



U N I V E R S I T Y O F
SOUTH CAROLINA[®]
A I K E N

Enlightening the Path of Educational Excellence: Institutional Effectiveness Report 2008

Submitted to
The South Carolina Commission for Higher Education

Available online at:
<http://ie.usca.edu/ie/assessment/IEReports/>

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University Mission

Founded in 1961, the University of South Carolina Aiken (USCA) is a comprehensive liberal arts institution committed to active learning through excellence in teaching, faculty and student scholarship, research, creative activities and service. In this stimulating academic community, USCA challenges students to acquire and develop the skills, knowledge, and values necessary for success in a dynamic global environment.

The university offers degrees in the arts and sciences and in the professional disciplines of business, education, and nursing. All courses of study are grounded in a liberal arts and sciences core curriculum. USCA also encourages interdisciplinary studies and collaborative endeavors.

Emphasizing small classes and individual attention, USCA provides students with opportunities to maximize individual achievement in both academic and co-curricular settings. The institution challenges students to think critically and creatively, to communicate effectively, to learn independently, and to acquire depth of knowledge in chosen fields. The university values honesty, integrity, initiative, hard work, accomplishments, responsible citizenship, respect for diversity, and cross-cultural understanding.

USC Aiken attracts students of varying ages and diverse cultural backgrounds who have demonstrated the potential to succeed in a challenging academic environment. In addition to serving the Savannah River area, USCA actively seeks student enrollment from all parts of South Carolina as well as from other states and countries.

As a senior public institution of the University of South Carolina, USCA combines the advantages of a smaller institution with the resources of a major university system. Located in beautiful, historic Aiken, South Carolina, USCA is an institution of moderate size (2,500-5,000 students) that offers baccalaureate degrees in a number of disciplines, completion baccalaureate degrees at University of South Carolina regional campuses, and master's degrees in selected programs.

The USCA World Wide Web Home Page is: <http://www.usca.edu>

The USCA Office of Institutional Effectiveness World Wide Web Home Page is: <http://ie.usca.edu/>

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Introduction

This report documents improvements made through the comprehensive assessment system at the University of South Carolina Aiken (USCA). It is submitted to the South Carolina Commission on Higher Education (CHE) and the state legislature in compliance with South Carolina Act 255 of 1992 and Act 629 of 1996.

USCA's mission, which challenges students to "acquire and develop the skills, knowledge and values necessary for success in a dynamic global environment," as well as the University's strategic plan guide all assessment efforts on campus. The extent to which students have achieved learning outcomes, developed as citizens and individuals, and reached their educational goals constitutes the measures of our success. Outcomes assessment forms the core of campus efforts to measure progress, make adjustments, and demonstrate that the University is laying a foundation for excellence.

Assessment activities are coordinated and monitored by the Office of Institutional Effectiveness. The mission of this office is to provide internal and external constituencies with an accurate and complete understanding of how USCA is advancing its institutional mission. The IE Office uses a multifaceted and dynamic approach that integrates the collection and analysis of institutional data with the coordination of the assessment of student learning outcomes from academic units, general education, and co-curricular programs in an ongoing effort to improve programs and services throughout the university. The IE Office disseminates assessment results and institutional data to support institutional planning and decision-making as well as to advance quality and innovation in the teaching and learning process, co-curricular programs, and other administrative units.

A variety of institution-wide assessment efforts and planning documents were completed in 2007-08 that impact learning across academic programs. Highlights among these efforts include USCA's participation in or completion of:

State Agency Accountability Report 2007-08 (2008)
Faculty Salary Study, 2007-08 (2008)
National Survey of Student Engagement 2008
First Pace Program Effectiveness Report 2008
Student Orientation Reports (2008)
Campus Housing Survey (2008)
Faculty Satisfaction with Bookstore Services (2008)

Findings from these studies have been analyzed and disseminated to a variety of constituencies; serving as an indication that improvement of educational outcomes lies at the heart of institutional priorities. Administration of assessment tools and ongoing studies about campus-wide academic success continues to proceed on a regular schedule to promote quality learning and data-driven decisions. As an indicator of USCA's dedication to its mission and its commitment to continuous improvement, the institution opted in the 2007-08 academic year to be an early participant in the *Voluntary System of Accountability (VSA)*. Results and recommendations from studies and links to VSA's *College Portrait* are available on the IE Office website at <http://ie.usca.edu>.

