



U N I V E R S I T Y O F  
**SOUTH CAROLINA**<sup>®</sup>  
A I K E N

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Perceptions of Administration, Work  
Load, and Academic and Campus  
Services at USC Aiken  
Focus Group Research, 2005-06

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A Companion Report to Perceptions of USC Aiken's Image, Mission, and Values

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## University of South Carolina Aiken

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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>

The USCA Office of Marketing and Community Relations World Wide Web Home Page is  
<http://www.usca.edu/marketing/>

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## ***Executive Summary***

This companion report to *Perceptions of USC Aiken's Image, Mission, and Values* summarizes the findings from focus groups conducted between November 2005 and January 2006 on important issues that arose when conducting focus groups but are not directly related to the university's image, mission, and values. While the purpose of these focus groups was to determine perceptions of students, faculty, and staff about the University of South Carolina Aiken (USC Aiken), the range of responses to questions went beyond material pertinent for the internal communications plan.

In addition to a brief description of methodology and analysis of activity responses, the report is divided into four sections. A full list of activity responses is provided in the Appendices.

### **Areas of Discussion:**

#### ➤ ***Campus Administration.***

The Chancellor was described by respondents in all focus groups as visible, accessible, and friendly, but staff and a few faculty members reported communication difficulties with some other senior administrators and that senior administrators appeared overwhelmed by too many responsibilities.

#### ➤ ***Academics and Teaching.***

While small class sizes, quality teaching, and individual attention were identified by all groups as hallmarks of USC Aiken's academic experience, respondents raised questions about student abilities, the pitfalls of occasional poor teaching, and issues with academic advisement.

#### ➤ ***Work Environment.***

Faculty and staff praised the cooperative nature of the work environment and the collaboration and support they felt as members of the USC Aiken community, but both faculty and staff voiced concerns about heavy work load.

#### ➤ ***Campus Services.***

Faculty and staff effusively praised the number and quality of resources available for students, and while students acknowledged quality and availability of many of these resources, they were often more critical of specific areas.

## Methodology

*Seven focus groups were conducted with 69 students, 22 faculty and 15 staff at USC Aiken between November 2005 and January 2006 to determine their perceptions of the institution.*

Focus groups were conducted by Jennifer Lake, Director of Marketing and Community Relations and Dr. Braden Hosch, Director of Institutional Effectiveness; Kendall Tubbs, Coordinator of Public Information and Events, served as the primary note-taker. Participants were selected to balance demographic characteristics, academic rank of faculty, duration of faculty or staff employment, organizational levels and areas, as well as student class level and major. Focus groups lasted about one hour and refreshments were provided to participants.

Following guidelines for research on human subjects, all focus group participants volunteered to participate and were allowed to leave at any time. Respondents were informed about the purposes of the research project, and they were promised that their confidentiality and anonymity would be protected.

Questions and activities were designed to prompt participants to share their views about USC Aiken, including its strengths and weaknesses, distinguishing characteristics, and core values.

By race or ethnicity, 70% of participants were white, 25% were African American, 2% were Asian, and another 2% were Hispanic. Thirty-eight percent of respondents were men and 62% were women.

### Demographic Distribution of Respondents

#	Type	Group	Date	Men			Women				Total
				Black	Asian	White	Black	Asian	Hispanic	White	
1	Staff	Staff Group 1	10/19/2005			4	1			7	12
2	Faculty	Faculty Group 1	11/14/2005			4		1		4	9
3	Staff	Staff Group 2	11/21/2005	1		2	2			5	10
4	Faculty	Faculty Group 2	11/22/2005			3				3	6
5	Students	Organization	1/17/2006	3		5	3			10	21
6	Students	Freshman Arts & Science Class	1/20/2006	1		5	8		2	11	27
7	Students	300-level Prof School Class	1/24/2006	4	1	7	4			5	21
		<b>Total</b>		<b>9</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>45</b>	<b>106</b>

## **Faculty/Staff Focus Group Activities and Questions**

- Activity #1: On a note card, respond to the following prompt: If you were in charge of USC Aiken tomorrow, 1) what would you keep, 2) what would you do away with, and 3) what would you change?
- Activity #2: On a note card, list four words or phrases that describe USC Aiken.
- Question #1: What makes USC Aiken unique?
- Question #2: When you talk to other people about USC Aiken, what do you say?
- Question #3: What does USC Aiken do really well?
- Question #4: What does USC Aiken need to do better at or improve?
- Activity #3: On a note card, respond to the following prompt: There are four USC Aiken values. List as many of them as you can.
- Question #5: To what extent do these values describe USC Aiken? Are there better words to describe USC Aiken?

