AGENCY NAME:	Francis Marion University		
AGENCY CODE:	H180	SECTION:	17

Fiscal Year 2027-28
Agency Budget Plan

FORM A - BUDGET PLAN SUMMARY

	For FY 2027-28, my agency is (mark 'X'):	
OPERATING REQUESTS (FORM B1)	X	Requesting General Fund Appropriations.
		Requesting Federal/Other Authorization.
		Not requesting any changes.

	For FY 2027-28, my agency is (mark 'X'):	
NON-RECURRING REQUESTS (FORM B2)		Requesting Non-Recurring Appropriations.
		Requesting Non-Recurring Federal/Other Authorization.
	X	Not requesting any changes.

	For FY 2027-28, my agency is (mark 'X'):	
CAPITAL REQUESTS (FORM C)	X	Requesting funding for Capital Projects.
		Not requesting any changes.

	For FY 2027-28, my agency is (mark 'X'):	
PROVISOS (FORM D)		Requesting a new proviso and/or substantive changes to existing provisos.
		Only requesting technical proviso changes (such as date references).
	X	Not requesting any proviso changes.

Please identify your agency's preferred contacts for this year's budget process.

	Name	*Phone*	*Email*
PRIMARY CONTACT:	Darryl Bridges	(843) 661-1201	dbridges@fmarion.edu
SECONDARY CONTACT:	Eric Garris	(843) 661-1136	egarris@fmarion.edu

I have reviewed and approved the enclosed FY 2027-28 Agency Budget Plan, which is complete and accurate to the extent of my knowledge.

	Agency Director	*Board or Commission Chair*
SIGN/DATE:	9/22/2026	9/23/2026
TYPE/PRINT NAME:	Luther F. Carter	Mark S. Moore

This form must be signed by the agency head – not a delegate.

Agency Name:	Francis Marion University
Agency Code:	H180
Section:	17

BUDGET REQUESTS			FUNDING					FTES				
Priority	Request Type	Request Title	State	Federal	Earmarked	Restricted	Total	State	Federal	Earmarked	Restricted	Total
1	B1 - Recurring	Tuition Mitigation Support	3,100,000	0	0	0	3,100,000	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
2	B1 - Recurring	Workforce Development Internships	600,000	0	0	0	600,000	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
3	C - Capital	Thomas C. Stanton Academic Computer Center Renovation	7,500,000	0	0	0	7,500,000	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
4	C - Capital	Deferred Maintenance Needs	3,000,000	0	0	0	3,000,000	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
TOTALS			14,200,000	0	0	0	14,200,000	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00

Agency Name:	Francis Marion University		
Agency Code:	H180	Section:	17

FORM B1 – RECURRING OPERATING REQUEST

AGENCY PRIORITY

1

Provide the Agency Priority Ranking from the Executive Summary.

TITLE

Tuition Mitigation Support

Provide a brief, descriptive title for this request.

AMOUNT

General: $3,100,000

Federal: $0

Other: $0

Total: $3,100,000

What is the net change in requested appropriations for FY 2027-2028? This amount should correspond to the total for all funding sources on the Executive Summary.

NEW POSITIONS

0.00

Please provide the total number of new positions needed for this request.

FACTORS ASSOCIATED WITH THE REQUEST

Mark "X" for all that apply:	
X	Change in cost of providing current services to existing program audience
	Change in case load/enrollment under existing program guidelines
	Non-mandated change in eligibility/enrollment for existing program
	Non-mandated program change in service levels or areas
	Proposed establishment of a new program or initiative
	Loss of federal or other external financial support for existing program
	Exhaustion of fund balances previously used to support program
	IT Technology/Security related
	HR/Personnel Related
	AI Related
	Related to a Non-Recurring request – If so, Priority #

STATEWIDE ENTERPRISE STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

Mark "X" for primary applicable Statewide Enterprise Strategic Objective:	
X	Education, Training, and Human Development
	Healthy and Safe Families
	Maintaining Safety, Integrity, and Security
	Public Infrastructure and Economic Development
	Government and Citizens

ACCOUNTABILITY OF FUNDS

This request supports Goal 2 of the University's Strategic Plan, as outlined in the 2026 Accountability Report, which emphasizes student academic success and engagement, including retention and completions. It reaffirms FMU's commitment to providing a rigorous academic experience at an affordable cost. Tuition mitigation funding would allow the University to absorb rising operating costs while limiting additional tuition burdens on students and families.

