

## **University of South Carolina Union**

Act 629 – Summary Reports on Institutional Effectiveness  
Fiscal Year 2006 – 2007

### **Assessment of Procedures for Student Development**

The purpose of the student services program at USC Union is to contribute to the total development of the student as an individual. This is accomplished through services and activities designed to supplement students' academic programs, as well as to assist in their physical, emotional, and social growth.

An orientation and pre-registration program is conducted by the Student Affairs Office each summer for new freshmen and for transfer students. In addition, extended orientation is provided to new students throughout their first year through University 101. Counseling services are provided without charge to USC Union students on matters of personal, educational, and career concerns.

The University provides a balanced student-life program, which contributes significantly to students' educational experiences. Students are encouraged to participate in a variety of extracurricular activities, which are designed to enhance their sense of community responsibility and their capacity for leadership.

#### **Indicators:**

- Participation in Student Government Association (SGA) activities.
- Participation in services provided by the Opportunity Scholars Program (OSP).
- Participation in activities of student organizations.
- Satisfaction with student development activities and services.

#### **Assessment Methods:**

- Participation data for Student Government Association activities.
- Participation data for OSP services.
- Participation data for student organizations.
- Summary results for student surveys (course evaluations and withdrawal surveys).
- Summary results for alumni survey.

#### **Assessment Results:**

##### **Student Government Association (SGA) Activities**

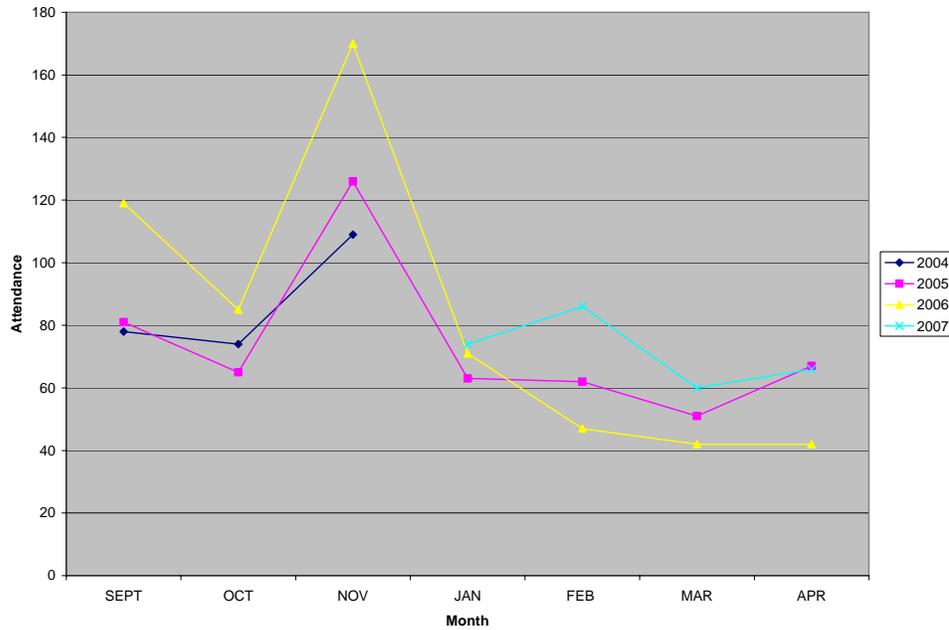
The purpose of the SGA is to represent the student body both academically and socially. The SGA schedules and directs activities. Any co-curricular activity of interest to students can be organized within the framework of the SGA. The SGA has a planning session with other student organizations near the end of each semester to develop a schedule of student events for the coming term.

The USC Union SGA averages two student events per month from September to April. For the 2006 – 2007 year, the events held were:

- September: Welcome Back Cookout; Ice Cream Social
- October: Pizza Party; Evening Social; Halloween Social
- November: Thanksgiving Luncheon and Food Drive
- January: Welcome Back Social

- February: Valentine's Social
- March: Theme Social; Evening Social
- April: Spring Fling

The SGA also provides funds for a Christmas party and a spring semester social for the USC Union students at the Laurens County Higher Education Center, as well as sponsoring a blood drive each semester. The participation data (average attendance per month) and the three-year trend are shown below.



