

Palmetto College (Central Office)

Service Blueprint

Note: As home to both associate and baccalaureate degrees, Palmetto College Central Office, USC Palmetto College Columbia, and the four Palmetto College Campuses produce [Blueprints for Academic Excellence](#). The following report represents a narrower scope, focusing on PC Central in its role in providing leadership and direction to the academic endeavors of Palmetto College.

Vision: USC Palmetto College will be a destination of choice for students seeking affordable and flexible access to the resources of UofSC, by creating innovative and inclusive pathways focused on student success that nurture critical thinking, civic engagement, and career development.

Source: Final Report of the Focus 2023 PC College Strategic Planning Committee (representing an effort to align Palmetto College - as accredited with USC Columbia - with the Columbia-based Focus Carolina 2023 plan). This plan has now been succeeded by the Path to Excellence plan (hereafter PtE), which is in its initial implementation phase. Therefore, goals listed below are PC-specific refinements of Focus Carolina 2023 goals as well as initial efforts attempting to transition to the new goal structure and language. All contribute to the PtE vision of UofSC being the nation's preeminent flagship University.

Mission: Palmetto College exists to leverage the resources of the USC System and provide accessible, affordable, and flexible degrees for all South Carolinians. In doing so, Palmetto College endeavors to follow the [USC System Mission Statement](#). This mission encompasses, either directly or by implication, most of the PtE's mission statement tenets, most specifically empowering education, creative engagement, and selfless service.

I. Executive Summary:

A. Strengths: Palmetto College centers its efforts around six primary goals: Enrollment, Student Success, Faculty Excellence, Commitment to Service, Organizational and Financial Health, and Planning. With the PtE now serving as the University's "master plan" going forward, we will eliminate Planning as a free-standing goal in recognition of our alignment efforts with the PtE. A lean, but professional, flexible and dedicated faculty and staff brought about accomplishments for 19/20 within these five areas including: record enrollment; increased student achievement as measured by graduation and transfer; significant faculty hiring and tenure/promotion, considerable service activity; prudent fiscal management. Specific discussion of these accomplishments is addressed in the Goals section below. In addition to these accomplishments, PC also accomplished: 1. The successful launch of the Palmetto Pathways Program (54 students with a success rate of 93%), 2. The establishment, through working with fellow Chancellors and Deans, another new fully online bachelor's degree (with five more launching in fall '20). 3. The conclusion of the Regional Palmetto Colleges Salary Study Report which resulted in salary adjustments for 71 individuals, 4. The addition of new Dual Credit/Early College sites by partnering K-12 School Systems, 5. Continued focused on enhanced service to military

populations by coordinating with the President's Office to deliver services and programs, 6. The installation of John Catalano to the Associate Provost role fulltime as he relinquished his joint appointment as Dean of the Union campus to Interim Dean Randy Lowell, 7. The appointment of Joe Mews as Assistant Dean for Enrollment Management, a central office position created to assure coordination of enrollment efforts across PC. 8. The hiring of Ron Cox as Dean of Palmetto College Columbia as well as Associate Dean for Diversity Equity and Inclusion, 9. The successful management of the COVID -19 spring shutdown and subsequent efforts to stabilize enrollments and operations for fall 20, 10. The continued hosting of the University of Possibilities Program, which bring 6th -8th grade students from underserved areas of the state to the regional Palmetto College campuses and connects with them as middle school students 11. The successful completion of PC's contribution to the SACSCOC reaffirmation report, submitted in September and 12. For a second consecutive year, recognition of all four campuses by Niche.com among its "[Top Five Best Community Colleges in South Carolina](#)" (No.1 USC Lancaster, No. 2 USC Sumter, No. 3 USC Union and No. 5 USC Salkehatchie). In addition, USC Lancaster once again received national recognition as the [No. 2 community college in the United States](#).

B. Weaknesses (and how we are addressing) : 1. Funding: Loss of Evening Program and Continuing Education several years ago resulted in a frozen, flat budget. We have and continue to request restoration of prior funding. 2. Space: PC Central is housed in three locations which, combined with the launch of the Pathways program, makes optimal functioning challenging. We continue to work with appropriate officials to centralize operations. 3. Administrative processes: Obstacles to admission of Ft. Jackson and BOL/BLS students due to strict application of traditional student standards. We continue to work with appropriate officials to address this critical issue.

C. Key Issues: In addition to those listed in the Weaknesses section above, the challenges to enrollments and funding include: 1. The "flat" pool of traditional high school seniors, which creates increased competition from other state institutions, both two and four year and 2. Pressures to accelerate alternative delivery modes and obtain student buy-in brought on by the challenges of addressing, COVID-19, both immediate and long term. 3. Current State regulations regarding expansion/creation of new programs and dual enrollment offerings.