The effectiveness of this appropriation will be evaluated based on the University's continued ability to freeze tuition rates for FY2027-28 despite rising operating costs reflected in the latest HEPI estimate.

What specific strategy, as outlined in the most recent Strategic Planning and Performance Measurement template of agency's accountability report, does this funding request support? How would this request advance that strategy? How would the use of these funds be evaluated?

RECIPIENTS OF FUNDS	Students and families are the primary beneficiaries of tuition mitigation. FMU's 2026 Accountability Report states that 93 percent of its students are from South Carolina, 65 percent of those students are from the Pee Dee region, and 54 percent of students are Pell Grant eligible. Internally, these funds will offset instructional and operational costs that would otherwise place additional pressure on tuition revenue, thereby directly supporting the University's core mission of access, affordability, and educational quality. Applying the latest HEPI estimate to the University's annual expense budget, together with cost categories that historically outpace HEPI, brings the total amount requested to hold tuition flat to $3,100,000. No new positions are being requested with this funding.

What individuals or entities would receive these funds (contractors, vendors, grantees, individual beneficiaries, etc.)? How would these funds be allocated – using an existing formula, through a competitive process, based upon predetermined eligibility criteria?

JUSTIFICATION OF REQUEST	Francis Marion University remains committed to providing South Carolinians with one of the most affordable four-year university experiences in the state. Tuition mitigation funding has enabled FMU to absorb rising operating costs without increasing tuition, protecting students and families from additional financial burden. FMU requests $3,100,000 in recurring state funding for FY2027-28 to continue this commitment while sustaining instructional and operational quality. FMU continues to maintain one of the lowest tuition rates statewide, a critical consideration given the students it serves. The 2026 Accountability Report states that 93 percent of FMU students are from South Carolina, 65 percent of those students are from the Pee Dee region, and 54 percent are Pell Grant eligible. Keeping tuition affordable supports continued access and opportunity for students in the Pee Dee region and across the state. The financial uncertainty many families face makes this appropriation essential. The Pee Dee workforce region has a reported poverty rate of 21.9 percent, compared with 14.1 percent statewide. Although these regional figures are not measures of individual FMU student households, they reinforce the importance of limiting additional tuition burdens. The region's largest employment sectors include health care and social assistance and manufacturing, and FMU's programs in health sciences, engineering, education, and business help prepare graduates to serve these and other workforce needs. The request reflects the continued increase in the cost of providing current services. The Higher Education Price Index measures the operating purchases of colleges and universities and reported a 3.5 percent forecast for FY2026. These indicators, together with University-specific increases in compensation, utilities, insurance, maintenance contracts, technology, and other essential operating categories, support the $3,100,000 request. There are no matching funds associated with this request and no new positions are requested. Without this additional recurring support, the University would be forced to consider tuition increases or reductions in instruction, academic support, and other operations to cover rising costs. Such an outcome would disproportionately affect students with the greatest financial need and would undermine FMU's mission of access and affordability. This appropriation will help the University meet its financial obligations, sustain educational quality, and continue providing the services needed for student success.

Please thoroughly explain the request to include the justification for funds, potential offsets, matching funds, and method of calculation. Please include any explanation of impact if funds are not received. If new positions have been requested, explain why existing vacancies are not sufficient.

Agency Name:	Francis Marion University		
Agency Code:	H180	Section:	17

FORM B1 – RECURRING OPERATING REQUEST

AGENCY PRIORITY

2

Provide the Agency Priority Ranking from the Executive Summary.

TITLE

Workforce Development Internships

Provide a brief, descriptive title for this request.

AMOUNT

General: $600,000

Federal: $0

Other: $0

Total: $600,000

What is the net change in requested appropriations for FY 2027-2028? This amount should correspond to the total for all funding sources on the Executive Summary.

NEW POSITIONS

0.00

Please provide the total number of new positions needed for this request.

FACTORS ASSOCIATED WITH THE REQUEST

Mark "X" for all that apply:	
	Change in cost of providing current services to existing program audience
	Change in case load/enrollment under existing program guidelines
	Non-mandated change in eligibility/enrollment for existing program
	Non-mandated program change in service levels or areas
X	Proposed establishment of a new program or initiative
	Loss of federal or other external financial support for existing program
	Exhaustion of fund balances previously used to support program
	IT Technology/Security related
	HR/Personnel Related
	AI Related
	Related to a Non-Recurring request – If so, Priority #

STATEWIDE ENTERPRISE STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

Mark "X" for primary applicable Statewide Enterprise Strategic Objective:	
X	Education, Training, and Human Development
	Healthy and Safe Families
	Maintaining Safety, Integrity, and Security
	Public Infrastructure and Economic Development
	Government and Citizens

ACCOUNTABILITY OF FUNDS

Francis Marion University requests $600,000 in recurring General Fund appropriations beginning in FY2027-28 for Workforce Development Internships. The proposed program would connect academic preparation with supervised employment experience and help Pee Dee and other South Carolina employers develop potential future employees. Stipends would help students manage the cost of participating when an internship offers limited pay or requires travel.