SGA event participation tends to be significantly higher in the fall semester than in the spring, with the Thanksgiving Lunch and Food Drive being the most popular event of the year. A decrease in participation during the spring semester may be attributed to traditionally lower enrollments of on-campus students during that semester and inclement weather from January to March. Attendance at events is also related to the advertising done by the members of the SGA and the motivation of the SGA officers in publicizing their events. More attention to publicity will be given. Alternative times to the traditional student activities period (12p – 1p Monday and Wednesday) are also being considered.

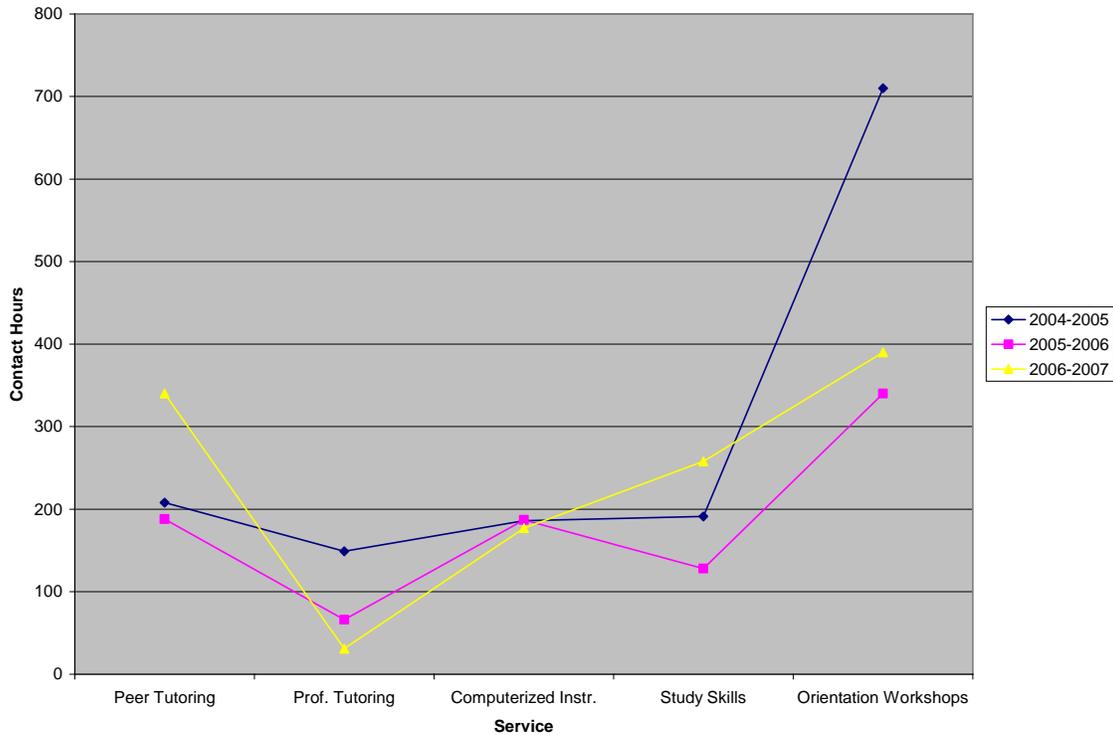
There have been concerns over the last several years from the administration on the quality of student activities from the SGA and other organizations. More emphasis is needed on student activities that have a cultural/academic enrichment focus rather than pure socialization. To make student organizations more accountable for the dollars they are allocated in the budget process, all organizations are now required to submit a strategic plan including mission, vision, goals, initiatives, action plans, results for the previous year's activities along with their annual budget request in the spring.

### Opportunity Scholars Program (OSP) Services

The Opportunity Scholars Program is federally funded and designed to assist students throughout their college career. Academic support for eligible students includes academic counseling,

