



## C-19-RELATED EMPLOYEE FAQ

As of August 1, 2020

### RETURNING TO CAMPUSES

#### 1. What are the dates for returning to campus workplaces?

The four two-week phases of the Return-To-Workplaces Plan are:

- Phase 1: July 6-17
- Phase 2: July 20-31
- Phase 3: August 3-14
- Phase 4: August 17 until end of the academic year

This incremental approach, inclusive of new risk-mitigation measures, is designed intentionally both to protect the well-being of returning faculty, staff, and students and to ensure the efficient conduct of university operations. For more information, read: [COVID-19: Returning-to-Workplaces Plan](#).

#### 2. How do I know when to return to campus?

USCB employees will be contacted by their supervisors to establish their dates and protocols for return. Employees should not report to campuses unless/until they have been notified by their supervisors.

#### 3. Are there any circumstances that would exempt an employee from returning to face-to-face work?

USCB is mindful of the need to protect vulnerable and high-risk individuals. Please discuss with your supervisor if you believe you fall into one of the following categories:

- Those with underlying health conditions
- Those who are immunocompromised
- Those who are 65 years of age or older
- Those who have routine contact with vulnerable or high-risk individuals.

#### 4. Beyond belonging to a high-risk category, what qualifies an employee to work remotely?

Employees, who do not present a condition or circumstance preventing them from being on campus but who would prefer to continue to work remotely, should request a temporary telecommute agreement from their supervisor. Approval of an employee's request to continue to telecommute in the Fall 2020 semester without a documentable medical or other issue related to Covid-19 will be at the discretion of the supervisor based on departmental need.

#### 5. Are there COVID-19 informational resources available for faculty and staff?

Yes. In fact, returning employees are required to complete COVID-19 educational training:

- [Handwashing](#)
- [Stop the Spread of Germs](#)
- [Face Coverings](#)
- [Beaufort COVID-19 Health for Faculty and Staff](#)

Faculty and staff members may complete the training in advance of their return to campus but not later than the end of the first day of their return to campus. Further, employees should read: [COVID-19: Guidelines for University Operations](#).

**6. Does completing COVID-19 educational training imply that an employee accepts the risk of returning to campus? Does completing the quiz at the end of the training imply that an employee waives legal rights to seek restitution in the event of work-related COVID-19 infection?**

The modules are simply educational training for employees – similar to IRB Research with Human Subjects training or Title IX training. The intent is to educate faculty and staff about a) what is known currently about COVID-19 and b) the university’s policies and protocols related to COVID-19 mitigation. Employees are responsible for being familiar with the content. But this training is not a waiver of employees’ rights nor will it be used by insurers to grant or deny health coverage.

**7. What are the “new normal” expectations for on-campus comportment?**

Social distancing and personal hygiene are important safeguards. Employees are to:

- Maintain a distance of six feet from others
- Avoid close contact with others
- Wear cloth face coverings indoors and whenever it is not possible to maintain six feet of separation
- Wash/sanitize hands frequently
- Cover coughs and sneezes with a tissue or elbow
- Avoid contact with frequently-touched surfaces
- Clean their own work spaces routinely
- Respect the personal space of others
- Send meeting materials ahead of time for personal printing or e-viewing.

**8. How do I social distance for on-campus meetings?**

To the extent possible, meetings should continue to convene via online platforms – to avoid unnecessary employee contact and to ensure inclusion of employees who continue to work remotely. Where face-to-face meetings are necessary, meetings must be convened in ways that allow for six-foot social distancing – in open areas or rooms with occupancy levels that significantly exceed the numbers of participants (i.e., not greater than 33 percent of occupancy limit). Further, you should send meeting materials ahead of time for personal printing or e-viewing.

Also, faculty and staff should consider virtual office hours and student meetings. And, to the extent possible given job requirements, all employees, in consultation with their supervisors, should consider staggered in-office schedules and flex-time to limit shared office occupancy to one person at a time.

**9. How do I handle travel for off-campus meetings or events?**

If you must travel in vehicles to perform your duties, you should limit the number of people per vehicle to the maximum extent possible. Whenever possible, the number should be limited to one person per vehicle.

