

**PROGRAM REVIEW
1998-99
OFFICE OF INSTITUTIONAL RESEARCH**

PART I - MISSION

The mission of the Office of Institutional Research is to provide verifiable data and information to improve the quality of decision-making at USCA. In addition, the Office seeks to disseminate accurate information about USCA to both on-and off-campus entities and to provide data services to the University, the community and to the State. To this end, the Office conducts surveys, provides data and assistance, offers a variety of on-line services, and undertakes studies for the university and its constituents. (See Appendix for complete objectives).

PART II – 1997-98 ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Director:	Full-time unclassified:	Dr. Lovely Ulmer-Sottong
Statistician I:	Full-time classified:	Jodi Herrin
Statistician II:	Full-time classified:	New position follows October, 1998
Adm. Asst.:	Full-time classified:	Maureen Bergstrom
Student Worker 10 hr.per wk.FWS		Ashley Brown
FISPE .20 week, temporary staff:		Three year temporary position paid from FIPSE/CHE contract <u>(Nov. 1998 –2001)</u>

BACKGROUND

In August 1994, a reorganization occurred at USCA in which the Office of Institutional Research and Office of Academic Assessment were put under a single director, Dr. Wanda Hayes. In February 1995, Ms. Jodie Herrin, a Statistician I, was hired to help meet the demands of the office. In December 1997, Dr. Hayes left the institution and on April 16, 1998 Dr. Lovely Ulmer-Sottong was hired as Director. In October 1998 a Statistician II will be hired to meet the increased statistical analysis demands of the office.

In May 1998, a student worker, Mr. Paul DeJong, was hired who was highly skilled in computer programming particularly as applied to the World Wide Web. As a result of his work creating on-line surveys and testing services, Mr. DeJong will return to the Office for the spring semester (1999) as a part of a Scholarship offered by the Chancellor to assist the University in its on-line services.

In August 1998, a three year, \$55,000 contract was secured from the Commission on Higher Education as part of a statewide Fund for the Improvement of Postsecondary Education (FIPSE) grant. As part of the grant, a 20 hour per week temporary classified staff person will be hired from that contract for the next three years to implement statewide on-line surveys, produce grant reports, and assist and state-wide performance funding assessment projects.

Lastly, when all professional level new hires are in place an additional 10 hour per week federal work study student will be hired to assist the administrative assistant, Maureen Bergstrom, with the increased administrative demands of the office.

As evidenced by this brief history, the demands placed on the institutional research function have dramatically increased over the past several years with the implementation of performance funding in South Carolina. With the Office's expanded statewide role in the evaluation of performance funding, there is every reason to believe that the Offices workload will continue to rise. Furthermore, as a major data informational office on campus, USCA on-campus demands for data information will continue to grow due to three factors:

- 1) The heightened focus on enrollment management and enrollment planning with the implementation of The Freshmen Year Experience,
- 2) The responsibility for supplying the Chancellor's non-routine data requests which has shifted from CSD to IR, and
- 3) The impending CHE audit and SACS review for which increased data demands are being already beginning to surface.

Major Projects Accomplished in 1997-98 – Even with the 3.5-month absence of a Director, the Office accomplished a number of major initiatives in 1997-1998. These included:

1. Online Fact Book:
1996, 1997 Enrollment Statistics, Survey Results and Institutional Effectiveness Reports are now available on line at <http://www.usca.sc.edu/ESIP/AIR/irpage.htm>. Increasingly data will be made available to the general public about USCA through our online fact book.
2. Online (Electronic) Survey Services
The ability to administer surveys online and to receive online reports and subgroup reports was developed and will be maintained by the Office.
3. Scannable (Paper) Survey Services:
The ability to create, administer and produce reports from in-house scannable surveys was developed and will be maintained by the Office.
4. Performance Funding Initiatives –
 - A) USCA became a leading member of the Sector by hosting the first Sector Power meeting, producing a Sector Power report which was distributed to all Presidents in the Sector;
 - B) Setting up and maintaining a Sector LISTSERV so that information can be shared and discussed immediately by all nine teaching colleges.
 - C) Submission of corrected data which resulted in a 6 point gain on the 1997 USCA Report Card