Academic Affairs: Advising

Advising Procedures & Practices

Trained and qualified academic advisors are assigned to all degree-seeking students at USCA, and students meet with their advisors a minimum of two times each year. A recent quantitative study of the advising system indicates that after their first-year virtually all students with a declared major are advised by a full-time faculty member in their discipline. Less than 1% of students are advised by faculty members in closely related disciplines, e.g. some secondary education majors are advised by faculty in their area of teaching concentration (Biology, English, History, and Mathematics).

Training is provided to new and continuing advisors on an ongoing basis. New advisors complete a day of specialized training and an annual day-long workshop for continuing advisors must be completed at least once every three years. Disciplines such as business and education that rely upon some staff members to advise first-year students often provide supplementary advisor training throughout the year; these advisors are limited to an advising load of ten students. Advisors of first-year students actively participate in focus groups following the official advising and registration sessions to share expertise and information that can improve the quality of student outcomes.

Assessment & Actions Taken Based on Assessment Data

Satisfaction surveys administered to current students and recent alumni have indicated an extraordinarily high level of student satisfaction with the advising process with no statistically significant variation in the results. Survey results specific to faculty advisors are included in regular performance review discussions with Department Chairs and School Deans; results from these surveys also are included in the tenure and promotion process.

Percentage of Satisfied Students/Alumni Responding on Advising Surveys									
Question	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008
1) Overall satisfaction with advising ^a	99.2	99.2	95.4	95.6	96.5	96.3	96.9	96.2	96.1
2) Alumni Satisfaction with advisement by faculty in chosen major ^b	--	91.4	--	91.5	--	89.9	--	88.9	--
3) Availability of academic advisor ^a	96.2	97.6	98.4	98.4	98.6	98.6	98.5	98.8	99.3

(a) Annual Student Advising Survey
(b) Biannual Alumni Survey

Even with relatively high response rates (50-60% for current students, 20-25% for alumni), these data belie institutional retention and graduation rates, which have identified first-year retention (ranging between 68% and 77% within the USC system over the past several years) as a priority area for improvement in institutional performance. After an advising consultant visit in June 2006, the Advisement office and the Academic Success Center engaged in a study of the services and functions of each department. In Spring 2007, the departments were combined and in Fall 2007 were relocated to one central location. This consolidation of services affords a comprehensive and coordinated approach to student success.

Mission & Goals of the Academic Success Center

The new Academic Success Center encourages the academic success of USC Aiken students by assisting them in developing educational plans, connecting them to campus resources, and promoting engaged learning and personal responsibility.

The goals of the program are:

1. to coordinate academic advising for campus, including providing ongoing support and training for advisors;
2. to assist students with the transition from high school to higher education; and
3. to identify, coordinate, and support academic success initiatives.

The Academic Success Center engages in a regular and on-going evaluation of the effectiveness of its strategies in fulfilling its goals. Like all academic and administrative units, the Academic Success Center submits an annual assessment report. Some of the more notable actions taken by the Academic Success Center as a result of assessment findings include:

- Making available the First-Year Seminar (AFYS 101) to students entering the university in both fall and spring semesters;
- The début of Academic Success Workshops in Fall 2006. All workshops were delivered by professional staff in the department;
- A marked increase in Early Warning letters to students due to an increase in the number of Faculty who submitted Early Warning forms; this has been attributed to a new on-line submission process. The top four reasons that forms were submitted have consistently been the same: poor performance on tests/quizzes, missing class, not completing reading and/or assignments, and lack of essential skills;
- The addition of a new bridge program for students at risk called “First Pace,” required for all first-year students admitted provisionally to the university. The Academic Success Center, with the assistance of Institutional Effectiveness, continues to track and evaluate all First Pace students as they progress through their degree programs;
- Free tutoring services and the providing of Supplemental Instruction (SI) for select courses that have high DFW rates;
- Tutor training being extended in Fall 2006 to a full-day session;
- The début of the Pacer Success Program in January 2007 to provide guidance to students on probation and those on first reinstatement after suspension;
- Additional opportunities for advisor training and professional development; and
- The addition of a First Year Advisor session during Freshman Orientation.