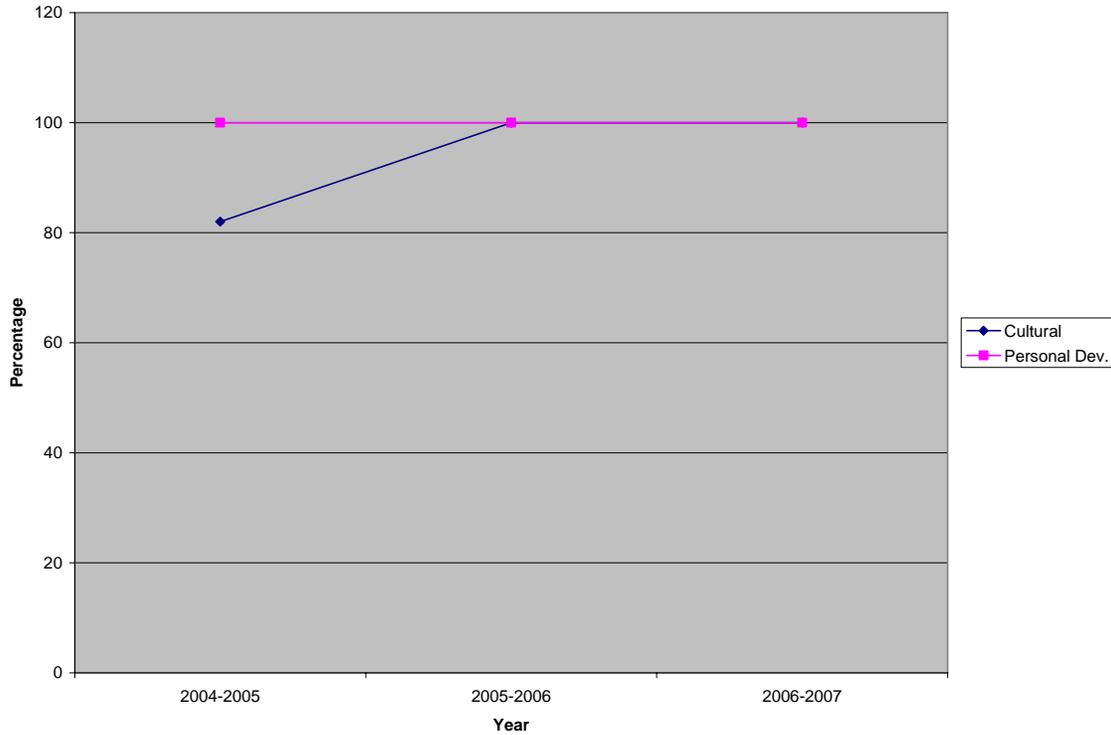
tutoring, mentoring, and cultural activities programming. Generally, financial aid recipients, first-generation college students, and disabled students are eligible for program services. The USC Union OSP is funded to serve 160 students.

The number of contact hours for specific student development activities over the last three years is shown below.



There has been a decrease in the amount of professional tutoring given due to the primary tutor being hired as a permanent member of the USC Union faculty. Orientation workshops have been shortened, decreasing the number of contact hours. Study skills and various orientation workshops tend to be the most popular of the OSP services. An increase in the use of peer tutoring has coincided with the increase in emphasis on student learning outcomes by the academic administration.

OSP also contributes to the cultural development of its members by providing opportunities for attending various cultural events throughout the year. OSP sponsors a number of workshops related to health, wellness and personal development. The percentage of OSP membership attending a cultural and a personal development event for 2004 – 2007 are shown below.



OSP members are encouraged to take part in all cultural and personal development events at USC Union. OSP does an incredible job in enhancing the cultural and personal development of USC Union students.

### Student Organization Activities

There are five active student organizations at USC Union: African American Association (AAA), Women on a Mission (WOM), Hiking Club, Baptist Student Union (BSU) and the USC Union Music Club. Of those five, AAA, WOM, Hiking Club and the USC Union Music Club receive funds from the student affairs division. BSU, although an officially chartered organization, is funded by the local Southern Baptist Association office.

African American Association (AAA) is the largest and most active of the student organizations at USC Union. The purpose of AAA is to provide a supportive network for the successful advancement of African Americans and all minorities in Higher Education. The objectives of AAA will be to sponsor activities to encourage progression through college, to provide mentoring to high school African Americans and all minorities in Union County to pursue a Baccalaureate Degree, to promote a healthy contribution of cultural, social and community service projects for the benefit of African Americans and all minorities at USC Union, and the greater Union Community. Membership in AAA shall be extended to any student, faculty, or staff expressing a desire to adhere to the purpose and objectives of the organization. Membership shall not be limited to persons based on their race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, disability, or veteran status. AAA had 40 members during the 2006 – 2007 year. AAA-sponsored activities that were open to the student body and the community were, among others: HIV/AIDS awareness programs, Black History Month program, Martin Luther King Jr. Birthday program, *God's Trombone* musical drama and a Talent and Fashion Show. AAA also sponsored a number of events with local African-American churches to strengthen relationships and conducted

community service activities such as nursing home visits and voter registration drives. Attendance at AAA events ranged from 50 to 250, and a majority of its membership took part in the community service activities.