This request advances FMU's FY2025 Accountability Report strategic vision, Objective 3(c), to expand internships with business, governmental, and public organizations, and Objective 3(d), to develop programs responsive to local employers. It also supports career development under Objective 3(b).

What specific strategy, as outlined in the most recent Strategic Planning and Performance Measurement template of agency's accountability report, does this funding request support? How would this request advance that strategy? How would the use of these funds be evaluated?

RECIPIENTS OF FUNDS	Enrolled FMU students would receive internship stipends and approved access support for supervised placements with South Carolina businesses, public agencies, and nonprofit organizations, with emphasis on employers serving the Pee Dee. Proposed selection criteria include academic readiness, placement related to career goals, employer supervision, and documented financial need. Each placement would require learning objectives, defined hours, a named supervisor, and completion verification. The program would be coordinated with FMU Financial Assistance and existing internship programs to prevent duplicate payment for the same cost. Vendors could receive payment for approved training and evaluation services.

What individuals or entities would receive these funds (contractors, vendors, grantees, individual beneficiaries, etc.)? How would these funds be allocated – using an existing formula, through a competitive process, based upon predetermined eligibility criteria?

JUSTIFICATION OF REQUEST	The proposed program would connect academic preparation with supervised employment experience and help Pee Dee and other South Carolina employers develop potential future employees. Stipends would help students manage the cost of participating when an internship offers limited pay or requires travel. Placements would focus on employer-validated needs aligned with FMU programs. Proposed areas include health-related services, education, business, engineering, and technology, subject to employer commitments and appropriate supervision. Recurring support would allow FMU to recruit successive student cohorts and plan placements with employers each year. Employer interest, placement capacity, and student demand must be confirmed before awards are committed. The model assumes existing staff coordination and no new FTE. No required employer match, federal award, or other offset is assumed in the request. Employer wages or private support, if secured, would be documented separately and reviewed for overlap. The program would operate within $600,000 annually, with award volume adjusted for actual costs; no automatic escalation is included. Without this appropriation, FMU would lack proposed recurring funding to support this program. The intended benefits are broader access to career experience, stronger employer connections, and increased student success.

Please thoroughly explain the request to include the justification for funds, potential offsets, matching funds, and method of calculation. Please include any explanation of impact if funds are not received. If new positions have been requested, explain why existing vacancies are not sufficient.

Agency Name:	Francis Marion University		
Agency Code:	H180	Section:	17

FORM C – CAPITAL REQUEST

AGENCY PRIORITY

3

Provide the Agency Priority Ranking from the Executive Summary.

TITLE

Thomas C. Stanton Academic Computer Center Renovation

Provide a brief, descriptive title for this request.

AMOUNT

$7,500,000

How much is requested for this project in FY 2027-2028? This amount should correspond to the total for all funding sources on the Executive Summary.

CPIP PRIORITY

The Stanton Academic Computer Center Renovation is included in the University's 2026-27 Comprehensive Permanent Improvement Plan as an initial submission for Plan Year 2028. It is Plan Year Priority 2 of 3, Overall Priority 5 of 10, and Project Number 6128. The University is requesting $7,500,000 to support comprehensive facility renovation and to provide technology equipment needed to modernize the facility.

If the full state appropriation is not available, the University would evaluate a phased scope that gives priority to the most critical building systems, safety and accessibility needs, instructional spaces, and essential technology equipment.

Identify the project's CPIP plan year and priority number, along with the first year in which the project was included in the agency's CPIP. If not included in the agency's CPIP, please provide an explanation. If the project involves a request for appropriated state funding, briefly describe the agency's contingency plan in the event that state funding is not made available in the amount requested.

OTHER APPROVALS

The University will obtain all approvals required for the project and funding source. Depending on the final scope and delivery method, these approvals may include the Francis Marion University Board of Trustees, the Joint Bond Review Committee, the State Fiscal Accountability Authority, and other applicable state review bodies.

The CPIP submission documents the project in the University's capital plan. Facilities Management will confirm the remaining approval sequence and document the status of each approval as the scope and cost estimate are refined.

