10.4 Academic governance

The institution (a) publishes and implements policies on the authority of faculty in academic and governance matters, (b) demonstrates that educational programs for which academic credit is awarded are approved consistent with institutional policy, and (c) places primary responsibility for the content, quality, and effectiveness of the curriculum with its faculty.

Compliance Judgment: In Compliance

Rationale

      Authority of Faculty in Academic and Governance Matters. As stipulated in the Faculty Manual [1], the faculty of the University of South Carolina Aiken has "legislative powers in all matters pertaining to the standards of admission, registration, requirements for and the granting of degrees, curricula, instruction, research, extracurricular activity, discipline of students, educational policies and standards of the University." Responsibilities for academic governance are also ascribed to faculty in USC system policies ACAF 2.00 Creation and Revision of Academic Programs [2] and ACAF 2.03 Creation and Revision of Academic Courses [3] which state, "faculty of the university has legislative authority over matters pertaining to the curriculum on the campus where they serve." The Faculty Manual is available on the USC Aiken Academic Affairs website [4] and system-wide policies are published on the USC System Policy and Procedures website.[5] All policies related to faculty governance are listed on the policy and procedures website under the areas of academic affairs.

      The Faculty Manual contains the essential elements of the employment relationship between the university and the faculty, individually and collectively. The manual establishes the terms of employment, the manner of appointment, the procedures and standards for tenure and promotion, the responsibilities of faculty members, and the procedures and standards for termination of employment. In addition, the manual delineates the faculty organization; confirms the authority of the faculty to

participate in the governance of the university, particularly with respect to academic matters; and describes university support services. Finally, in a series of appendices are standing rules of the Faculty Assembly [6] and the Faculty Assembly bylaws [7], which includes descriptions of standing committees.[8] Standing Committees do the bulk of the work for the Faculty Assembly investigating and considering academic and governance matters. Issues that come out of committees are presented to the Faculty Assembly, which consists of all full-time faculty, for approval. The Assembly meets a minimum of four-times each fall and spring semester.

Amendments to the Faculty Manual are presented for consideration and approval of the assembly and administration before submission for approval by the Board of Trustees. The Board typically reviews and approves a Faculty Manual each summer in advance of the new academic year; thus proposed changes adopted by the Assembly, accepted by the Chancellor, and ratified by the Board go into effect for the following academic year. If the Chancellor is not in agreement with recommended revisions to the Faculty Manual, the Chancellor must engage in discussions with the faculty to obtain a resolution.

Approval Process for Educational Programs. USC system policy ACAF 2.00 Creation and Revision of Academic Programs [2] requires that educational programs offered for academic credit be approved by the appropriate faculty governance body and the administration before being presented to the Board of Trustees for approval. Modifications of courses are governed by USC system policy ACAF 2.03 Creation and Revision of Academic Courses.[3] After securing internal approvals, several external reviews and approvals must take place. As presented in the narrative response to Standard 9.1 – Program content [9], the development of new programs or substantial modification of existing programs, including substantive changes in delivery mode, involve:

- Origination and approval by discipline faculty in consultation with senior administrators;
- Approval of the College Coordinating Council which consists of faculty and department chairs, if appropriate;

- Review by the Academic Council which consists of school deans and department chairs;
- Review by the University Planning Committee [10] of the Faculty Assembly to ensure alignment with the mission and goals of the institution;
- Review and approval by the Courses and Curricula Committee [11] of the Faculty Assembly for undergraduate degree material;
- Review and approval by the Graduate Advisory Council [12] of the Faculty Assembly for graduate degree material;
- Review and approval by the General Education Committee [13] of the Faculty Assembly for material that impacts the general education core;
- Review and approval by the Faculty Assembly;
- Review and approval by the USC Aiken Chancellor;
- Review and approval by the Academic Affairs Committee of the USC Board of Trustees;
- Review and approval by the USC Board of Trustees;
- Review by the state's Advisory Committee on Academic Programs (ACAP);
- Review by the state's Committee on Academic Affairs and Licensing (CAAL);
- Review and approval by the South Carolina Commission on Higher Education (SCCHE); and
- Review and approval by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools, if required.

