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

Fiscal Year 2026-27
Agency Budget Plan

FORM A - BUDGET PLAN SUMMARY

OPERATING REQUESTS ***(FORM B1)***	**For FY 2026-27, my agency is (mark "X"):**	
	X	Requesting General Fund Appropriations.
	X	Requesting Federal/Other Authorization.
		Not requesting any changes.

NON-RECURRING REQUESTS ***(FORM B2)***	**For FY 2026-27, 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 2026-27, my agency is (mark "X"):**	
	X	Requesting funding for Capital Projects.
		Not requesting any changes.

PROVISOS ***(FORM D)***	**For FY 2026-27, 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 2026-27 Agency Budget Plan, which is complete and accurate to the extent of my knowledge.

	Agency Director	***Board or Commission Chair***
SIGN/DATE:	Michael Amiridis 9/14/25	Thad H. Westbrook 9/28/25
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	3,823,074	0	0	0	3,823,074	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
2	C - Capital	Deferred Maintenance – Campus-wide Facilities and Equipment	16,000,000	0	0	0	16,000,000	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
3	C - Capital	Penland Building Façade and Welcome Center Renovation	10,000,000	0	0	0	10,000,000	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
4	B1 - Recurring	Federal and Other Funds Authorization	0	2,000,000	0	0	2,000,000	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
TOTALS			29,823,074	2,000,000	0	0	31,823,074	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: $3,823,074** **Federal: $0** **Other: $0** **Total: $3,823,074**

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**

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

FACTORS ASSOCIATED WITH THE REQUEST

	Mark "X" for all that apply:
X	Change in cost of providing current services to existing program audience
X	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:
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?

RECIPIENTS OF FUNDS	These funds will benefit the University of South Carolina Aiken, its student body of over 4,000 and the faculty/administrative and support 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 $3,823,074 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. We take pride in the fact that we have managed this with no increase in tuition since the 2018-19 budget year. USC Aiken continues to strive to maximize its utilization of available 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. 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.

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		
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FORM B1 – RECURRING OPERATING REQUEST

AGENCY PRIORITY	**4**

Provide the Agency Priority Ranking from the Executive Summary.

TITLE	**Federal and Other Funds Authorization**

Provide a brief, descriptive title for this request.

AMOUNT	**General: $0** **Federal: $2,000,000** **Other: $0** **Total: $2,000,000**

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**

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

FACTORS ASSOCIATED WITH THE REQUEST

Mark "X" for all that apply:	
X	Change in cost of providing current services to existing program audience
X	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:	
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 is to increase spending authorization for Federal Funds, which support for Education, Training, and Human Development as well as Public Infrastructure and Economic Development.

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?

RECIPIENTS OF	Use of these funds benefits the USC Aiken student body and the faculty/administrative staff who serve them.

FUNDS	

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	Aiken's Federal Funds are comprised primarily of Student Financial Aid (mostly Pell Grants, but also work study, SEOG and Teach grants). Research Funds are the second largest Federal source and have seen recent increases as the result of continued gains in nuclear science related grants. Preliminary figures for Fall 2025 indicate undergrad enrollment will be up for the second year in which should lead to Student Financial Aid expenditures and corresponding authorizations. With a number of Department of Energy related facilities proximate to USC Aiken and renewed interest in collaboration, the University believes that prospects continue to be good for increased Federal grant activity. Federal $2M • Increased enrollment • Increased activity in research • Increased Pell grants • Rising mandatory costs such as: • State mandate and/or market salary increases • Employee fringe benefits including retirement and health insurance • Property and liability insurance • Cost of materials, travel and facilities maintenance costs • Utility costs

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		
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FORM C – CAPITAL REQUEST

AGENCY PRIORITY	2

Provide the Agency Priority Ranking from the Executive Summary.

TITLE	Deferred Maintenance – Campus-wide Facilities and Equipment

Provide a brief, descriptive title for this request.

