

Agency Name:	Francis Marion University		
Agency Code:	H180	Section:	17



Fiscal Year FY 2026-2027

Agency Budget Plan

FORM A - BUDGET PLAN SUMMARY

OPERATING REQUESTS

(FORM B1)

For FY 2026-2027, my agency is (mark "X"):

- | | |
|-------------------------------------|---|
| ☒ | Requesting General Fund Appropriations. |
| ☐ | Requesting Federal/Other Authorization. |
| ☐ | Not requesting any changes. |

NON-RECURRING REQUESTS

(FORM B2)

For FY 2026-2027, my agency is (mark "X"):

- | | |
|-------------------------------------|---|
| ☐ | Requesting Non-Recurring Appropriations. |
| ☐ | Requesting Non-Recurring Federal/Other Authorization. |
| ☒ | Not requesting any changes. |

CAPITAL REQUESTS

(FORM C)

For FY 2026-2027, my agency is (mark "X"):

- | | |
|-------------------------------------|--|
| ☒ | Requesting funding for Capital Projects. |
| ☐ | Not requesting any changes. |

PROVISOS

(FORM D)

For FY 2026-2027, 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). |
| ☒ | Not requesting any proviso changes. |

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

PRIMARY CONTACT: SECONDARY CONTACT:

<u>Name</u>	<u>Phone</u>	<u>Email</u>
Darryl Bridges	(843) 661-1201	dbridges@fmarion.edu
Eric Garris	(843) 661-1136	egarris@fmarion.edu

I have reviewed and approved the enclosed FY 2026-2027 Agency Budget Plan, which is complete and accurate to the extent of my knowledge.

SIGN/DATE:

TYPE/PRINT
NAME:

<u>Agency Director</u>	<u>Board or Commission Chair</u>
Luther F. Carter	H. Randall Dozier

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

Agency Name:	Francis Marion University
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BUDGET REQUESTS			FUNDING					FTES				
Priority	Request Type	Request Title	State	Federal	Earmarked	Restricted	Total	State	Federal	Earmarked	Restricted	Total
1	B1 - Recurring	Tuition Mitigation Support	2,925,000	0	0	0	2,925,000	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
2	B1 - Recurring	Campus Police Support & Public Safety Enhancement	500,000	0	0	0	500,000	4.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	4.00
3	C - Capital	James A. Rogers Library Renovation	5,000,000	0	0	0	5,000,000	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
4	C - Capital	Campus Infrastructure and HVAC Upgrades	4,000,000	0	0	0	4,000,000	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
TOTALS			12,425,000	0	0	0	12,425,000	4.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	4.00

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FORM B1 – RECURRING OPERATING REQUEST

AGENCY PRIORITY	1
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Provide the Agency Priority Ranking from the Executive Summary.

TITLE	Tuition Mitigation Support
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Provide a brief, descriptive title for this request.

AMOUNT	General: \$2,925,000 Federal: \$0 Other: \$0 Total: \$2,925,000
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What is the net change in requested appropriations for FY 2026-2027? This amount should correspond to the total for all funding sources on the Executive Summary.

NEW POSITIONS	0.00
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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
	☐	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:	
	☒	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 Goal 1 of the University’s Strategic Plan, as outlined in the 2025 Accountability Report, which emphasizes providing high-quality education to students from South Carolina and the Pee Dee Region. It reaffirms FMU’s commitment to delivering a rigorous academic experience at an affordable cost. The effectiveness of this appropriation will be evaluated based on the University’s continued ability to freeze tuition rates for FY26–27, despite rising operating costs reflected in the latest HEPI estimate.
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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?