## **Student Focus Group Activities and Questions**

- Activity #1: On a note card, respond to the following prompt: If you were in charge of USC Aiken tomorrow, 1) what would you keep, 2) what would you do away with, and 3) what would you change?
- Activity #2: On a note card, list four words or phrases that describe USC Aiken.
- Question #1: When you talk to other people about USC Aiken, what do you say?
- Question #2: What is the difference between USC Aiken and other colleges/universities you know about?
- Question #3: What does USC Aiken do really well?
- Question #4: What does USC Aiken need to do better at?
- Activity #3: On a note card, respond to the following prompt: You are designing an ad targeted to high school seniors to get them to come to USC Aiken. What four words, phrases, images, or other things would you emphasize to try to get them to come here?

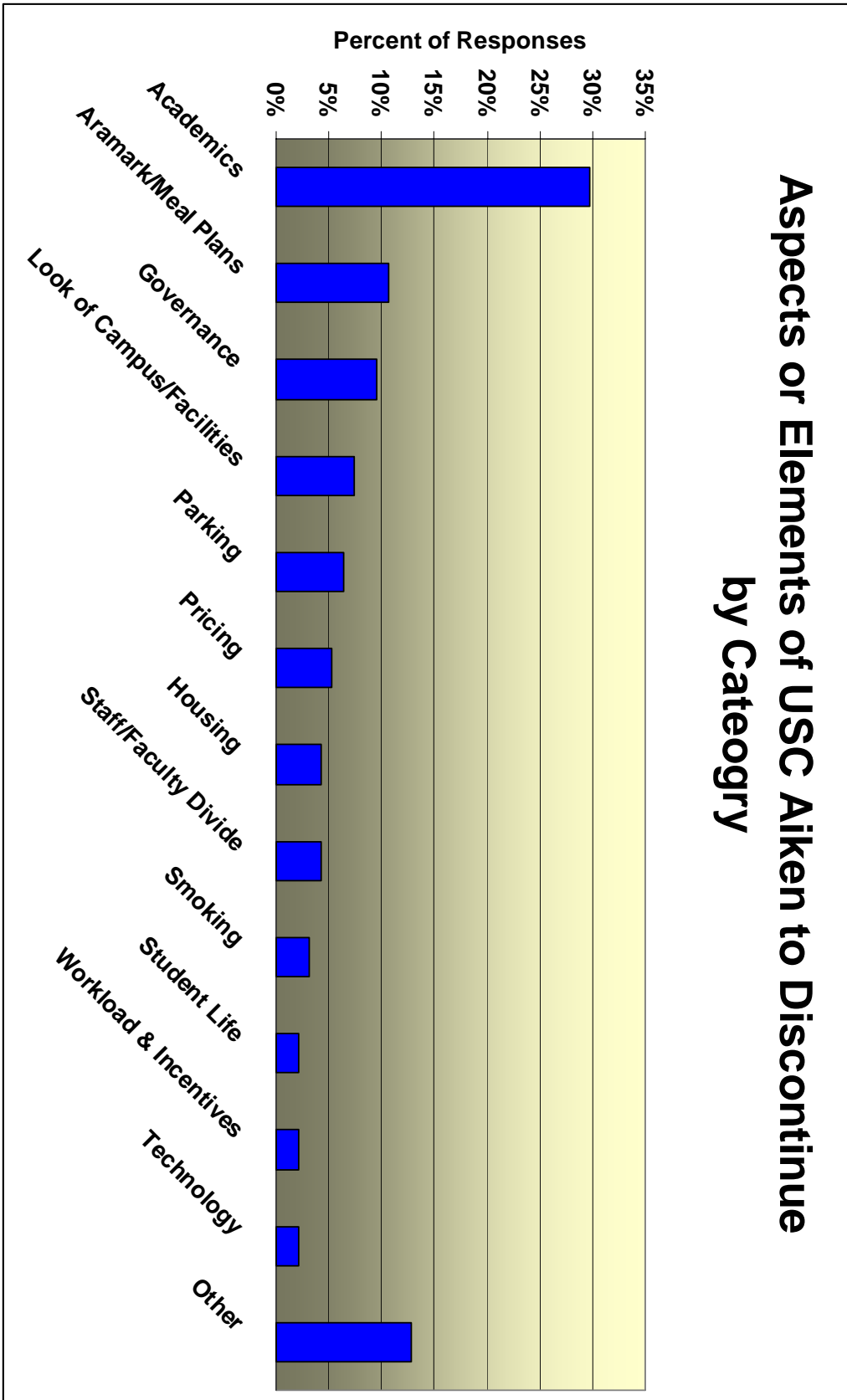
## Aspects of USC Aiken to Discontinue

Before facilitators asked focus group participants to respond to open-ended questions, the participants were asked to complete two activities. In the first of these activities, individuals were given a 3” x 5” note card and asked to write down a response to the following prompt: “If you were in charge of USC Aiken tomorrow, 1) what would you keep, 2) what would you do away with, and 3) what would you change?” Because of the nature of responses generated for Item #1 of the prompt, these findings are presented in *Perceptions of USC Aiken’s Image, Mission, and Values*. Results gathered from Items #2 and #3 are presented below.

