

Provide a summary of the project and explain why it is necessary. Please refer to the budget guidelines for appropriate questions and thoroughly answer all related items.

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FORM C – CAPITAL REQUEST

AGENCY PRIORITY	6
	Provide the Agency Priority Ranking from the Executive Summary.

TITLE	Nursing/Health Sciences Building Expansion
	Provide a brief, descriptive title for this request.

AMOUNT	$20,000,000
	How much is requested for this project in FY FY 2025-2026? This amount should correspond to the total for all funding sources on the Executive Summary.

CPIP PRIORITY	PENDING
	Identify the project's CPIP plan year and priority number, along with the first year in which the project was included in the agency's CPIP. If not included in the agency's CPIP, please provide an explanation. If the project involves a request for appropriated state funding, briefly describe the agency's contingency plan in the event that state funding is not made available in the amount requested.

OTHER APPROVALS	With the inclusion of this project in the University's CPIP, the concept of this project has had vetting within the USC System. Further approvals would be required of the USC Board of Trustees, CHE and as applicable the JBRC and SFAA.
	What approvals have already been obtained? Are there additional approvals that must be secured in order for the project to succeed? (Institutional board, JBRC, SFAA, etc.)

LONG-TERM PLANNING AND SUSTAINABILITY	This project is intended to support State and University initiatives and is not intended to result in any additional requests for capital or operating funds in the future (beyond those requested for the renovation.) The existing operating budget will continue to provide funding for operations.
	What other funds have already been invested in this project (source/type, amount, timeframe)? Will other capital and/or operating funds for this project be requested in the future? If so, how much, and in which fiscal years? Has a source for those funds been identified/secured? What is the agency's expectation with regard to additional annual costs or savings associated with this capital improvement? What source of funds will be impacted by those costs or savings? What is the expected useful life of the capital improvement?

	As the School of Nursing continues to grow, more space is needed, particularly for classroom, lab, and office space. Additional classroom space is needed as our program has expanded to two additional campuses and is tele-streamed to students. The addition of MSN and DNP programs within the next couple of years will also require additional space. The current Exercise and Sports Science programs are scattered in the Business and Education building and would be moved to this space and able to take advantage of the enlarged lab and classroom spaces. The university is planning to expand and add other health science majors that would be housed in this building. The current simulation labs are in need of expansion and could be utilized by other health science majors in this shared space.

The vision for this building is for it to be able to house nursing and other health science majors under a single roof with more efficient utilization of expensive laboratory and simulation space. |

SUMMARY

Provide a summary of the project and explain why it is necessary. Please refer to the budget guidelines for appropriate questions and thoroughly answer all related items.

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FORM E – AGENCY COST SAVINGS AND GENERAL FUND REDUCTION CONTINGENCY PLAN

TITLE	Agency Cost Savings and General Fund Reduction Contingency Plan

AMOUNT	$719,759

What is the General Fund 3% reduction amount? This amount should correspond to the reduction spreadsheet prepared by EBO.

ASSOCIATED FTE REDUCTIONS	Current plans do not include FTE reductions for USC Aiken.

How many FTEs would be reduced in association with this General Fund reduction?

PROGRAM / ACTIVITY IMPACT	Education and General Unrestricted (I.A) and associated Employee Benefits (II). The University of South Carolina Aiken is dedicated to preserving the instructional program of the institution, and therefore reductions suggested are intended to be the least impactful on institutionally supported instructional programs. In some cases, reductions to other University programs are proposed to allow for internal reallocations to preserve instructional activity. Both academic and service units are funded from the Campus' general fund which is comprised almost exclusively from State General Fund and student tuition and fee revenue. The University of South Carolina Aiken is dedicated to preserving the instructional program of the institution and therefore reductions suggested are intended to be the least impactful on institutionally supported instructional programs. In some cases, reductions to other University programs are proposed to allow for internal reallocations to preserve instructional activity. See summary of proposed reductions on next page.