Majors / Concentrations

Assessment of student learning outcomes at USCA is critically linked to the principles of faculty peer review and the connection of outcomes assessment to budgetary requests made in the program review process. USCA requires departments to provide an update on assessment activities in their annual program reviews which are submitted to the Academic Council and the Executive Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs. This focus on the assessment of student learning outcomes complements traditional elements such as credit hour production, personnel needs, budget requests, and future plans. The practice successfully connects requests for resources with learning outcomes.

In addition to annual program review, the Faculty Academic Assessment Committee reviews each academic program leading to a degree at USCA every three years. This review is accomplished with a rubric to evaluate the quality of assessment programs and an iterative process of feedback and dialogue between academic units and the Committee. Further, the Committee has charged the Director of Institutional Effectiveness to review assessment reports of units in the year following Committee review to determine the extent to which Committee recommendations have been addressed. The Director has also been charged to meet with unit leaders the semester before materials are due to the Committee to coach them through the submission process.

Ratings of Assessment Programs from Assessment Committee Review

(Target Mean Rating = 3.0)

Program Review Year	2003-04	2004-05	2005-06	2006-07
Number of Degree Programs Reviewed	6	8	6	6
Review Completed	2004-05	2005-06	2006-07	2007-08
Ratings <i>4=Exceeds, 3=Meets, 2=Approaches, 1=Does Not Meet Guidelines or Missing</i>				
Goals	1.8	2.8	2.9	2.0
Goals are stated clearly.	1.8	2.9	2.9	2.0
Goals are about student learning.	1.7	2.8	3.0	2.0
Goals have "students" as the grammatical subject.	1.8	2.8	2.9	2.1
Objectives	2.0	2.3	2.8	2.2
Objectives derive from each goal.	1.8	2.3	2.7	1.7
Objectives are measurable in scope.	2.1	2.3	2.8	2.4
Objectives have "students" as the grammatical subject.	2.1	2.4	2.7	2.5
Measurement	2.0	2.3	2.7	2.3
Outcomes of objectives have been measured.	1.8	2.1	2.5	2.2
Measures for each outcome include one measure independent of student grades.	2.1	2.3	2.7	2.2
Measurements have been made by faculty or other qualified professionals.	2.1	2.4	3.0	2.5
Findings	1.7	2.5	2.7	2.1
All findings are presented.	1.7	2.3	2.6	2.1
Data from findings appear in tables and/or appendices.	1.6	2.6	2.7	2.1
Findings about supplementary assessment data are presented when appropriate.	1.8	2.5	2.7	2.0
Actions Taken	1.7	2.0	2.5	2.1
Actions prompted by the results are described.	1.7	2.0	2.5	2.1

History

Mission and Goals for Learning Outcomes

The History Program, an exclusively undergraduate program leading to the BA degree, is designed to achieve the following: 1) contribute to the humanistic, liberal education of all USCA students; 2) prepare History majors to meet program requirements and ultimately receive the BA degree in History; 3) provide auxiliary services for other disciplines (e.g., history courses as electives, cognates, minors and other curriculum requirements); 4) contribute to the overall development of the USCA academic community through faculty services activities; and 5) contribute academic and scholarly expertise to the Aiken community and beyond. Our faculty strives to fulfill its mission primarily through instruction, research, and service, in particular the emphasis on pursuit of academic excellence.

Students in the history program will:

1. develop a depth and breadth of knowledge in the history discipline;
2. communicate effectively using and developing oral and written communication skills as well as utilizing relevant technology;
3. gather and critically evaluate historical data;
4. develop the skills of synthesizing and conceptualizing findings;
5. demonstrate an ability to explore values openly and critically; and
6. be able to examine and perceive relationships among disciplines, concepts, and areas of study.

Actions Taken Based on Assessment Results

The History faculty closely monitor student mastery of intended learning outcomes through a variety of means, including a common rubric for all papers submitted in upper-level courses, an entrance survey, a senior exit survey, analysis of enrollments and class sizes, analysis of class syllabi, student contributions to publications such as Social Science Journal, and participation in scholarly forums. Actions taken based on assessment results include:

