

# USC AIKEN STRATEGIC PLAN 2008-09

## (Goals, Objectives & Current Strategic Initiatives)

### I. Excellent Academic and Co-Curricular Programs

#### A. Modify/Enhance the curriculum to promote the development of engaged learners and principled citizens

1. *Revise the general education requirements*
2. *Increase participation in dynamic experiential learning opportunities (e.g., study abroad, travel courses, service learning, internships, etc.)*
3. *Establish several learning communities by Fall 2008*
4. *Increase linked course offerings*
5. *Expand participation in the Honors Program*
6. *Expand ADP initiatives*

#### B. Increase support for faculty to develop effective teaching strategies and techniques

1. *Establish a faculty committee on teaching improvement*
2. *Produce a quarterly newsletter on innovative teaching strategies*
3. *Fund department subscriptions to disciplinary journals on college teaching*
4. *Expand programs and resources provided by the Center for Teaching Excellence*

#### C. Expand initiatives that promote student retention and academic success

1. *Establish First Pace, a provisional admission program*
2. *Establish a schedule for raising probation and suspension levels*
3. *Establish a Grade Forgiveness Policy*
4. *Establish an online BSN completion program*
5. *Establish a First Year Reading Program*
6. *Establish Freshman Convocation*
7. *Continue to maintain small class sizes, where feasible and appropriate, to promote student/faculty interaction*
8. *Continue to provide opportunities for faculty and staff to participate in national teleconferences on topics related to student success and retention*
9. *Promote ongoing discussion and adoption of consistent academic standards and expectations*

#### D. Review degree offerings to ensure continuing viability of existing programs and to capitalize on new and emerging degree opportunities

1. *Determine the viability of existing degree programs*
2. *Explore development and/or modification of degree programs in response to regional research and employment opportunities as well as market demands*
3. *Departments will investigate the need for additional online or hybrid course offerings*

## **II. Dynamic Student Centered Environment**

### **A. Develop and reach enrollment targets by effectively managing the recruitment and retention of students**

1. *Continue to use the Enrollment Planning Team to address enrollment management issues*
2. *Attract an increasingly diverse and qualified student body*

### **B. Enhance student success and persistence through increased engagement in and out of the classroom**

1. *Aggressively implement strategies that increase student engagement with academic and curricular life (e.g. increased use of technology in and out of the classroom; Blackboard, blogging, podcasting and vodcasting; interactive and participatory classroom approaches; learning communities)*
2. *Aggressively implement strategies that increase the amount of time students interact with faculty, staff, and other students outside of the classroom*
3. *Adjust class sizes as necessary to ensure effective student-instructor interaction*

### **C. Increase effectiveness of academic advising**

1. *Review and, where appropriate, implement advising consultant's recommendations which included increasing the size of the professional advising staff, redistributing advising loads by increasing the number of trained advisors in disciplines with a large number of majors, offering more training for academic advisors, etc.*
2. *Add staff member to serve as Director of the First Pace program and as an academic advisor*
3. *Enhance efficiency by increasing advisors' use of electronic resources*
4. *Adjust advising loads so no academic advisor has more than 30 advisees*

### **D. Assess adequacy and utilization of and satisfaction with housing and associated services**

1. *Monitor need for additional on-campus housing*
2. *Evaluate need for additional staff/support services outside of housing operation to support additional residential students (food service, academic support services, University Police, communications and information technology, student health and wellness (including counseling), student activities (including weekend programming), other areas identified by CHAT)*

### **E. Develop ways to enhance the sense of community at USCA**

1. *Develop special traditions/ceremonies including those designed to celebrate the beginning and end of students' careers at USCA*
2. *Encourage the development of social and academic events to bring students, faculty and staff together outside the classroom, and provide funding for such events*

### **III. Superior Faculty and Staff**

#### **A. Recruit and retain high quality faculty and staff**

1. *Maintain competitive incoming salaries and address salary compression for continuing faculty and staff through additional annual budget allocations for pay increases above state funded levels with the goal of achieving, then maintaining, average USCA salaries at the average of the appropriate peer group salary*
2. *Enhance programs by adding faculty and staff positions as the need is demonstrated through the appropriate institutional planning processes*
3. *Increase financial support for scholarly and creative activities of faculty*
4. *Develop and fund an annual (student-nominated) award for teaching excellence for a part-time Instructor each year*
5. *Determine and implement additional means of generating faculty release time to allow them to engage more with students and scholarly activities*
6. *Redesign the current annual evaluation rating system for faculty from three levels of evaluation (merit, satisfactory, unsatisfactory) to allow more discrimination among performance levels*

