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**SOUTH CAROLINA**<sup>®</sup>  
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Minority Achievement Program -  
Student Success at USC Aiken  
Fall 2007

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Prepared By:

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## **University of South Carolina Aiken**

Dr. Thomas L. Hallman  
Chancellor

### **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 Ms. Stacie Williams, Director of Multicultural Affairs, to see if there was a relationship between student participation in the Minority Achievement Program (hereafter referred to as MAP) and academic performance in terms of grade point average. The purpose of this report is to provide a summary of the academic performance of minority students who participate in MAP compared to non-participant minority students. The study's findings were inconclusive. Although slight differences were found between participants and nonparticipants in terms of their semester grade point average, the pattern of the findings was neither statistically significant nor consistent across gender levels.

## Methodology

Data for this investigation were collected using the frozen Homer file for Fall 2007. Stacie 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 2007 semester. The data supplied by Ms. Williams was then cross referenced with the frozen Homer file for the end of the Fall 2007 semester. After matching the list that was supplied with the frozen data file, it was determined that 64 out of a list of 65 students had remained enrolled for the duration of the Fall 2007 semester. All 64 students were freshman students who had identified themselves as non-Hispanic African American or Black, other, or had no response when they were admitted to the university. As a result, the control group of non participants from the frozen data consisted of freshman students who had similarly identified themselves as non-Hispanic African American or Black, other, or had no response when they were admitted, and who had remained enrolled for the duration of the Fall 2007 semester. A total of 152 students constituted the control group. The variable of interest for the study was the average Fall 2007 semester grade point average

## Demographic Factors and Academic Performance

MAP participants achieved slightly, but not statistically significant, higher overall averages in terms of semester grade point average.

<b>Fall 2007 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 2007 SEMGPA</b>	<b>Standard Deviation of SEMGPA</b>
Non Participant	152	2.38	0.85
MAP Participant	64	2.44	0.83
Grand Total	216	2.40	0.85

Source: Homer Data Fall 2007

Male MAP participants achieved a slightly, but not statistically significant, lower average Fall 2007 semester grade point average than those that did not participate in MAP.

<b>Fall 2007 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 2007 SEMGPA</b>	<b>Standard Deviation of SEMGPA</b>
Non Participant	46	2.33	0.93
MAP Participant	16	2.21	1.03
Grand Total	62	2.30	0.95

Source: Homer Data Fall 2007

Female MAP participants achieved a slightly, but not statistically significant, higher semester grade point average than non-participating females.

<b>Fall 2007 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 2007 SEMGPA</b>	<b>Standard Deviation of SEMGPA</b>
Non Participant	106	2.40	0.82
MAP Participant	48	2.51	0.75
Grand Total	154	2.44	0.80

Source: Homer Data Fall 2007

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. The table below shows that as you move in the direction from two meetings attended toward five meetings attended you see a gradual increase in the average Fall 2007 semester grade point average of participants. The fact that MAP participants who attended only 1 meeting have a high grade point average of 2.56 may be indicative of academically strong students who correctly determine that they do not need the support services associated with presence at meetings, after attending their first meeting.

<b>USC Aiken MAP Participants Fall 2007 Semester GPA and Predicted GPA Controlled by Number of Fall MAP Meetings Attended</b>		
<b>Number of Fall Meetings Attended</b>	<b>Number of MAP Participants</b>	<b>Average Fall 2006 SEMGPA</b>
1	6	2.56
2	8	1.90
3	5	2.13
4	19	2.35
5	26	2.70
Grand Total	64	2.44

Source: Homer Fall 2007

## **Conclusion**

Analysis of the data is inconclusive. Although slight differences were found between participants and nonparticipants in terms of their semester grade point average, the pattern of the findings was neither statistically significant nor consistent across gender levels. It remains to be seen if participation in the MAP program leads to higher persistence and graduation rates. As indicated in last year's study, these measures may be a more interesting indicator of MAP participants' success.