Dear Campus Colleagues,

It is with personal regret but gratitude and warm wishes that I announce Dr. Jeff Priest’s intent to retire, effective June 30.

Dr. Priest has served the university for more than 30 years, most recently as our Executive Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs (EVCAA) and Provost.

He was the first individual to serve in the enhanced EVCAA position, which was restructured to reflect the provost model requested by the university during strategic planning in 2012. His portfolio of responsibilities expanded to include the offices that directly support academics, as well as the Schools and Colleges on campus.

For the past six years, Dr. Priest has served in this critical position -- one that is important to all of us -- providing steady, principled leadership for our faculty and academic staff, wise counsel to me, and a valued colleague on the Cabinet.
During his tenure at USC Aiken, Jeff established the Ruth Patrick Science Education Center. He has secured more than $22 million in grants for the university, and as EVCAA, he supported the creation of engaging and relevant academic programs, enhanced student support, and championed our students’ academic success.

True to his humble nature, Jeff will be the first to say that any success enjoyed and accomplishments achieved are due to the collaboration and hard work of colleagues. While he won’t take any credit, we all know he leaves a tremendous legacy and has made an indelible mark on this institution.

We are indebted to his vision and commitment for propelling us to our present position among South Carolina’s Comprehensive Universities. Jeff’s work has assured our continued success. A snapshot of his impressive accomplishments can be found at: https://intranet.usca.edu/ooc/

We are grateful to Jeff and his wife, Ellen, for their unwavering support of this university. While we wish them continued success and happiness beyond the classrooms of USC Aiken, we know Dr. Priest has set a strong foundation for continued success.

A search committee will be formed, and a national search will be conducted in the fall when we are all back on campus, refreshed from the summer break.

Until the search is complete, in the interim, Dr. Daren Timmons will assume the role of acting EVCAA on July 1.

When you see Dr. Priest on campus, please congratulate him on his achievements; thank him for his commitment to the university and our mission; and join me in wishing him all the best in his retirement.

Sincerely,

Sandra J. Jordan
Chancellor