	Students and families are the beneficiaries of freezing tuition rates. Internally, these funds will offset instructional and operational costs that would otherwise be covered by tuition revenue, thereby directly supporting the University’s core
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RECIPIENTS OF FUNDS	mission of access and affordability. Applying the August 2025 HEPI forecast (3.7 percent) to the University’s annual expense budget yields approximately \$2.7 million. Adding \$225,000 for categories that historically outpace HEPI (utilities, maintenance contracts, insurances, etc.) brings the total amount to hold tuition flat to \$2,925,000. No new positions are being requested with this funding.
<i>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?</i>	
JUSTIFICATION OF REQUEST	Francis Marion University remains committed to providing South Carolinians with one of the most affordable four-year university experiences in the state. Tuition mitigation funding has enabled FMU to absorb rising operating costs over the past eight years without increasing tuition, protecting students and families from additional financial burden. FMU continues to maintain one of the lowest tuition rates statewide, a critical factor given that 93 percent of our students are South Carolina residents and many are first-generation college students. Keeping tuition rates affordable ensures continued access and opportunity for students in the Pee Dee region and across the state. The financial uncertainty many families face makes this appropriation essential. Without it, the University would be forced to consider tuition increases to cover operating costs, which would disproportionately affect lower-income and first-generation students. Such an outcome would directly undermine FMU’s mission of access and affordability. Applying the August 2025 HEPI forecast (3.7 percent) to the University’s annual expense budget yields approximately \$2.7 million. Adding \$225,000 for categories that historically outpace HEPI (utilities, maintenance contracts, insurances, etc.) brings the total amount to hold tuition flat to \$2,925,000. No new positions are being requested with this funding; existing staff will continue to meet institutional needs. If additional staff are required in the future, they will be supported through separate, program-specific requests. This appropriation, combined with private fundraising for needs-based scholarships directed to first-generation students, will allow FMU to meet financial obligations, sustain instructional and operational quality, and continue providing the services required for student success. State support is critical to maintaining stability during this period of economic pressure, ensuring FMU remains affordable and accessible for South Carolinians.
<i>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.</i>	

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FORM B1 – RECURRING OPERATING REQUEST

AGENCY PRIORITY	2
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Provide the Agency Priority Ranking from the Executive Summary.

TITLE	Campus Police Support & Public Safety Enhancement
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Provide a brief, descriptive title for this request.

AMOUNT	General: \$500,000 Federal: \$0 Other: \$0 Total: \$500,000
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What is the net change in requested appropriations for FY 2026-2027? This amount should correspond to the total for all funding sources on the Executive Summary.

NEW POSITIONS	4.00
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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
	☐	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:	
	☐	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 Goals 2, 8, 10, and 12 of the University’s Strategic Plan, as outlined in the 2025 Accountability Report, which emphasizes Student Enrollment & Development, Staff Development, and Community Relations. This request also reaffirms FMU’s commitment to providing a safe campus environment that supports the academic, research, and community service missions of the university.
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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 be utilized to further enhance campus safety and the capacity of the FMU Campus Police Department to continue meeting the needs of Francis Marion University and its constituents. Students, employees, and community
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RECIPIENTS OF FUNDS

members are the beneficiaries of the services provided by FMU Campus Police which is comprised of sworn law enforcement officers.

Approximately 65% of these funds are planned to support the hiring of four (4) new sworn patrol officers to supplement eleven (11) current officers. Remaining funds (approximately 35%) are planned for annualized equipment expenses, including leasing and upfitting additional patrol vehicles, as well as refitting current patrol vehicles. Additionally, funds will be used for body cameras, body armor, and radios for the new officers and end-of-use equipment replacements for existing officers.

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

Over the past 15 years, the Francis Marion University campus has grown over 60% in acreage from a single, contained campus into a multi-site institution with significantly expanded acreage, facilities, and daily activity. In addition to the main campus, FMU now operates critical academic and public-facing venues across downtown Florence, including medical and health-science education facilities, the FMU Performing Arts Center, and University Place (Gately Gallery). Additionally, the university operates the FMU Freshwater Ecology Center on Williston Road in northern Florence County and has a substantial presence at The Continuum in Lake City. This broader physical footprint increases call volume, patrol complexity, and travel time between locations, underscoring the need for a modern campus police department able to respond swiftly and professionally wherever FMU operates.

The FMU Campus Police Department has a strong foundation, built on years of steady investment and support from the institution. The University has consistently upgraded vehicles, communications technology, and other essential equipment while also increasing personnel to meet the needs of a growing campus community. These efforts have ensured that FMU Police remain a professional, responsive presence dedicated to protecting students, faculty, staff, and visitors. However, the dynamic nature of both the campus and the surrounding community demands continued progress. Expanded facilities, multiple downtown locations, and evolving safety challenges collectively require further enhancements to maintain the readiness and capacity expected of a modern university police department.