II. Goals. Under the direction of the Chancellor, Palmetto College has, since 2013, followed five main goals (Note: Planning has been a sixth – see above discussion as to its absence here). Listed below is each goal along with its "linkage"(in parentheses) to one or more of the PC Focus 2023 "refined" goals (as described above), that mirror the Focus Carolina 2023 plan goals. All are ongoing, continual goals. A cross walk to the Path to Excellence plan (PtE) is included as we begin our tack to this University-wide Strategic Plan.

Enrollment (PC Focus 2023 goals addressed: Educating future leaders and thinkers through affordable, flexible, and quality educational opportunities; Assure efficiency, accountability, and fiscal responsibility by continually examining operations, growing programs, and engaging in

continuous planning efforts. *PtE Strategic Priorities* addressed: 1. The Best Students, 4. Increase Diversity and 5. Affordability and Accessibility)

Enrollments in Palmetto College encompass three groups: “traditional-age” students (including dual enrollment students as well as the PC Columbia Palmetto Pathway students) at the four campuses; online degree students in all majors of PC; and “2 + 2” students, who are students in four year programs of the baccalaureate system, but take their courses at the PC campuses.

Progress: Traditional: HC enrollments: Freeze date numbers for F20 reflect a HC enrollment of 5,151, exceeding 5,000 again for the second time in history.

Progress: Online: HC enrollments: Freeze date F20 numbers reflect continued growth to 1,272.

Progress: 2 + 2: HC enrollments: As the online programs have become available and increasingly popular, the long-available 2 + 2 programs are experiencing “positive competition,” therefore producing flat numbers. Preliminary numbers for F20 reveal HC enrollment of 104.

Summation of the three groups: F20 – overall PC freeze date enrollment stands at 6,527, PC Campuses enrollments exceed 5,000 for the second consecutive year, PC Online enrollment exceeds 1,200 for the first time.

Discussion: As stated, enrollment growth is an ongoing goal. The past several years has brought a concerted effort to provide central office guidance, leadership, and resources to this area. Enrollment management practices continue to develop as central financial aid, marketing, recruiting, and student success units coordinate directly with corresponding campus staff to provide consistent, efficient support to all prospective and current PC students. To inform these practices, data analytics and predictive modeling have been integrated to provide ongoing enrollment monitoring and forecasting through an enrollment management dashboard, which accounts for historical trends and real-time key performance indicators generated from the shared Palmetto College CRM and USC System SIS.

An emphasis on providing dual enrollment opportunities to students in or near each of our campus service areas (which results in substantial cost of higher education savings to these students and their families) continued for the campuses in F20 with HC enrollment growth of 8.9% over F19. Five sites were added for FY19, with several more added in FY20. The Palmetto Pathways program continued for its second year with 48 new HC enrollments (included in the Lancaster HC number). After a very successful inaugural year in which 46 of the 54 successfully completed the program, PC Columbia is gearing up to both grow and enhance this program for year three (see Programmatic Priority request for this program in Success section below). A fourteenth online program was launched in fall 2019 and five more began in fall 2020, bringing the total number of PC online degree completion offerings to 19. Enhanced service to the military population was solidified this year through direct coordination with the President’s Office as it established and staffed the Senior Director of Strategic Partnership for Military and Government Programs position. These military-focused services will specifically address opportunities to enhance the marketing of our lower tuition rate for active duty personnel and flexible degree paths (online and blended modalities), while also exploring ways to expand

access to USC through a more accommodating admissions and enrollment process. Our commitment to these efforts is reflected in our Programmatic Request 1 – Attract students in the military with online courses. See link in *Initiative Solicitation* section at the end of this report for full information. Finally, this fall marked the launch of *South Carolina Online*, the new system online umbrella that encompasses all online programs across the system. Palmetto College is an active participant in this initiative, and we anticipate increased enrollments through this more visible, integrated “face” on online education at UofSC. Further, this integration allows us to align our counting methodology for student headcount with OIRAA’s methodology for counting students in online programs, therefore assuring better accuracy.

Also of importance is the assurance that efforts are made to attract and support underrepresented student groups. Although encompassing all campus stakeholders (that is, faculty, staff, students and the public), Programmatic Request 2 – Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Across Palmetto College, with its primary focus on student attraction and support, represents our efforts to accelerate our current efforts. See link in *Initiative Solicitation* section at the end of this report for full information.