A total of 94 written responses were obtained from the second part of the prompt, representing aspects of USC Aiken that participants thought it was important to do away with or discontinue. Several participants provided no response to this prompt, while only a few provided more than one response; all responses were included in analysis. Typically these items were specific campus features or aspects, and these are categorized below. First among these with about a third (30%) of all suggestions was the area of academics; about half of these suggestions were to ease academic requirements, most prominently to discontinue the Junior Writing Portfolio as a degree requirement. The removal of professors perceived to provide poor instruction and changes in scheduling (typically not offering classes on Friday) comprised almost another half of the academic complaints. About 10% of the written responses suggested the removal of Aramark as the food service provider and/or discontinuation of mandatory meal plans for on-campus residents since students have kitchens in their residence hall suites. Ten percent of responses covered a variety of governance issues noted by faculty and staff, and about seven percent of complaints, primarily from students, were about parking. A complete list of responses by category is provided in the Appendix.

<b>Category</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>%</b>
Academics	28	30%
Ease Requirements	14	15%
Teaching Quality	7	7%
Scheduling	6	6%
Advising	1	1%
Aramark/Meal Plans	10	11%
Governance	9	10%
Parking	7	7%
Look of Campus/Facilities	6	6%
Pricing	5	5%
Housing	4	4%
Staff/Faculty Divide	4	4%
Smoking	3	3%
Student Life	2	2%
Workload & Incentives	2	2%
Technology	2	2%
Other	12	13%
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>94</b>	<b>100%</b>