Contemporary safety expectations and today’s threat environment further elevate the demands on campus law enforcement. University police must be prepared for a wide spectrum of incidents: medical emergencies and mental-health crises; traffic and pedestrian safety across expanded roadways and parking; large-scale events at the Performing Arts Center; safety in health-science spaces; property crimes; and, though rare, critical incidents that require coordinated, immediate response with local, state, and federal partners. Meeting these obligations responsibly requires competitive officer pay to recruit and retain experienced professionals, additional officers to provide true 24/7 coverage across multiple sites, and updated equipment—vehicles capable of reliable inter-site response, interoperable communications, medical and lifesaving gear, modern de-escalation and less-lethal tools, and evidence-management technology.

Approximately 65% of these funds are planned to support the hiring of four (4) new sworn patrol officers to supplement eleven (11) current officers. Remaining funds (approximately 35%) are planned for annualized equipment expenses, including leasing and upfitting additional patrol vehicles as well as refitting current patrol vehicles. Additionally, funds will be used for body cameras, body armor, and radios for the new officers and end-of-use equipment replacements for existing officers.

Enhancing the FMU Campus Police Department is an essential investment that protects our students, employees, and guests; safeguards high-value academic and cultural assets; and preserves the welcoming environment that defines Francis Marion University’s mission.

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.

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FORM C – CAPITAL REQUEST

AGENCY PRIORITY	3 Provide the Agency Priority Ranking from the Executive Summary.
TITLE	James A. Rogers Library Renovation Provide a brief, descriptive title for this request.
AMOUNT	\$5,000,000 How much is requested for this project in FY 2026-2027? This amount should correspond to the total for all funding sources on the Executive Summary.
CPIP PRIORITY	This renovation is planned for inclusion in the University’s FY 2026-27 Comprehensive Permanent Improvement Plan (CPIP). Advancing funding now will allow FMU to modernize the library in line with statewide priorities for affordability, access, and academic excellence, ensuring that students, faculty, and community members benefit from updated facilities without further delay. 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	The University will obtain all required approvals, including Institutional Board of Trustees, Joint Bond Review Committee (JBRC), and State Fiscal Accountability Authority (SFAA), upon funding approval. 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	The James A. Rogers Library is a two-story, steel-framed masonry and precast stone facility located at the center of campus. - Year Constructed: 1971 - Year Last Renovated: 1975 (removal of temporary second-floor partitioning) - Year Enlarged: 1988 (J. Mitchell Reames Wing, dedicated 1989) - Gross Square Feet: 77,129 - Assignable Square Feet: 58,549 The library supports all undergraduate and graduate programs, houses over 398,000 volumes, provides access to ~35,000 e-journals, >343,000 e-books, 142 electronic databases, and is a member of PASCAL, a statewide academic library consortium providing access to over 12.5 million volumes. The University Archives, also housed in the library, preserve and provide access to culturally significant collections for the region. The renovations requested will extend the building’s useful life by several decades and position the facility to meet contemporary academic, research, and community needs. This request will fund: Mechanical/Infrastructure Upgrades – Replacement of two HVAC units: mezzanine unit and humidity control system for the 2nd floor. Interior Renovations

	• Replacement of carpet on the 2nd floor, Reames Wing, offices, and corridors (including stairs). • Removal of wallpaper and repainting throughout the building. • Updates to study rooms, including technology enhancements and aesthetic improvements. • Replacement of study carrels with modern, functional units for individual study. Exterior Improvements - Painting of the exterior precast concrete to extend building life and improve appearance.
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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?