Women on a Mission (WOM) is the newest student organization at USC Union, formed in fall 2006. The mission of WOM is to empower/build self-esteem for females by: prayer meetings, empowerment/support circles, retreats, community works, and campus activities. Membership shall not be limited to persons based on their race, color, gender, color, religion, nationality, age, disability, or veteran status. WOM had 25 members in 2006 – 2007. WOM sponsored a depression workshop and a Women's History Month program open to all students and the community. The organization also co-sponsored a number of community service projects with AAA, with a majority of its membership taking an active role. Participation in WOM sponsored events ranged from 20 to 60.

The Hiking Club is the smallest student organization at USC Union with 7 members. The club sponsored fall and spring hikes in the South Carolina and North Carolina mountains that were open to all students. Participation was 5 students for each hike.

The USC Union Music Club is a performance band of approximately 10 students and faculty that perform at student events and community functions. The Music Club is one of the most visible groups in the community affiliated with USC Union.

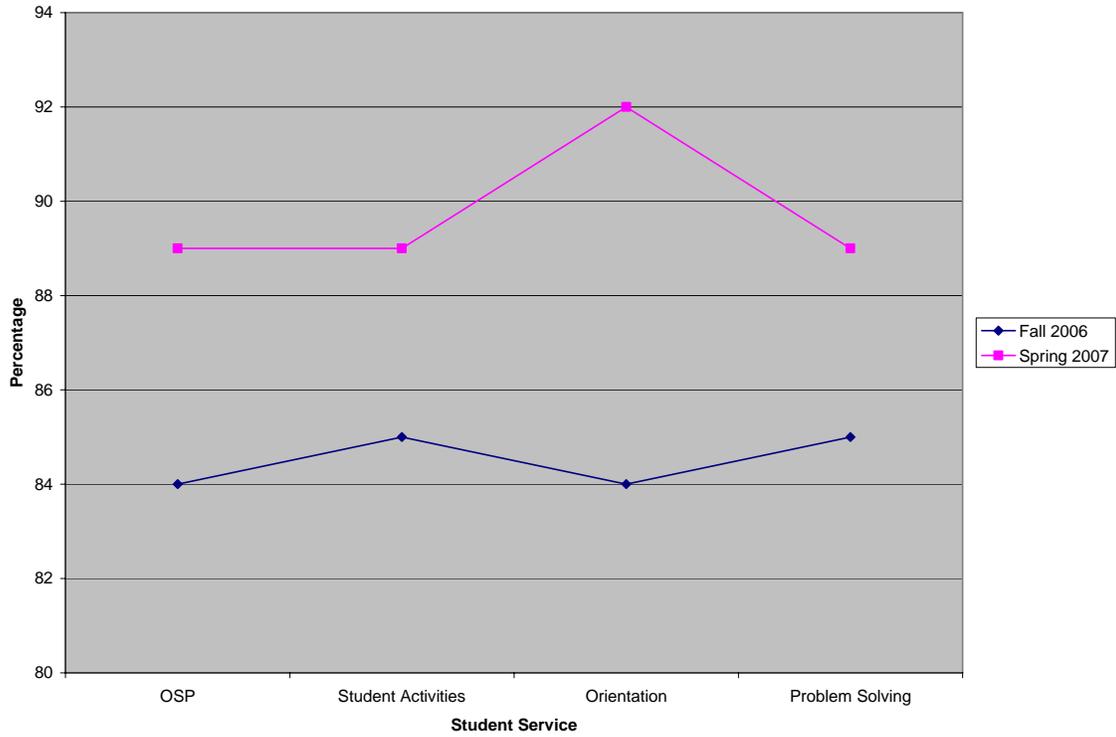
With the addition of new staff and faculty within the next two years, USC Union hopes to add additional clubs, particularly those with an academic emphasis and possibly ones with national affiliation. With the new accountability requirements in place, student organizations will be working harder to recruit members that will make an active contribution to achieving the mission, vision and goals of their group. In addition, each organization is required to develop an assessment plan to determine the effectiveness of each activity for which they have been allocated student activities budget funding. A major component of this assessment plan is student attendance at an activity, holding organizations more accountable for student involvement.

