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# Minority Achievement Program Student Success at USC Aiken Fall 2006

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### **University Mission**

Founded in 1961, the University of South Carolina Aiken (USCA) is a comprehensive liberal arts institution committed to active learning through excellence in teaching, faculty and student scholarship, research, creative activities and service. In this stimulating academic community, USCA challenges students to acquire and develop the skills, knowledge, and values necessary for success in a dynamic global environment.

The university offers degrees in the arts and sciences and in the professional disciplines of business, education, and nursing. All courses of study are grounded in a liberal arts and sciences core curriculum. USCA also encourages interdisciplinary studies and collaborative endeavors.

Emphasizing small classes and individual attention, USCA provides students with opportunities to maximize individual achievement in both academic and co-curricular settings. The institution challenges students to think critically and creatively, to communicate effectively, to learn independently, and to acquire depth of knowledge in chosen fields. The university values honesty, integrity, initiative, hard work, accomplishments, responsible citizenship, respect for diversity, and cross-cultural understanding.

USC Aiken attracts students of varying ages and diverse cultural backgrounds who have demonstrated the potential to succeed in a challenging academic environment. In addition to serving the Savannah River area, USCA actively seeks student enrollment from all parts of South Carolina as well as from other states and countries.

As a senior public institution of the University of South Carolina, USCA combines the advantages of a smaller institution with the resources of a major university system. Located in beautiful, historic Aiken, South Carolina, USCA is an institution of moderate size (2,500-5,000 students) that offers baccalaureate degrees in a number of disciplines, completion baccalaureate degrees at University of South Carolina regional campuses, and master's degrees in selected programs.

The USCA World Wide Web Home Page is: <http://www.usca.edu>

The USCA Office of Institutional Effectiveness World Wide Web Home Page is: <http://ie.usca.edu>

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## **Executive Summary**

This report was prepared by the Office of Institutional Effectiveness at the request of Stacie Williams, Director of Multicultural Affairs, to see if there was any correlation between minority student participation in the Minority Achievement Program (here after referred to as MAP) and academic performance in terms of semester grade point average. The purpose of this report is to provide a summary overview of data analysis of minority student participation in MAP and non-participant minority students. The information presented here is primarily descriptive in nature.

## **Major Findings**

*Non-Hispanic African American or Black Students participation in MAP suggests higher semester GPA.* When controlled for MAP participation and gender, those students who participated in MAP had a higher average predicted grade point average as well as a higher average semester grade point average than those Non-Hispanic African American or Black non-participants in MAP.

For the purposes of this report, the Non-Hispanic African American or Black indicator(s) were used.

## **Data Sourcing and Collection**

Some of these data, such as grade point averages are restricted to certain administrative personnel. Whenever possible, the report uses data gathered from publicly available resources, so that many of these indicators can be monitored and tracked in the future by those interested in the success of minority students.

## Methodology

Data for this investigation was collected using the frozen Homer Data file for Fall 2006. Williams, Director of Multicultural Affairs, provided the USC Aiken Institutional Effectiveness office with a list of MAP students that included: the students' first and last names, social security number, and the number of MAP meetings these students attended during the Fall 2006 semester. The data supplied by Williams was then cross referenced with the frozen Homer Data file for Fall 2006. After matching the list that was supplied with the frozen data file, it was determined that 50 out of a list of 56 students had remained enrolled for the duration of the Fall 2006 semester. It should be noted that the 50 MAP members on this list that appeared in the frozen data file were all Non-Hispanic African American or Black in terms of ethnicity. As a result, the harvesting method for extracting the control group from the frozen data was directly impacted. In terms of this investigation the control group was Non-Hispanic African American or Black students enrolled in USC Aiken during the Fall 2006 semester. A total of 787 students composed this control group. The two measures that were of extreme importance in this investigation were the average Fall 2006 semester grade point average and the average predicted grade point average.

First, all students in the frozen Homer Fall 2006 data file were sorted based on race/ethnicity. This allowed our office to isolate the complete control group of only Non-Hispanic African American or Black students. The next step was to separate those students that were MAP participants from those that were not. Our office then attached the number of meetings each of the participants had attended during the duration of the Fall 2006 semester. Finally, pivot tables were used to gather analysis on the two measures of importance.