What approvals have already been obtained? Are there additional approvals that must be secured in order for the project to succeed? (Institutional board, JBRC, SFAA, etc.)

LONG-TERM PLANNING AND SUSTAINABILITY

Named in honor of the second president of Francis Marion University, the Thomas C. Stanton Academic Computer Center was occupied in 1988. The 12,500-square-foot facility houses specialized computer classrooms, a 60-station general-use computer laboratory, and the main Campus Technology Help Desk. It serves as a core hub for campus computing, network infrastructure, and technical support.

This project will address the building envelope, exterior and interior finishes, utilities, mechanical systems, classrooms, laboratories, support areas, and related renovation needs. It will also provide technology equipment and infrastructure necessary to modernize instructional and technical-support functions within the facility.

Project Component	Amount
Utilities and mechanical-system renovations	$2,500,000
Interior renovations and instructional-space improvements	$1,750,000
Other construction, renovation, and repair work	$1,000,000
Building exterior renovations	$500,000
Technology equipment and infrastructure	$1,500,000
Architectural, engineering, and other fees	$250,000
Total	$7,500,000

No other capital or operating funds have been identified for this project at this time. FMU Facilities Management and Campus Technology will further refine the renovation scope, equipment requirements, phasing, cost estimates, and approval schedule.

The University estimates recurring utility savings of $50,000 from existing General Funds. The renovations and technology investments are intended to modernize the learning and support environment, improve reliability and functionality, strengthen instructional and technical-service capabilities, and extend the facility's useful life.

What other funds have already been invested in this project (source/type, amount, timeframe)? Will other capital and/or operating funds for this project be requested in the future? If so, how much, and in which fiscal years? Has a source for those funds been identified/secured? What is the agency's expectation with regard to additional annual costs or savings associated with this capital improvement? What source of funds will be impacted by those costs or savings? What is the expected useful life of the capital improvement?

SUMMARY

The Thomas C. Stanton Academic Computer Center is an important academic and technology facility serving FMU students, faculty, and staff. Occupied in 1988, the 12,500-square-foot building houses specialized computer classrooms, a 60-station general-use computer laboratory, and the main Campus Technology Help Desk. It is a core hub for campus computing, network infrastructure, and technical support.

FMU requests a $7,500,000 state appropriation to comprehensively renovate and modernize the facility and provide technology equipment needed for contemporary instruction and technical support. The project is included in the 2026-27 CPIP as an initial Plan Year 2028 submission, Plan Year Priority 2 of 3, Overall Priority 5 of 10, and Project Number 6128. The scope includes utilities and mechanical-system renovations; interior, exterior, instructional-space, and other building improvements; technology equipment and infrastructure; and architectural, engineering, and related fees.

Timely investment will extend the building's useful life, improve reliability and functionality, support contemporary instruction and technical services, and reduce the risk of costly repairs and disruptions. The technology investment will equip renovated classrooms, laboratories, and support areas for current and future academic needs. The University estimates $50,000 in recurring utility savings from existing General Funds for three years or more. If the project is delayed, aging systems, outdated technology, and space limitations will continue to place pressure on maintenance resources and may constrain the facility's ability to support current academic and technology needs.

Provide a summary of the project and explain why it is necessary. Please refer to the budget guidelines for appropriate questions and thoroughly answer all related items.

Agency Name:	Francis Marion University		
Agency Code:	H180	Section:	17

FORM C – CAPITAL REQUEST

AGENCY PRIORITY

4

Provide the Agency Priority Ranking from the Executive Summary.

TITLE

Deferred Maintenance Needs

Provide a brief, descriptive title for this request.

AMOUNT

$3,000,000

How much is requested for this project in FY 2027-2028? This amount should correspond to the total for all funding sources on the Executive Summary.

CPIP PRIORITY

Francis Marion University requests $3,000,000 in state appropriations to address high-priority deferred maintenance needs across campus. The project is included in the University's 2026-27 Comprehensive Permanent Improvement Plan as a Plan Year 2028 resubmission, Plan Year Priority 3 of 3, Overall Priority 6 of 10, and Project Number 6129.

Without this funding, FMU will be required to defer critical maintenance, increasing the risk of higher long-term costs, system or building-component failures, temporary repairs, and disruption to academic and campus operations. The request addresses urgent deferred-maintenance needs that cannot be accommodated within the University's annual maintenance budget. If the full appropriation is not available, Facilities Management will prioritize and phase the work based on documented condition, safety, operational impact, and available resources, proceeding first with the most critical needs and documenting the consequences of deferring the remaining work.