Student Success (*PC Focus 2023* goals addressed: Assembling and supporting a diverse world-class faculty dedicated to teaching, scholarship, and student success; Assure efficiency, accountability, and fiscal responsibility by continually examining operations, growing programs, and engaging in continuous planning efforts. *PtE Strategic Priority* addressed: 1. The Best Students)

Student Success is vital to PC, both from an enrollment management perspective, but also from a moral imperative for those to whom we provide educational opportunities that others may not. Because of our diverse program mix; that is, a blend of first-time full-time students, transfer students into our online programs, and dual enrollment students, tracking progress presents a challenge in terms of both definitions of success and cohort establishment.

Concerning the former, the best measure we have found for our regular, FTFT students at the PC campuses is Success Rate (a measure established when the state’s public institutions were under performance funding legislation - roughly 1996-2005) which is defined as tracking students for three years (150% of time for associate degree attainment) with success being defined as 1. graduated, 2. transferred to another institution or 3. still enrolled. These three possible positive outcomes best capture the varied educational goals/challenges our students face (example: a student’s desired baccalaureate major curriculum requires him/her to leave one of our campuses after one year as the courses offered at the campuses do not include those in the curriculum. In this case, transfer would be considered success). In regard to transfer (also referred to as migration), successfully remaining in higher education in pursuit of desired educational attainment goals is a key priority for Palmetto College. For online students, the measure would be eventual degree attainment, given that transfer into the program and subsequent enrollment status with a wide dispersion of hours earned and FT versus PT enrollment. For dual enrollment students, success is measured by subsequent transfer (migration) into postsecondary institutions – particularly the USC System.

Finally, having well-qualified, trained, and compensated faculty contributes to student success. Progress in this area will be discussed below.

Progress: FTFT students: The CHE calculated Success Rate for the four PC campuses combined increased from 58.0% for the 2014 cohort (reported in 2018 in the CHE Statistical Abstract) to 71.5% (2015 cohort, 2019 Statistical Abstract). It should be noted that the corresponding 2015 cohort number (reported in 2019 Statistical. Abstract) for the state’s technical colleges is 53.7%. Another important outcome of what constitutes success for our traditional student cohort is measured in the CHE Placement 301 report, which defines success for an associate degree recipient one year after graduation as: 1. Working or 2. Continuing his/her enrollment in a higher education institution on a fulltime basis. The target set by CHE for the combined grads in a given year is 50%. In an obvious demonstration to us that our students utilize our campuses successfully, our students earning general AA/AS degrees not only far succeed the 50% target rate (64% to 86% depending on campus in 2016/17, 67% to 86% for those graduating in 2017/18 and 82% to 98% for those graduating in 2018/19), they do so with the majority number pursuing education fulltime toward the baccalaureate degree – 67% (all campuses combined) 2018/19 graduates. Finally, the latest transfer/migration figures are clearly representative, as prior numbers have for years, of the fact that once a student transfers/matriculates at one of the PC Campuses, s/he is highly likely to choose one of the baccalaureate-degree granting campuses of the UofSC System to continue his/her education. Specifically, of those who transferred to an in-state four-year institution, 84% enrolled at either Aiken (12%), Beaufort (7%), Columbia (56%), or Upstate (9%).

Online students: Because our online students transfer to our programs with a wide range of hours earned and because over 40% (42%, F19) enroll PT, we have found the most dependable measure for evaluating the success of this group and their respective programs is numbers of graduates. We have observed a steady increase from 242 for 2016/17 to 356 for 2017/18 to 370 for 18/19 to 383 for 2019/20.

Dual Enrollment students: We believe the best measure of success for this group subsequent enrollment in higher education. That broad goal is best refined on a practical basis by examining how our dual offerings “feed” the USC System, having earned significant USC credit (thereby supporting both the Enrollment and Success goals). Of the 2121 enrolled as duals in F18, our research reveals that 766 enrolled in the USC System in F19, either as first-time freshman or continuing dual enrollments, while an additional 1221 enrolled at other higher education institutions. Therefore, 1987 students who enrolled initially at the four PC Campuses and their families benefited both educationally and economically (supporting our mission of accessibility, affordability, and flexibility). The corresponding numbers for the prior year are: 2248 enrolled, 797 enrolled in the USC System, 1199 enrolled outside the system, 1996 enrolled in higher education F17. With dual enrollment students becoming an increased focus of our campuses, an emphasis on central office support and coordination is needed. This is reflected in our [Programmatic Request 5 - Hire a coordinator to promote Dual Enrollment/Early College](#). See link in *Initiative Solicitation* section at the end of this report for full information.