5. Provisional Student Study –
A provisional student study which assisted in furthering the discussion of the Freshman Year Experience
6. Major Role in SCHEA Board and Exemplary Program Evaluations
Continued service to the SCHEA Board in its final year. Submission of three exemplary programs and award of two statewide Exemplary Assessment Programs. Helped produce the SCHEA Exemplary Program Brochure.
6. AASCB Service as Assessment Advisor
Continued service to AASCB as an Assessment Advisor to AASCB Schools seeking accreditation. Will help plan the 1999 AASCB Outcomes Seminar at Clearcreek Florida for AASCB. Presented at 1998 AASCB Outcomes Seminar and will present at the 1999 AASCB Outcomes Seminar.
8. Representative Harry Stille Data Requests –
Rep. Harry Stille requested several detailed, time-consuming reports again this year. Those included requests regarding student enrollments, admission requirements, and faculty workloads.
9. Completion of Three Year National Retention Study
The completion of the _____ Study.
10. Major Role in the South Carolina FIPSE 3-Year Grant to Evaluate Performance Funding at the Institutional Level.
Secured USCA's position as the chief LEAD institution in the State by securing three-year \$55,000. contract to do the evaluation section of the FIPSE grant. Through this contract USCA will be in the position to obtain first hand knowledge of the effects of performance funding on thirty-three public institutions planning policies and student outcomes.

PART III - STATISTICAL DATA

NOTE: Due to the reorganization that occurred at USCA in August 1994, the responsibilities of this office were collapsed with the Office of Assessment, thus resulting in one office, the Office of Institution Research and Assessment. Due to this change, with the exception of staff support information, statistical data for this office begins in 1994. The data provided under the columns "1994" and "1995" were calculated based on calendar years (i.e., January - December). The data provided under the columns "1995-96" "1996-97" and 1997-98 were calculated based on fiscal years (i.e., July 1 - June 30).

A. NUMBER AND TYPE OF STAFF SUPPORT

	HEADCOUNT (FTE)					
	<u>1993</u>	<u>1994</u>	<u>1995</u>	<u>1995-96</u>	<u>1996-97</u>	<u>1997-98</u>
Full-time	2 (1.25)	2 (1)	3 (2.0)	3 (2.0)	3 (2.0)	4 (3.0)
Part-time	0	0	0	0	0	.5
Temporary (FIPSE)						
Student	0	1 (.25)	1 (.0626)	1 (.0626)	1 (.0626)	1 (.06)
Paul DeJong Spring Sem.	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	.5
TOTAL	2 (1.25)	3 (1.25)	4 (2.0625)	4 (2.0625)	4 (2.0625)	5.5 (4.1)

B. OFFICE ACTIVITY/TRANSACTIONS:

TOTAL TRANSACTIONS

Although it is important for both Institutional Research and Assessment to track the production for each area, it is just as important to reflect the “total load” for the office itself, thereby giving the reader an idea of the total production of both functions of the Office of Institutional Research and Assessment. Total production of the four staff members is approximately reflected below (Complete breakdown is shown in appendices).

<u>ACTIVITY</u>	<u>AY</u> <u>1993</u>	<u>AY</u> <u>1994</u>	<u>AY</u> <u>1995</u>	<u>FY</u> <u>1995-96</u>	<u>FY</u> <u>1996-97</u>	<u>FY</u> <u>1997-98</u>
SURVEYS (Distrib& Processed)						
Total Survey Load.....IR	?	?	3753	1697	3222	6549
Total Survey Load.....Assm.	1084	2031	375	482	322	522
Total Load.....Combined	1084	2031	4128	2179	3544	7071
TESTS/ TRANSCRIPTS/ REPORTS						
Total Load.....IR						
Total Load.....Assm.	?	314	367	370	1171	1631
Total LoadCombined	513	747	917	1084	950	940
	513	1061	1284	1454	2121	2571
REQUESTS/CONSULTATIONS/ PRESENTATIONS						
Total Load.....IR						
Total Load.....Assm.	?	?	149	484	522	308
Total Load.....Combined	more than 2	more than 2	44	59	59	25
		2	193	543	581	333
		more than 2				
NUMBER OF HOURS SPENT IN MEETINGS/WORKSHOPS						
Total Hours.....IR	?	?	209	423	1016	181(3mo.)
Total Hours.....Assm.	more than 2	?	155	149	166	75(3mo.)
Total Hours.....Combined	more than 2	?	364	572	1182	256(3mo.)

