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MEMORANDUM

To: Mr. Ken Wingate, Chairman, and Members, Commission on Higher Education

From: Dr. Bettie Rose Horne, Chair, and Members, Committee on Academic Affairs and Licensing, and Members

Consideration of Annual Evaluation of Associate Degree Programs FY 2006-2007

Background

The South Carolina 1979 Master Plan requires the annual review of associate degrees in the State's public higher education institutions. In 1996, the passage of Act 359 underscored the importance of program accountability by focusing on questions related to time to degree and graduates' first-time passing rates on professional licensure examinations. Over time, the concept of accountability of institutions of higher education has grown on the national agenda.

The purposes of this study remain relevant as part of the focus of both state and national governments on institutional accountability. The language of Act 359 maintained the purposes of this annual review as they had been articulated in earlier legislation and Commission policy, as follows:

- 1) to insure that programs demonstrate responsiveness to employment trends and meet minimum standards of enrollment, graduation, and placement; and
- 2) to identify programs which need to be strengthened.

Given the preponderance of associate degree programs which are employment-related to specific occupations or occupational sectors, this report has for many years sought to provide insight into specific programs which are *either exceptionally achieving*

their ends *or are underperforming* in relationship to the state’s current and future economic development needs.

The procedures for this review require each program’s productivity to be evaluated in terms of enrollment, number of graduates, and percent of graduates placed in a related job or continuing their studies full-time. The following criteria apply:

1. Each program must produce at least six graduates during the evaluation year or an average of at least six graduates over the most recent three-year period.
2. At the most recent fall term, each program must enroll at least 16 students who generate 12 full-time equivalents.
3. At least 50 percent of the graduates available for job placement must be placed in a job related to their education or continue their education on a full-time basis.

Programs which fail to meet the above criteria must be canceled, suspended, or put on probation unless their continuation is justified to the Commission. Justification for programs may take into consideration such factors as manpower requirements, funding, and employment “stop outs” of students. In addition, three programs—General Technology, Vocational Technical Education, and General Engineering Technology—have historically had different and much more flexible standards of evaluation because of the unique needs they have filled and the low enrollments which they were expected to produce.

When a program is placed on probation, the institution may continue to offer the program but must provide a plan for the program to meet all criteria within three years. Suspension means that the program’s inability to meet the minimum criteria is serious enough to discontinue temporarily the enrollment of new students in the program until the institution can study the need and demand for the program. A program may remain on suspension for three years.

Programs such as General Technology, Vocational Technical Education, and General Engineering Technology have historically been considered “justified” for continuation regardless of whether they met the evaluation requirements.

Distribution of Associate Degree Programs by System and Sector

For this reporting period, associate degree programs exist in all sixteen technical colleges, the four two-year regional branches of the University of South Carolina, and the

four four-year campuses of the University of South Carolina. After next year's report no further associate degree program data will be reported from the four-year campuses of USC-Aiken and USC-Upstate, since both campuses have discontinued their only associate degree program, the Associate Degree in Nursing. USC-Beaufort, formerly a two-year institution which was approved to become a four-year institution in June, 2002, has been permitted by the Commission on Higher Education to continue to offer the associate of arts/associate of science degree program at the military bases in Beaufort. The Commission's decision was made after a request had been received from the military leadership in the Beaufort area. All other associate degrees in public institutions of higher education in the state are offered in two-year institutions with the sole exception of the AA/AS at Fort Jackson offered by USC-Columbia.

The associate degree programs in the state's public institutions were evaluated using Fall 2007 enrollment data and academic year 2006-2007 graduation and employment data. Nine (9) associate degree programs in the two-year USC campuses, four (4) associate degree programs in the four-year USC campuses (i.e., including the two now-discontinued Associate Degree in Nursing programs at USC-Aiken and USC-Upstate), and 301 associate degree programs in the technical college system were evaluated.

Associate degree programs implemented within the past three years in the Technical College system have always been excluded from this analysis. No new associate degree programs have been added at any of the USC two-year campuses or four-year campuses during the past three years. It is unlikely that additional two-year programs will be opened at any USC two-year campus, since 1) USC increasingly views these campuses as part of a larger concept (called "Palmetto College") which is to work with USC-Columbia for delivery of an array of programs; and 2) the Technical College System holds the view that it must pre-approve all new two-year degree programs, which might lead to immediate employment, at any public institution.