### **Satisfaction with Student Development Activities and Services**

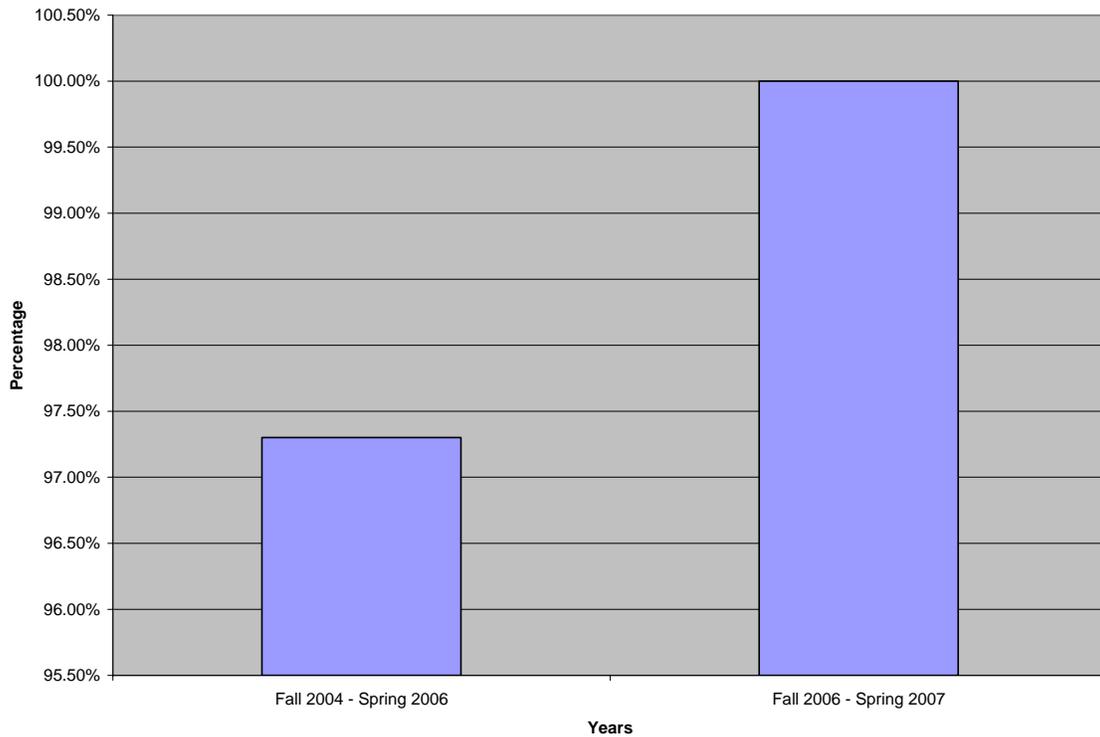
Satisfaction with student development activities and services are assessed each semester with questions embedded in the course evaluation. Satisfaction is also measured by similar questions on a survey that is administered when a student withdraws from USC Union (either permanently, temporarily or transfer to another school or USC campus).

The USC Union course evaluation form was revised this year to ask direct questions concerning student satisfaction with a variety of processes rather than rely on anecdotal data. Directly impacting student development were questions on satisfaction with OSP services, student activities, incoming student orientation, and how any problems were handled at USC Union. On the withdrawal survey, students are asked how they feel about various support services (Admissions, Financial Aid, Library, Computer Lab, Science Labs, Advisement, SGA Activities, etc.). Students were given the choice of Very Satisfied, Satisfied, Dissatisfied, and Very Dissatisfied.