Identify the project's CPIP plan year and priority number, along with the first year in which the project was included in the agency's CPIP. If not included in the agency's CPIP, please provide an explanation. If the project involves a request for appropriated state funding, briefly describe the agency's contingency plan in the event that state funding is not made available in the amount requested.

OTHER APPROVALS

The University will secure all required approvals before beginning the applicable project phases. These may include approvals from the Francis Marion University Board of Trustees, Joint Bond Review Committee, State Fiscal Accountability Authority, and other state oversight bodies. CPIP inclusion reflects the project's planning status but does not authorize construction. Facilities Management will confirm the approval sequence and track each approval as the scope, cost estimates, delivery method, and funding are finalized.

What approvals have already been obtained? Are there additional approvals that must be secured in order for the project to succeed? (Institutional board, JBRC, SFAA, etc.)

LONG-TERM PLANNING AND SUSTAINABILITY

Francis Marion University has been diligent in maintaining its facilities, but many core systems and infrastructure elements have reached or are approaching the end of their useful life. This request addresses the most pressing deferred maintenance needs identified by Facilities Management, including roofing, utilities, building interiors and exteriors, and other construction, renovation, and repair work. These investments will extend the useful life of campus facilities, improve reliability and safety, and reduce exposure to emergency repairs and disruptions.

The CPIP classifies the work as repair or renovation of existing facilities and systems, divided equally between office and administrative facilities and program and academic facilities. Upon approval of the funds, the University will use the A-1 process to confirm and, if necessary, revise project priorities, with emphasis on documented condition, urgency, safety, and campus impact. Work will be phased to minimize disruption to academic programs and operations.

Project Component	Amount
Other construction, renovation, and repair work (Parking and landscaping)	$600,000
Building exterior renovations (Building envelope, windows, and walls)	$600,000

Building and addition interior renovations (Interior finishes, flooring, and fixtures)	$600,000
Utilities renovations (including HVAC)	$600,000
Roofing repairs and replacement	$600,000
Total	$3,000,000

No matching or other funding source has been identified in the CPIP. Facilities Management will further refine the project list, estimates, phasing, and approval schedule. The University has not yet estimated annual cost savings; however, HVAC improvements are expected to generate recurring utility savings.

What other funds have already been invested in this project (source/type, amount, timeframe)? Will other capital and/or operating funds for this project be requested in the future? If so, how much, and in which fiscal years? Has a source for those funds been identified/secured? What is the agency's expectation with regard to additional annual costs or savings associated with this capital improvement? What source of funds will be impacted by those costs or savings? What is the expected useful life of the capital improvement?

SUMMARY

Francis Marion University requests $3,000,000 in non-recurring capital appropriations for Deferred Maintenance Needs. The 2026-27 CPIP describes roofing repairs and replacement, interior and exterior renovations, utilities, paving, and landscaping.

The CPIP cost schedule allocates $600,000 each to five categories: other construction, renovation, and repair; building exteriors; building and addition interiors; utilities; and roofing. The five categories total $3,000,000. Separately, the plan assigns 20 percent of building-component work to each of building envelope/windows/walls, HVAC, interior finishes/flooring/fixtures, parking/landscape, and roofs. These percentages are component classifications, not additional funding.

Facilities Management would refine the project list and estimates using documented deficiencies, urgency, safety, and campus impact. Funds would be paid to contractors, vendors, and professional service providers through applicable procurement processes. Completion would be evaluated against approved scope, budget, and correction of identified deficiencies.

The proposed work would protect existing facilities, support reliability, and reduce exposure to disruption and emergency repairs. Without funding, prioritized deficiencies would remain and may require temporary repairs.

Provide a summary of the project and explain why it is necessary. Please refer to the budget guidelines for appropriate questions and thoroughly answer all related items.