SUMMARY	The Rogers Library is an essential academic hub for FMU students and faculty, serving as both a physical and digital learning environment. The original structure is now over 50 years old, and many of its systems and interior finishes are well past their service life. The proposed renovation focuses on critical HVAC replacement, interior refurbishment, exterior preservation, and improvements to student learning spaces. These upgrades will: • Ensure reliable environmental controls for student comfort and archival preservation. • Modernize study spaces with updated aesthetics and technology integration. • Improve the overall functionality and appearance of the facility. • Extend the useful life of the building and reduce future maintenance pressures. Timely investment will prevent further deterioration and ensure the Rogers Library remains a strong foundation for student achievement, faculty scholarship, and regional engagement.
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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	4 Provide the Agency Priority Ranking from the Executive Summary.
TITLE	Campus Infrastructure and HVAC Upgrades Provide a brief, descriptive title for this request.
AMOUNT	\$4,000,000 How much is requested for this project in FY 2026-2027? This amount should correspond to the total for all funding sources on the Executive Summary.
CPIP PRIORITY	This project will be included in the University’s Comprehensive Permanent Improvement Plan for FY 2026-27. Without this funding, FMU will be forced to defer critical maintenance, resulting in higher long-term costs, potential system failures, and disruption to critical campus activities. This request addresses urgent infrastructure needs that cannot be met within the annual maintenance budget. 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	The University will obtain all required approvals, including Institutional Board of Trustees, Joint Bond Review Committee (JBRC), and State Fiscal Accountability Authority (SFAA), upon funding approval. 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	Francis Marion University has been diligent in maintaining its facilities, but many core systems and infrastructure elements have reached or are approaching the end of their useful life. This request addresses the most pressing maintenance needs identified by Facilities Management, including HVAC system replacements, utility infrastructure, exterior lighting, athletic complex safety equipment, and pedestrian improvements. These investments will extend the useful life of campus facilities, improve energy efficiency, enhance campus safety, and reduce emergency repair costs. While this is not an exhaustive list, upon approval of the funds, the University’s A-1 will better prioritize each need at that time, with priority given to these areas of emphasis. Work will be phased to minimize disruption to academic programs and operations. This request will fund: HVAC Systems • Smith University Center – replace 2 air handler units • Ervin Dining Hall – replace 2 rooftop units • Hyman Fine Arts Center – replace 2 boilers • Replace Chiller #4 • Replace in-ground chilled water isolation valves throughout campus • Replace 20,000-gallon underground gas tank for boilers with 15,000-gallon above-ground tank Parking Lots and Sidewalks • Resurface Student Housing parking lot (Lot G) • Resurface Facilities Management parking lot (Lot H) • Repair/replace sidewalks near Stokes Administration Building

Campus Safety and Lighting - update exterior lighting throughout campus

Griffin Athletic Complex - replace netting for softball and soccer fields

Main Laundry Facility - repair/replace drainage and venting in student laundry room.

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 request will fund high-priority maintenance projects necessary to maintain safe, efficient, and accessible facilities for FMU students, faculty, staff, and visitors. The work addresses essential HVAC replacements and utility infrastructure, resurfacing of campus parking lots and sidewalks, modernization of campus lighting, athletic safety improvements, and repairs to residential facilities.

Together, these upgrades will reduce the risk of unplanned outages, improve energy efficiency, and create a more reliable and safe campus environment, ensuring FMU can continue to provide a supportive and functional setting for learning and campus life. As funding is available, the University will use the A-1 process to confirm and, if necessary, revise project priorities to ensure the most effective use of resources. While not exhaustive, these priorities represent the most pressing maintenance needs identified to date.

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
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AMOUNT	\$1,139,730
What is the General Fund 3% reduction amount? This amount should correspond to the reduction spreadsheet prepared by EBO.	

ASSOCIATED FTE REDUCTIONS	None
How many FTEs would be reduced in association with this General Fund reduction?	

PROGRAM / ACTIVITY IMPACT	The University would address the reduction by applying it to the operating budget within the I.A. E&G unrestricted general funds category by: - Reducing operating expenditures - Scaling back the scope of community engagement activities - Reassessing non-essential travel - Delaying the hiring of certain positions as determined by the University’s regular position review process - Reviewing existing contracts with vendors and service providers for possible adjustments. These steps are designed to preserve core academic instruction and student support, though some indirect effects may occur. Potential impacts could include fewer community events, reduced opportunities for travel-supported professional development, adjustments in contracted services, and longer timelines in filling certain staff positions.
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What programs or activities are supported by the General Funds identified?

	The University would address a reduction in General Fund Appropriations by applying it to the operating budget within the I.A. E&G unrestricted funds category. Reductions would be implemented in the following priority order to minimize disruption to academic instruction and student support services:
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SUMMARY

1. Non-Essential Travel – Scaling back professional development travel and non-mandatory conference attendance.

2. Community Engagement Activities – Reducing the frequency or scope of certain outreach programs, such as public lecture series or non-academic community events.

3. Operating Expenditures and Contracts – Deferring non-critical maintenance and supplies purchases and reviewing vendor/service contracts for potential adjustments.

4. Delayed Hiring – Postponing the filling of certain vacant staff and administrative positions following the University's semiannual position review process.