What programs or activities are supported by the General Funds identified?

SUMMARY	**$150,000 – Reduce Funding for Education and Analysis of Emergent Trends in Accreditation/Compliance and Other Risk Areas**– Annually, the University is required by both State and Federal agencies to provide data and analyses to meet accreditation and compliance regulations. Additionally, data analytics, participation/sponsorship of seminars by industry knowledge experts, and participation in benchmarking activities are used to identify emerging trends that are a growing concern both locally and nationally. Some examples of topics are students' ability to pay for college, reduction of default rates, trends in online education, and teaching efficiency, etc. This reduction represents approximately 50% of the funding available for these activities. The reduced ability to conduct/be involved with these activities will hamper the institution's ability to meet the growing expectations of both State and Federal Agencies. Additionally, reduction of these funds could result in increased difficulty in addressing new risks as they emerge. **$150,000 – Reduce Funding for Student Retention, Progression and Graduation (RPG) Efforts** - There has been growing concern with student retention, progression, and graduation rates at both the State and national levels. USC Aiken has invested in pilot projects using academic coaches/success managers and topical seminars to help students meet their goals. Initial data from these projects indicate that this model has positive impacts on RPG. Reductions would jeopardize the ability to continue these and related projects. **$150,000 – Reduce Funding Intended to Support/Seed Academic Programs** -The development of new programs takes time and often additional efforts of faculty and staff. This funding will limit the development of new programs intended to support the needs of our regional and State economies. Partnerships are also intended to provide enhanced work-readiness opportunities for South Carolinians. USC Aiken's current enrollment boasts approximately 91% South Carolinians. The University pays great attention not to lose sight of the overall mission to serve students of the Palmetto State. **$269,759 – Reduce Support for Campus Maintenance/Renewal Projects** – USC Aiken has made efforts in recent years to do more to address its aging facilities and infrastructure. This would reduce the available funding for maintenance/renewal projects and fleet replacements and put greater burden on related systems in subsequent years.

$719,759 – Grand Total

Calculation is based on 3% actual ongoing state appropriation funding currently included in the FY23-24 University of South Carolina Aiken Budget received from the State as provided by the Executive Budget Office.

Amounts for reduction are based on amounts currently included in the FY23-24 University of South Carolina Aiken Budget.

Please provide a detailed summary of service delivery impact caused by a reduction in General Fund Appropriations and provide the method of calculation for anticipated reductions. Agencies should prioritize reduction in expenditures that have the least significant impact on service delivery.

AGENCY COST SAVINGS PLANS

These cost savings would be realized by delaying hires and/or not filling vacant positions, reducing the scope of or eliminating programming, and by deferring maintenance expenditures into future periods. All such decisions will, have an impact on operations and service levels across all areas of the University.

What measures does the agency plan to implement to reduce its costs and operating expenses by more than $50,000? Provide a summary of the measures taken and the estimated amount of savings. How does the agency plan to repurpose the savings?

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FORM F – REDUCING COST AND BURDEN TO BUSINESSES AND CITIZENS

TITLE	Reducing Cost and Burden to Businesses and Citizens – USC Aiken

Provide a brief, descriptive title for this request.

EXPECTED SAVINGS TO BUSINESSES AND CITIZENS	USC Aiken has implemented programs and taken steps over the last several years designed to assist students in obtaining a degree in a timely manner and to minimize the overall cost of obtaining a quality education, to include significant revisions to our General Education requirements. Providing a quality workforce to the businesses within the State is a vital aspect of continuous economic development. The savings to citizens and business of the state are incalculable. The economic impact of the University on the State of South Carolina is significant, and highlights are provided further below.

What is the expected savings to South Carolina's businesses and citizens that is generated by this proposal? The savings could be related to time or money.