The 2018-19 end-of-year report [14] for the standing committees of Faculty Assembly show the active role faculty play in the governance and oversight of academic matters of the campus. Upon completion of internal reviews and approvals, new programs and substantive modifications of existing programs undergo further examination externally. The ACAP, which consists of academic officers from higher education institutions throughout the state, reviews academic proposals and provides advice to both the institution and the CAAL - a standing committee of SCCHE. The Bachelor of Arts (Music) program proposal [15] is provided as an example of the review process. More

examples are provided in the narrative response to Standard 14.2 – Substantive change [16] where all new programs proposals since the last reaccreditation are provided.

Faculty Responsibility for Curriculum Content, Quality, and Effectiveness.
The faculty within an academic unit of the University have responsibility for the development, implementation, evaluation, and modification of curriculum of all academic programs within that unit. As detailed in the narrative response to Standard 9.1 – Program content [9], faculty ensure that each program of study is coherent and of high quality by aligning the curriculum content with professional accreditation standards, mapping the curriculum to student learning outcomes of the program, and sequencing classes within the curriculum to present information at more advanced levels as students progress in their studies, evaluating achievement of student learning outcomes, and modifying the curriculum based on assessment results.

After review of new program proposals by the University Planning Committee of the Faculty Assembly to ensure alignment with the mission and goals, faculty governance over curriculum splits by the academic level of the program -- undergraduate or graduate. Undergraduate curricula is reviewed by the Courses and Curricula Committee and graduate curricula is reviewed by the Graduate Advisory Council. When examining new proposals, both committees consider issues such as:

- Is the subject matter within the discipline of the proposing unit?
- Is an appropriate rationale and justification for the proposal provided?
- Are the titles and descriptions of courses accurate and informative?
- Is the proposed credit of courses justified by the course requirements?
- Is the rigor and assessment appropriate for the educational level?
- Is there potential overlap with other courses?
- Are other programs or courses affected by the proposal?
- Have affected academic units, if any, reviewed the proposal?

Faculty members evaluate the quality and effectiveness of academic program curricula on an ongoing basis within department or school level committees. Each program furthermore submits an annual assessment report to the Office of Institutional

Effectiveness, Research, and Compliance documenting the extent to which student learning outcomes are achieved and plans to effect improvements. Assessment plans and activities of all academic programs and general education are reviewed on a three-year rotational cycles by a standing committee of the Faculty Assembly, with approximately one third of all academic programs being evaluated each year. General education assessment activities are reviewed by the General Education Committee. Assessment activities of undergraduate programs are reviewed by the Academic Assessment Committee.[17] Assessment activities of graduate programs are reviewed by the Graduate Advisory Council. These committees act in an advisory capacity to help academic units improve assessment plans, and to ensure curricula are being adjusted to more effectively achieve desired learning outcomes.

Supporting Documentation

1. Faculty Manual
2. USC System Policy ACAF 2.00 - Creation and Revision of Academic Programs
3. USC System Policy ACAF 2.03 Creation and Revision of Academic Courses
4. USC Aiken Academic Affairs website: Access to the Faculty Manual
5. USC System Policy and Procedures website
6. Standing rules of the Faculty Assembly
7. Faculty Assembly Bylaws
8. Faculty Assembly Standing Committees
9. Narrative response to Standard 9.1 – Program content
10. University Planning Committee of the Faculty Assembly
11. Courses and Curricula Committee of the Faculty Assembly
12. Graduate Advisory Council of the Faculty Assembly
13. General Education Committee of the Faculty Assembly
14. 2018-19 End-of-year Standing Committee Reports
15. Bachelor of Arts (Music) program proposal
16. Narrative response to Standard 14.2 – Substantive change
17. Academic Assessment Committee of the Faculty Assembly