



PRELIMINARY REPORT OF THE REAFFIRMATION COMMITTEE

Statement Regarding the Report

The Board of Trustees of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC) is responsible for making the final determination on reaffirmation of accreditation based on the findings contained in this committee report, the institution's response to issues contained in the report, other assessments relevant to the review, and application of the Commission's policies and procedures. Final interpretation of the Principles of Accreditation and final action on the accreditation status of the institution rest with SACSCOC Board of Trustees.

Name of the Institution: **University of South Carolina - Aiken**

Date of the Review: **November 5-6, 2020**

SACSCOC Staff Member: **Dr. Denise Y. Young**

Chair of the Committee: **Dr. William R. Fannin - CHAIR**
Professor of Management
The University of Texas Permian Basin
Odessa, TX

Section 6: Faculty

- 6.1 **The institution employs an adequate number of full-time faculty members to support the mission and goals of the institution.**
(*Full-time faculty*) [CR; Off-Site/On-Site Review]

Non-Compliance

The institution's mission emphasizes its commitment to "transformative teaching made possible through high impact learning practices, undergraduate research, small class sizes and individual attention" demonstrated by a low student-to-faculty ratio and small class sizes. The student-to-faculty ratio has been a consistent 14:1 for the past three years. Furthermore, the average class size for upper-division classes was twelve (12) and eight (8) for graduate classes. More than 90% of graduating seniors indicated that they were satisfied or very satisfied with faculty availability. For 2019-2020, the institution had 131 faculty in tenured and tenure-track positions, 34 faculty in non-tenure-track positions, and 139 faculty in temporary part-time positions. Less than 25% of instructional credit was generated by part-time faculty. The teaching load for full-time faculty was 12 semester contact hours for undergraduate courses and nine semester contact hours when one or more of the courses was a graduate course. Further reduction in faculty workload is possible with administrative assignments or research associated with grants. The institution reported that a professional body or association accredits 57% of the degree programs, which further demonstrates having an adequate number of faculty. The institution's mission also emphasizes excellence in research and creative pursuits and service and contributions to the community. The institution presented data to support that faculty were actively involved in scholarly activity, advising and service to the institution and community. End-of-Year Reports were provided for 14 different departments. The average advisee load has decreased from 18.8 students per faculty member to 17.5 students per faculty member; however, some popular programs, notably nursing and exercise and sports science, have large advising loads of 47 to 58 students. The institution is addressing this by creating a centralized advising center and through the Quality Enhancement Plan.

The institution uses the same faculty for both traditional and online courses. Online classes are scheduled and evaluated in the same manner as traditional courses. Faculty use Blackboard Learning Management System for both face-to-face and online instruction. The institution offers four degree programs at USC Sumter and one degree program at USC Salkehatchie. These programs use face-to-face and online classes. Each program at the remote campus locations has a full-time program coordinator on-site.

In standard 6.2.c the institution identified program coordinators for the remote campus locations, however it was unclear if faculty teaching at the remote campus locations were the same faculty teaching at the main campus. The Off-Site Reaffirmation Committee could not locate evidence regarding the adequacy of full-time faculty to support the off-campus instructional sites at USC Sumter and at USC Salkehatchie.