- **Refinement of goals and objectives for student learning and rubric alignment**
Significant changes have been made in the assessment of the program. The faculty have reviewed their goals and objectives for student learning to link them more directly to specific outcomes related to the discipline. In addition, they have established a common rubric to evaluate all papers submitted in upper-level courses.
- **Increase number of faculty to reduce class sizes and improve learning**
Analysis of class sizes prompted the addition of a part-time adjunct faculty member to reduce the average class size to 25, ensuring individual student attention.
- **Expand opportunities for faculty student interactions in scholarly endeavors**
Assessment data indicated the need to expand opportunities for student participation in scholarly endeavors outside the classroom. The creation of a History Club has helped, as well as increased opportunities for student-faculty interaction outside classes. The faculty will continue to explore additional strategies to integrate and introduce students into the scholarship arena.
- **Explore the development of a public history track**
In response to feedback from students to expand the employment options of history graduates, the faculty are exploring the option of developing a public history track. Several part-time adjuncts with the department have extensive public history, archival, and museum experience. This track, if implemented, would prepare history majors for work as professional researchers for corporations and legal firms, archives, and museums.

Nursing

The USCA School of Nursing offers the Bachelor of Science Degree in Nursing (BSN) and a RN/BSN Completion track. All programs are fully accredited by the National League for Nursing Accrediting Commission (NLNAC) and are approved by the South Carolina Board of Nursing.

Mission and Goals for Learning Outcomes

The School of Nursing, consistent with the mission of the University of South Carolina Aiken, endeavors to prepare students with the knowledge and skills necessary for success in a rapidly changing society. The School of Nursing contributes to the profession of nursing and the development of students through 1) the provision of quality nursing education that prepares graduates with the nursing knowledge and competencies necessary to assume responsible positions in the delivery of health care and 2) the discovery and creation of knowledge in the discipline of nursing.

The curricula for the programs offered by the School of Nursing provide a foundation of nursing knowledge, theory, and practice. The university setting, with course work from an array of disciplines, provides a framework within which personal and professional growth is enhanced.

The graduate of the BSN Program at USCA:

1. provides professional nursing care based on knowledge derived from theory and research;
2. utilizes critical thinking in the provision of nursing care;
3. communicates effectively;
4. accepts responsibility and accountability for functioning within the legal and ethical scope of nursing practice;
5. demonstrates commitment to the values of caring and diversity;
6. coordinates the health care of clients across the lifespan in collaboration with other members of the health care team;
7. applies strategies for health promotion, risk reduction, and disease prevention across the lifespan;
8. explains the need for lifelong learning; and
9. explains the importance of participation in activities to improve the nursing profession.

Actions Taken Based on Assessment Results

Multiple indicators are monitored to measure student success with outcomes goals and programmatic goals for retention, time to degree, successful licensure of program graduates, and job placement rates. Focus groups of faculty are held annually to review assessment results and make curricular adjustments. Actions taken based on assessment results include:

- **Continue to monitor performance on licensure examinations**

The School of Nursing has set as its target that its BSN graduates attempting the NCLEX-RN will pass at a rate no more than 5% below the national pass rate. In December of 2006, the National Council for State Boards of Nursing increased the standard required to pass the NCLEX-RN from -.28 to -.21 logits and as a consequence, the NCLEX pass rates at the USCA School of Nursing decreased. Specifically, the percentage of BSN students to pass the NCLEX-RN exam in the May 2006 graduating class was 81.0%, while the December 2006 sitting of the exam, at which the standard for passing was raised, had a pass rate of 76.4%. In response, the School of Nursing implemented a number of new strategies to better prepare students for the increased standards including but not limited to faculty development workshops, a new requirement that students take a proctored nationally-normed, web-based standardized test from Educational Resources, Inc. (ERI) that has a strong predictive value for success on NCLEX-RN, increased emphasis across semesters on the identified weak area of student performance in pharmacology. As a result of these actions, the NCLEX-RN pass rate for May 2007 was 86.7%, within the 5% range of the national average. Further, the December 2007 pass rate has risen to 91.3%.
- **Sustain high job placement rates**

Most of the RNs in the BSN Completion track are already employed. For those students seeking employment, 100% are employed within 1 year of graduation. Of the generic track students who graduated in May 2006, 100% were employed or in graduate school one year after graduation. Of the 22 December 2006 graduates, 100% were employed and of the 30 May 2007 graduates, 28 were employed, and 2 had yet to take the NCLEX.
- **Maintain mastery of learning outcomes at high levels**