Where employees are required, by job duties, to travel with a crew, vehicle occupants must:

- Wear face masks/cloth face coverings
- Use hand sanitizer regularly
- Allow for the circulation of outside air

**10. What about meetings and events that bring non-USCB employees to one of our campuses?**

Visitors and other intermittent traffic pose additional risks. Avoid non-essential visitors and take precautions to maintain safe distances between people. Employees should be proactive by:

- Using phone conferences and online meeting platforms to reduce the number of visitors
- Limiting points of entry and exit
- Designating one-way paths when possible
- Using tape, floor decals, and/or signs to identify where visitors should stand to preserve social distance
- Limiting or removing chairs

- Adding transparent barriers to protect both employees and visitors
- Providing hand sanitizer and cloth face coverings at entrances and in high-traffic areas
- Removing high-touch items such as magazines or shared pens

#### 11. Is there a “hotline” for answering questions related to USCB’s COVID-19 response?

Yes. Questions will be addressed: [uscbcovid19@uscb.edu](mailto:uscbcovid19@uscb.edu) or (843) 208-8099.

## HEALTH & SAFETY

#### 12. Will faculty, staff, and students be tested for COVID-19 when they return to campuses?

The South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control (SCDHEC) [does not recommend testing](#) all students, faculty, and staff upon return to campuses. The reasoning is that antibody tests continue to be unreliable, and viral tests are a snapshot in time but provide no indication or assurance for whether an individual will test positive or negative at any other point in time. Thus, USCB will not engage in mass testing; however, the university has entered a partnership with Beaufort Memorial Hospital (BMH) in order to provide access to testing for any individual – faculty, staff, or student – who wants to be tested. Testing is free of charge (but subject to change based on federal and state funding for testing supplies and personnel).

Students will be screened for symptoms on move-in day, and we will have onsite testing for those who indicate that they may be symptomatic or that they have been in contact with someone who is symptomatic and/or positive.

#### 13. Will any health services be available on campus?

Beaufort Memorial Hospital (BMH) will run flu vaccination clinics on the Beaufort and Bluffton campuses in early fall and will provide ongoing telehealth services via an app and a kiosk on the Bluffton campus, Library #227. Students and employees are encouraged to download the [BMH Care Anywhere](#) app. These services are available to all USCB students and employees. Telehealth provides a virtual visit with a healthcare provider. Students who require further care will be referred to a local BMH healthcare provider or advised to seek hospitalization if the health concern is potentially serious. We have access to Registered Nurse staff and a medical director to support campus health operations and collaborate with SCDHEC on COVID-19 cases.

#### 14. Will USCB engage in contact tracing to mitigate the spread of COVID-19?

SCDHEC is responsible for the process of contact tracing. USCB’s [Public Health Response Team](#) has completed contact-tracing training through the Johns Hopkins University and will support SCDHEC to implement contact tracing and additive practices, e.g. verification of student class attendance, seating charts, student ID swipes, and portable swipes at student events.

#### 15. What do I do if I get sick or believe that I might be sick?

Most importantly, employees, who are sick or who may be sick, should stay at home and should be tested. SCDHEC recommends that people, who have been infected with COVID-19, remain in isolation until: a) at least 10 days have passed since their symptoms began, b) they have no fever (body temperature of 100.4°F or less using an oral thermometer) for 3 days without the use of fever-reducing medicines, and c) their symptoms are improving. Some people may require more than ten (10) days to feel better.

The Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) requires employers to monitor employees’ illness-related leave and inquire whether individuals, who have reported COVID-19-related symptoms, have tested positive for the disease. If an employee tests positive for COVID-19, the university must perform a reasonable, good-faith inquiry to determine whether illness resulted from workplace exposure. If three conditions are met, the university will be required to report the workplace illness to OSHA. These conditions are:

- Confirmed case of COVID-19 (as defined by CDC)
- Determined a case of workplace exposure
- Employee misses work, is restricted in their work, and/or requires medical treatment

#### 16. What about stress and anxiety?

The COVID-19 pandemic has created challenges for each of us. Individuals who are experiencing feelings of isolation, anxiety, and/or stress are encouraged to use the [Employee Assistance Program](#). Reach out to your supervisor or HR for assistance.

#### 17. What happens if I need a leave-of-absence as a result of getting sick?

The federal government's [Family First Coronavirus Response Act](#) expands employee protections and relief. You should speak with your supervisor and with HR about how best to accommodate your needs.

#### 18. Am I required to monitor my symptoms?

Yes. Using the [CDC's Self-Checker](#), employees are required to self-monitor daily for the following symptoms:

- Fever Greater Than 100.4°F
- Cough
- Shortness of Breath or Difficulty Breathing
- Sore Throat
- Muscle or Body Aches
- Headache
- Chills or Shaking
- New Loss of Sense of Smell and/or Taste
- Congestion or Runny Nose
- Nausea or Vomiting (more common in children)
- Diarrhea (more common in children).

