March 21, 2016

Dear Campus Colleagues,

Have you noticed the exciting renovation projects all over campus?

As you may recall, a couple of years ago a committee of faculty, staff, and students helped update the University’s master plan, and I'm thrilled we're moving forward on some of the improvements, including:

-- Pedestrian Bridge across Robert M. Bell Parkway: I'm looking forward to walking across it with all of you late fall.

-- Equestrian Fence on University Parkway: It really ties USC Aiken to the heart of our town, and helps showcase our beautiful circular entrance with our recently added horse statue, Spirit, and the fountain, made possible by a very generous donor. Once painted, it will look really handsome!

-- Fireplace by the Natatorium: This beautiful rock structure is almost complete. Once complete feel free to gather there with friends-- or stop there for a break.

-- Biology Greenhouse behind The Downs: We received a grant which allows our students to conduct very interesting research. Our own faculty actually built the greenhouse, and our operations outfitted it with electricity and running water.

-- Quad Furniture: Once the beautiful azaleas start blooming on the quad, sit and enjoy your lunch or morning Starbucks.

The best news about these key components of our master plan is that they have not been funded by tuition increases. The improvements to date have been funded by donors, grants, improved funding from the state, and operational efficiencies which makes them even more enjoyable for our faculty, staff, and students!

Be on the look out for more! The USC Aiken operations team has a full summer planned, so you'll see some changes if you're on campus during the break -- and most certainly in the fall:

-- Engineering Lab & Office Renovations: We’re creating a new engineering lab in Penland, building additional office space and converting the math study room into a classroom. Deans from those departments who will be impacted by this project met with the architect recently, giving him critical insight on their requirements for these spaces.
-- Ruth Patrick Mechanical Upgrades and Roof Repairs: We're replacing the original HVAC condensers, water heater, and boilers, and roof repairs will be made to the glass curtain wall and other areas affected by the leaks in the roof. We are currently receiving bids for these projects, which will ultimately enhance the experience of our visitors, some of which might be prospective students!

-- Penland Building Mechanical Upgrades: It's time to replace the 20-year-old, 225-ton chiller, 125-gallon hot water heater, four chilled water valves, and make upgrades to the energy management system. And we're doing just that -- right after spring semester finals!

-- Replacement of Classroom Furniture: Come fall, many of your classrooms in the Penland, B&E, and Science buildings, as well as the Ruth Patrick Science Education Center, will have brand new furniture. What a great way to kick off a new school year!

Thanks again to the dedicated team of faculty, staff, and students who worked diligently on updating our master plan. Like you, I look forward to watching how their efforts transform our campus!

Sincerely,

Sandra J. Jordan
Chancellor