FACTORS ASSOCIATED WITH THE REQUEST	**Mark "X" for all that apply:**
	<table><tr><td></td><td>Repeal or revision of regulations.</td></tr><tr><td></td><td>Reduction of agency fees or fines to businesses or citizens.</td></tr><tr><td>X</td><td>Greater efficiency in agency services or reduction in compliance burden.</td></tr><tr><td></td><td>Other</td></tr></table>

METHOD OF CALCULATION	Serving Our Region: USC Aiken educates the next generation of professionals, so they have the broad understanding and critical capabilities necessary to succeed in their careers, enjoy a full life, and contribute as citizens and neighbors, building vibrant communities for decades to come. Accreditation: Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges Economic Impact: USC Aiken pumps more than $350.7 million annually into the South Carolina economy, most of which benefits Aiken and Aiken County. (Estimate from the Darla Moore School of Business, 2021.)

Describe the method of calculation for determining the expected cost or time savings to businesses or citizens.

REDUCTION OF FEES OR FINES	The only published State of South Carolina regulations pertaining to USC Aiken are those contained in Chapter 119 dealing with motor vehicle registration, parking, obeying traffic signs and adhering to posted speed limits while on campus. These regulations were promulgated under the authority of Section 59-117-40 of the S.C. Code of Laws. All tuition, fees and fines are reviewed annually before being presented to the Board of Trustees for their consideration and approval. These tuition and fees are contained in the annual budget and are related to providing instructional services to enrolled students. There are a few fines contained in that schedule which relate to parking, traffic violations, smoking or Student Judicial Affairs.

Which fees or fines does the agency intend to reduce? What was the fine or fee revenue for the previous fiscal year? What was the associated program expenditure for the previous fiscal year? What is the enabling authority for the issuance of the fee or fine?

REDUCTION OF REGULATION	The university's regulations do not pertain to business operations. Nor do they pertain to the citizens of the State in general. The University has taken steps over the last several years to assist students in obtaining a degree in a timely manner and to minimize the overall cost of obtaining a quality education. See summarized highlights below.

Which regulations does the agency intend to amend or delete? What is the enabling authority for the regulation?

	USC Aiken has been consistently highly ranked by *U.S. News and World Report's America's Best Colleges* guide. The university has been recognized 21 times among the top three in the Regional Comprehensive Public College in the South category. Fourteen times it has been honored as the #1 institution in that category. Additionally, USC Aiken has recognized as a top institution for veterans and their family members. Some of USC Aiken's Points of Pride include: **Student Debt:** 31% of the students who start college at USC Aiken and graduate do so with no debt. The average debt load of USC Aiken students is $19,415, which is far lower than the national average of $32,731 as of January 4, 2021, according to the Federal Reserve.

SUMMARY	**Alumni:** 20,000 Alumni of record **NCAA Athletics:** 5 men's teams and 5 women's teams. **Student-Faculty ratio:** 15:1 creates opportunities for individualized learning Talented faculty including recipients of the Governor's Award for Excellence in Scientific Research, the Governor's Professor of the Year, and a Grammy-Award winning Artist-in-Residence **Honors and Distinctions** *U.S. News and World Report (2021): #1 Regional Comprehensive Public College in the South.* This 2021 distinction marked USC Aiken's 23rd consecutive ranking among the top three in this category. The university has won the first place ranking fifteen times. *College of Distinction (2020)*: By demonstrating continued dedication to high-impact educational practices that influence both student learning and student success, USC Aiken has been named as one of the nation's Colleges of Distinction. The selection process at Colleges of Distinction requires that institutions adhere to the four distinctions: engaged students, great teaching, vibrant community, and successful outcomes. This process also includes a review of each institution's freshman experience as well as its general education program, strategic plan, alumni success, satisfaction measures, and more. Additionally, USC Aiken has been further recognized in the fields of Business, Education, and Nursing for 2020-21. The University received "Field of Study" badges in these areas from Colleges of Distinction. These additional awards are based on qualities such as accreditation, breadth of program, and the track record of success for the individual programs.