Agency Name:	Francis Marion University		
Agency Code:	H180	Section:	17

FORM E – AGENCY COST SAVINGS AND GENERAL FUND REDUCTION CONTINGENCY PLAN

TITLE	Agency Cost Savings and General Fund Reduction Contingency Plan
AMOUNT	$1,212,718 *What is the General Fund 3% reduction amount? This amount should correspond to the reduction spreadsheet prepared by EBO.*
ASSOCIATED FTE REDUCTIONS	**None** *How many FTEs would be reduced in association with this General Fund reduction?*
PROGRAM / ACTIVITY IMPACT	The University would address the reduction by applying it to the operating budget within the I.A. E&G unrestricted general funds category through the following actions: • Reducing operating expenditures • Scaling back the scope of community engagement activities • Reassessing non-essential travel • Delaying the hiring of certain positions as determined by the University's regular position review process • Reviewing existing contracts with vendors and service providers for possible adjustments • Deferring selected technology replacement cycles across departments where existing equipment can remain in service without materially affecting operations, academic instruction, or student support These steps, including are designed to preserve core academic instruction and student support, though some indirect effects may occur. Potential impacts could include fewer community events, reduced opportunities for travel-supported professional development, adjustments in contracted services, longer timelines for filling certain staff positions, and extended use of select technology assets before scheduled replacement. *What programs or activities are supported by the General Funds identified?*
	The University would address a reduction in General Fund Appropriations by applying it to the operating budget within the I.A. E&G unrestricted funds category. Reductions would be implemented in the following priority order to minimize disruption to academic instruction and student support services: • Non-Essential Travel – Scaling back professional development travel and non-mandatory conference attendance.

SUMMARY

• Community Engagement Activities – Reducing the frequency or scope of certain outreach programs, such as public lecture series or non-academic community events.

• Operating Expenditures and Contracts – Deferring non-critical maintenance and supplies purchases and reviewing vendor/service contracts for potential adjustments.

• Delayed Hiring – Postponing the filling of certain vacant staff and administrative positions following the University's semiannual position review process.

• Technology Replacement Cycle Deferrals – Deferring selected departmental technology replacements when existing equipment remains serviceable and continued use does not materially affect operations, cybersecurity, academic instruction, or student support.

Method of Calculation: Identify non-essential or deferrable expenses within these categories while ensuring that the core mission of instruction and student support remains protected.

Likely Impacts: Reduced community programming, fewer travel-supported professional development opportunities, longer timelines for filling staff vacancies, a curtailment of some services, and extended use of selected technology assets. Technology deferrals would be limited to equipment that can remain safely and effectively in service without materially affecting academic instruction, student support, cybersecurity, or essential operations.

Cost-Savings Category	Amount
Non-Essential Travel	$75,000
Community Engagement Activities	$50,000
Operating Expenditures and Deferred Purchases	$525,000
Vendor and Service Contract Adjustments	$70,000
Delayed Hiring and Position Review Actions	$342,718
Deferral of Technology Replacement Cycles Across Departments	$150,000
Total Estimated Savings	Target: $1,212,718

Please provide a detailed summary of service delivery impact caused by a reduction in General Fund Appropriations and provide the method of calculation for anticipated reductions. Agencies should prioritize reduction in expenditures that have the least significant impact on service delivery.

AGENCY COST SAVINGS PLANS

The University conducts twice-yearly reviews of open positions as part of an ongoing cost-management and workforce-planning process. Senior leadership evaluates instructional needs by academic discipline alongside essential administrative and student-service functions to determine which vacancies should be filled, frozen, reclassified, consolidated, or eliminated. This structured approach has, over time, resulted in targeted FTE reductions through attrition and selective elimination of vacancies, while prioritizing the protection of core instruction and student support. Savings realized are used to maintain student affordability by offsetting increases in fixed or essential costs and sustaining services central to the University's mission. Savings from these reviews vary from year to year based on the positions and actions under consideration and can substantially exceed $50,000.

The University is renewing its focus on reducing overlapping technology tools and licenses, retiring legacy infrastructure, consolidating vendors and platforms, reviewing hosting arrangements, standardizing technology purchases, and selectively deferring departmental technology replacement cycles. These efforts will be guided by operational need, equipment condition, supportability, and security requirements to protect instruction, student support, cybersecurity, and essential operations. Savings will be reinvested in technology that supports students and employees, strengthens cybersecurity, and advances planned lifecycle needs.

What measures does the agency plan to implement to reduce its costs and operating expenses by more than $50,000? Provide a summary of the measures taken and the estimated amount of savings. How does the agency plan to repurpose the savings?

Agency Name:	Francis Marion University		
Agency Code:	H180	Section:	17

FORM F – REDUCING COST AND BURDEN TO BUSINESSES AND CITIZENS

TITLE	Comprehensive Initiatives for Workforce Development, Student Success, and Financial Accessibility

Provide a brief, descriptive title for this request.

Overview of Recent and Planned University Initiatives

FMU's affordability strategy directly benefits South Carolina students and families. Ninety-three percent of FMU students are South Carolina residents, 65 percent of those students are from the Pee Dee region, and 54 percent of FMU students are Pell Grant eligible. The University has frozen tuition for eight consecutive years and continues the Premier Pledge Scholarship program, which combines federal, state, and institutional aid to cover first-year tuition costs for eligible admitted in-state students.