#### **B. Recruit and retain increasing numbers of qualified minority faculty and staff members**

1. *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*
2. *Develop external relationships with institutions such as professional associations, peer institutions and community-based organizations that will support campus diversity goals*
3. *Engage members of the Aiken community as a support system to make newly recruited minority faculty feel welcome in the community*

#### **IV. “Strong Community Relations”**

##### **A. Expand USCA partnerships with K-16 education**

- 1. Increase the amount and depth of outreach and collaboration across the University with K-16 education*
- 2. Increase collaborative interactions between USCA and Aiken Technical College (ATC)*

##### **B. Increase engagement of USCA alumni to build lifelong relationships with USC**

- 1. Increase consistent communications and programming for USCA Alumni*
- 2. Develop and implement a plan for consistent programs and events to attract alumni back to campus or to reconnect with USCA that includes involvement with current and prospective students*
- 3. Increase current student understanding of the role of alumni through programming, education, and contact with alumni*

##### **C. Substantially expand financial support of USCA through annual contributions and major gifts**

- 1. Raise \$26 million through the Capital Campaign over next seven years with major gifts effort*
- 2. Increase donor participation and the average size of gifts to USCA through annual fund efforts (examples: Family Fund, Alumni Annual Fund and Friends Annual Fund)*

##### **D. Build community pride and commitment to USCA in the local area**

- 1. Increase community involvement and attendance in campus events and programs through a deliberate and structured marketing campaign*
- 2. Maintain and strengthen connections to newcomers and retirees in the community through outreach efforts.*

## V. Enhanced Campus Environment

### A. Strengthen the campus community by increasing the opportunity for students to live on campus

1. *Complete construction of a new Residence Hall by August 2008*
2. *Provide additional support services required to serve an increased residential population*

### B. Stimulate informal learning, study, and social engagement outside the classroom

1. *Develop exterior areas that create opportunities for student interaction and quiet study*
2. *Create and enhance interior common areas to promote social engagement and informal study*
3. *Invigorate campus space through increased use of high-quality graphic displays and banners that reinforce campus life and values*

### C. Enhance the academic environment by improving the quality and versatility of space for formal learning

1. *Create spaces that encourage independent, assisted, and collaborative learning activities, including a dynamic learning center to be located in a new academic building*
2. *Expand and reassign academic space to satisfy programmatic growth*

### D. Improve administrative services by increasing the effectiveness and efficiency of data management systems and business processes

1. *Effectively implement One-Carolina*

## **VI. Enhance the Institution's Financial Base**

### **A. Secure the financial resources required to accomplish all the university's goals and objectives**

1. *Institute a rolling multi-year financial planning process*
2. *Develop alternative revenue sources to state appropriations*
3. *Develop collaborative programs and initiatives with other colleges that will enhance revenue production and effective use of resources*
4. *Develop collaborative programs and initiatives with private business and industry that will enhance revenue production and effective use of resources*

### **B. Develop tuition and financial aid policies that support increased access and affordability**

1. *Increase merit and need-based scholarship funding (fee waiver/Bookstore/Partnership) by at least the same percentage annually as the percentage increase in tuition.*
2. *Set academic tuition and fees for in-state residents that are comparable with those of peer institutions in South Carolina.*
3. *Increase scholarship funding so that institutional grant awards are equal to the median of peer in-state institutions (both % of students receiving awards and average award)*

### **C. Determine feasibility and desirability of tuition and financial aid policies that allow for differentiation among academic programs**

1. *Future tuition increases are based on program costs, program demand and market forces.*

### **D. Establish and fund a Renovation Reserve Account for the regular maintenance of facility and infrastructure needs, as well as non-technology furnishings and equipment**

1. *Determine annual level needed and begin the funding process as part of tuition planning for 08-09 year*

### **E. Maintain effective use of campus financial resources**

1. *Review current departmental-level budgets every three years*
2. *Review degree-level budgets every three years*