Provide an explanation of the proposal and its positive results on businesses or citizens. How will the request affect agency operations?

FORM H – TUITION MITIGATION (PROVISO 117.187)

TITLE	Tuition Mitigation Proviso 117.187

AMOUNT	$3,500,000

What is the amount needed for Tuition Mitigation for FY26? This amount should correspond to the priority 1 recurring budget request. Tuition Mitigation should ONLY include the state funding necessary to continue existing operations on July 1, 2025, with no in-state undergraduate tuition or mandatory fee increases. Tuition Mitigation should not include any new programs or expansion of existing academic programs that may be contemplated for Fiscal Year 2025-26.

EXPLANATION OF METHODOLOGY	Among the state's 10 public 4-year colleges, the USC System's 3 comprehensive universities are among the MOST AFFORDABLE, with all 3-charging tuition BELOW the state average and USC Aiken and USC Beaufort being the 2 LEAST EXPENSIVE statewide! The top budget priority for the University of South Carolina System is continuing to partner with the state to invest in predictable funding to mitigate against annual resident tuition increases. With this partnership, USC Aiken has held tuition flat for a record seven consecutive years. HEPI provides an objective estimate of inflationary pressure specific to higher education. When applying HEPI index over both state appropriations and tuition (Education and General operating funds), the University continues to experience lost purchasing power even when factoring tuition mitigation funding, for which USC Aiken is grateful. To fulfill its mission to maintain quality programs that benefit the citizens of South Carolina while managing inflationary cost increases, the University continually assesses viability of programs. As such, and considering the aforementioned factors, USC Aiken looks forward to continuing to partner with the state to ensure fair, equitable and reliable state investment going forward. Calculation methodology: Prior year new appropriations rounded down to the nearest $500K. ($2.9M tuition mitigation + Pay plan $511K + Health Allocation $187K) FY25 Resident required tuition and fees $5,355 per semester. Fall 2024 preliminary percentage of in-state, undergraduate students is 86%.

4% Fee Waiver Information: USC Aiken							
		Total		Resident		NonResident	
Fiscal Year	Class	# Students	Amount	# Students	Amount	# Students	Amount
2024	Total	404	802,906.00	277	745,422.00	127	57,484.00

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Summary Data for Non-Resident Abatements by Campus
Academic Year 2023-2024 (Fall 23, Spring 24, & Summer 24)

Campus	# of Students	Amount
USC Aiken	278	2,583,183

Please provide a detailed explanation of the methods used to estimate the FY26 tuition mitigation needs. What standard inflation factor is being used (HEPI, CPI, etc.)? What base budget items is the inflation factor applied to? What is the impact of tuition waivers and abatements, including the amount of foregone revenue, and its impact on the need for additional state funding.

COST SAVINGS

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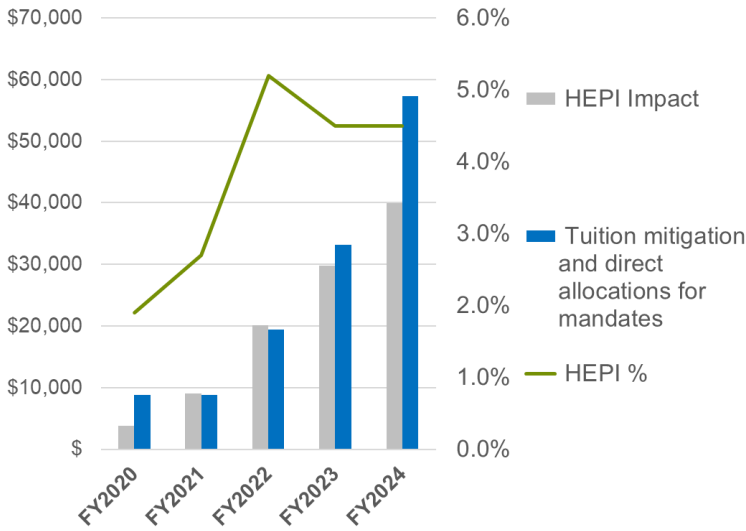
HEPI provides an objective estimate of inflationary pressures specific to Higher Education. This graph applies the index to USC's Comprehensive and Palmetto Regional Colleges total education and general budgets (excluding Auxiliaries) since 2020, providing an approximation of cumulative *increased cost of doing business.* With Tuition Mitigation support, the State has provided generously for the needs of these institutions, allowing them to continue to provide excellent education while experiencing stagnant enrollments and inflationary cost pressures.