The School of Nursing monitors student learning outcomes beyond the successful completion of the NCLEX-RN. At present, the School of Nursing Curriculum Committee is formulating an evaluation tool which will reflect the School of Nursing's outcome objectives. It is anticipated that the tool will be piloted during the spring semester in ANRS 411 Leadership and Management – the capstone course of the BSN program. The clinical assessment tool continues to show that 100% of graduating students met 100% of the outcome objectives. The shorter version of the assessment tool is being piloted. However, work continues to fine-tune the tool.
- **Program Satisfaction**

The School of Nursing faculty set as its target that 80% (or higher) of graduates will rate their competence to meet the outcome objectives at 3 or higher on a 4-point Likert scale. In a USCA survey of alumni from 2000 - 2002 conducted in Spring 2005, all indicated competence in all graduate outcomes at the above average or excellent level. In 2004-2005, 2005-2006 and 2006-2007 academic years, 100% of students rated their competence to meet the outcome objectives above 3 on a 4 point scale. Employers of alumni have also been surveyed, if the alumni consent, and are asked to rate the graduate's competence in meeting the outcome objectives. A high percentage of employers return the surveys and they consistently rate USCA alumni at 3 or above on the 4-point scale.
- **Develop strategies to attract high quality students to the program**

The USCA Associate degree in Nursing ended in December 05; therefore, the school no longer has this mechanism in house to serve as a feeder for the BSN Completion track. The School of Nursing is working with ATC faculty and students to form collaborative activities, where possible, so that ATC students will elect to complete their BSN degree with the USCA School of Nursing. Additionally, to enable RNs to continue their education, the RN to BSN Completion Track is now offered online.

Political Science

Mission and Goals for Learning Outcomes

The Political Science Program, an exclusively undergraduate program leading to the BA degree, supports the USCA mission, vision, and values as written in the *USCA Bulletin* and is designed to fulfill these. In addition, it has accepted as its specific mission the following: 1) Contribute to the humanistic, liberal education of all USCA students; 2) prepare Political Science majors to meet program requirements and ultimately receive the BA degree in Political Science; 3) provide auxiliary services to other disciplines (Political Science courses as general education requirements, electives, cognates, minors, and other curriculum requirements; 4) contribute to the overall development of the USCA community through scholarship and faculty service activities; 5) contribute academic and professional expertise to the Aiken community and beyond. The faculty strive to fulfill the program's mission primarily through instruction, scholarship, and service, and especially by pursuit of academic excellence.

Political Science students will acquire skills and understanding and develop their capacities in:

1. thinking critically and analytically;
2. communicating effectively, using and developing oral and written skills;
3. developing and applying technological skills appropriate for practicing political science methodology;
4. appreciating cross-cultural perspectives;
5. exploring values openly and critically;
6. identifying and examining relationships among disciplines, concepts, and areas of study; and
7. developing depth and breadth of knowledge in the political science discipline.

Actions Taken Based on Assessment Results

The Political Science Program assesses student learning outcomes directly through entrance and exit tests for majors and in courses that fulfill general education requirements. Senior exit surveys, course completion, survey and tracking of alumni, rising junior writing portfolios, syllabus checks, and advisor supervision of student progress also provide valuable data for measuring student success. Actions taken based on assessment results include:

- **Monitoring student learning with entrance-exit tests and adjusting the curriculum**

The primary assessment tool is a 100-question value added entry–exit test that covers the primary areas of political science: American politics and government, political theory, public administration, South Carolina politics, international relations and comparative politics, and research methods. Findings indicate that:

 - i. unsurprisingly tests scores show some small correlation with the number of credits earned toward graduation; and
 - ii. student learning appears most robust in the area of American government and research methodology. In areas of public policy and international relations, students appear to retain less of the target knowledge base.

As a result, the faculty have requested a new tenure-track assistant professor position in the area of International Relations/Comparative Politics.

Other assessment results show a high level of competence in thinking critically, writing reasonably well, and utilizing technology.

- **Engagement of students in scholarly activities**

Assessment data indicate that the department does a good job of involving students in scholarly activities outside the classroom. Students are encouraged and directed to participate in events such as the SCPSA conference, and many are active in the Political Science Club, Pre-Law Club, Campus Democrats and Campus Republicans.

Psychology

Bachelor of Arts and Bachelor of Science Degrees: Mission & Goals for Learning Outcomes

The mission of the USCA Department of Psychology undergraduate program is to educate students in the knowledge, research techniques, basic and applied perspectives of the various subfields of psychology, and the appreciation of psychological values, in an individualized learning environment, involving classroom, laboratory, and applied experiences.