## Demographic Factors and Academic Performance

MAP participants achieved higher overall averages in terms of semester grade point average and predicted grade point average. It should be noted that even though MAP participants are above the mark in terms of their semester grade point average when compared to the overall Non-Hispanic African American or Black population, they remain below the mark of their average predicted grade point average.

<b>Fall 2006 Semester GPA and Predicted GPA Comparison of MAP Participants and Non-Participating Non-Hispanic African American or Black USC Aiken Students</b>				
	<b>N</b>	<b>Average Fall 2006 SEMGPA</b>	<b>Average PRGPA</b>	<b>StdDev of SEMGPA</b>
Non Participant	787	2.14	2.58	1.13
MAP Participant	50	2.57	2.75	0.89
Grand Total	837	2.17	2.60	1.12

Source: Homer Data Fall 2006

In contrast with those that participate in MAP overall, when controlled by gender, analysis shows that males are out performing their average predicted grade point average. Male MAP participants also achieved a higher average Fall 2006 semester grade point average than those that did not participate in MAP.

<b>Fall 2006 Semester GPA and Predicted GPA Comparison of MAP Participants and Non-Participating Non-Hispanic African American or Black USC Aiken Students Controlled by Gender (Males)</b>				
	<b>N</b>	<b>Average Fall 2006 SEMGPA</b>	<b>Average PRGPA</b>	<b>StdDev of SEMGPA</b>
Non Participant	171	1.97	2.46	1.10
MAP Participant	7	2.85	2.39	0.65
Grand Total	178	2.01	2.45	1.10

Source: Homer Data Fall 2006

Female MAP participants also achieved a higher semester grade point average than non-participating females. However, unlike male MAP participants, female MAP participants are not reaching the threshold of their average predicted grade point average.

<b>Fall 2006 Semester GPA and Predicted GPA Comparison of MAP Participants and Non-Participating Non-Hispanic African American or Black USC Aiken Students Controlled by Gender (Females)</b>				
	<b>N</b>	<b>Average Fall 2006 SEMGPA</b>	<b>Average PRGPA</b>	<b>StdDev of SEMGPA</b>
Non Participant	616	2.19	2.62	1.14
MAP Participant	43	2.53	2.81	0.92
Grand Total	659	2.21	2.63	1.13

Source: Homer Data Fall 2006

One particular area of interest following the analysis of previous data and the success of MAP participants was to determine whether or not the number of MAP meetings a participant attend had an effect on their semester grade point average or predicted grade point average. The table below shows that as you move in the direction from one meeting attended towards five meetings attended you do in fact see a gradual increase in the average Fall 2006 semester grade point average of participants. In terms of the average predicted grade point average and the number of meetings attended, the table below shows a bell shaped distribution of grade point averages.

<b>USC Aiken MAP Participants Fall 2006 Semester GPA and Predicted GPA Controlled by Number of Fall MAP Meetings Attended</b>			
Number of Fall Meetings Attended	Number of MAP Participants	Average Fall 2006 SEMGPA	Average PRGPA
1	1	1.23	2.59
2	7	2.35	2.79
3	16	2.34	2.75
4	17	2.83	2.75
5	9	2.82	2.73
Grand Total	50	2.57	2.75

Source: Homer Fall 2006

## Conclusion

Analysis of the data appears to suggest that those Non-Hispanic African American or Black students that do participate in the Minority Achievement Program at USC Aiken reach higher levels of academic achievement than those Non-Hispanic African American or Black students that do not participate in MAP. While none of the analysis is at levels of statistical significance it does appear that levels are headed in that direction. It is important to note that there are a lot of factors that may contribute to students that are in MAP having higher grade point averages. One of the most obvious is the principle of self selectivity; students choose out of their own free will whether or not they want to be a part of an organization. The university may want to continue to monitor minority student success rates within the MAP program; the success of this program could hold the key to the overall minority student population success at USC Aiken. Ms. Williams may want to continue to follow the MAP participants that were involved in this study to track their persistence rates within the MAP Program as well as graduation rates. These measures may be a more interesting indicator of MAP participant's success.