

PCC Faculty Senate Resolution
May 26, 2021

We, the Palmetto College Campuses Faculty Senate, representing Palmetto College Columbia, USC Lancaster, USC Salkehatchie, USC Sumter, and USC Union, ask the UofSC Faculty Senate to support the following resolution:

Whereas, Palmetto College was established to provide accessible, affordable University of South Carolina baccalaureate degrees to ALL South Carolinians, supporting and encouraging the full participation of UofSC's colleges and departments in this effort, and

Whereas, since its creation in 2012, Palmetto College has worked across its campuses to provide high-quality baccalaureate degrees with significant online coursework options. Using this model, Palmetto College has generated \$101 million for the UofSC system; Palmetto College has boosted the UofSC system's ability to reach a diverse student body and positively impact regions of South Carolina that have been traditionally underserved, and

Whereas, the faculty of the Palmetto College campuses, who provide instruction for the Bachelor of Arts in Liberal Studies (BLS) and Bachelor of Arts in Organizational Leadership (BOL) degree programs, believe firmly in the doctrine of faculty governance in regard to academic degree programs, and

Whereas, the Carolina Online initiative was announced without any discussion with, or approval from, the Palmetto College Campuses Faculty Senate or Palmetto College Campuses' Faculty Organizations, and

Whereas, the BLS and BOL degree programs were announced as options within the Carolina Online initiative without the consultation or approval of the Palmetto College Campuses Faculty Senate or Palmetto College Campuses' Faculty Organizations, and

Whereas, the faculty of the Palmetto College campuses recognize that students in the Palmetto College degree programs benefit from, and are best served by, an option of course-delivery modalities including traditional face-to-face instruction, two-way video, synchronous and asynchronous online, etc., and

Whereas, Carolina Online expressly prohibits its students from accessing any courses offered in a traditional face-to-face setting, thus restricting opportunities for students who are based on the regional Palmetto College campuses and who have thrived on the flexibility to use both modalities, and

Whereas, there remain numerous questions regarding program admission, tuition rates and sharing procedures, academic governance, etc., which rightly should have faculty input through their elected representatives in the Palmetto College Campuses Faculty Senate and greater UofSC Faculty Senate, and

Whereas, at the UofSC Faculty Senate meeting May 14, 2021, Dr. Diana Hill Mitchell, Senior Associate Provost for Social Innovation and eLearning, indicated that the BLS and BOL degree programs would remain in Palmetto College for now and only that “Palmetto College in the terms of the four two-year brick and mortar institutions would continue.” Dr. Mitchell excludes in her statement Palmetto College Columbia (formerly Extended University), which derives its budget from the General Assembly’s Palmetto College appropriation and tuition from the BLS and BOL courses and the Ft. Jackson Program, and

Whereas, Palmetto College Columbia includes 6 tenured faculty and 2 administrators with rank, any decision to discontinue or reduce must come from the Committee of 9. The Committee of 9 did not recommend in its final report on December 7, 2020, the discontinuance or reduction of Palmetto College or Palmetto College Columbia, and

Whereas, the Board of Trustee’s approved mission statements of the four two-year campuses include “provid[ing] for the completion of selected bachelor’s degrees on campus through cooperative agreements and delivery structures with other University of South Carolina System institutions,” and

Whereas, the faculty, the majority of whom are tenured or tenure track, teach around 80 upper-division online Palmetto College courses and 175 upper-division courses on our campuses in support of the Palmetto College degree programs during the regular school year, and

Whereas, the per-credit hour tuition rate created by Carolina Online will negatively affect the revenue streams that support all of the collective academic and student services and opportunities that Palmetto College provides, and

Whereas, Carolina Online is a system-wide initiative, faculty and students from all campuses are affected, and Carolina Online will potentially promote a pernicious degree of intra-UofSC system competition and redundancy, and

Whereas, Palmetto College is committed to its part in helping the greater University of South Carolina system expand online learning options as we go forward together,

Be it therefore resolved, that the Palmetto College Campuses Faculty Senate requests to participate actively alongside UofSC faculty and administration in all discussions and decision-making concerning the Carolina Online initiative and that the Palmetto College Campuses Faculty Senate requests that the Provost’s Office desists in its attempt to take over the BLS and BOL programs from Palmetto College.