Discussion (to include upcoming plans and dashboard effects): Obviously, our goal is to continually work toward increased student success. For our traditional students this entails continually supporting current and proposed student success initiatives at the campuses and when possible, directly contribute to these efforts through the sponsorship of such services as Brainfuse, our online tutoring vendor solution. In addition, helping to assure successful transfer/migration is a high priority and is represented in Programmatic Request 5 – Hire a Transfer and Articulation Coordinator. See link in *Initiative Solicitation* section at the end of this report for full information. As noted, the newly established Palmetto Pathway program houses some of these traditional students, offering them a unique, immediate Columbia campus-based experience. Programmatic Request 6 – Palmetto Pathway/UofSC New Student Orientation Partnership represents our attempt to solidify the impressive success gains we witnessed in the first year of operation, thus providing the Columbia campus (primarily) with excellently prepared sophomores. See link in *Initiative Solicitation* section at the end of this report for full information. We will continue to monitor the CHE success measure discussed above as well as review our graduation rate success of our system transfers. In regard to our online students, now that the Assistant Dean of Enrollment Management is on board, we will work to ascertain, from the central office “perch,” if we can develop a practical success measure besides just graduation. For our dual students we plan to begin, starting with the fall 2019 cohort, which we have captured, to eventually produce 6- year graduation rates for this group. In summation, we are not setting target marks for success but rather we are processing efforts in order to fully determine what the best measures for our complex cohorts should be. Challenges to doing so will primarily be staffing in nature as, at present, we do not have fulltime FTE staff devoted to research.

Faculty (PC Focus 2023 goals addressed: Assembling and supporting a diverse world-class faculty dedicated to teaching, scholarship, and student success; Building inclusive and inspiring communities, on-campus and online. PtE Strategic Priorities addressed: 2. World- Class Faculty and Staff, 3. Outstanding Research, and 4. Increase Diversity)

Providing structure and support to the campuses in regard to attracting, hiring, and supporting the faculty of Palmetto College is a critical goal of the PC Central office. In addition to central office HR functions, the central office supports a fulltime FTE to provide support to campus and USC Palmetto College Columbia faculty. The office also provides funding and staff support for Faculty Senate meetings, CTE events, special events/activities. IT support is also provided to faculty as requested.

Progress: Support to the campuses has yielded positive outcomes with an increase of hires of faculty from five faculty hires for the 2017/18 year to 10 for 2018/19, 11 for 2019/20, and 9 for 2020/21. Our tenure-track faculty have experienced excellent success in receiving tenure and/or promotion with a 100% success rate for files submitted over multiple past years. It should be noted that central office encourages and supports the tradition of having a Columbia faculty member from the discipline serving on the search committee. This is done in order to better assure Columbia approval of coursework to be taught by the hire at his/her campus. The 18/19 academic year also included the sponsorship of a Palmetto College Faculty Salary Study and subsequent funding of \$100,000 for dispersal in FY19. In FY 19, 71 faculty and staff received

salary enhancements. In terms of diversity, our faculty mirror Columbia closely in terms of minority faculty (25% PC, 26% Columbia) but employ slightly more female faculty members (48% PC, 44% Columbia). Source: OIRAA Data Viewer.

Discussion (to include upcoming plans and dashboard effects): For 2020/21 and forward, the central office will continue to provide guidance and support to the campuses in determining need, securing funding and hiring new faculty. Of special emphasis for 2020/21 is directly working with USC PC Columbia in determining the faculty staffing requirements and securing of faculty hires for the Palmetto Pathways Program as we anticipate rapid growth – post COVID 19 - in this program. We will continue, pending funding availability, with the salary enhancements recommended to individuals in the Salary Study Report. Challenges to hiring and appropriately compensating faculty continue, however, will require consistent and significant funding to address.

Service (PC Focus 2023 goal addressed: Spurring creativity and innovation, including advanced educational opportunities responsive to regional community needs. CtE Strategic Priority addressed: 6. Community Partnerships)

Service is recognized as an integral part of our mission, as our existence is an exercise in providing opportunity to those who cannot avail themselves to traditional educational delivery sites and modes. The campuses report on their service activity in the Blueprints for Academic Excellence. We will focus here on what PC central office has initiated.

Progress In 2018/19, we began partnering with VP Derrick Huggins to implement the University of Possibilities which brings 6th-8th graders from underserved areas of the state to our campuses in order to connect them with the possibilities higher education holds. Programmatic Request 3 – University of Possibilities represents our desire to more formally entrench our efforts in regard to this important initiative. See link in *Initiative Solicitation* section at the end of this report for full information.