#### 19. Are face masks required on USCB campuses?

Yes. According to USCB's [Communicable Disease Outbreak-Mitigation Measures](#), face masks/cloth face coverings are required to be worn by all employees and all students on all campuses when in the presence of others and in all settings where six-foot social distancing is difficult to maintain. Face masks/cloth face coverings are not required while working alone in enclosed spaces or in private rooms in residence halls. USCB will provide to each employee and each student a personal health kit, which will include two reusable face masks, pocket hand sanitizer, and a germ key.

[Appropriate use of face masks/cloth face coverings](#) is critical to minimizing risks to those around you. You can spread COVID-19 to others even if you do not feel sick. Face masks/cloth face coverings mask [must cover the nose and mouth to be effective](#). Home-made or commercially manufactured face masks/cloth face coverings help contain a wearer's respiratory emissions. It is recommended face coverings are made primarily of cotton and double-layered.

Reusable face masks/cloth face coverings must be [properly laundered](#) after each day's use. After one day's use, they must be laundered before another day's use. Having a week's supply of face masks/cloth face coverings can help reduce the need for daily laundering.

Further, face shields will be provided for those who must work in close proximity to students and have medical contraindications to wearing a mask.

## **20. How have standard cleaning protocols for campus facilities been enhanced as a result of COVID-19?**

Informed by SCDHEC, our Facilities team has adjusted cleaning standards and schedules to appropriately address risks associated with the spread of COVID-19.

Classrooms and all shared spaces (e.g., dining rooms, recreation spaces, libraries, etc.) will be cleaned and disinfected every evening. Facilities and Dining staff will clean high-touch surfaces, e.g., door handles, railings, and elevator buttons, multiple times each workday. Facilities across our campuses will be equipped with hand sanitizer and sanitizing wipes for students and faculty to wipe down workspaces, desks, and other shared surfaces and areas between uses. It is important to note that the risk of COVID-19 transmission from surfaces is minor, so the provision of these supplies and their use are additional precautions.

To avoid use of air dryers, restrooms will be provided with paper towel dispensers that will be restocked daily. Further, there will be signage to call if a restroom (or any other space) needs attention.

Facilities is exploring air quality in buildings, including air exchange rates as well as air filters enabled to filter out smaller particles. It is important to note that no cases of COVID-19 have been linked to air handling systems.

## **21. Have classrooms been reconfigured to accommodate social distancing?**

Yes. After careful assessment, all USCB classrooms have been reconfigured for a 33 percent COVID-19 occupancy. While all other USC system institutions are using 50 percent occupancy, we believe 33 percent provides for six-foot distancing. Computer labs are also configured for 33 percent occupancy.

We recognize that occupancy limits present challenges. But we believe that there is also ample opportunity to meet student learning outcomes creatively. Further, technology upgrades in all classrooms provide high-ability recording for students to attend class remotely in a synchronous or asynchronous manner.

## **22. Will cleaning supplies be provided to maintain shared spaces?**

Yes. Each division/school of the university will be provided a kit, including hand sanitizer, disposable masks and gloves, disinfecting wipes, and disinfecting spray for use in maintaining healthful conditions for individual and shared spaces.

Various spaces on campuses, e.g., classrooms, dining and recreational facilities, libraries, and the bookstore, are reconfigured to support six-foot social distancing. Further, plexiglass, face shields, and social-distancing signage and decals will be utilized to promote safe practices.

## **23. What “triggers” will precipitate (inter- or intra-semester) changes in operational and/or pedagogical modalities going forward?**

It is premature to identify “triggers” because there are many independent and interconnected variables that will determine whether or when the university will adjust operations. These variables include but are not limited to: numbers of confirmed cases on campus, numbers of confirmed cases in our region and local communities, adherence to best practices by the full university community, availability of hospital beds in the region, usage of isolation rooms on campus for residential students, and feedback/data from medical professionals in the region. The Public Health Response Team will update Cabinet on any developments, which might lead to adjustments in modes of instruction and delivery, opening or closing of services, etc. Further, a color-coded system to keep outside communities abreast of the state of the university community is being considered.

## **24. Will fall plans become a USC system-wide decision, or could one system institution go fully online while the others do not?**

The current circumstances related to COVID-19 are unprecedented. But these kinds of decisions for one or more of our institutions are likely to be made at the system level – with the input and approval of the Board of Trustees.