General Analysis of the Programs of Study in the USC System

As stated above, all USC regional campuses designated as "two-year" as well as USC-Beaufort and USC-Columbia at Fort Jackson, continue to offer Associate of Arts/Associate of Science degree programs. In February 1998, in response to the requirements of Act 359 and to earlier concerns about the perceived inappropriateness of one of the state's three research institutions offering an associate degree, USC-Columbia requested and received approval to revise its mission statement so that its ongoing offering of the Associate of Arts degree program at Fort Jackson would be officially included as part of its institutional mission. Enrollment and graduation data show (see **Table 1**) that this program is very small.

Because it is small and peripheral to the mission of the state's comprehensive *research* university, the AA/AS at Fort Jackson would be more appropriately offered by a two-year institution, either USC-Sumter or Midlands Technical College. Accordingly, at the meeting of the Commission in Orangeburg on June 7, 2007, when the last annual report of the associate degree programs was reported for Commission action, this report included a portion of narrative on the USC-Columbia-at-Fort Jackson AA/AS program. In response the Commission requested that the staff meet with the personnel at USC-Columbia to discuss the issues further.

While it appears peripheral and anomalous for an AA/AS program to be part of the program offerings at USC-Columbia, the University administration has maintained historically that the program is important for carrying out the University's community and humanitarian mission. The University administration has been adamant that this program should not be transferred to either USC-Sumter or Midlands Technical College. The administration has been equally firm that the program not be phased out over time.

USC-Beaufort's continuation of the offering of the AA/AS degree presents another special case. Data from that institution show that the number of AA/AS associate degree students is still reported as a single category of degree recipients (N=23) at an institution that has only recently assumed baccalaureate degree-granting responsibilities. Graduates of the program at USC-Beaufort show a downward trend in the past eight years. (See **Table 1**.)

Over the past four years the numbers of graduates from the AA/AS programs in the University of South Carolina system have varied considerably as Table 1 shows. The data reported from the USC-Columbia Institutional Research Office show that for 2006-2007 four of the six USC campuses offering the AA/AS program have experienced decreases in graduates for 2006-2007 over the 2005-2006 academic year. Two USC campuses experienced increases in graduates in that year. One was a two-year regional campus and the other was USC-Columbia at Fort Jackson, which increased from eight to 11 graduates. In all, however, the total number of AA/AS graduates in the USC System decreased 7.8% from 327 to 295 from 2005-06 to 2006-2007.

Completion of an AA/AS degree prior to transferring to a four-year institution has been shown to increase the rate at which transfer students complete the baccalaureate degree. That fact, linked with students' eligibility for the Legislative Tuition Assistance Program while working toward their AA/AS, suggests that the two-year USC regional campuses should consider preparation of a master plan to increase the numbers of AA/AS degree recipients each year for the next decade. This suggestion has been made in this report for each of the past four years, but has thus far elicited no response from the University.

Recently, two new developments in South Carolina have made the call to increase AA/AS graduates (and their subsequent successful transfers to baccalaureate programs) even more important. As a matter of state policy through legislation, the Education and Economic Development Act of 2005 has placed a premium on “seamless” transfer in higher education with the end of creating a better-prepared and better-credentialed work force in the state. More recently, the Higher Education Study Committee, all of whose membership has been appointed by either the Governor or the leadership of the General Assembly, has stated as its first goal the creation of South Carolina as one of the most educated states in the country in the next 15 years. There is no way that this goal can be achieved without successive and successful efforts, targeted to various elements of the population, to increase the numbers of persons with earned baccalaureate degrees in South Carolina. Coupled with clear empirical evidence of the value added by baccalaureate-degree completers to the state’s economic and civic development, these two clarion calls of state policy make efforts to increase AA/AS production—at all the USC two-year campuses and at all the technical colleges--imperative.