Further, the Chancellor frequently makes presentations to groups throughout the state stressing the value and availability of our campuses and programs as a way to reach those who are underserved where they live and/or work. Faculty of PC Campuses, as well as students and staff, also devote significant hours to serve. These contributions are documented in each campus' Academic Blueprint. Finally, the aforementioned enhanced services to the military populations represents an attempt to expand the services we currently offer at Ft. Jackson and Shaw Air Force Base, as well as throughout the state.

Discussion (to include upcoming plans and dashboard effects): Efforts going forward include continued work with VP Huggins on the University of Possibilities program as well with our Military Strategies and Programs unit to further leverage the momentum created since we initiated our efforts. We also plan to develop a formal methodology to standardize collection of service activities of faculty/staff and students. Challenges include necessary funding and the ability to commit FTE resources to these efforts.

Organizational/Financial (*PC Focus 2023* goal addressed: Assure efficiency, accountability, and fiscal responsibility by continually examining operations, growing programs, and engaging in continuous planning efforts. *PtE Strategic Priorities* addressed: 7. Excellent Infrastructure and 8. Win With Character)

Our Organizational/Financial goal is considered foundational as without good management and finances, our other goals are not possible to achieve. The Chancellor has worked with all campus deans to assure that the twins overarching goals of balanced budgets and adequate fund balances are maintained. It should be noted that these goals are included in the evaluation standards of each dean. An increased emphasis on development efforts has also been made since the launch of Palmetto College with a director serving in PC Central to work with the campuses and units of Palmetto College to identify and solicit additional funding.

Progress: The Chancellor has set a goal of securing balanced budgets and maintaining a three-month fund balance. All campuses/business units ended FY19 with balanced budgets and adequate fund balances, while two of the four achieved this in COVID-19-influenced FY20. Development efforts resulted in \$1,244,000 secured in FY20, a significant increase from the \$972,200 raised in FY19. Palmetto College was also the recipient of a \$431,278 grant under the FY 2020 Distance Learning and Telemedicine Grant Program administered by the Rural Utilities Service. These funds will allow for upgrades of outdated technology in the two-way video conferencing classrooms.

The implementation of the Tuition Revenue Model continued providing substantial new revenue for each system campus with the total distributed across the system campuses (since 2013) exceeding 87 million. The aforementioned military support programs, Palmetto Pathway Program, fully online degrees were launched with the goal to provide both service and revenue to Palmetto College.

On the organizational front, the aforementioned personnel moves (John Catalano, Ron Cox, Joe Mews) have, we believe, further strengthened us for continued advancement. Additionally, we have boosted, centrally, services to students more directly associated with PC Central with the hiring of Laura Carnes as Academic Program coordinator. We continue to review the organizational structure in order to best organize for the future.

Finally, as part of the SACSCOC continuous compliance effort, all campuses, PC Central and USC PC Columbia prepared service blueprints to cover three years (2018/19, 2019/20, 2020/21).

Discussion (to include upcoming plans and dashboard effects): As PC reaches the halfway mark of our eighth year and point toward our ninth, our efforts will consist of a mixture of what we have established (balanced budgets/adequate fund balances, increased fundraising) and begun (Pathway, military support, Tuition Model formula finetuning). New tasks consist of the implementing of the new budget model and incorporating the appropriate components of the Path to Excellence plan in support of the Columbia-based initiatives. Goals for development include complete 110 donor visits, deliver 20 new funding proposals and generate \$1,000,000 in new funding production for Palmetto College's funding priorities. Challenges to the above include the aforementioned funding loss of several years ago, tight budgets overall due to current

state funding levels and, more immediately, addressing COVID-19, and any unanticipated turnover in key positions.

III. Dashboard Metrics Development: The following link [Dashboard Source Information](#) contains the primary data source for the above numbers and will serve as a source for formal dashboard development, consistent with the presentation platform being constructed and populated for the Columbia campus by OIRAA.

Resource Information

To be provided by University Budget Director

Initiative solicitation

To be requested by Budget Update Group. A comprehensive programmatic needs presentation is currently available at the following link: [Palmetto College Programmatic Requests 2021-2022](#)

Space Needs

As the Palmetto Pathways program grows, classroom space will need to increase accordingly. That demand, in turn, leads us to desire consolidated space for all our operations currently located at Byrnes and Hampton St. that support these students as well as, indirectly, students at the four PC Campuses. In short, increased numbers of classrooms predicated, on our growth, combined with a “one stop” location for services, represents our highest space priority.