

**UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH CAROLINA
STAFF SENATE MEETING**

Tuesday, August 12, 2025

3:00 – 4:30 p.m.

PRESIDING: Chris Burkett, President

Call to Order – *Chris Burkett, President*

Roll Call/Attendance Report – *Michaela Taylor, Secretary*

Secretary Taylor checked the roll after taking attendance. The meeting started at 3:02 PM. According to the attendance report, 44 senators were in attendance, 9 senators were absent or online, and no senators gave proxies.

Establish Quorum – *Jessica McCormick, Parliamentarian*

Based on the attendance report, Parliamentarian McCormick declared a quorum was established and declared business could be conducted.

Approval of Minutes – *Chris Burkett, President*

There were no changes to the July 8, 2025, staff senate meeting minutes. Senator Chambers made a motion to accept the general body staff senate minutes as written. Senator Bennett seconded the motion to accept the minutes as written. All senators were in favor. The motion was adopted and carried, and the minutes were accepted as written.

President's Update – *Chris Burkett, President*

President Burkett welcomed the new senators to their first general body meeting.

Commented [MJ1]: the second general body meeting of the 2025-26 term.

Information

- Shared leadership changes at the University of South Carolina including Dr. Mary Anne Fitzpatrick serving as Interim Provost, Dr. Thomas Hodges serving as interim Dean of McCausland arts and sciences and Dr. Angela Baum serving as interim dean of the College of Education
- Chat GPT is now available for all USC Columbia students, faculty and staff
- We will welcome almost 8,000 freshmen next week, making our total student population about 40,000

Upcoming Staff Senate speakers include the following....

September: USC Athletics Director, Jeremiah Donati

October: Staff Ombuds Person, Dr. Robynn Pease

November: Director of Parking, Joe Favela and the Executive Director of Community Engagement, Dr. Theresa Harrison

January/February 2026: USC President, Dr. Michael Amiridis

Senators can request a potential guest speaker through the Executive Committee.

Opportunities

- Sign up to volunteer with August events such as move in, first day of class, etc.
- Staff Senate day at the Columbia Fireflies is Sept. 11, 2025. More information is included in the Teams channel. This event is for Staff Senate and families only to test pilot a potential game for Staff Appreciation Day in the Spring
- Save the date | HR/Well-Being Expo is set for September 30 from 8 AM to 2 PM in Russell House
- 2025 State of the University is scheduled for Wednesday, September 17 at 10 AM. In the Russell House Ballroom

Celebrations

- Senators Hulett and Williams have started new roles on campus and are moving to Senators At-Large. Welcome Senator Jinnette as the new South Carolina Honors College Senator!

Connect. Empower. Lead

- A reminder to continue to connect with your constituents and meet with leadership.

Guest Speakers –

Jennifer Whetstone-Jackson, Assistant Director for Basic Needs of the CommUNITY Shop

Jennifer shared about the role the CommUnity shop plays on campus. If you know of a student in need, submit a referral at go.sc.edu/basicneeds.

Students, Faculty and Staff are able to access the Gamecock CommUnity shop and are given 40 points a month for food, clothing, school supplies, houseware and more.

Gamecock CommUnity Shop, Feed the Flock, Swipe Out Hunger, Garnet Bites and the Carolina Cares Fund are all sponsored by the needs team.

- Over 12,000 visits were recorded in the 2024-25 academic year
- Over 70,000 donations given
- Almost 5,000 volunteer hours

August 22 is a Fresh Food Farmer's Market sponsored by Food Lion. Open to all!

[Learn more about the CommUnity Shop here](#)

Reports of Committees:

Membership – Katie Annan

- Met with Leena Holt and Angela Wright to get their 'why' as we look at whether changes are necessary for the Senate membership representation

- All Staff Senate Past Presidents are scheduled to attend the September committee meeting on September 16 to further discuss the whys around the current structure of bylaws and representation
- At the September general body meeting Senators will complete a survey to assess readiness to serve in the role. Will review that survey before making changes to membership

Communications – Emily Miles & Thom Harman

- Working to update the website
- Encourage senators to share or have a new headshot taken to add to the website

Staff Policy and Well-being – Kelsey Chambers & Caroline Hulett

- Working to expand Tuition Assistance and Continuing Education for staff.
- Continuing previous year's work to establish mental health spaces around campus
- Want to regain staff access to the Blatt Pool
- Working on a discount on Campus Childcare and what's possible for staff

Professional Development – Jalen Fuller & Brett Williams

- Working with OPD to determine funding PD services/opportunities to a smaller subset of our staff OR serve in an advisory capacity
- Exploring collaboration with other Senate Committees – Potentially working with the Scholarship & Fundraising Committee as well as with the Staff Policy and Wellbeing Committee
- Kim Pruitt from the Organizational and Professional Development Office will be attending next Professional Development Committee meeting to help determine the committee role as an advisory committee to OPD

Community Projects – Amanda Minnet Colie & Alexis Watts

- Created a semester calendar to share with Senators and constituents to volunteer
 - o Will volunteer with Gamecock CommUnity shop, Midlands Trash Pick-Up, Cocky's Reading Express, Ronald McDonald Center and more.
- In-person opportunities and donation drives will occur every month.
- [Sign up here](#)

By-Laws – Stephanie Richards

- Reviewing bylaws about attendance in next meeting
- Education Senators about bylaws in next general body meeting

Staff Appreciation and Recognition Committee – Adrienne White & Brian Shelton

- Beginning planning for staff recognition for staffers across all campuses
- Reviewing feedback from 2025 Staff Appreciation event to make changes for next year

Scholarship and Fundraising Committee – Savannah Britz & Terrence Gilmore

- Brainstorming fundraising ideas to share that are both long-term and short term
- Met with the Professional Development Committee to discuss ways to collaborate

Order of Business

None

Announcements / Good of the Order

None

Adjourn

Senator Morgan made a motion to adjourn. Vice President Reid seconded the motion to adjourn. All senators were in favor. The formal meeting adjourned at 3:54 PM.

Next meeting of the new Staff Senate term: Tuesday, September 9 at 3:00 p.m. in the Lumpkin Auditorium, Close-Hipp Building, 8th Floor.

Respectfully Submitted,

Michaela Taylor

Secretary
Staff Senate