In the Bachelor of Arts and Bachelor of Science degree programs, psychology students will:

1. demonstrate familiarity with the major concepts, theoretical perspectives, empirical findings, and historical trends in psychology;
2. understand and apply basic research methods in psychology, including research design, data analysis, and critical interpretation, utilizing skeptical inquiry and reasoning skills;
3. understand and apply psychological principles to personal, social, and organizational issues; and
4. understand the value of empirical evidence, tolerate ambiguity, act ethically, and reflect other values that are the underpinnings of psychology as a science.

Master of Science Degree: Mission and Goals for Learning Outcomes

The mission of the USCA Master of Science degree program in Applied Clinical Psychology is to provide graduate study and clinical experience in preparation for careers in applied clinical and counseling settings and as a foundation for students interested in pursuing advanced doctoral studies.

In the Master of Science degree program, students will:

1. understand principles of psychology and how they are applied;
2. understand a diversity of theoretical perspectives;
3. interpret and apply statistical and research techniques;
4. understand professional, legal and ethical principles as they pertain to professional conduct and responsibility; and
5. understand and develop skills in assessment procedures and intervention strategies.

Actions Taken Based on Assessment Results

The Psychology Department assesses student learning outcomes through multiple measures, including performance on the ETS Major Field Test in Psychology, a senior exit survey that includes a self-assessment of learning as well as measures of satisfaction, number of students within the major, number of degrees awarded, class size, syllabus audits, a graduate exit survey, a master's thesis performance evaluation, a practicum evaluation form, a student self-evaluation instrument, and community advisory board feedback. Actions taken based on assessment results include:

- **Increasing the number of faculty to reduce class sizes and to expand curricular offerings in emerging and growth areas**

The results from the exit surveys and major field tests have revealed a lack of exposure to newer emerging areas of psychology. The department is proposing the development of additional course offerings in the areas of Health, Forensic, and Industrial/Organizational psychology.

- **Increasing support for research engagement**

Assessment data have indicated that students in the undergraduate and graduate programs require additional opportunities to be engaged in research. To this end, the department has identified a need for additional laboratory facilities.

Sociology

Mission and Goals for Learning Outcomes

The mission of the Department of Sociology is to provide students with an understanding of social science theories, concepts and methods leading to an ability to collect social science data, integrate material from diverse courses, draw conclusions from data, appreciate other cultures, and be aware of issues surrounding social change. Students have the opportunity to earn the Bachelor of Arts degree in Sociology in one of three concentrations: general, human services, and criminal justice. In addition, the Department provides general education courses in geography and anthropology. The Department mission includes contributing to the overall enhancement of the academic and scholarly community. The Department also provides expertise to local community agencies when appropriate.

A student who successfully completes the requirements for a Bachelor of Arts degree in Sociology is expected to be able to:

1. communicate effectively orally and in writing;
2. collect or assemble sociologically relevant data on a given topic;
3. integrate data/materials from a variety of sources into a logical framework;
4. draw informed conclusions from assembled data and materials;
5. exercise a sociological imagination (an awareness of the interconnections between larger social forces and the individual; an understanding of the impact of history on biography);
6. discuss other cultures and/or subcultures without demonstrating ethnocentrism; and
7. be aware of the pervasiveness of social change and of its causes and consequences.

Actions Taken Based on Assessment Results

Student mastery of learning outcomes is assessed with multiple methods, including evaluation of a senior portfolio, an oral presentation at the senior level, and a senior exit survey. Actions taken based on assessment results include:

- **Curricular adjustments based upon assessment data**
Results of the evaluation of portfolios of recent graduates have indicated that majors demonstrate the abilities associated with 4 of the 7 program objectives in their written work. Of concern is that the 80% success benchmark established by the faculty was not realized for two of the objectives.