AMOUNT	$16,000,000

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 request is made to fund items tracked on the university's Facilities Condition Assessment to provide a safe and productive learning environment on campus. Life cycle maintenance needs have not been included on the CPIP.

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	No approvals have been obtained to date for these projects. Approvals would be obtained as required.

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 request will address many existing facilities needs including restroom upgrades, roof replacements, HVAC equipment replacement, flooring replacement, painting, elevator refurbishments, various budling envelope and window repairs and replacement to prevent water infiltration. Additionally, this will include electrical panel replacements, emergency and exit light replacements, boiler replacement, door and lock replacements, and sidewalk and landscaping repairs. Finally, this request also includes road and parking lot repaving and striping.

Here is a cost estimate by category:

SUMMARY	Roofing projects $1,500,000 HVAC $1,850,000 Interior finish $2,500,000 Building Envelope $1,900,000 Exterior infrastructure $800,000 Plumbing/Restrooms $2,450,000 Elevators $500,000 Electrical $500,000 Roads, Parking lots and infrastructure $4,000,000

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	3

Provide the Agency Priority Ranking from the Executive Summary.

TITLE	Penland Building Façade and Welcome Center Renovation

Provide a brief, descriptive title for this request.

AMOUNT	$10,000,000

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	Currently on CPIP as Project 3 of 5 for 2026-27 for $2,000,000. However, this expanded project will be added to CPIP at the next available opportunity (April 2026) as Priority 1 for FY 2026-27

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 an Admissions Welcome 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

SUMMARY	across the Division of Enrollment Management in coordination with the Bursar's Office. As an aid to both recruitment and retention efforts, the One-Stop staff will be able to solve problems, answer questions, provide intake for paperwork, and walk students through any process at the university. At USC Aiken, this will bring to an end "the higher education shuffle" which frequently occurs on college campuses as students 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 customer service experience while providing 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 most importantly, support the critical recruitment and retention efforts which are vital to the continued success 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.

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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

$838,580

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 the 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 the 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

$200,000 – 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.

$200,000 – 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 as well as related projects.

$200,000 – 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.

$254,432 – 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.

$854,432 – Grand Total

Calculation is based on recurring state appropriation funding totaling $28,481,052 currently included in the FY25-26 University of South Carolina Aiken Budget received from the State as provided by the Executive Budget Office.

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:**	
		Repeal or revision of regulations.
		Reduction of agency fees or fines to businesses or citizens.
	X	Greater efficiency in agency services or reduction in compliance burden.
		Other

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 included 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:

SUMMARY	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. 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?

AGENCY NAME:	University of South Carolina Aiken		
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FORM H – TUITION MITIGATION (PROVISO 117.178)

TITLE	Tuition Mitigation Proviso 117.178

AMOUNT	$3,823,074

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.

EXPLANATION OF METHODOLOGY

USC Aiken's calculation is based on average appropriation dollars per South Carolina Resident undergraduate student across institutions as shown below.

	FY 25 Base	Fall 2024 UG	In state	$ per in state
Citadel	$27,704,744	2,737	1,827	$15,164
Coastal	$34,765,085	10,811	4,532	$7,671
Charleston	$56,595,002	10,880	5,720	$9,894
Francis Marion	$35,701,237	3,692	3,382	$10,556
SC State	$31,315,787	2,950	2,475	$12,653
USCA	$24,690,741	3,287	2,727	$9,054
USCB	$15,930,600	2,158	1,664	$9,574
USCU	$35,287,011	4,478	4,078	$8,653
Winthrop	$37,329,627	3,969	3,429	$10,886
			Average	$10,456
			Expected based on average per SC Resident student	$28,513,815
			Amount by which USCA lags the average	$1,402
			Current USCA Appropriation	$24,690,741
			Requested TM increase	$3,823,074

Unofficial Fall 2025 Undergraduate Enrollment:

Resident 2,841
Non-res 476
Total 3,317

AGENCY NAME:	University of South Carolina Aiken		
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Fee waivers:

4% Fee Waiver Information: USC Aiken

Total		Resident		NonResident	
# Students	Amount	# Students	Amount	# Students	Amount
375	583,217.00	237	524,708.00	138	58,509.00

Abatements:
FY25 totaled $2,849,625.