Academic Program Reductions or Eliminations

Francis Marion University has made strategic adjustments to its academic offerings to ensure operational efficiency and meet regional needs. The following outlines key program reductions and consolidations:

Program Consolidations:

In Spring of 2025, the BS in Biology, Secondary Education program was moved from the School of Education to the Biology Department with a change in CIP code aligning it with other secondary education programs within the university. This restructuring provides students with STEM scholarship funding the previous organization prohibited.

In the 2019-2020 academic year, FMU consolidated the Music Industry and Theatre Arts programs into a single Performing Arts program with concentrations in Music Industry or Theatre Arts. This consolidation was driven by shared resources and student overlap, ultimately benefiting both programs and streamlining resources.

The BS in Art Education was moved from the School of Education to the Visual Arts program, aligning it with other secondary education programs within the Department of Fine Arts. This restructuring meets a critical regional need for art educators and uses resources more efficiently.

In Spring 2018, FMU consolidated the BA/BS in Economics and the BBA in Economics due to significant curricular overlap. The School of Business now promotes the BBA in Economics as the primary offering.

Program Eliminations:

French Track in Modern Languages was eliminated in 2025.

Middle Grades Education and Mass Communications/Sports Information were eliminated in 2022. Middle Grades Education students can now pursue an add-on certification while earning their Elementary Education degree, reallocating resources to areas of need without requiring additional faculty hires.

The BS Physics and BS Biology Environmental Science tracks were eliminated in Summer 2022, replaced by new BS Environmental Science and BA Environmental Studies programs to better meet environmental science needs.

The German program was eliminated in Spring 2017.

Academic Programs Added or Expanded

FMU continues to develop and expand academic programs in response to regional and state workforce demands. The following new programs have been implemented in recent years:

New Programs:

- Forestry, BS (Fall 2026)
- Bachelor of Social Work, BSW (Fall 2026)
- Criminal Justice, BA/BS (Fall 2024)
- Autism Studies, BS (Fall 2024)
- Doctor of Occupational Therapy, OTD (Fall 2024)
- Doctor of Psychology, Psy-D (Spring 2024)
- Montessori Early Childhood Education, MED (Fall 2023)
- Montessori Elementary Education, MED (Fall 2023)
- Mass Communication, BS (Fall 2022)
- Environmental Studies, BA (Fall 2022)
- Environmental Science, BS (Fall 2022)
- Elementary Education Accelerated Program, MAT (Fall 2022)
- Early Childhood Education Accelerated Program, MAT (Fall 2022)
- Multi-Categorical Special Education, MAT (Fall 2022)
- Psychiatric Nurse Practitioner, MSN (Fall 2020)

EXPECTED SAVINGS TO BUSINESSES AND CITIZENS

- Mechanical Engineering, BS (Fall 2019)
- Teaching and Learning, MED (Spring 2019)
- Master of Speech-Language Pathology, MSLP (Fall 2018)
- Doctor of Nursing Practice, DNP (Spring 2018)
- Master of Applied Psychology in Applied Behavioral Analysis (Fall 2017)

New Tracks and Other Academic Credentials:

- Teaching Children of Poverty Track, MED Teaching and Learning (Spring 2025)
- Accounting, BBA, SEER Eligibility granted (Fall 2024)
- Education, BS, SEER Eligibility granted (Fall 2024)
- Interprofessional Certificate (Fall 2024)
- Psychiatric Nurse Practitioner Certificate (Fall 2024)
- Sociology, Criminology and Deviance Track, BS/BA (Fall 2024)
- Elementary Education, Non-Certification Track, BS (Spring 2024)
- Early Childhood Education, Non-Certification Track, BS (Spring 2024)
- English, Creative Writing Track, BA (Fall 2023)
- Management Information Systems, Systems Management and Systems Design Tracks, BBA (Fall 2021)
- Engineering Tech, Mechanical Engineering Option, BS (Fall 2021)
- Marketing, Digital Marketing Track, BBA (Fall 2021)
- Chemistry, Forensic Science, BS (Fall 2020)
- Biology, Pre-Professional Studies Option, BS (Fall 2019)
- Healthcare Informatics, BS (Fall 2018)

• History, Secondary Education, BS (Fall 2018)

Future and Proposed Programs:

• Education Leadership, MEd and Certificate (Spring 2027)

• Physician Assistant Studies, MS (Fall 2027)

• Dental Hygiene, BS (Fall 2028)

• Physical Therapy, DPT

These programs strengthen the regional workforce pipeline while expanding affordable, accessible options for students.