Method of Calculation: Identify non-essential or deferrable expenses within these categories, ensuring that the core mission of instruction and student support remains protected.

Likely Impacts: Reduced community programming, fewer travel-supported professional development opportunities, longer timelines for filling staff vacancies, and a curtailment of some services.

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

The University conducts twice-yearly reviews of open positions as part of an ongoing cost-management and workforce-planning process. Senior leadership evaluates instructional needs by academic discipline alongside essential administrative and student-service functions to determine which vacancies should be filled, frozen, reclassified, consolidated, or eliminated. This structured approach has, over time, resulted in targeted FTE reductions through attrition and selective elimination of vacancies, while prioritizing the protection of core instruction and student support. Savings realized are used to maintain student affordability by offsetting increases in fixed or essential costs and sustaining services central to the University's mission.

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?

Academic Programs Added or Expanded

FMU continues to develop and expand academic programs in response to regional and state workforce demands. The following new programs have been implemented in recent years:

New Programs:

- Criminal Justice, BA/BS (Fall 2024)
- Autism Studies, BS (Fall 2024)
- Doctor of Occupational Therapy, OTD (Fall 2024)
- Doctor of Psychology, Psy-D (Spring 2024)
- Montessori Early Childhood Education, MED (Fall 2023)
- Montessori Elementary Education, MED (Fall 2023)
- Mass Communication, BS (Fall 2022)
- Environmental Studies, BA (Fall 2022)
- Environmental Science, BS (Fall 2022)
- Elementary Education Accelerated Program, MAT (Fall 2022)
- Early Childhood Education Accelerated Program, MAT (Fall 2022)
- Multi-Categorical Special Education, MAT (Fall 2022)
- Psychiatric Nurse Practitioner, MSN (Fall 2020)
- Mechanical Engineering, BS (Fall 2019)
- Teaching and Learning, MED (Spring 2019)
- Master of Speech-Language Pathology, MSLP (Fall 2018)
- Doctor of Nursing Practice, DNP (Spring 2018)
- Master of Applied Psychology in Applied Behavioral Analysis (Fall 2017)

**EXPECTED
SAVINGS TO
BUSINESSES AND
CITIZENS**

New Tracks and Other Academic Credentials:

- Teaching Children of Poverty Track, MED Teaching and Learning (Spring 2025)
- Accounting, BBA, SEER Eligibility granted (Fall 2024)
- Education, BS, SEER Eligibility granted (Fall 2024)
- Interprofessional Certificate (Fall 2024)
- Psychiatric Nurse Practitioner Certificate (Fall 2024)
- Sociology, Criminology and Deviance Track, BS/BA (Fall 2024)
- Elementary Education, Non-Certification Track, BS (Spring 2024)
- Early Childhood Education, Non-Certification Track, BS (Spring 2024)
- English, Creative Writing Track, BA (Fall 2023)
- Management Information Systems, Systems Management and Systems Design Tracks, BBA (Fall 2021)
- Engineering Tech, Mechanical Engineering Option, BS (Fall 2021)
- Marketing, Digital Marketing Track, BBA (Fall 2021)
- Chemistry, Forensic Science, BS (Fall 2020)
- Biology, Pre-Professional Studies Option, BS (Fall 2019)
- Healthcare Informatics, BS (Fall 2018)
- History, Secondary Education, BS (Fall 2018)

Future and Proposed Programs:

- Physician Assistant Studies, MS (Fall 2026)
- Forestry, BS (Fall 2026)
- Social Work, BSW (Fall 2026)
- Education Leadership, MEd and Certificate (Spring 2027)

- Physical Therapy, DPT

These programs strengthen the regional workforce pipeline while expanding affordable, accessible options for students.

Clinical and Community Services Initiatives

FMU provides affordable, community-based services that benefit both citizens and students:

Autism Studies Center: The Center provides workshops to child-care facilities, school districts, police departments, and individuals on how to interact with individuals with Autism. They also provide, through a partnership with Duke, Sensory Tubs for FMU students during clinical education and current teachers in the Pee Dee region. The Center has also established collaborative programs with the Office of Special Education Services.

Speech-Language Pathology Clinic and Behavioral Health Clinic: These clinics offer low-cost services such as speech therapy, applied behavioral analysis, and autism treatment while serving as critical training facilities for graduate students. In the summer of 2025 SLP students provided critical therapy to K-12 students in the Pee Dee region to fill the gap during scheduled school vacation.