Percentages of students saying they were very satisfied or satisfied for Fall 2006 and Spring 2007 on the course evaluations are given below:



Percentages of students saying they were very satisfied or satisfied for Fall 2006 and Spring 2007 on the withdrawal survey are given below:



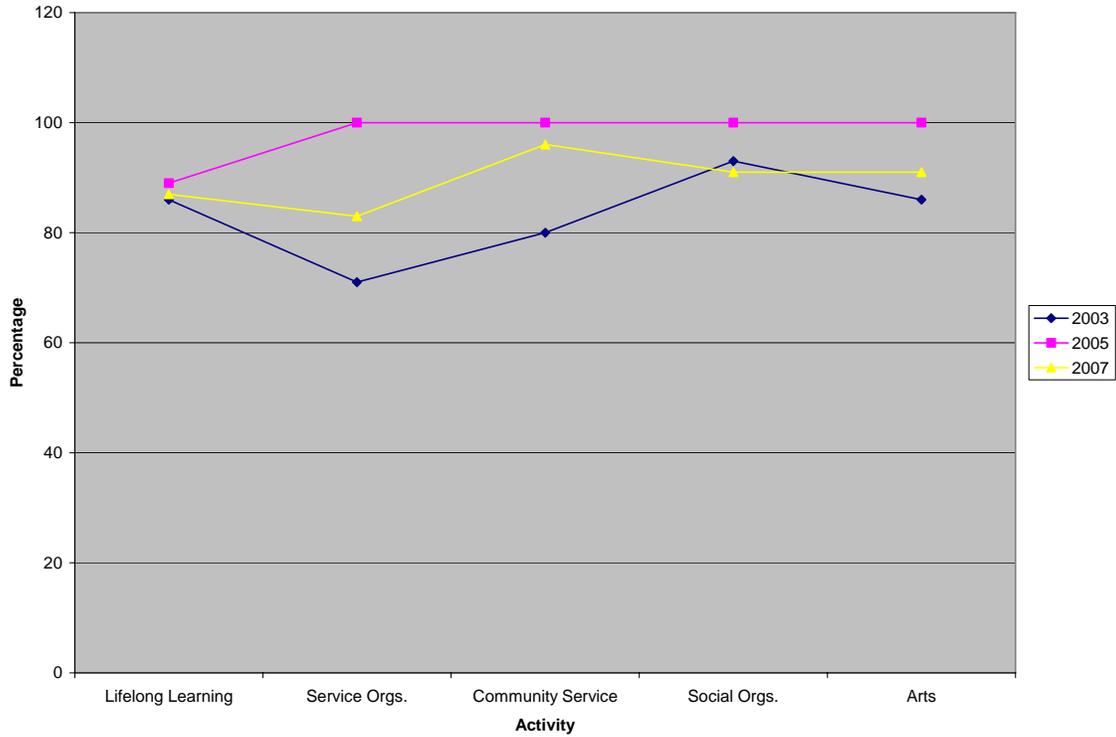
USC Union continues to make progress in improving satisfaction in its student services. A number of changes in student services are being made that should lead to increased satisfaction. They are:

- Hiring of an Admissions Recruiter who will assist with student activities.
- Hiring of an Academic Program Manager who will supervise the USC Union at Laurens Higher Education Center operation, allowing the Executive Assistant to spend more time on student services.
- Streamlining incoming student orientation and investigating one-stop shop and DVD/online video options.
- Developing mass e-mail capabilities through the USC e-mail and/or Blackboard course management systems as a mechanism for publicizing student events.
- Teaching student organization leaders and advisors to use Flashlight survey software as a way of obtaining feedback in lieu of paper surveys.
- Offering more workshops for student organizations on strategic plan and budget development.
- Offering more opportunities for leadership development by officers and members of student organizations.