Table 1
USC-System AA/AS Program Graduates

	1999-00	2000-01	2001-02	2002-03	2003-04	2004-05	2005-06	2006-07
4-Year:								
USC-Columbia (Ft. Jackson)	12	14	19	14	12	4	8	11
USC-Beaufort	87	63	72	79	73	56	39	23
SUB-TOTAL	99	77	91	93	85	60	47	34
2-Year:								
USC-Lancaster	74	86	96	81	69	71	91	108
USC-S’hatchie	93	83	90	80	84	92	76	62
USC-Sumter	152	160	161	119	70	74	62	45
USC-Union	51	35	52	45	55	49	51	46
SUB-TOTAL	370	364	399	325	278	286	280	261
TOTAL	469	441	490	418	363	346	327	295

Source: USC annual reports on associate degree data

Applied, Occupationally-Specific Two-Year Degrees in the USC System

In the past few years, two of the four-year campuses of the University of South Carolina have terminated the Associate Degree in Nursing (ADN) program: USC-

Upstate (end of Spring Semester 2004) and USC-Aiken (end of Fall Semester 2005.) The last graduates of these programs exited their respective institutions in 2005-2006. Thus, data for the USC-Aiken and USC-Upstate associate degree programs in nursing no longer exists.

The two-year campuses of the USC System present another important challenge to and opportunity for higher education institutions in South Carolina. Three of the four of these two-year regional campuses are found in communities where a technical college is neither located nor found nearby. These three campuses are USC-Lancaster, USC-Salkehatchie, and USC-Union. Of these three, only USC-Lancaster offers occupationally-specific degree programs, although neither the authorizing legislation nor Act 359 prohibits the others from offering occupational degrees. The occupational programs at USC-Lancaster are nursing, criminal justice, and business. Graduates from the occupationally-specific two-year programs at USC-Lancaster are listed below in **Table 2** for the past two academic years. While in nursing and business the numbers of graduates have gone down in the most recent year, all three of these programs meet the CHE statewide productivity requirements. The USC-Lancaster occupational associate degree programs serve a small, but vital, set of counties in the state.

Table 2
USC-Lancaster Graduates of Two-Year Occupational Associate Degree
Programs of Study
(Academic Years 2005-2006 and 2006-2007)

	Nursing	Criminal Justice	Business
2005-2006	27	15	19
2006-2007	18	15	12

Four years ago, this annual report suggested the inclusion (or, in the case of Lancaster, the increase) of offerings of two-year occupationally-related degree programs in the curricula of the three remaining two-year regional USC campuses located in communities where no technical college is located (i.e., Lancaster, Union, and Salkehatchie) as an initiative to spur economic development in those communities. The logic behind this position was to use more efficiently USC facilities in these small communities by inviting the neighboring technical college to bring its expertise in technical fields to supplement the arts and sciences instruction available from the USC-campus' faculty.

Three years ago, the Commission asked that these two systems address the Commission's concerns about using the resources of the two systems cooperatively so that technical and occupational programs could be offered on the USC two-year regional campuses. The State Technical College System responded by noting efforts of the

technical colleges to serve better those communities where USC two-year campuses are located by renting or building facilities.

The University of South Carolina did not respond to this request, but subsequently has introduced and received approval for offering the Bachelor of Science in Nursing-Generic (BSN-Generic) program through USC-Columbia at USC-Salkehatchie and at USC-Lancaster; and a Bachelor of Arts in Liberal Studies degree through USC-Columbia by distance education at the two-year regional campuses. Neither of these two systems' responses has addressed the Commission's concern that the two systems should cooperate fully to offer technical, associate degree programs with solid arts and sciences courses in them to promote economic development in these three small and relatively isolated communities.

Especially in times of economic distress it behooves the Technical College System and the USC System to cooperate in providing technical programs at underutilized USC two-year regional campuses. Discussions have gone on for many years about this underutilized resource. Most recently at the November meeting of the State Technical College System, a president of one of the institutions stated that it was time for the University to divest itself of all its two-year campuses so that they could provide technical associate degree programs to their communities. Such a far-reaching solution need not take place if the two systems will cooperate to provide these services.