FMU Downtown Evening College: This program offers low-cost courses aimed at community engagement.

Partnerships with Hope Health and ACS Technologies: FMU has entered into partnerships to offer on-site MBA courses to employees at Hope Health and ACS Technologies, demonstrating the University's commitment to serving the community and local businesses through accessible education.

Graduate Program Revisions

FMU continues to refine its graduate programs to enhance accessibility and meet critical workforce needs:

- The new **Master of Education, Teaching Children of Poverty Track** (Spring 2025) provides a specialized advanced degree option for all prospective students, and completers may request a TCOP Endorsement from the SCDE.
- Graduate programs in Business have created customized program delivery to partner with businesses seeking to provide advanced education to their employees.
- Graduate programs in Education and Business have transitioned to online delivery, reducing costs and increasing flexibility for students.
- A new **Post-Master's Certificate in Psychiatric Mental Health Nurse Practitioner (PMHNP)** (Fall 2024) provides advanced training for MSN-prepared nurses, addressing shortages in mental health providers.

Through these initiatives, FMU remains dedicated to operational efficiency, student success, and addressing regional workforce needs.

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:	
	☐	Repeal or revision of regulations.
	☐	Reduction of agency fees or fines to businesses or citizens.
	☐	Greater efficiency in agency services or reduction in compliance burden.
	☒	Other
METHOD OF CALCULATION	N/A	
Describe the method of calculation for determining the expected cost or time savings to businesses or citizens.		
REDUCTION OF FEES OR FINES	N/A	
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	N/A	
Which regulations does the agency intend to amend or delete? What is the enabling authority for the regulation?		
SUMMARY	Francis Marion University has undertaken multiple initiatives to reduce the financial burden on students and families while supporting regional workforce development. Program consolidations and eliminations have streamlined operations and improved efficiency. New and expanded programs in healthcare, education, business, and STEM fields address critical state and regional needs.	
	Through its clinics, employer partnerships, and accessible graduate programs, FMU provides affordable services to citizens, while preparing students for high-demand careers. These measures benefit South Carolina businesses by strengthening the talent pipeline, and they reduce costs for families through affordable, accessible education.	
	Francis Marion University remains committed to affordability, efficiency, and student success, ensuring that higher education continues to be a driver of economic growth in the Pee Dee and across the state.	
	Provide an explanation of the proposal and its positive results on businesses or citizens. How will the request affect agency operations?	

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FORM H – TUITION MITIGATION (PROVISO 117.178)

TITLE	Tuition Mitigation Proviso 117.178
AMOUNT	\$2,925,000 <i>What is the amount needed for Tuition Mitigation for FY27? 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, 2026 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 2026-27.</i>
EXPLANATION OF METHODOLOGY	Impact on Students and Families FMU has maintained one of the lowest tuition rates among South Carolina’s four-year universities. With 93% of FMU students coming from within the state and many being first-generation college students, affordability remains central to the University’s mission. Without tuition mitigation, FMU would be forced to raise in-state tuition to offset inflationary costs. By sustaining a tuition freeze, the University preserves affordability and access for students and families across the Pee Dee region and throughout South Carolina. Methodology Applying the August 2025 HEPI forecast (3.7 percent) to the University’s annual expense budget yields approximately \$2.7 million. Adding \$225,000 for categories that historically outpace HEPI (utilities, maintenance contracts, insurances, etc.) brings the total amount to hold tuition flat to \$2,925,000. No new positions are being requested with this funding; existing staff will continue to meet institutional needs. Waivers & Abatements 2024–2025 total waivers and abatements were \$2,919,000, comprised of about \$2,092,000 in non-resident and athletic abatements, \$918,000 in state-mandated waivers (Veterans & Line-of-Duty), and \$65,000 in 4% waivers. - These programs support student access, competitiveness, retention, and compliance with state mandates. Importantly, FMU’s tuition mitigation request is entirely separate from these programs. This request addresses inflationary pressures and does not seek to backfill waiver or abatement revenue losses.