### **25. What is the process when students are sick and need to be quarantined?**

Students who live in the residence halls are required – by the recently-updated USCB housing contract – to follow all public health guidelines, including those related to quarantine and isolation. In the event that students require quarantine or isolation, USCB’s standard protocol is for students to return to their primary residences. If they are unable to return home, the university will provide alternate housing on-campus for the duration of their quarantine or isolation. During this period, the [Public Health Response Team](#) will work with housing, dining, and others to ensure that the student is supported.

Every student, who lives in USCB’s residence halls, must develop an Individual Health Plan, which the Housing Office will keep on file. The plan is a record of each student’s preferred plans in the event that quarantine or isolation is necessary. Further, all quarantined or isolated students (whether at home or on campus), including commuters, should submit the [COVID-19 Student Report Form](#), so that USCB personnel may assist with faculty notifications and any other needed academic accommodations.

### **26. What is student life able to plan for fall? What sort of programming and events are they aiming to do?**

The university will continue to offer student support services, including academic advising, tutoring, career services, counseling, and student life activities. Most services will be offered both virtually and in-person. Counseling Services will continue to support students and will offer new virtual walk-in appointments, workshops and other opportunities to help students cope with the stressors caused by COVID-19. Guidelines are under development for student events. Further, we will have new Welcome Week programs that meet CDC guidelines. We also encourage students to use outdoor space whenever possible.

## **ACADEMICS**

### **27. How will students be informed in the event of changes to course delivery?**

During the Academic Affairs (AA) Fall 2020 Planning Meeting on June 18, 2020, in consultation with the Director of Advising, it was determined that the academic departments will inform students of changes.

The decision to move a course 100 percent online is an AA responsibility. However, as changes are approved, department chairs should notify students that the delivery mode has been changed. We recognize that many students registered in spring, long before fall adjustments began, and need to be informed of changes in delivery methods.

AA is working closely with Advising to ensure that students receive the latest updates and modalities. Per Faculty Briefing #5, we have shared a chart of the modalities (inclusive of descriptions) with Advising. Also, these modalities will be described in Banner, so students will understand what they are electing. As we make adjustments to the schedule, students will receive notification when the modality of a class changes. In speaking with Advising, our hope is to enroll all first-time freshmen face-to-face classes. The next best option is synchronous online delivery. Many of our freshmen are not prepared for 100 percent asynchronous classes, and the other modalities will afford many of them their best chance for success. Further, our Student Survey data indicate a clear preference for face-to-face instruction.

### **28. What is the protocol in the event that a faculty member gets sick and is unable to teach?**

As has been standard AA procedure, faculty members, who must be away from face-to-face classes short term, have the option of teaching online or having a colleague substitute for them. In Deans Council on June 17, 2020, long-term coverage strategies were discussed. Options range from hiring an existing part-time faculty member, giving overload compensation to a full-time faculty member, or hiring from the part-time faculty applicant pool that exists for most disciplines. We determined that each department/school will need to plan and manage based on individual circumstances. The university is prepared to pay for long-term class coverage.

If faculty members are isolated due to confirmed infection, they need to inform their department chair and discuss best ways to cover the class. If faculty members are ill and expected to be out for an extended period of time, they are expected to follow normal university operating procedures, including working with the department chair to cover course(s), recording sick time in ITAMS, and working with HR to provide supporting documentation to qualify for COVID-19 sick leave under the [Family First Coronavirus Response Act](#). Your administrative assistant or HR can provide direction on how to complete ITAMS.

### **29. What is the protocol if a faculty member, who is teaching face-to-face, tests positive but is asymptomatic and able to continue instruction online during isolation, does s/he need to submit time to ITAMS?**

If faculty are infected and in isolation but feeling well enough to conduct online classes for the duration of illness, no sick time is needed. Faculty are required to inform their supervisor and students of the temporary change in course delivery. Further, faculty are expected to resume the normal course schedule once recovered, no longer contagious, and out of isolation.

### **30. What is the protocol for situations where students refuse to comply with wearing face masks or other protocols?**

Per Faculty Briefing #5, faculty have the authority to deny access to the classroom and, where warranted, can follow up by submitting an online referral indicating the student has failed to comply with USCB's [Communicable Disease Outbreak-Mitigation Measures](#). This referral form will be available in the COVID-19 Toolbox of the Faculty-Staff Resources page of USCB.edu. The next step is Judicial review. Unmasked and/or disruptive and/or non-complying students possibly infringe on the health and well-being of an entire class, including the professor. Faculty have the authority to set the tone. Further, classrooms have emergency alert buttons if the situation is potentially serious, and/or faculty can call DPS at x8911.