LEVEL OF SATISFACTION WITH OFFICE	<u>AY</u> <u>1994</u>	<u>FY</u> <u>1997-98</u>
	CLASSIFIED	CLASSIFIED
	50% Satisfied 48% did not know	72% Satisfied 29% did not know
	FACULTY	FACULTY
	57% Satisfied 25% did not know	51% Satisfied 38% did not know

Additional information regarding data production during 1997-98:

1. The breakdown of requests from USCA Departments is: Admissions 20%; Business 19%; Records 8%; Education 5%; Student Org. 5%; Financial Aid 5%
2. The Office of Research and Assessment generated approximately 9,975 total activities during the 1997-98 year. This represents a growth of about 1/3 over the previous year (1996-97) and over 1/2 from 1995-96. This trend is most probably as a result of performance funding demands.

PART IV – 1998-99 INSTITUTIONAL RESEARCH GOALS

ON-CAMPUS

- 1) Continue to maintain the current workload in a timely manner.
- 2) Increase the use of on-line services for on-campus surveys and testing
- 3) Increase the visibility of the Office on-campus by training a core group of faculty and staff in the use of on-line data in order to decrease amount of time spent on simple departmental data requests
- 4) Present on-campus reports in more readable formats
- 5) Educate more faculty and staff regarding their role in performance funding.
- 6) Position the Office as a “broker” of information on campus about USCA students and services
- 7) Move all outside vendor surveys to on-campus production when possible
- 8) Staff training in on-line programming such as JAVA and SAS reports.

OFF-CAMPUS

1. Increase the use of on-line services as a "for-pay" service the Office can offer to the State and to the Aiken community.
2. Increase the visibility of USCA in the statewide conversations regarding Performance Funding
3. Lead the sector in Performance Funding FIPSE evaluation data and information
4. Continue to explore grant opportunities for the Office

PART V: IDENTIFIED NEEDS (combines Office of Assessment and Institutional Research):

SPACE:

With the addition of a half time FIPSE grant person (3 year temporary classified) there is a need for an additional office which is in close proximity to the rest of the staff. Although there is an addition office space upstairs in Admin. Bldg. which is currently assigned to IR, it is being used weekly for College Base testing and as secure storage for exams and historical files which will be needed during the CHE and SACS reviews. Even after a massive clean-up in spring 1998, secure, easily accessible storage space remains a critical need.

With the requirement that all Seniors must take the College Base, there is a need for a designated "TESTING AREA" which could accommodate up to 20 test takers at one time. In addition to large scale testing, on the average approximately 2-5 tests are given per week during the regular academic year.

Because of an unfortunate error regarding the budget in 1997, the Director could not buy any office furniture budget, therefore unmet needs remain.

OFFICE FURNITURE:

In addition to office space, the FIPSE grant person must have a desk, chair and one file cabinet. The Director proposes that her desk be given to this person and that the Director gets a new desk (a new desk was ordered and subsequently cancelled last year as part of the budget shortfall). Shared equipment such as the laser printer for Enrollment Services and a shredder for multiple office use were purchased out of the IR budget in 1997, perhaps money can be found for the Director to now purchase a desk and for her to then reallocate her desk to the FIPSE staff person. Regardless, the FIPSE three year staff member must have a desk, chair, and a filing cabinet.

A 4-door file cabinet should be bought for Jodi Herrin as we cannot destroy any of the files that she has since they are required on a weekly basis and will be needed in close proximity for CHE review in 2000 and SACS review in 2001. Again this was a priority in the 1997 budget but was cancelled due to the budget error.