Summary of USC System Offerings in Associate Degrees

Graduation rates and student enrollment data for the current review period show that all the two-year programs in the USC system (AA/AS and occupational programs) are now meeting the productivity requirements for two-year programs, *but the system has produced fewer AA/AS graduates in each passing year since 2001-2002*. The three occupational programs at USC-Lancaster are producing relatively small numbers of graduates, a fact which reflects the relatively sparse population of the area served.

The institutional decisions taken at USC-Upstate and USC-Aiken to cease offering the associate degree in nursing have resulted in the transfer of these programs to neighboring technical colleges. Plans for enrollments and degree completions in the two new ADN programs at the technical colleges suggest that each of these new ADN programs will provide more graduates than their predecessor programs had produced.

General Analysis of Associate Degree Programs in the Technical Colleges

A summary of the number of programs evaluated over the past 25 years in various categories at the technical colleges is found in **Table 3**.

Table 3
Twenty-three Year Summary
Annual Associate Degree Program Evaluation
In the Technical Colleges

Year Evaluated	Good Standing	On Probation	Under Suspension	Cancelled	Total
1983	198	30	10	12	250
1984	206	33	2	9	250
1985	214	16	17	9	256
1986	212	30	11	9	262
1987	216	29	11	6	262
1988	204	44	15	4	267
1989	215	41	13	5	274
1990	254	44	12	8	318
1991	244	46	6	10	306
1992	251	36	11	4	302
1993	247	36	16	1	300
1994	260	31	16	5	312
1995	275	35	5	5	320
1996	267	25	14	6	312
1997	262	29	11	6	308

Table 3
Twenty-three Year Summary
Annual Associate Degree Program Evaluation
In the Technical Colleges

Year Evaluated	Good Standing	On Probation	Under Suspension	Cancelled	Total
1998	270	18	9	7	304
1999	261	31	7	2	301
2000	264	30	7	5	306
2001	269	22	9	7	307
2002	294	26	10	2	332
2003	297	19	14	1	331
2004	265	22	11	5	303
2005	276	13	8	4	301
2006	277	15	5	4	301
2007	281	15	4	4	304

In the data for the current annual report, 15 (4.9%) programs of study out of a total of 304 which were analyzed at the technical colleges are on probation. By comparison, last year's report showed a total of 15 (5%) degree programs on probation; and the previous year 13 (4.3%) programs were on probation. During the past three years this report has recorded the three lowest numbers and percentages of "noncompliant" programs since the report was initiated in 1983. For this reporting year, the specific programs (by degree and institution) on probation can be found in **Table 4**.

Table 4
Associate Degree Programs on Probation
in Fall 2007
(N=15)

<u>College</u>	<u>Degree</u>	<u>Program</u>
Central Carolina	ENGR	Environmental Engineering Technology
Florence-Darlington	ENGR	Engineering Graphics Technology
Florence-Darlington	ENGR	Electro-mech. Engineering Technology
Florence-Darlington	AOT	General Technology
Greenville	ENGR	Arch. Engineering Technology
Greenville	ENGR	Mechanical Engineering Technology
Midlands	IND	Machine Tool Technology
Spartanburg	ENGR	Engineering Graphics Technology
Tech College of LC	PSER	Criminal Justice Technology
Tech College of LC	ENGR	Civil Engineering Technology
Tri-County	ENGR	Electronics Engineering Technology
Trident	IND	Aircraft Maintenance Technology
Trident	IND	Machine Tool Technology
York	ENGR	Mechanical Engineering Technology
Williamsburg	BUS	Administrative Office Technology

Engineering and Industrial Technology programs

In last year's report, Engineering Technology programs were at the top of the categorical list of programs on probation (N=8) with Health programs second (N=3) and Industrial Technology programs third (N=2). This year Engineering Technology remains at the top of the probation category with nine (9) programs on probation; health programs have disappeared from the list; and industrial technology programs have increased to three (3). A single program in Business, in General Technology, and in Public Service complete the total of 15 probationary programs for this year's analysis. Engineering Technology programs accounted for 40% (N=4) and Health programs accounted for 30% (N=3) of the programs moving from Probation to Good status, as can be seen in reviewing Table 7 of this report.