### **31. In the event of a hurricane evacuation, will classes go fully online?**

Our response will depend largely on when (i.e., at what point in the semester) and for how long the evacuation occurs. In the event of a serious storm threat that requires evacuation, residential students will follow the same screening protocols as were followed during initial move-in. Residential students who cannot return home will be transported to USC Aiken as they have in years past. USCA is prepared to follow our risk mitigation protocols while accommodating USCB if the need arises.

### **32. Beyond belonging to a high-risk category, what qualifies a faculty member to teach remotely?**

HR will reach out to employees, who have self-identified as unable to return to our campuses this fall as a result of documentable risk factors, in order to confirm documentation and formalize their telecommuting work status for the Fall 2020 term. For employees, who do not present a condition or circumstance preventing them from being on campus but who would prefer not to return, you must provide HR with a letter explaining your preference. Please submit requests by close of business on Wednesday, June 24, 2020 (although some late requests may be considered). Approved requests will be followed with a formal telecommute agreement, which will be valid for Fall 2020 semester.

Having a process ensures fairness across academic disciplines. It also ensures fairness across the various ranks of faculty. Remote teaching is based on a prioritization – with priority given to employees in high-risk categories. Note: we cannot discriminate against employees who are high risk and choose to return. Second priority is for those who do not self-identify as high-risk but prefer to work from home. Those requests may not be accommodated due to the need to ensure that there are sufficient face-to-face classes on campus.

### **33. What can I do if I don't have a laptop or other technologies needed for teaching remotely?**

Per Faculty Briefing #5, IT Support Services (ITSS) ordered 12 webcams with built in microphones that may be borrowed by faculty members. All were loaned out. ITSS has ordered another 15, which should arrive in July. If there

is need beyond these 27, we will make additional purchases. To borrow a webcam, please submit a help desk ticket, and the team will assign a webcam and arrange for pick up.

#### **34. Have students been informed of new technology requirements for varying teaching modalities?**

The proposed COVID-19 Addendum states: Courses may require virtual delivery and virtually-proctored exams, which require a computer outfitted with both camera and microphone. Student equipment needs for successful course completion will be noted in the syllabi and discussed by faculty on the first day of the course.

In the COVID-19 Student Survey, 95 percent of 422 student respondents indicated that they have access to a laptop, while 66 percent indicated that they have access to a webcam.

Virtual proctoring is available, at no cost to students, through the USC system. It is important to include a statement in your syllabi that exams may be proctored using Respondus software. A standardized statement has been developed and distributed by AA. Also, Accessibility Services is working to identify and share options that may be helpful for faculty and students.

#### **35. How should faculty determine which students participate in which face-to-face sections of a course?**

Faculty can communicate with students prior to the start of class, regarding who will attend the first (or second, etc.) meeting.

#### **36. Are faculty allowed to give "paper" tests for Fall 2020 semester?**

Faculty are encouraged to use Blackboard as the primary method for distribution and collection of assignments and tests, as appropriate. Faculty members, who are not able to use Blackboard in this way, are encouraged to consult their department chairs for input and assistance. If there is a need to physically distribute and collect work, this process should be done in a manner that avoids multiple students handling the same pieces of paper.

#### **37. What strategies are in place to support TT faculty through this academic year?**

Several forms of support have been developed and/or provided, including but not limited to: optional tenure clock extensions, altered policies and practices regarding Spring 2020 student evaluations, Telecommuting Agreements for Fall 2020, the [Office of eLearning](#) training course: *Getting Ready to Teach Online*, enhanced technology installed in most USCB classrooms, [Teaching Innovation Grants](#), and the [Employee Assistance Program](#).

#### **38. Is there discussion of amending the tenure process rather than freezing/extending it?**

There is no discussion among university administrators about amending the tenure process. It is likely that discussions of this kind would be faculty-driven and would involve Faculty Senate. Further, if a proposal were to earn broad faculty support, it is likely that university administration would consider it.

#### **39. What strategies are in place to support and advocate for contingent faculty?**

We are focused on maximizing numbers of returning students in order to prevent/minimize the need for staffing changes. But, if class sections do not fill, we may need to adjust teaching schedules.