Please provide a detailed explanation of the methods used to estimate the FY27 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

AGENCY NAME:	University of South Carolina Aiken		
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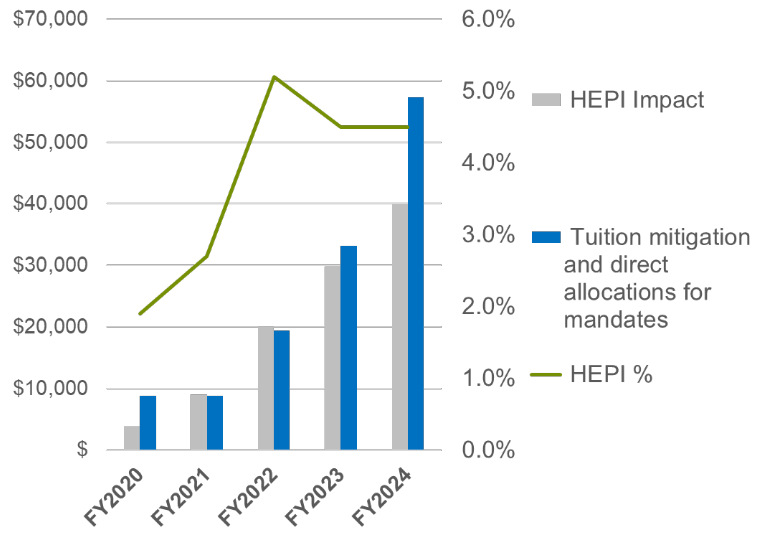
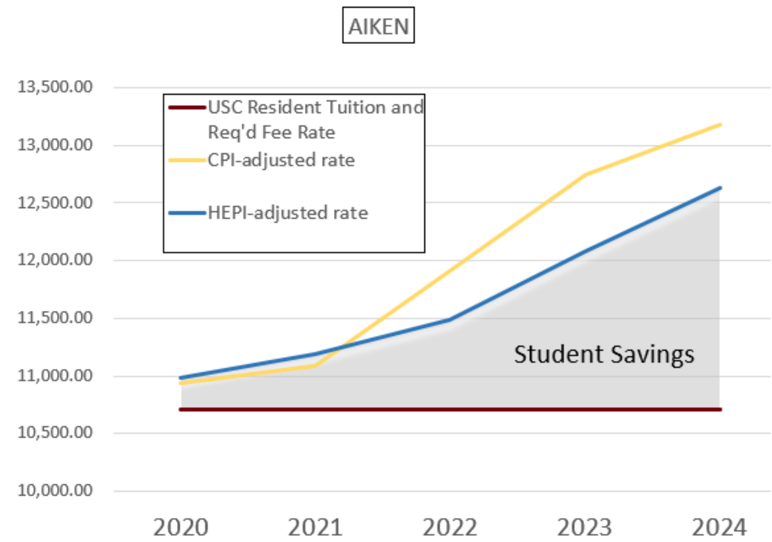


HEPI provides an objective estimate of inflationary pressures specific to Higher Education. This graph applies the index to USC's Comprehensive and Palmetto Regional Colleges total education and general budgets (excluding Auxiliaries) since 2020, providing an approximation of cumulative *increased cost 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.

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



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 8 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. University leadership will continue to focus on the optimization of Faculty and staff productivity. Funds will be reallocated from declining programs to fund mission critical initiatives prioritized for highest and best use in educating South Carolinians.

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

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 completion of our new Academic Success Center in the Gregg-Graniteville Library is helping 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-$23,627

Institutional Breakdown:

Academic & Operational $19,384; Auxiliaries $4,242

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, while no formal policy exists, we strive to maintain 3-6 months of operating funds in the institution's fund balance to mitigate risks within our 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.