The data showing low enrollments and graduates in Engineering Technology degree programs is long-standing. This report has shown that area of the curriculum to have had more programs on probation in every one of the past seven years. As a system, the Technical Colleges of South Carolina have been described as a model among the states for preparing the state workforce. However, the system's inability to remove

Engineering Technology programs from the “probationary” group showcases for the state’s comparative difficulty in attracting and retaining industries which it wants to have located in South Carolina. Such industries tend to be engines of major growth and innovation, attracting other corporations to enter into the state.

For eight years this report has cited the gulf between the often-stated need by the business community for Engineering Technology graduates and the small enrollments and graduates in these programs. Three years ago the Technical College System reported an initiative to address this issue more systematically by focusing on three areas:

- Elimination of excess coursework in some programs;
- Consolidation of multiple “engineering technology” programs at a single institution to concentrate resources and produce a more integrated curricular approach; and
- Vigorous recruitment of talented high school students—including the granting of college course credit through *Project Lead the Way*—into Engineering Technology programs.

In last year’s report to the Commission three-year averages of enrollments in Engineering Technology were compared from two different chronological data points. These three-year averages for credit hours generated were calculated for all enrollment terms in both the 1994-1997 period and the 2004-2007 period. The two multi-year averages calculated from the data show a decrease of semester hours generated from the 1994-1997 period to the 2004-2007 period of -8786 (-15% from 59,095 to 50,309). All the prevailing economic models for the state’s future assume that engineers supported by engineering technicians will together play an essential role in building South Carolina’s 21st century economy. To meet this goal, the decreasing numbers of students enrolled in and graduating from Engineering Technology programs in the state must be addressed soon and convincingly.

Continuing Success of the AA/AS Programs in the Technical Colleges

The purpose of the AA/AS is to be the degree program in public two-year institutions to prepare students for transfer into baccalaureate programs. In South Carolina, AA/AS programs were begun in the 1970s in response to the needs of persons who for reasons of finance, geography, and/or historical under-representation in higher education (especially mature students, women, and minorities) found it much more possible to begin a baccalaureate degree program by taking the first two years of coursework at a technical college.

In 1998, for the first time, the nine technical colleges with the most recently approved AA/AS programs had their programs reviewed for productivity. Only in the

reports of 1998, 2001, and 2002 (and, in the latter two reports, only on a technicality) did one of the 16 technical colleges fail to meet the productivity standards for the AA/AS.

For this reporting year, all AA/AS programs in the Technical College System are in the “good” category. (See **Table 5**.)

Table 5**Graduates of AA/AS Degrees by Technical College, 2002-03 through 2006-07**

Technical College	Year					
	2007	2006	2005	2004	2003	2002
Aiken Tech	38	53	36	26	28	31
Central Carolina	33	28	29	36	31	28
Denmark	14	27	11	45	20	22
Florence-Darlington	49	50	61	76	56	58
Greenville	187	169	155	177	155	136
Horry-Georgetown	90	92	72	73	66	71
Midlands	260	238	249	223	228	200
Northeastern	39	38	27	30	18	24
Orangeburg-Calhoun	6	11	10	5	11	9
Piedmont	62	62	52	79	54	52
Spartanburg Community College*	51	61	69	79	61	42
Lowcountry	21	19	34	12	13	16
Tri-County	62	65	75	73	54	66
Trident	323	342	290	315	378	328
Williamsburg	19	26	16	12	8	13
York	78	52	37	26	29	21
TOTAL	1332	1333	1223	1287	1206	1117

As **Table 5** demonstrates, the AA/AS programs in the Technical College System have been a great success in opening up the possibilities for transferring into a four-year degree program for many South Carolinians. The data for 2006-2007 show that the programs continue to produce a significant number of graduates, albeit no growth over last year's total. Only six institutions graduated more than in the preceding year, whereas nine graduated fewer students; and one had no change. This program is of unique benefit to both the state which provides the first two years of a baccalaureate education at much lower cost than a generic four-year institution and to the student who pays much less in tuition and can access the program either full- or part-time. To provide equal educational opportunity throughout the state all the state's technical colleges should demonstrate a

commitment to raise the numbers of students studying in, graduating from, and transferring to four-year institutions through the AA/AS option.