#### **40. What grading system will be used in Fall 2020?**

Barring unforeseen circumstances, USCB's normal grading system will be used.

#### **41. If necessary, what steps (e.g. 5/5 teaching load, adjusting department chair contracts, or reducing number of schools or departments) might USCB consider in order to lower administrative overhead and operating costs?**

If the university must consider staffing and/or responsibility changes, options will be considered (in consultation with university stakeholders, including faculty and staff representatives) with the goal of alignment not only with the institution's stated strategic direction and plans but also with national best practices.

**42. Will faculty receive monetary compensation for the hours spent transforming courses to online delivery? What resources will the university provide to assist with this increased workload?**

While faculty are contracted for nine months, many engage in research and/or professional development during the summer. We recognize that GRTO and other training, although voluntary, require significant time and effort on the part of faculty. Further, we recognize that staff in other units across campus have been impacted by alternate work arrangements, assignments, and increased expectations due to COVID-19. Additional compensation for some units would likely mean reductions for others. Therefore, the institution is not prepared to provide additional compensation for faculty participating in GRTO training. We recommend that you document the extra effort in your annual review. Those efforts will be acknowledged as valuable professional development and will be recognized institutionally.

**43. Will faculty, who did not spend their departmental research funds (i.e., \$1,000 or \$1,500), have access to these funds in the fall?**

Reinstating faculty development funds for AY 2020-2021 is a priority, but the outcome will depend on budget constraints. The restoration or recovery of AY 2019-2020 faculty-development funds appears unlikely as of this writing because of the need to ensure that payroll is met.

**44. Will faculty, who were approved for tenure and promotion in AY 2019-2020, receive a pay bump?**

Yes. Compensation adjustments for faculty who have already been approved for tenure and promotion have been included in the FY 21 operating budget.

**45. Will there be issues with faculty going up for tenure and promotion in AY 2020-2021?**

For fall 2020 and beyond, we anticipate no issues with regard to faculty pay increases associated with successful promotion and tenure as well as post-tenure review.

**46. What is the status of the libraries regarding circulation, particularly interlibrary loans among in-state institutions?**

USCB library circulation services will resume in August. The library has activated traditional ILL borrowing for faculty. Through the summer, Dudley Stutz is in the Bluffton Campus Library on Tuesdays and Thursdays and working remotely Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays. Reach out to him with ILL questions: (843) 208-8160 or [ddstutz@uscb.edu](mailto:ddstutz@uscb.edu).

Because COVID-19 forced library closings at member institutions, PASCAL Delivers service, including requests and courier deliveries, was suspended statewide March 16, 2020 and will be unavailable at least through July 28, 2020.

**47. Amid Faculty concerns about academic freedom being under pressure – particularly as it a) touches upon the COVID-19 pandemic and/or #BlackLivesMatter in teaching, service, and research and/or b) acknowledges the legacies of slavery, drawing attention to systems of racial inequity – will the administration reaffirm its commitment to the AAUP Statement of Principles on Academic Freedom and Tenure as affirmed in USCB's Faculty Manual?**

The administration takes seriously any concerns regarding academic freedom and recognizes those rights as a cornerstone of intellectual and societal progress. The administration affirms its commitment to the AAUP Policy Statement as stated in [The University of South Carolina Beaufort Faculty Manual](#), p. 76.

**48. Will there be cuts to academic programs if enrollment projections are not met? How does USCB evaluate the viability of low-demand majors?**

All academic programs are reviewed annually using the program productivity standards determined by the [SC Commission on Higher Education](#) (CHE). "For Commission purposes, academic degree program productivity is defined as the capacity of an academic degree program to enroll majors and award degrees (completion) relative to the criteria established by the Commission."

#### 49. What efforts are being made to market USCB? How are we capitalizing on location, faculty, and resources?

We have just concluded a six-week local “Your University, Close to Home” advertising campaign in Beaufort, Jasper, Hampton, Colleton, and three border counties in Georgia (where students are eligible to pay in-state tuition) through geofencings and social-media ad buys.

Enrollment Management has hosted a full complement of virtual events since mid-March, including general information sessions, virtual tours, and Accepted Students Week – all of which feature presentations on Beaufort College Honors, housing, student success services, financial aid and scholarships, athletics and recreation, specific disciplines as well as the overall USCB academic experience (conducted by faculty members). Further, the EM team has conducted multiple Instagram Live events featuring, virtual tours of residence halls, the recreation center, and career services. They will continue to add events going forward and welcome your ideas.