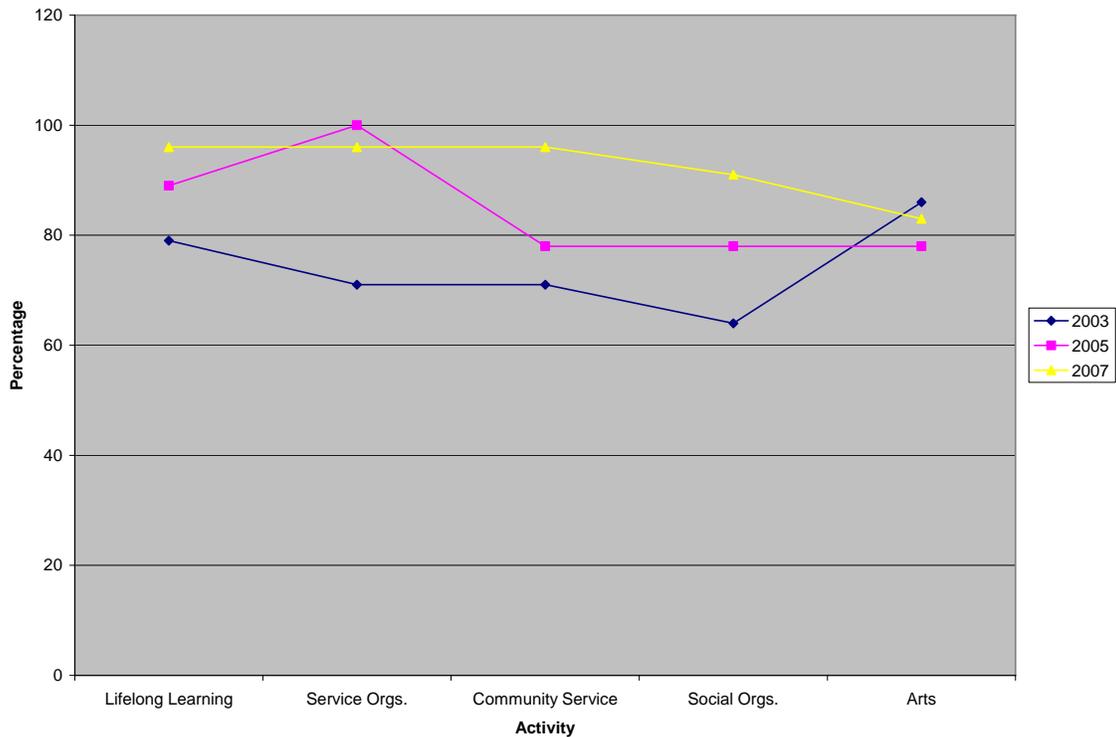
### **ASSESSMENT OF ALUMNI/PLACEMENT SURVEYS**

The South Carolina Commission on Higher Education requires all institutions of higher education to conduct a survey every two years of a cohort of graduates from four years prior (150% completion time for a baccalaureate degree). The questions on the survey related to student development are: "lifelong learning"/personal enrichment studies outside career area, professional or service organizations, volunteer, public or community service, social/recreational organizations, support or participation in the arts. Respondents are asked both how frequently (weekly, monthly, annually, less often, never) they participate in such activities and to what degree (strongly, moderately, somewhat, not at all) the college experience influenced their participation.

Results from the 2003 (1999 – 2000 cohort), 2005 (2001 – 2002), and 2007 (2003 – 2004 cohort) alumni surveys are shown below for the percentage of respondents who say they participate in the given activities.