Importance of the Associate Degree Nursing Programs

For a number of years this annual report has been grounded in two basic assumptions about the program of study leading to the associate degree in nursing:

1. In South Carolina the associate degree in nursing is accepted by employers (as is true throughout the United States, except in South Dakota which does not recognize the associate degree for professional Registered Nurse designation) as a legitimate degree for a Registered Nurse (R.N.), who is almost always paid at the same rate as a baccalaureate-prepared nurse.
2. Meeting employers' demands for a well-educated nursing workforce to provide safe care in hospitals and other healthcare settings will apparently require the sustained commitment of each institution to enroll and graduate increasingly larger numbers of students for some number of years. Because the associate degree programs have been the largest programs historically in South Carolina, they must continue to enroll and graduate very large numbers of new nurses. (As in many other states, South Carolina regularly graduates about two-thirds of all its new nurse graduates from associate degree programs.)

The actual *level of employer demand* for nurses is unknown because no database has been made available to show what the actual level of employer demand might be. It is, therefore, not possible yet to know exactly for how many years a sustained commitment to increase the numbers of nursing graduates will be required. On the other hand, the *supply of graduates* from nursing programs in the Technical College System has grown convincingly since the issuance of the *Colleagues in Caring* report in 2001. As **Table 6** shows, four years ago for the reporting year of 2001-2002 the number of graduates of the technical colleges' eleven existing ADN programs *decreased* 3.6% over the previous year's graduation numbers. In the following year (2002-2003), there was a 6% *increase* of graduates from the 11 programs over the 2001-2002 academic year. In 2003-2004 there was an even higher annual *increase over the 2002-2003 year* (+ 22.7%). In the 2004-2005 report, the increase continued (+5.2%). In 2005-2006, there was a 3.9% *decrease in the number of graduates* from associate degree nursing programs (from 968 to 940), but for the current reporting year of 2006-2007, there has been another *increase of +5.0% from 940 to 989* over the previous year. (**See Table 6.**)

Since 2004 three more associate degree programs have been added in the Technical College system (i.e., Spartanburg Community College in Fall 2004; Aiken

Technical College in Fall 2005; and Northeastern Technical College in Fall 2007), so that now 14 of the 16 technical colleges have functioning associate degree programs in Nursing. The technical college programs at Aiken Technical College and Spartanburg Community College have enrolled larger numbers of students than their now-closed area predecessors had done.

Of the three new technical college ADN programs, only Spartanburg Community College and Aiken Technical College have graduated students from their programs. It is encouraging that Spartanburg Community College’s second class of graduates has increased from 35 to 48. In the next reporting year, Aiken Tech also will have graduated a second class and Northeastern Technical College will have graduated its first class.

Among the 11 established ADN programs in the Technical College System, six graduated significantly more students in this year’s reporting class and five graduated fewer than last year. The total of 989 ADN nurses graduated from the Technical College system in 2006-2007 is the highest number ever. The significant growth in seven years (2000-01 to 2006-07) from 725 graduates per year in 2000-2001 to 986 in 2006-2007 (+27%) demonstrates the capacity of the technical college system to respond to market demand. In lieu of verified data-driven demand statistics, anecdotal estimates of demand from the healthcare industry indicate that *all* 14 of the technical colleges with associate degree programs in nursing—whose ADN graduates continue to provide the largest numbers and percentage of new nurses in South Carolina—should make additional efforts to raise the numbers of nursing graduates to meet market needs.

Table 6

**Total Number of Graduates from Technical Colleges’
Associate Degree in Nursing Programs for Years
2000-2001 through 2006-2007**

2000-2001	725
2001-2002	706
2002-2003	748
2003-2004	918
2004-2005	968
2005-2006	940
2006-2007	989

Degree Programs No Longer on Probation

For the current reporting year, a total of ten programs which had been on probation in the technical colleges for last year's reporting period have been recommended by the State Technical College System for placement in good standing. In this group there are four programs in Engineering Technology, three programs in Health Science, and one each in Agriculture, Business, and Industrial Technology. The degrees and institutional locales of all the programs moving from Probation to Good are found below in **Table 7**.

