Dear Colleagues,

Welcome to the 2015-16 Academic Year! As we embark on a new semester, I want to thank every member of the USC Aiken community for continuing to distinguish this University as a place where individual devotion fuels collective purpose and advances our mission. Because of your commitment to sustaining collegial collaboration, your creativity, energy, and commitment to continuous improvement, 2015 was a year filled with noteworthy achievements. I know that this year USC Aiken will continue this trend.

Those of you who are returning to campus may have noticed several new faces. The Class of 2019 moved-in over the weekend and they promise to be an energetic and creative group of students who bring an assortment of experiences and ideas that ultimately will enrich life on our campus. In addition to the arrival of new transfer students and the Class of 2019, we have several new faculty and staff who have joined our community since Commencement 2015. Recognizing that many faculty are off campus over the summer, please note our new colleagues who have joined us since May 6th:

Adam Pazda
Alexis Robinson
Angela Ryan
Ashlee Horton
Benjamin Triana
Candace Bailey
Deborah McMurtrie
Elizabeth Green
Hillary George
Jessica Shepherd
Joanna Reitz
Jonathan Jackson
Kelsey Jones
Kenneth Roberts
Kimberly Harward
Kristina Ramstad
Mark Vanderslice
Mary Driscoll
Mary Gaffney
Matthew Thornburg
Michael Daugherty
Nicole Keenan
Phil Disher
As opportunities arise, please take a moment to greet the newest members of our faculty and staff community with a warm USC Aiken welcome!

This fall we officially welcome Deans Thayer McGahee, Mick Fekula, and Judy Beck, and Interim Deans Jack Benjamin and Bill Jackson to the university and to their positions. As recommended by campus constituents during the Forward Together planning process, we are shifting more fully to the “provost” model. Through this model, the deans work within the governance structure to provide pivotal, efficient, and inclusive leadership while creating an environment for improved campus dialogue and communication. Additionally, the deans will be working externally to create opportunities and raise awareness of the good work taking place daily in each college and school.

We also wish to recognize and sincerely congratulate the faculty who achieved promotion and/or tenure. Achieving tenure and promotion to Associate Professor are Dr. Bing Han, Dr. Joyce Pompey, Dr. Linda Rodriguez, and Ms. Kari Weaver. Dr. William Jackson and Dr. Andrew Geyer were approved for promotion to the rank of Professor and Mr. Roy Seeger attained promotion to Senior Instructor. Congratulations to each of our colleagues for these notable professional accomplishments!

As we look forward to the new academic year, I am happy to report that the University is flourishing. On October 7th, it will be my pleasure to present the State of the University which will outline in greater detail our accomplishments and successes, and highlight those areas where we have more work to do to achieve our goals. Suffice it to say, I am proud that in 2015 the entire USC Aiken community worked diligently to put into action the Forward Together plan that is designed to focus our collective work.

Under the heading of “good news” is the fact that we’ve completed the University’s Carolina Campaign on June 30th. I know that you will join me in expressing gratitude to the many remarkable alumni and friends who have been so enthusiastic and generous in their support that we were able to nearly reach our historic campaign goal of $26 million dollars. Our donors to USC Aiken during the Carolina Campaign numbered an impressive 8,466. Ultimately, we raised an astonishing $23,541,096 in our first Capital Campaign, which was undertaken during the recession. Of the dollars raised, 51% or $12M of the total was designated for student support and $9M or 37% was specified for faculty and program support. This is a milestone certainly worth celebrating and at a designated time this fall we will take time to revel in this accomplishment. Meanwhile, we know that we cannot become complacent. We all realize that, at least in the short term, our ambitions and needs still outpace our funding, so continuing to seek support through fund raising and friend building, and by forging strategic partnerships, is necessary to help us meet our institutional goals and serve our students and community effectively. Much remains for us to accomplish in this area and we will continue working in 2016 toward all of our remaining priorities in the campaign, while stewarding our new donors and alumni.

Very soon we’ll all be preoccupied with our primary work. Inside and beyond our classrooms, studios, offices, and laboratories, we will be about the business of transforming lives, helping students to achieve their dreams of an education, and providing the foundation for rewarding futures. This is noble and essential work, and I feel incredibly fortunate to be here today working alongside you to achieve our
goals. This is an exceptional community of dedicated scholars, committed staff, and talented individuals who are moving USC Aiken forward. Once again, we will do our best to excel in teaching, research, and public service, and by doing so, we fulfill the promise of our public comprehensive university. I hope that you feel comfortable approaching me with any questions, thoughts, concerns or good ideas you may have. If you cannot make it to one of my scheduled faculty and staff “mix and mingle” sessions, please feel free to contact me via email or phone, or simply stop by my office in the historic Pickens-Salley House.

Thank you for making this an academic home that I’m proud to serve. As in the past, I’m excited to see what we will accomplish together this year. Have a great semester!

Best,

Sandra Jordan
Chancellor