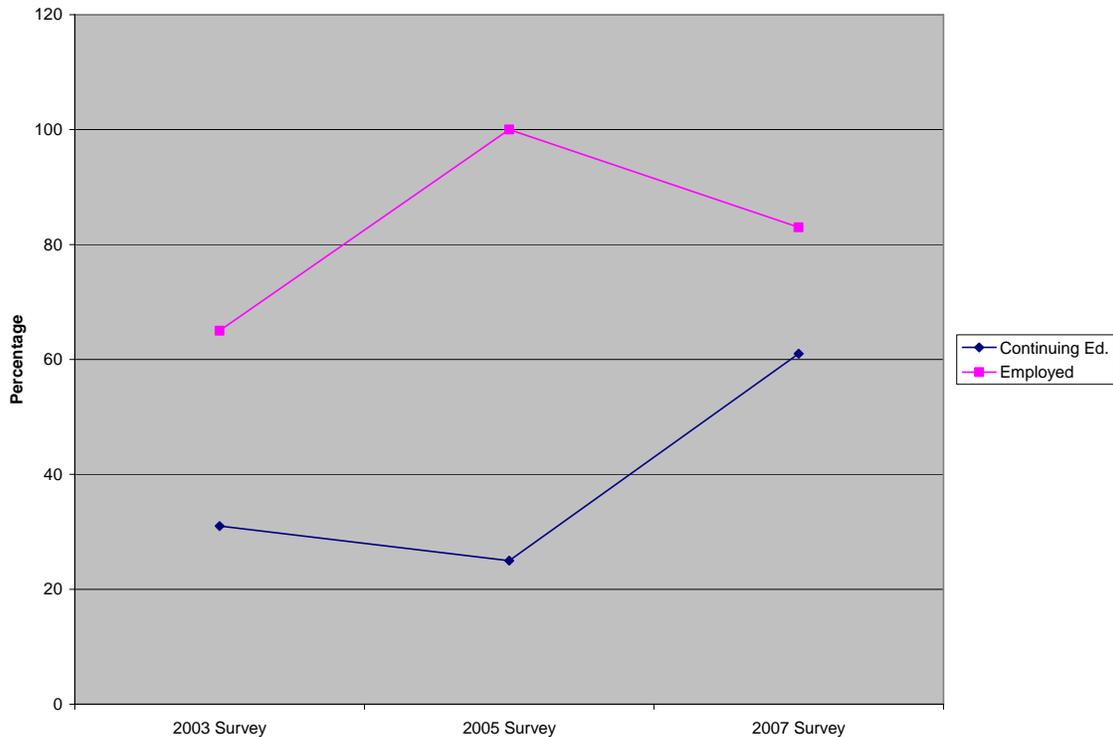


Results from the 2003 (1999 – 2000 cohort), 2005 (2001 – 2002), and 2007 (2003 – 2004 cohort) alumni surveys are shown below for the percentage of respondents who say their college experience influenced their participation in the given activities.



USC Union continues to perform outstandingly in student development. The African American Association and Women on a Mission are making community service an integral part of their missions. The Student Government Association is working closely with the faculty and administration to develop more opportunities for activities relating to lifelong learning and in the arts, including partnering with the Union County Arts Council on performances and art exhibitions.

Measured by the alumni survey and related to student development are the percentages of students continuing their education and/or employed. Results from the 2003 (1999 – 2000 cohort), 2005 (2001 – 2002), and 2007 (2003 – 2004 cohort) alumni surveys are shown below:



While USC Union has remained strong in the percentage of graduates employed, the university has made tremendous progress in developing in students a desire to continue their education past the Associate's degree. The new Academic Program Manager will work closely with the Opportunity Scholars Program to develop additional resources for students to investigate further opportunities for education.

**Policies and Procedures to Ensure that Academic Programs Support the Economic Development Needs in the State by Providing a Technologically Skilled Workforce**

The primary mission of USC Union is to provide students with the first two years of a liberal arts university education. Historically, the curriculum in the Associate in Arts and Associate in Science degree programs are for students who intend to pursue a baccalaureate degree. Traditional practices are no longer sufficient. USC Union has long served its mission of being the “beacon between the interstates” for the transfer student population – perhaps, too long. The challenge for the USC Union in the next few years will be to identify the educational needs of the citizens and businesses of its service area and to develop programs to address these needs. The single focus approach of its traditional mission – to prepare students to transfer to four year colleges

and universities – does not begin to address the desires and needs of its service area. The challenge of the next decade will be to develop a dual strategy. USC Union must work with local leaders from industry, government, education, and perhaps even religion to address the more immediate job-related needs of students while improving and extending its traditional mission of preparing students for transfer to four year institutions.

USC Union serves a geographical area that has been increasingly economically challenged over the past two decades. Historically, the mission of USC Union matched the advantage USC Union had over its competitors: it has served as a transfer portal to the University of South Carolina system. USC Union had the name and prestige of the University of South Carolina, but it offered students the caring environment of a small, local campus. As the economic base of Union County and surrounding counties has eroded, this advantage has given way to more economically driven concerns of price and employment.

USC Union has in its general education competencies the following categories: effective and persuasive communication, effective mathematical reasoning and problem-solving, scientific literacy and technological skills, global awareness and multicultural understanding, values, ethics, and social responsibility and life-long learning. Each of these areas is addressed in the degree requirements for the Associate in Arts and Associate in Science degrees.

With a greater need for economic development in the USC Union service area, several new degree programs are being pursued with other institutions. A Robotics Center to be managed and serviced in conjunction with Spartanburg Community College will open in fall 2008. Students will take general education coursework with USC Union and upon completion will enroll in the Electrical Engineering Technology degree program with SCC. The hope is that after students complete the EET degree, they will re-enroll in USC Union for additional general education courses in pursuit of a Bachelor of Science in Industrial Management at USC Upstate. A Bachelor of Science in Nursing is also being developed with USC Upstate where students will do their clinical work at Wallace Thomson Hospital in Union and take nursing courses offered by USC Upstate on the USC Union campus.