Table 7
Degree Programs Returning to
“Good” Status from “Probation” 2004-2005
(N=7)

<u>College</u>	<u>Degree</u>	<u>Program</u>
Aiken Tech	BUS	Marketing
Central Carolina Tech	AGR	Natural Resources Mgt
Denmark Tech	IND	Electronics Technology
Florence-Darlington Tech	HEA	Medical Laboratory Technology
Florence-Darlington Tech	HEA	Health Information Mgt
Spartanburg Comm	ENGR	Mechanical Engr Tech
Tri-County Tech	ENGR	Industrial Supervision Tech
Trident Tech	HEA	Occupational Therapy Asst
Trident Tech	ENGR	Mechanical Engr Tech
Trident Tech	ENGR	Civil Engr Tech

Tabular Analysis of Associate Degree Programs

Tables 8 and 9 provide a succinct quantitative analysis of the programs of the technical colleges for this period which are on suspension or have been cancelled. It is noteworthy that there are so few programs in each category, a fact which suggests that planning by the Technical College System for technical programs, based upon community and business demand for graduates in certain fields, has minimized the need to suspend and cancel programs. Also of interest is the fact that all but one of these suspended and canceled programs is found in either Industrial Technology or Engineering Technology, a fact which continues to be mirrored in the probationary status of programs in these fields discussed earlier in this report.

Table 8
Associate Degree Programs On Suspension in 2007
(or Continued for 2nd or 3rd Year Suspension)
(N=5)

<u>College</u>	<u>Degree</u>	<u>Program</u>
First Year:		
Greenville Technical College	BUS	Food Service Management
Midlands Technical College	ENGR	Engineering Design Technology
Second Year:		
(None)		
Third Year:		
Technical College of the Lowc'try	IND	Building Construction Technology
Aiken Technical College	IND	Machine Tool Technology

Table 9
Associate Degrees Cancelled in Fall 2007
(N=4)

<u>College</u>	<u>Degree</u>	<u>Program</u>
Aiken Technical College	ENGR	Computer Engineering Technology
Central Carolina Technical College	ENGR	Civil Engineering Technology
Greenville Technical College	IND	Computer Electronics Technology
Horry-Georgetown Technical College	IND	Electronics Technology

Summary

All 11 of the associate degree programs in the University of South Carolina system and 281(92.4%) of the 304 technical college programs evaluated for this report meet the “good” status requirements for this reporting year. The associate degree programs in the USC system and the Technical College System are overwhelmingly meeting the modest statewide productivity standards which have been measured since 1983 in these annual reports. The programs in the USC system present two issues: 1) the under-utilization of facilities in three relatively isolated two-year institutional campuses; and 2) the anomalous presence of the AA/AS by USC-Columbia, which the institution both insists upon offering (rather than transferring it to its own two-year Sumter campus or to the neighboring Midlands Technical College) while also aspiring to the mantel of flagship comprehensive research institution in South Carolina. The University’s

administration has indicated it is unwilling to consider any alternative institutional administration of the AA/AS at Fort Jackson renders.

Analysis of programs in the Technical College System also suggests several issues to monitor: 1) continuing small enrollments and graduations in Engineering Technology curricula; 2) assuring that all AA/AS programs are providing enough diversity of coursework and focus on advising to promote growth in the numbers and percentages of students successfully transferring to four-year institutions to complete the baccalaureate degree; and 3) providing continuous monitoring to assure growth in enrollments and graduation rates of associate degree students in Nursing as long as anecdotal sources continue to report a nursing “shortage” in South Carolina.

Recommendations

The Committee on Academic Affairs and Licensing commends favorably to the Commission this report’s designation of programs for the current reporting year as shown in **Tables 1, 3, 6, 7, 8, and 9**. Because of the importance of certain associate degree programs to economic development in South Carolina, the staff further recommends that

- The State Technical College system be requested to review any existing plans and consider a system plan for increasing enrollments and retention to graduation in the Engineering Technology area of the curriculum; and
- A working group of the staffs of the Commission, the State Technical College System, and the USC System be convened to consider active steps to implement cooperative programming at the three identified two-year Regional Campuses to provide technical associate degree programs of value for economic development in those three communities.