Table 1. Results of Portfolio Evaluation

Program Objective	Success Ratings in Percentages
Effective written communication	84.4
Ability to collect and assemble sociologically relevant material	97.8
Ability to integrate data/material & place it in a logical framework	90.0
Ability to draw conclusions from assembled data/material	74.4
Ability to exercise a sociological imagination	75.6
Ability to set aside ethnocentrism	90.0
An awareness of the pervasiveness of social change; its causes and consequences	90.0

Students demonstrated the ability to draw conclusions from assembled data/material and to exercise a sociological imagination in less than 80 percent of the portfolios. The Department has planned to introduce a sophomore-level measurement course (methodology and statistics) in an attempt to ameliorate these deficiencies. This will

allow students to be better prepared for upper-level coursework and be better prepared to demonstrate their ability to draw conclusions and exercise a sociological imagination in the portfolio projects.

As well, in order to address perceived weaknesses in the program, faculty in the department have determined that the addition of an intermediate or advanced introductory course for majors is justified.

- **Improvements to assessment of oral communication**
In the assessment of oral communication skills, the sociology faculty concurred with the Assessment Committee that the evaluation instrument could be revised in a way that would better measure student oral communication competencies through evaluation of distinct behavioral criteria. A new rubric has recently been developed and adopted to evaluate student presentations.
- **Additional focus on research methodology**
The Department has strengthened its core curriculum with the addition of “labs” to two major core courses. This has been done, in part, as a result of assessment data which revealed that students needed more classroom hours and instructor involvement in certain courses to pursue data collection, perform analyses, and interpret findings. These two courses are mentioned most frequently in senior exit surveys as the “most valuable” courses in the program. In addition Sociology majors now have the opportunity and are encouraged to present the research they conduct to fulfill the requirements of the research methods course at the annual South Carolina Undergraduate Symposium. In recent years, junior and senior sociology majors who expressed interest in graduate school have accompanied faculty to regional professional conferences.

Institutional Effectiveness Data Tables

Programs Eligible for Accreditation and Programs Accredited

Applicable to four- and two-year institutions

Due August 1, 2008

This form includes a list of accrediting bodies for which one or more academic programs are currently accreditable in a South Carolina institution as reported on U.S. Department of Education FORM IPEDS-1C-1 (6-1-94) and/or have been approved by the Commission on Higher Education.

According to Section 59-101-350, the Commission is responsible for collecting “the number and percentage of accredited programs and the number and percentage of programs eligible for accreditation” from four- and two-year post-secondary institutions to be included in the annual report to the General Assembly. The Commission on Higher Education also uses this information as a base to fulfill requirements in Section 59-103-30 for performance funding to collect information on Instructional Quality by looking at the accreditation of degree-granting programs.

If your institution offers one or more programs listed in the Commission’s current Inventory of Academic Degree Programs (<http://connect.che.sc.gov/AS400/Inven/Default.asp>) that is accreditable by one or more of the following agencies, you should complete the columns in the table that follows by placing an “x” in the box. For those agencies that **accredit individual programs within departments, please put the number of programs in parentheses beside the “x”**. An **accreditable** program is one that is eligible for accreditation, regardless of whether or not the institution chooses to pursue accreditation. An **accredited** program is one that has been granted **full** accreditation status by the appropriate accrediting agency.

The addition or deletion of an agency from this list is a prescribed process, administered through the Commission’s Academic Affairs Division. If an agency is added to this list the date that it is added dictates when an accreditable program should be counted “against” the institution with regard to its full accreditation. The most recent agencies that have been added to the list have their corresponding dates listed so that institutions can better calculate the time frame for accreditation. Any agencies that appear on the list without a corresponding date should be understood to have appeared at least five years prior to the current date. For a complete set of policies and procedures regarding this process, see the Commission’s website at: <http://www.che.sc.gov/AcademicAffairs/Accreditation%20Guidelines.doc>.

Institution: University of South Carolina Aiken

LIST OF NATIONAL INSTITUTIONAL AND SPECIALIZED ACCREDITING BODIES RECOGNIZED BY THE SOUTH CAROLINA COMMISSION ON HIGHER EDUCATION

These agencies and areas may also be found on the CHE's website at:

http://www.che.sc.gov/AcademicAffairs/Accrediting_Agencies_Recognized_by_CHE.htm

ACCREDITING AGENCIES AND AREAS	Accreditable Program	Fully Accredited Program	Details on Program (if program not fully accredited-do not complete if fully accredited)		
			Year program added at institution	Institution has chosen NOT to seek accreditation for this program	Accreditation Expected (if known)
American Assembly of Collegiate Schools of Business - International Association for Management Education	<i>An institution may be accredited by the AACSB or the ACBSP</i>				
Business (BUS)-Baccalaureate, Masters', and Doctoral degree programs in business administration and management	X	X			
Teacher Education (TED) - Baccalaureate and graduate programs for the preparation of teachers and other professional personnel for elementary and secondary schools	X	X			
NATIONAL LEAGUE FOR NURSING, INC					
Nursing (NUR) - Baccalaureate and higher degree programs	X	X			