## Aspects or Elements of USC Aiken to Discontinue by Category





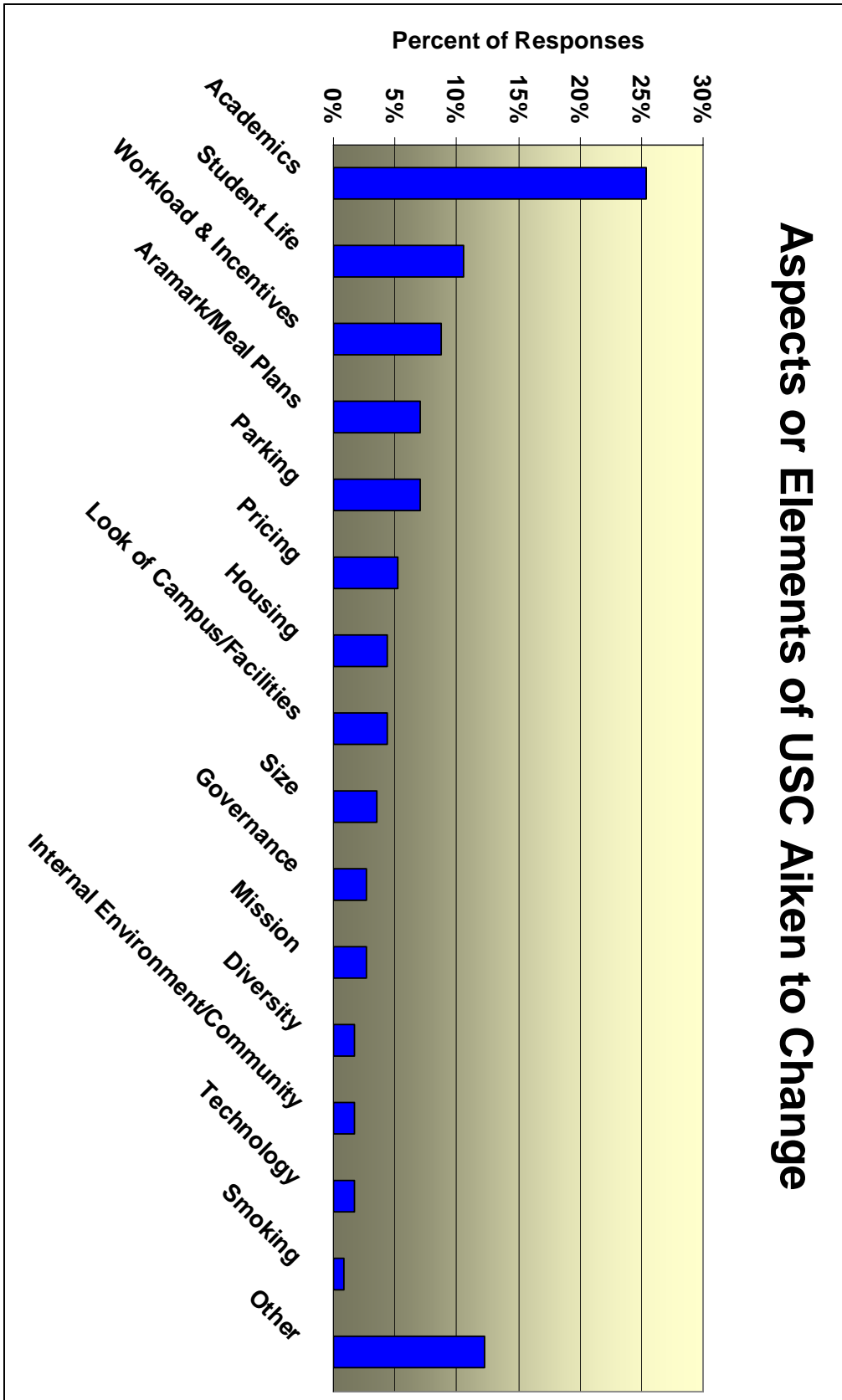
## Aspects of USC Aiken to Change

A total of 114 written responses were obtained from the third part of the prompt, representing aspects of USC Aiken that participants thought it was important to change or alter. Several participants provided no response to this prompt, but several others provided more than one response; all responses were included in analysis. Much like the aspects of USC Aiken to discontinue, these items were typically specific campus features or aspects deemed important to change, and these are categorized below.

First among these, comprising about a quarter (25%) of all suggestions, was the area of academics; about two-fifths of these suggestions were about scheduling, and another fifth suggested adding programs or faculty in specific areas. Some students again suggested easing academic requirements, while a few faculty and staff suggested tightening these requirements. About one out of nine (11%) of responses were about student life. Typically suggestions included adding a football team and getting students more involved in activities and school spirit. About another tenth (9%) were staff and faculty comments about workload and salaries. Changes to the meal plans and parking were also near the top of the list, each with 7% of the comments about institutional change. A complete list of responses by category is provided in the Appendix.

<b>Category</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>%</b>
Academics	29	25%
Scheduling	11	10%
Add Programs, Faculty	6	5%
Ease Requirements	5	4%
Advising	2	2%
Teaching Quality	2	2%
Tighten Requirements	2	2%
Misc	1	1%
Student Life	12	11%
Workload & Incentives	10	9%
Aramark/Meal Plans	8	7%
Parking	8	7%
Pricing	6	5%
Housing	5	4%
Look of Campus/Facilities	5	4%
Size	5	4%
Governance	3	3%
Mission	3	3%
Diversity	2	2%
Internal Environment/Community	2	2%
Technology	2	2%
Smoking	1	1%
Other	14	12%
Grand Total	114	100%

