Goal 1: Teaching & Learning

To improve the quality of academic programs at all levels, develop and nurture a faculty devoted to teaching excellence, and enhance the richness of the student experience in and beyond the classroom so that the teaching and learning environment of the University of South Carolina equals or surpasses that of comprehensive state university systems that are deemed peer aspirants

Strategic Initiatives

A. **Graduates who are Engaged Learners and Principled Citizens**
   1. Establish by Fall 2009 an ongoing process to monitor and review the general education requirements and to revise as appropriate to better meet desired learning outcomes
   2. Ensure that all graduates have participated in at least one experiential learning opportunity (e.g. faculty-mentored research, study abroad, service learning, internships, etc.)
   3. Increase participation in co-curricular service opportunities
   4. Expand social and academic networks through linked courses and learning communities
   5. Increase the number of graduates from the Honors Program
   6. Assign responsibility for American Democracy Project initiatives

B. **Faculty who are Dynamic Teachers**
   1. Promote and expand the utilization of available resources on innovative teaching strategies for individual faculty and departments
   2. Fund library subscriptions on content area pedagogy and publicize through the Center for Teaching Excellence website. One major journal on teaching in each discipline should be funded
   3. Review the Student Evaluation of Teaching instrument for possible revision

C. **Policies and Practices that Promote Student Achievement**
   1. Conduct an annual discussion of factors affecting academic standards and student success
   2. Adjust class sizes as necessary to ensure effective student-instructor interaction

D. **Advisors who Provide Effective and Sound Academic Counsel**
   1. Increase the size of the professional advising staff and offer more training for academic advisors
   2. Enhance efficiency of academic advising by expanded use of electronic resources
   3. Limit advising loads to no more than 30 advisees

E. **Campus Spaces that Stimulate Learning**
   1. Create and enhance common areas to promote informal study
   2. Create spaces that encourage independent, assisted, and collaborative learning activities, including a dynamic learning center
   3. Expand and reassign academic space to satisfy programmatic growth

Goal 2: Research, Scholarship & Creative Achievement

USC will be recognized as a top public university system dedicated to discovery, application, and dissemination of knowledge; excellence in creative achievement; and world-renowned scholarship. Leadership among comprehensive research institutions will be signified by continuation of the highest Carnegie classification for the Columbia campus and rising status within that peer group, and recognition of all campuses for excellence relative to their peers and peer aspirant institutions.

Strategic Initiatives

A. **Support for Research, Scholarly and Creative Endeavors that Enhance the Quality and Profile of the Institution**
1. Determine and implement additional means of faculty support to allow faculty more time to engage in research and creative activities
2. Determine and implement a means to balance faculty workload to allow for more scholarly activities

B. **Stable Source of Funding for Research, Scholarly and Creative Endeavors**
1. Establish a stable source of funding to provide faculty with start-up funding for research, scholarly pursuits, and creative activities
2. Establish a stable source of funding for equipment and facilities that support the research, scholarship, and creative activities of faculty
3. Establish a stable source of funding to increase library resources in support of research, scholarship, and creative activities
4. Increase the number of extramural funding requests in support of faculty research, scholarship, and creative endeavors.
5. Increase the number of endowed chairs and professorships, as well as funds available to recognize and support distinguished faculty research, scholarship, and creative achievement

C. **Students Engaged in External Research, Scholarly and Creative Endeavors**
1. Expand opportunities for students to engage in collaborative research, scholarly and creative endeavors (e.g., opportunities with businesses and local art groups, research collaborations, etc.)

Goal 3: Service Excellence

USC will be committed to effective engagement of the expertise and capabilities of faculty, staff and students with state, national and global communities to advance educational attainment at all levels, guide economic development, and promote quality of life. Achievement of this goal will be signified by formal recognition of service excellence by the Carnegie Foundation for eligible campuses within the system, as well as by recognition of all campuses for excellence relative to their respective peer and peer aspirant institutions.

Strategic Initiatives

A. **Degree Programs that are Responsive to Local, Regional and Global Needs and Opportunities**
1. Explore development and/or modification of degree programs in response to regional research and employment opportunities as well as market demands
2. Expand course delivery methods to respond to diverse populations

B. **Partnerships that Capitalize on and Expand Capabilities, Expertise, and Service**
1. Monitor the effectiveness and depth of outreach and collaboration across the University with K-12 education
2. Increase collaborative interactions between USCA and other colleges
3. Increase the effectiveness of Professional Development School programs

C. **Efficient and Sustainable Partnerships and Programs**
1. Monitor the viability of existing programs to effectively and efficiently meet the University mission
2. Invest resources in identifying and developing programs and initiatives with other entities that will enhance revenue production

D. **Programs and Activities that Provide Services to the Community**
1. Increase and monitor opportunities for student organizations to participate in community service
2. Pursue opportunities for faculty, staff, and students to participate in applied research and consulting that has an impact on the community

E. **Increased environmental consciousness**
1. Increase environmental consciousness among students

F. **Environmentally astute faculty and staff**
1. Increase environmental consciousness among faculty and staff

G. **Programs and activities focused on environmental sustainability**
1. Increase the number of courses with objectives that focus on environmental impact awareness
2. Offer opportunities for Inter-curricular Enhancement (ICE) events that focus on environmental impact awareness
3. Engage in activities that promote the Presidents' Climate Commitment (e.g., decrease greenhouse gas emissions, increase recycling efforts, etc.)

