Dear Faculty and Staff,

As you know, the budget season in the state of South Carolina is underway, so on Tuesday I appeared before the House Ways and Means Committee to present an update on USC Aiken and make our case for new funding that would be included in our 2019 budget.

In previous correspondence, I outlined that we are asking for $1.2 million in recurring money to support our academic mission. We also requested new dollars to support special initiatives related to student success (retention and progression initiatives). Recurring funding for these two projects would finally bring our funding up to the average received by our sister comprehensive institutions in the state. Our funding is one of the three lowest per student in the state, but, instead of asking for parity, our strategy this year is to focus on our regional impact, our performance metrics as a university, and on the need for new dollars to support our core mission: providing an excellent education and supporting student success.

The breakdown of the $1.2 million request is $830,000 for new faculty positions and increased operating dollars for academic programs, and $370,000 for student support initiatives.

Additionally, for the 2019 budget, we are requesting $1.3 million in increased federal expenditures. This is a 25% increase in what we are currently authorized to pull down from federal grants. This request is basically a technical adjustment and does not impact the S.C. budget or utilize tax dollars. The way the state budget is structured, if we receive more federal dollars than our budget is authorized to receive, we have to request an adjustment during the budget process. We made a similar request last year and were granted the increase, so I fully expect to be granted the increase in authorization again this year.

The $1.3 million in increased federal expenditures will allow us to receive the additional federal funding, primarily Pell grants, that our students are qualified to receive and that our student populations desperately need to achieve their dream of a college education. It will also give us an opportunity to accept additional federal grants (research) and federal funding.

Finally, we are asking for one-time funding support to upgrade our physical plant. This includes the following:
**Penland Administration Building--$3.5 million**
The Penland Administration Building, the oldest building on our campus, built in the 70’s, has a limping dinosaur of an HVAC system. Through good stewardship, the HVAC system has held together long beyond its natural life. It must be replaced. The cost is based on the estimates we received and reflects the massive scope of the project and some unique architectural challenges that Penland requires. The university has already invested significantly in this project, replacing a chiller and making other updates to keep the system running. This is the fourth year in a row we’ve requested assistance on this project. An added benefit of replacing this antique system is that a modern HVAC system will be more efficient, use less fuel, and be more green.

**Gregg Graniteville Library Updates--$8.5 million**
This renovation project to the university’s library would update the space to create a learning commons that brings together library, technology, advising, and student support services under one roof. It will also give us the opportunity to free up space currently used for some of these functions in the academic buildings. The total renovation cost is approximately $10 million. So, in addition to the request for $8.5 million, the institution would contribute $500,000 and fundraise $1 million more to make this project work.

**Relocate Supply and Maintenance Building--$1.5 million**
Our last several campus Master Plans include moving the Supply and Maintenance Building away from the heart of the campus. The current space will be repurposed to provide space more aligned with the academic core of the campus. The move will also allow the university to create a larger space for operations to use as a lay-down yard.

I’m pleased to say that several members of our local delegation sat in on the USC Aiken presentation on Tuesday. When you see Representatives Blackwell, Taylor and Clyburn, please thank them for their demonstrable support of our university. Their colleagues on the House Ways and Means Committee commented publically on their attendance and support.

Carolina Day is coming up on January 31. After that, I’ll be at the statehouse for individual meetings through the month of February and then preparing to meet with the Senate Finance Committee.

While it is early in the state budget process, the fact that this is a university committed to providing South Carolinians greater opportunity through a quality, yet affordable, education gives us all a very positive story to tell.

Best wishes,

**Sandra J. Jordan**
Chancellor