## Aspects or Elements of USC Aiken to Change



## **Campus Administration**

*The Chancellor was described by respondents in all focus groups as visible, accessible, and friendly, but staff and a few faculty members reported communication difficulties with some other senior administrators and that senior administrators appeared overwhelmed by too many responsibilities.*

### **The Chancellor**

Six out of seven focus groups independently mentioned how the Chancellor went out of his way to know and interact with faculty, staff, and students, and discussions of the Chancellor's performance were overwhelmingly positive. Students reported that his appearance at athletics and campus events showed them that he cares about students and their activities. Faculty and staff were also very complimentary of the Chancellor's performance, mentioning the birthday cards they received from the Chancellor and his conversations with them made them feel welcomed and included on the campus. One faculty member, drawing a contrast with a negative experience at a previous institution, specifically was impressed that the Chancellor "knows my name, and he knows my spouse's name." Some minor criticisms were made, however, with just one student observing, "no one knows who the Chancellor is. He should come to more student meetings." One staff member suggested the Chancellor was "afraid of the faculty" and caters to them too much. Cancellation of the four-day week in summers was cited as an example of this.

### **Communication with Other Administrators**

Some other senior administrators were described less positively. Most criticism came from staff members but also a few faculty members and centered on poor communication. One staff member stated that senior administrators will "listen, but they don't hear you," and continued to indicate that while opinions could be conveyed to senior administrators, it appears that nothing is done about the issues discussed. Many staff indicated that their input and feedback were not adequately solicited nor integrated into planning or implementation. When pressed on this issue, one participant responded, "well, I'm not on that committee," but several acknowledged that they could talk to someone on a particular committee to provide input.

### **Organizational Structure and Implementation**

Additionally, some senior administrators were described as "reactive rather than proactive," in part because they were stretched too thin. Some staff observed that senior administrators were not "champions" for their units and did not have enough expertise to make informed judgments about areas under their supervision. Several comments indicated that the organizational chart should become less "flat," which would reduce the number of direct reports to senior administrators. These suggestions for structural change in the organization were not seen by participants to be in conflict with calls for better communication.

## **Academics and Teaching**

*While small class sizes, quality teaching, and individual attention were identified by all groups as hallmarks of USC Aiken's academic experience, respondents raised questions about student abilities, the pitfalls of occasional poor teaching, and issues with academic advisement.*

### **Size and Overall Quality**

As noted in the report, *Perceptions of USC Aiken's Image, Mission, and Values*, the quality of teaching and academic programs were mentioned by all groups as highlights of USCA's offerings. A significant proportion of respondents associated this quality with small class size, so that in the minds of participants, small class sizes appeared to be almost an organic aspect of academic quality. Whenever institutional growth was discussed, participants typically qualified their remarks by stating that class sizes should remain small.

In addition to noting that their courses were taught by faculty rather than teaching assistants and that they had smaller class sizes than their peers at other institutions, many students noted that various programs were impressively accredited and also that USC Aiken was ranked as "a top school." Results from the 2005 administration of the Freshman CIRP survey appear to confirm the importance of these rankings in students' minds. While just 8.0% of entering freshmen at public four-year institutions with medium selectivity indicated that their institutions ranking in national magazines was very important in influencing their decision to attend, 27.4% of entering freshman at USCA indicated that the institution's ranking in national magazines was very important in their decision to attend USCA (Hosch, forthcoming).

### **Student Abilities and Academic Standards**

Faculty and staff alike raised some questions about the quality of students who were admitted to USC Aiken, along with the way students are treated when they arrive. One staff respondent suggested that the freshman year was too much like high school, as a "13<sup>th</sup> grade." Faculty observed that the wide range of student ability levels posed instructional challenges that were difficult to overcome and at times short changed more talented students. In the activities conducted during focus groups, faculty and staff were much more likely to indicate that academic requirements for admission and progression through the degree be strengthened. Some faculty expressed concern about grade inflation and that grades were not awarded consistently across departments. Student evaluation of teaching were seen in part to prompt grade inflation (one faculty member indicated that these evaluations should be done away with).