Total **3** **3**

THIS INFORMATION TO BE USED FOR PERFORMANCE INDICATOR 3D

Institution:

University of South Carolina Aiken

Student Involvement in Sponsored Research

Applicable to Four-Year Institutions – Reported for Fall 2007

According to Section 59-101-350, the Commission is responsible for collecting “the percent of graduate and upper division undergraduate students participating in sponsored research programs” from four-year institutions to be included in the annual report to the General Assembly.

The numbers included here should reflect the graduate and upper division undergraduate students who participate in sponsored research programs. Each institution that receives research dollars generated by external funding (sponsored research) should report the number of students who benefit from these dollars.

The CHE will calculate the percentage using these data and headcount enrollment data from the Fall 2007 IPEDS Enrollment Forms.

	Number of Students Participating in Sponsored Research (Exclude first professional students)
Upper Division, Undergraduate Students	19
Graduate Students	2

Results of Professional Examinations

Applicable to all sectors – Reported for April 1, 2007-March 31, 2008

According to Section 59-101-350, the Commission is responsible for collecting “student scores on professional examinations with detailed information on state and national means, passing scores, and pass rates, as available, and with information on such scores over time, and the number of students taking each exam” from four- and two-year institutions to be included in the annual report to the General Assembly. The Commission on Higher Education also uses this information as the primary source with which to fulfill requirements in Section 59-103-30 for performance funding to collect information on Instructional Quality and Graduates’ Achievements by looking at the scores of graduates on post-undergraduate professional, graduate, or employment-related examinations and certification tests.

Past committee work and the development of performance funding have defined the collection of this information to include only first-time test takers (except the teacher education exams at four-year institutions, which include all test takers) for those students who completed an examination during the period of **April 1, 2007 through March 31, 2008**. The following list displays the exams that each sector has reported in the past. Please use this list as a guide for the exams you report this year on the table provided. **Please be aware that your institution may have students taking certification exams that have not been reported on in the past.** This would be the case if students were just beginning to complete a new program.

The Commission will request national and state pass rates and any additional information for these examinations, as it is available, from national and state agencies to be used in the report to the General Assembly. These national and state agencies can be found in “A Closer Look.”

Beginning this year, Praxis exams are reported in a separate table.

Please note that Praxis results are reported on all test-takers. Other exams are reported on first-time test-takers.

Results of PRAXIS Examinations 2007-08

Name of Exam	Date(s) Administered	# of Examinees	# of Examinees who Passed	% Examinees Passing
Teaching and Research Sectors				
PRAXIS Series II: Core Battery Professional Knowledge	----	----	----	----
PRAXIS Series II: Principles of Learning & Teaching (K-6)	4/28/07 6/09/07 8/04/07 9/08/07 11/17/07 1/12/08 3/15/08	98	76	77.6%
PRAXIS Series II: Principles of Learning & Teaching (5-9)	4/28/07 11/17/07 3/15/08	5	3	60.0%
PRAXIS Series II: Principles of Learning & Teaching (7-12)	4/29/07 6/09/07 8/04/07 9/08/07 11/17/07 1/12/08 3/03/07 3/15/08	22	18	81.8%
PRAXIS Series II: Specialty Area Tests	4/28/07 6/09/07 8/04/07 9/08/07 11/17/07 1/12/08 3/15/08	149	116	77.9%

Results of All Other Examinations 2007-08

Name of Exam	Date(s) Administered	# of Examinees	# of 1 st Time Examinees	# of 1 st Time Examinees who Passed	% 1 st Time Examinees Passing
TEACHING SECTOR					
National Council Licensure Exam. (NCLEX) - Registered Nurse	April 1, 2007 – March 31, 2008	53	53	47	89%*

* Based on results from recent NCLEX exams and in response to the State Board of Examiners ongoing rise in expectations, the School of Nursing has recently taken steps to increase the standard of the students both through extra work and by tougher entrance requirements.