FMU also helps students retain state merit aid when they fall just short of credit-hour or GPA requirements. From 2022 through 2024, summer tuition assistance supported 185 students; 142, or 77 percent, subsequently met LIFE Scholarship requirements, and 37 also qualified for LIFE Enhancement. In summer 2025, 50 of 65 participants, or 77 percent, met LIFE Scholarship requirements, and 9 also met LIFE Enhancement requirements. In summer 2026, 27 of 36 Pell-eligible participants, or 75 percent, met LIFE Scholarship requirements, and 7 students in eligible majors met LIFE Enhancement requirements.

Clinical and Community Services Initiatives

FMU provides affordable, community-based services that benefit both citizens and students:

Autism Studies Center: The Center provides workshops to child-care facilities, school districts, police departments, and individuals on how to interact with individuals with Autism. They also provide, through a partnership with Duke, Sensory Tubs for FMU students during clinical education and current teachers in the Pee Dee region. The Center has also established collaborative programs with the Office of Special Education Services.

Speech-Language Pathology Clinic and Behavioral Health Clinic: These clinics offer low-cost services such as speech therapy, applied behavioral analysis, and autism treatment while serving as critical training facilities for graduate students. In the summer of 2025 SLP students provided critical therapy to K-12 students in the Pee Dee region to fill the gap during scheduled school vacation.

FMU Downtown Evening College: This program offers low-cost courses aimed at community engagement.

Partnerships with Hope Health and ACS Technologies: FMU has entered into partnerships to offer on-site MBA courses to employees at Hope Health and ACS Technologies, demonstrating the University’s commitment to serving the community and local businesses through accessible education.

Graduate Program Revisions

FMU continues to refine its graduate programs to enhance accessibility and meet critical workforce needs:

• The Accelerated Master of Teaching for both Early Childhood Education and Elementary Education revised the curriculum to eliminate the second semester of student teaching to encourage enrollment and reduce time and cost to degree.

• The new Master of Education, Teaching Children of Poverty Track (Spring 2025) provides a specialized advanced degree option for all prospective students, and completers may request a TCOP Endorsement from the SCDE.

• Graduate programs in Business have created customized program delivery to partner with businesses seeking to provide advanced education to their employees.

• Graduate programs in Education and Business have transitioned to online delivery, reducing costs and increasing flexibility for students.

• A new Post-Master's Certificate in Psychiatric Mental Health Nurse Practitioner (PMHNP) (Fall 2024) provides advanced training for MSN-prepared nurses, addressing shortages in mental health providers.

Through these initiatives, FMU remains dedicated to operational efficiency, student success, and addressing regional workforce needs.

What is the expected savings to South Carolina's businesses and citizens that is generated by this proposal? The savings could be related to time or money.

FACTORS ASSOCIATED WITH THE REQUEST

Mark "X" for all that apply:	
	Repeal or revision of regulations.
	Reduction of agency fees or fines to businesses or citizens.
	Greater efficiency in agency services or reduction in compliance burden.
X	Other

METHOD OF CALCULATION

N/A

Describe the method of calculation for determining the expected cost or time savings to businesses or citizens.

REDUCTION OF FEES OR FINES

N/A

Which fees or fines does the agency intend to reduce? What was the fine or fee revenue for the previous fiscal year? What was the associated program expenditure for the previous fiscal year? What is the enabling authority for the issuance of the fee or fine?

REDUCTION OF REGULATION

N/A

Which regulations does the agency intend to amend or delete? What is the enabling authority for the regulation?

Francis Marion University has undertaken multiple initiatives to reduce the financial burden on students and families while supporting regional workforce development. Program consolidations and eliminations have streamlined operations and improved efficiency. New and expanded programs in healthcare, education, business, and STEM fields address critical state and regional needs.

Through its clinics, employer partnerships, and accessible graduate programs, FMU provides affordable services to citizens, while preparing students for high-demand careers. These measures benefit South Carolina businesses by strengthening the talent pipeline, and they reduce costs for families through affordable, accessible education.

Francis Marion University remains committed to affordability, efficiency, and student success, ensuring that higher education continues to be a driver of economic growth in the Pee Dee and across the state.

SUMMARY

Provide an explanation of the proposal and its positive results on businesses or citizens. How will the request affect agency operations?