USC Aiken has managed this gap with a) State appropriations for tuition mitigation and direct allocations and b) cost-saving measures such as forced efficiencies and reprioritization. Also, since 2017 USC Aiken has demonstrated fiscal responsibility by maintaining a stable fund balance while internally funding several needed capital projects such as the new Academic Success Center in the Gregg-Graniteville Library on campus, the relocation of our Maintenance Facility, and the repurposing of the former Maintenance Building as office space and the home for the Aiken Scholars' Academy, a successful partnership with the Aiken County Public School District.

As inflationary pressures impact faculty and staff hiring as well as cost of goods and services, the University remains committed to employing sound budgeting principles and continuing to operate as efficiently as possible to educate South Carolina residents.

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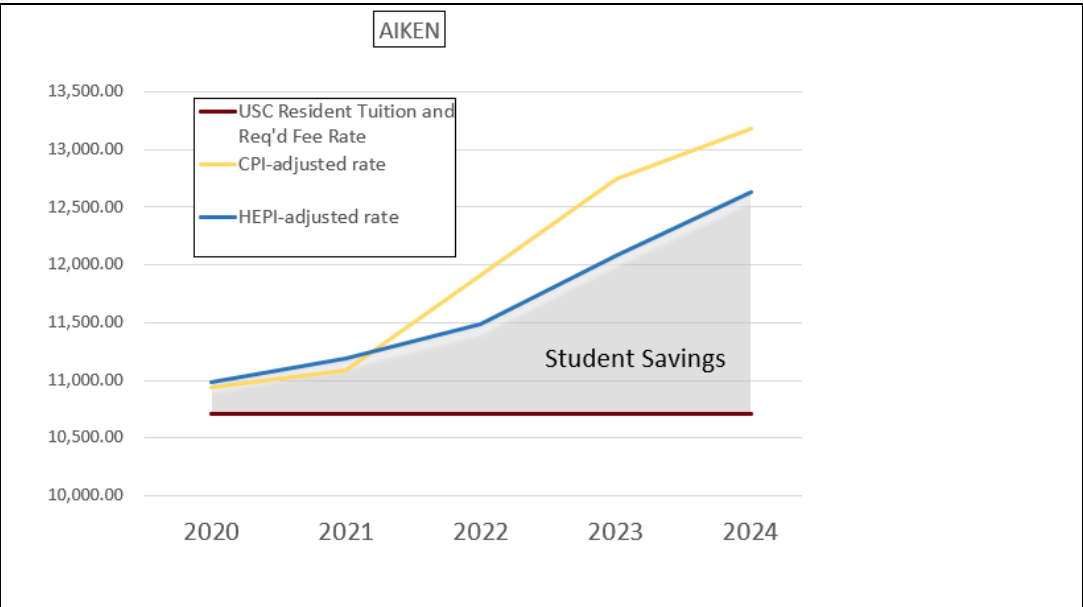
This chart provides a comparison of the resident undergraduate tuition rates to what rates could have reached under HEPI and CPI. With support from the state and the University's conservative budgeting philosophy during this period of historic inflation, USC Aiken has continued to educate the citizens of South Carolina and the region at the same tuition rate for a record 7 consecutive years. The University will continue to assess less healthy programs for termination and expand programs contributing to South Carolina workforce needs, as we have done recently with our rapidly growing Mechanical Engineering and Cyber programs. Faculty and staff productivity and resources will continue to be optimized. Funds will be reallocated from declining programs to fund mission critical initiatives prioritized for highest and best use in educating South Carolinians.