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Please provide a detailed explanation of the methods used to estimate the FY27 tuition mitigation needs as well as the number of enrolled in-state and out-of-state undergraduates. 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	Cost Savings • FMU has consolidated and, where appropriate, eliminated low-enrollment programs to reduce duplication and concentrate resources where student demand and workforce needs are strongest. • The University conducts twice-yearly reviews of open positions, evaluating instructional, administrative, and student-service needs to determine which vacancies should be filled, frozen, reclassified, consolidated, or eliminated. • These measures have produced targeted FTE reductions through attrition and selective vacancy elimination, while prioritizing the protection of core instruction and student support. • Savings from program and position adjustments have been reinvested to stabilize operating costs, offset increases in fixed or essential expenses, and maintain affordability without compromising instructional quality. Collectively, these efforts reflect sustained cost-management practices that preserve affordability and services central to the University’s mission. Future Cost Savings Plans • FMU will continue consolidating or eliminating low-enrollment programs where feasible, reducing duplication and aligning resources with student demand and workforce needs. • Twice-yearly reviews of open positions will remain an important workforce-management practice, allowing senior leadership to evaluate vacancies for potential reclassification, consolidation, or elimination while protecting instructional quality and student support. • The University will continue to implement energy-efficiency improvements, particularly in HVAC and lighting systems, to mitigate rising utility costs and generate long-term operational savings. • These strategies represent ongoing efforts to control costs, offset unavoidable increases in fixed expenses, and sustain affordability for students.
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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.

LOW ENROLLMENT	Academic Program Reductions or Eliminations Francis Marion University has made strategic adjustments to its academic offerings to ensure operational efficiency and meet regional needs. The following outlines key program reductions and consolidations: Program Consolidations: In Spring of 2025, the BS in Biology, Secondary Education program was moved from the School of Education to the Biology Department aligning it with other secondary education programs within the university. This restructuring also provides students with the opportunity for STEM scholarship funding. In the 2019-2020 academic year, FMU consolidated the Music Industry and Theatre Arts programs into a single Performing Arts program with concentrations in Music Industry or Theatre Arts. This consolidation was driven by shared resources and student overlap, ultimately benefiting both programs and streamlining resources. The BS in Art Education was moved from the School of Education to the Visual Arts program, aligning it with other secondary education programs within the Department of Fine Arts. This restructuring meets a critical regional need for art educators and uses resources more efficiently. In Spring 2018, FMU consolidated the BA/BS in Economics and the BBA in Economics due to significant curricular overlap. The School of Business now promotes the BBA in Economics as the primary offering. Program Eliminations: Middle Grades Education and Mass Communications/Sports Information were eliminated in 2022. Middle Grades Education students can now pursue an add-on certification while earning their Elementary Education degree, reallocating resources to areas of need without requiring additional faculty hires.
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The **BS Physics** and **BS Biology Environmental Science** tracks were eliminated in Summer 2022, replaced by new **BS Environmental Science** and **BA Environmental Studies** programs to better meet environmental science needs. **German program** (Spring 2017)

Student Enrollment – Statistics regarding student enrollment for Fall 2025 are pending finalization. FMU does not anticipate a measurable decline in in-state undergraduate enrollment and enrollment trends were not used in calculating this tuition mitigation request.

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**

FMU seeks to maintain adequate fund balances to address unforeseen financial challenges without needing immediate emergency support from the State for critical operations, such as payroll and utility payments.

FY25	Fund Balance	Expense Budget	Fund Balance % of Budget
Annual Operations Budget	6,720,694	77,053,300	
Capital & Maintenance Reserve Fund	12,835,110	2,514,995	
Auxiliary & FMU Designated accounts	4,195,623	5,489,398	
Total	23,751,427	85,057,693	27.9%

Restricted funds, including federal funds and capital funding, are restricted by the donor or grantor; these funds are not available for university general operating expenses and are excluded. Auxiliary & FMU Designated accounts include auxiliary accounts and uncommitted FMU Designated funds.

The Capital & Maintenance Reserve Fund is funded through student fees as prescribed by the FMU Board of Trustees. It supports planned and unplanned maintenance projects, small capital needs, and other identified priorities. This is an adequate reserve given the rising costs of maintaining and repairing campus infrastructure.

FMU considers these fund balances to be both appropriate and prudent,

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	especially considering the potential for disruptions caused by unexpected events. These resources provide flexibility to sustain key academic services during emergencies, ensuring operational continuity and resilience thus allowing the University to respond to unforeseen challenges, while supporting ongoing maintenance needs and securing the continuous delivery of essential services.
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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.