During the spring, the chancellor created an [Enrollment Management Council](#) comprised of faculty and staff. The faculty on the council spearheaded an outreach campaign (inclusive of a broader group of faculty and staff members) to accepted students that included telephone calls, emails, and handwritten notes. Academic departments followed up with prospective students, who expressed interest in particular courses of study. Further, all student-related COVID-19 video and email messages from the chancellor have been shared with newly-admitted students as well as current students. Routinely, going forward, the council is tasked to “enhance the recruitment efforts of the university.”

On July 2, EM hosted a virtual event expressly for transfer students. On July 13, they hosted a “Meet the Majors” event where prospective students interacted with faculty and department chairs, getting the chance to explore majors in separate chat rooms. Continuing and re-admitted students and their families had a virtual Town Hall meeting on July 21 to discuss USCB’s COVID-19 strategies, including plans for classrooms, offices, housing and food service, and students’ responsibilities to help mitigate the virus, e.g., handwashing, social distancing, and mask wearing. Faculty participation in these kinds of events is determined by individual departments. Faculty members, who would like to participate, should contact their respective department chairs. Further, all virtual events are recorded and can be shared with any and all that would like to see them.

#### 50. How will USCB support international students (and faculty) given the announcement that ICE will deport students who are enrolled in only/primarily online courses?

President Donald Trump has rescinded the order.

## BUDGETS & FINANCE

#### 51. What happened to the CARES Act funding?

Cares Act funding was distributed according to federal guidelines. Half was disbursed directly to students. The other half, along with anticipated funding from the state’s AccelerateSC relief program, will be used, according to guidelines, to offset lost revenue and/or expenses incurred through the university’s response to the Covid-19, including but not limited to the costs of PPE, supplies, physical accommodations, and more.

#### 52. How is the university thinking about cost-cutting measures?

We implemented freezes for hiring and all-but-critically-essential expenditures at the onset of the pandemic in order to generate the financial flexibility to cover expenditures related to Covid-19 mitigation. While other potential strategies to generate savings and/or revenue stability have been identified, these will be considered only as needed to operationalize our plans (A and B) for the fall term and support long-term financial sustainability for USCB.

Strategies that enable USCB to cover expenditures and lost revenue (contingent on fall enrollments) range from restricting travel and other operating expenditures, hiring freezes, use of federal and state relief funds, institutional

fund balances, and, if absolutely necessary, strategies to reduce personnel expenditures, e.g., furloughs, reductions in force, contract period reductions, voluntary retirement, or separation incentives.

We anticipate that with moderate budget restrictions and strategic use of one-time funding, we can cover the expected budget shortfall of tuition and fee revenue due to a projected 10-percent decline in student FTE. The chancellor is determined to make no drastic changes until we have a clear understanding of where we are with regard to enrollment numbers. Fall 2020 enrollment decline that is greater than anticipated or the necessity to move all instruction online and close housing and dining services would inform decision making.

Technology investments (made in response to Covid-19) total \$63,000 to date and will be eligible for reimbursement coverage from federal and state aid sources. Technology investment breakdown:

Item Provided	Number of units	Cost per unit	
Dell Latitude Laptop (Student)	2	\$1,200	\$2,400
Dell Vostro Laptop (Student)	12	\$780	\$9,360
Portable Web Cams	31	\$49	\$1,531
Dell Latitude Laptop (Fac/Staff)	7	\$1,200	\$8,400
Mini Tri pods	8	\$16.99	\$136
Mini Tri pods	10	\$14.95	\$150
LED Light mirror	18	\$15.99	\$288
Mini Tri pods for iPad	1	\$20.57	\$21
Tablet Tri-pod Mount	1	\$18.95	\$19
Apple headphone jack adapt	18	\$9	\$162
Lav mic for mobile device	18	\$14.95	\$269
GoToMeeting Subscription (per Month)	12	\$77.04	\$924
Video Cams for classrooms	46	\$771.00	\$35,466
Mac Keyboard Covers for multiuse	38	\$13.00	\$494
Dell Keyboard Covers for multiuse	189	\$15.47	\$2,924
Apple iPad with Apple Care	1	\$358	\$358
<b>Total to date</b>			<b>\$62,902</b>

### 53. What is the difference between layoffs and furloughs?

Layoffs are when employers terminate employees, temporarily or permanently, for reasons other than employees' actual performance. Whereas, with furloughs, employees are required (or volunteer) to take leave without pay for a specific period of time. Under a furlough, an employee's health and retirement benefits are not impacted.