INCREASE EDUCATIONAL SUPPLY BUDGET:

With the recent requirement that all Seniors must be tested with the College Base, more money needs to be allotted in that budget line for College Base tests, answer sheets, paper, staples, copying and routine expenses associated with testing. Since Assessment workshops are a major function of this Office supplies need to be increased to meet the needs of assessment demands.

INCREASE TRAVEL FUNDS:

This staff has grown without any increase in travel funds for professional conferences. Given the current budget, when it is between sending staff to a conference and the Director attending, most of the time, the staff will be sent so they can gain more knowledge in the field. This will decrease the number of times USCA will gain recognition in the field as the Director could present at a wide variety of conferences thereby gaining more recognition for USCA.

APPENDIX A

OFFICE OF INSTITUTIONAL RESEARCH OBJECTIVES FOR 1998-99

The objectives for the Office of Institutional Research are:

1. To provide longitudinal data (trend-line) for use in decision-making at USCA.
2. To conduct studies and maintain data on student retention and attrition.
3. To conduct annual surveys of students and bi-annual surveys of alumni.
4. To conduct surveys of full-time faculty, part-time faculty, and staff on a 3-year rotational cycle.
5. To process/analyze surveys for other units on campus, e.g., the library, bookstore.
6. To administer, analyze and report the 360-degree evaluations of USCA's administrators.
7. To produce a compendium of data that can be readily accessed by those academic and administrative areas, and others who have a need for it.
8. To respond to requests for information from outside agencies, e.g., CHE, SACS, AASCU, etc., as well as to review such data for accuracy when prepared by others.
9. To provide data for performance funding.
10. To provide assistance to various committees and task forces of the CHE in relation to performance funding.
11. To revise and maintain up-to-date organizational charts for each unit and the university as a whole.
12. To provide grade distribution data to the academic units and the Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs.
13. To provide on-line services for USCA and CHE FIPSE requirements
14. To provide training in order for others to be able to use USCA data more effectively in their own areas.

APPENDIX B

**COMPLETE BREAK DOWN OF ACTIVITIES RELATED TO INSITUTIONAL
RESEARCH AND ASSESSEMENT**

APPENDIX C

ROLE OF THE IR OFFICE REGARDING THE KEY ISSUES FACING USC AIKEN

1. *Student Centered Learning*

- Collecting/analyzing student surveys to assist in decision-making
- Supplying data/reports to Admissions Office
- Retention/attrition studies, including determining the reasons why students leave USCA
- Assisting in the ongoing development and implementation of the student evaluation of teaching

2. *Resource Development and Budget Planning*

- The Director will spend a great deal of time serving on committees addressing the new performance funding which will affect this area.
- Checking/verification of facility data provided to CHE on our behalf
- Provide data on summer school enrollments

3. *Partnerships*

- Sharing/use of technology, factbook on Web, semesterly reports on LAN
- Involvement with other institutions on state committees (ACIR, Statewide Planning Committee, Performance Indicator task forces)
- Sharing equipment (shredder, laser printer)
- Collaboration with other units on campus, particularly with regard to survey design and analysis (e.g., library, CSD, bookstore)
- Growing partnership with CHE regarding the evaluation of performance funding through the FIPSE grant (three years)

4. *Recruitment/Retention of Students, Faculty, and Staff*

- Survey students, faculty, staff, and alumni
- Provide data to human resources on faculty compensation studies
- 360-degree evaluation of administrators
- Studies of retention/attrition
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5. *Technology*

- Our office's use of technology is ever changing, i.e., scanner, web pages, shared area on the LAN for our department (between IR and academic unit heads), disseminating information via e-mail (Headcount and FTE data)
- Development of increased On-Line Services

6. *External Accountability*

- Increased role as performance funding is evaluated in FIPSE grant
- Increased role as performance funding is evaluated in Sector
- Supplying and reviewing data for performance funding
- Supplying information for other legislative mandates (Act 255, Institutional Effectiveness)
- Supplying data as needed for accreditation (SACS, NCATE, AACSB, NLN)
- Supplying data as needed for CHE program reviews