USC Aiken has historically maintained a very conversative approach to budget development, which prevented the need for specific budget cuts. Vacant positions were held open as long as possible. Facility renovation requests were deferred unless funded from state appropriations or private sources. Increase efforts to obtain external funding (grants and private gifts). Opted not to fill vacant faculty lines in departments with significant declines in credit hour production. Savings redirected to new strategic initiatives or departments with significantly increased funding needs.

Provide a detailed analysis of any cost savings measures taken since FY19 to offset undergraduate tuition and fee increases and attach quantifiable documentation. Please include documentation of actions taken by the board of trustees or board of visitors or by administration. Attach any cost savings studies that have been undertaken and provide an explanation of actions taken to implement these studies. Provide future quantifiable cost savings plans and expectations for implementation.

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LOW ENROLLMENT	Program review occurs: • 3 -5 years following the launch of a new academic program • Compares the actual enrollment and financial support of new programs to original program projections Institutions review program results and assign a rating: • Healthy (meeting projections) • Becoming Healthy (not meeting projections but is expected to do so soon) • Becoming Unhealthy (not meeting projections and trending in wrong direction • or Unhealthy (not meeting projections) Programs deemed unhealthy or becoming healthy/unhealthy in Year 3 are reviewed for an additional two years. USC Aiken also participates in CHE Program Productivity Review Process. For the most recent CHE Review, USC Aiken had a net increase of 2 academic programs from July 2020- June 2024. (6 terminated programs and 8 programs added.) To position the university to maintain a stable (if not increasing) enrollment, USC Aiken has made investments in student recruitment and retention which have resulted in two of the largest freshmen classes in the university's history, with the Fall 24 class being the largest in the university's history. The soon to be completed construction of our new Academic Success Center in the Gregg-Graniteville Library will help USC Aiken continue to improve our retention numbers, which have rebounded since the pandemic.

Provide a list of any undergraduate programs, academic or other, that have been reduced or eliminated since FY19. Please document the reasons for the reduction or elimination. If the institution has, or is expected to have, a decline in in-state undergraduate student enrollment, provide analysis on how the institution will ensure the corresponding reduction in tuition will not lead to requests for additional state funding.

UNOBLIGATED FUND BALANCE	($000) State-$0.00; Federal-$0.00; Other-$22,008 Institutional Breakdown: Academic & Operational $18,368; Auxiliaries $3,640 Good budget discipline in concert with student market strength supports consistent operating results. The numbers above divide reserves by functional area. The USC System has maintained an operating margin of least 3% over the past five years. This financial discipline has earned the System the AA+/Aa2 credit rating, and raters note the System's sound financial management. Balances reflect all deposits and investments under the control of the State Treasurer for investing and exclude endowment funds that are not invested by the State Treasurer. Essentially all the University's unrestricted net position/reserves have been internally designated for core missions such as instruction, research, and associated programs and initiatives that enhance these areas. Additional funds are used for capital projects that align with the University's highest priorities, including capital renewal. Appropriate levels of fund balance are unique to each institution and the pressure of outside forces. For USC Aiken, we strive to maintain 3-6 months of fund balance to

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mitigate risks within our operating budget. Operating reserves represent 36% of the annual operating budget.

Provide the institution's unobligated fund balance for the most recently completed fiscal year. Attach documentation showing this balance disaggregated to identify amounts that are restricted in their use by external authorities (General Assembly, Federal Government, donors, etc.) and those that are not subject to such restrictions. Provide an explanation of the amount the institution considers to be an appropriate unrestricted fund balance as a percentage of its operating budget and the percentage of the institution's operating budget that the fund balance represents.