### 54. Will there be furloughs and/or layoffs of faculty and staff in FY 2020-2021?

Currently, only voluntary furloughs are being considered. All chancellors across the USC system have been asked to participate in a voluntary furlough. USC Columbia's furloughs are for senior-level employees, whose salaries are in excess of \$200,000. USCB's salary scale is much more modest. Our current perspective is that we simply do not have sufficient numbers of employees to garner substantive savings from furloughs unless we include employees in mid-to-low salary bands. The potential impact of furloughs on these employees and their families could be severe hardship. Therefore, we are not considering mandatory campus-wide furloughs at this time.

If the pandemic worsens, and it becomes necessary to move all instruction online and close housing and dining services, it may become necessary to implement strategies to reduce personnel costs, e.g., reductions in forces, retirement or separation incentives, furloughs, and/or contract reductions. A fall 2020 semester that is 100 percent online is estimated to increase the budget shortfall to \$9.6 million through loss of housing and dining revenue (and

estimating a 20 percent decline in student FTE). Initially, layoffs would impact those whose jobs are associated with having students living and attending classes on campus; however, other units on campus may also be impacted.

**55. As part of shared governance, will faculty be involved in the decision-making processes regarding layoffs?**

Policies pertaining to the faculty role in university governance are published in [The University of South Carolina Beaufort Faculty Manual](#), p. 8. These policies are governed by the Board of Trustees for the USC system, which delegates powers to the president, chancellors, and faculty across the system.

The manual states (p. 8):

“The Board of Trustees is the governing body of the university, and it delegates to the President and the faculty their powers. The faculties of the Aiken, Beaufort, Columbia and Upstate campuses, subject to the review of the appropriate Chancellors, the President, and the Board, have legislative powers in all matters pertaining to standards of admission, registration, requirements for and the granting of earned degrees, curriculum, instruction, research, extracurricular activities, discipline of students, educational policies and standards of the university, and all other matters pertaining to the conduct of faculty affairs, including the discipline of their own members.

Proposals from any academic department that pertain to the faculty's legislative competency shall be forwarded to the Board by the President only after such proposals have been considered by the appropriate faculty committees and shall be accompanied by the legislative judgment of the Faculty Senate as appropriate.

As such occasions arise, faculty members have the opportunity to consider the appointment of all principal academic officers of USCB and, through an appropriate committee, communicate their views to the Chancellor. The faculty shall also communicate, through an appropriate committee, their views concerning the selection of the President of the University and the Chancellor of USCB.”

Further (p. 70):

“The Faculty Senate of the USCB is endowed with all the powers and authority of the university faculty. The Senate shall formulate policy regarding the educational practices and standards of the university and all other matters pertaining to the conduct of faculty affairs, subject to review and approval by the EVCAA, the Chancellor, the President, and the Board of Trustees.”

The Faculty Manual articulates the contractual elements that define the employment relationship between the faculty and USCB, including the responsibilities, benefits, and privileges of faculty status. The manual confirms the authority of faculty to participate in the governance of USCB, specifically with regard to all academic matters.

**56. Will benefits be cut?**

Currently, there are no plans to cut benefits for any employees.

**57. In the event that we are forced to go 100 percent online and/or that residence halls are not at capacity, what “other use” options are being considered for residential buildings?**

Currently, we plan to use our residence halls normally. If we are unable to fill them with students, we will consider other appropriate alternatives.

**58. What are the plans for housing and dining refunds should we have another shutdown in the fall?**

If the situation with COVID-19 triggers a move to online course delivery as it did in spring 2020, pro-rated refunds will be provided again to students for their housing and unused meal credits.

**59. Can faculty and staff access a copy of the 2020-2021 USCB Budget?**

Beth Patrick, VC for Operations, Finance, and IT, has given and will continue to give updated presentations on the budget for faculty and staff. Further, the internal [Budget Workgroup](#), composed of faculty and staff members, will

continue to be invited to participate in budget planning. USCB's operating budget is included as part of the USC system budget. Copies of annual operating budgets are available on the [USC Budget Office website](#).

## **NOTE**

If you would like to submit questions for inclusion in ongoing updates of the FAQ document, please submit: [ponder@uscb.edu](mailto:ponder@uscb.edu). Your input is welcomed and appreciated.