Goal 4: Quality of Life in the University Community

The multi-campus system will be a destination of choice for high-achieving faculty, students and staff who value, benefit from, and contribute to a rich and rewarding learning and working environment where civility, ethics, and collaboration create an inclusive culture of fairness and respect, facilitating for all Carolinians the highest levels of intellectual and personal achievement. Achievement of this goal will be evidenced by the recruitment and retention of the highest quality faculty, students, and staff; their advancement of the University's mission; and by enrichment of the communities where Carolinians live and work.

Strategic Initiatives

A. **High Quality and Diverse Faculty and Staff**

1. Enhance programs and office functions by adding faculty and staff positions as the need is demonstrated through the appropriate institutional planning processes
2. Develop a more effective and discriminating faculty evaluation rating system
3. Increase professional development opportunities for staff
4. Seek ethnic, racial and gender diversity among faculty and staff at all levels by developing search strategies and policies that ensure a diverse pool of qualified applicants
5. Develop external relationships with institutions such as professional associations, peer institutions and community-based organizations that will support campus diversity goals
6. Engage members of the Aiken community as a support system to make newly recruited minority faculty feel welcome in the community

B. **Enhanced Recruitment and Retention Activities**
1. Continue to use the Enrollment Planning Team to address enrollment management issues
2. Increase the size and diversity of a qualified student body
3. Increase opportunities for faculty and staff to actively participate in student recruitment and retention
4. Increase merit and need-based scholarship funding (fee waiver/Bookstore/Partnership) by at least the same percentage annually as the percentage increase in tuition
5. Set academic tuition and fees for in-state residents comparable to those of peer institutions in South Carolina
6. Increase scholarship funding to the median of peer in-state institutions

C. **Engaging Activities that Enhance the Quality of Life on the Campus and Promote University Values**
1. Develop special traditions/ceremonies including those designed to celebrate the beginning and end of students' careers at USCA
2. Develop social, academic, and service events that bring students, faculty and staff together outside the classroom
3. Encourage student, staff, and faculty interaction in the organization of and participation in campus activities (e.g., student recruitment, search committees, and fund raising)
4. Expand campus programs that facilitate an examination of and tolerance for diverse views on politics, lifestyles, religion, and culture
5. Assess current and develop new residential experiences that promote an enhanced campus community

D. Enhanced Campus Environment
1. Develop common areas that create opportunities for student interaction and social engagement
2. Invigorate campus space through increased use of high-quality graphic displays and banners that reinforce campus life and values
3. Engage students in campus beautification efforts
4. Encourage student leadership on initiatives to improve the health and safety of the campus environment

E. Business and Operational Processes that Increase Effectiveness and Efficiency
1. Effectively implement new enterprise software systems to facilitate recruitment of student
2. Effectively develop and implement new enterprise software systems to facilitate assessment, planning, and reaccreditation efforts
3. Identify and effectively implement appropriate operational support software systems
4. Encourage responsible stewardship of existing resources

F. Financial Plan that Advances University Goals and Objectives
1. Increase alternative revenue sources to state appropriations
2. Maintain competitive incoming salaries and address salary compression for continuing faculty and staff with the goal of matching, then maintaining, average USCA salaries at the average salary of disciplinary peers
3. Review all unit level budgets every three years
4. Establish and fund a Renovation Reserve Account for the regular maintenance of facility and infrastructure needs, as well as non-technology furnishings and equipment

Goal 5: Recognition & Visibility

Accomplishments of students, faculty, staff and alumni will be showcased and publicized such that the campuses are recognized for excellence and leadership in education, research, scholarship, creative endeavors, athletics, and public service, consistent with their respective missions.

Strategic Initiatives

A. **Alumni and Donor Relationships that Enhance USC Aiken**
   1. Increase participation in programs and events to maintain alumni relationships with USC Aiken
   2. Increase donor and alumni participation and the average size of gifts

B. **Recognition and Visibility of University Achievements**
   1. . Develop a campus-wide initiative to promote recognition and visibility of student excellence in academics, research, creative endeavors, athletics, and public service.
   2. Develop a campus-wide initiative to promote recognition and visibility of faculty excellence and leadership in teaching, scholarship, the arts, and professional and public service
   3. Develop a campus-wide initiative to promote recognition and visibility of staff excellence and leadership in public and professional service.
   4. Develop a campus-wide initiative to promote recognition and visibility of alumni excellence and leadership in public and professional endeavors.

C. **Community Pride in and Commitment to USC Aiken**
   1. Develop a marketing campaign to increase community attendance at campus events and programs
   2. Develop a comprehensive approach for outreach efforts to retirees