While faculty and staff called for tightening admission requirements and making sure that students were held to high standards, many students indicated that faculty expectations were too high and there was too much work in classes. Some students complained that they had assignments that required them to do things or

go places outside of class time, and others complained about required internships in some disciplines. The most widespread complaint, however, was about the requirement to submit a rising junior writing portfolio. One student focus group was held a week before the junior writing portfolio was due, and almost half of the participants in this group indicated that the junior writing portfolio should be removed from degree requirements. Many of these students observed that their friends at other institutions did not have to undertake a similar project. Sentiment against this requirement was strong enough that some sort of institutional initiative or campaign to communicate to students why this requirement is important could be warranted.

## **Quality of Teaching**

Teaching was a point of pride among faculty groups, and students recognized that they received special attention from their professors, whom they often described as “caring,” “concerned,” and “helpful.” Also, while faculty routinely described teaching as excellent, this characterization was typically qualified as “most faculty are excellent teachers,” that faculty “by-and-large” really care about students, and that “everyone believes they are a good teacher.” These comments at times appeared to be worded quite deliberately to acknowledge that while excellence in teaching was a shared value, its execution at times fell short.

Yet students too observed that they were occasionally exposed to poor teaching, and the downside of the small institution was that they typically could not avoid “the bad professors” because they were the exclusive instructors of one or two required courses in their major curricula. One student said quite memorably that even if a faculty member “has earned tenure and has been here forever...if evaluations come back and they are bad, they need to go!” Students agreed generally that course evaluations were ineffective in removing bad teachers. In addition to making high quality teaching universal, students also wanted to see an expansion of curricular offerings in their areas of interest, often citing majors and courses that are common at larger research universities, e.g. a major in broadcast communications.

## **Advising**

Advising emerged as an issue for both faculty and students. Some students mentioned that they had friends who had been misadvised by faculty, although no one in the focus groups acknowledged directly that they had been misadvised themselves. One student said, “we know that we are responsible for our academic programs, but we trust our advisors,” and the instances of misadvising appeared to them as a betrayal of that trust. In many ways it is understandable that students would have difficulty questioning the expertise of their academic advisors who are supposed to help them successfully navigate academic requirements at the university.

One faculty focus group was conducted the week following priority registration, and a number of complaints about advising arose among this group of individuals.

These issues revolved primarily around advising load as well as support from the Advisement Office. In terms of load, several faculty complained that they had too many advisees. One participant observed, “I couldn’t find out exactly how many [advisees] I had, which was over sixty” in fall 2005 although the faculty member did mention that this number had dropped to 45.<sup>1</sup> Other faculty members indicated that they began advising one to two weeks before they were supposed to in order to have enough time to meet with all of their advisees. Some faculty members expressed some concern about uneven advising loads among faculty member. One participant reported, “I had to beg to become an advisor – it ought to be mandatory.”

Additionally, faculty members in this group indicated that the support they received from the Advisement Office did not meet their needs. Participants reported a number of issues that detracted from their service as advisors. Primarily these were late or missing materials, such as transcripts for transfer students, blank advisement forms, a list of their advisees with names, GPAs, the list of schedule changes. Faculty members also observed that they had no way to track down advisees.

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<sup>1</sup> A recent study of faculty advising loads (Hosch, 2006) indicates that this particular faculty member is officially listed as the advisor of between only 30-40 students for the past several years (still a high load). It is possible that advisors end up with students who are not officially listed as their advisees, and it is also possible that a high volume of advisees prompts faculty members to have an exaggerated concept of how many students they advise.

## **Work Environment**

*Faculty and staff praised the cooperative nature of the work environment and the collaboration and support they felt as members of the USC Aiken community, but both faculty and staff voiced concerns about heavy work load.*

The report on *Perceptions of USC Aiken's Image, Mission, and Values* discusses in greater detail how faculty and staff alike described their work environment in a positive light, and observed the cooperative and collaborative atmosphere at USC Aiken.

### **Staff Workload**

Heavy work load emerged as a key issue for both groups, although their proposed solutions generally pointed in different directions. Staff members observed that an extraordinary amount of high quality work was accomplished by very few staff in offices on grounds crews and in other areas. The financial rewards for this quality work were low, however, especially compared to opportunities in the private sector. While some staff participants suggested that more staff be hired to help do this work, a more widespread solution was for the current staff to be compensated at higher levels for the work they are doing currently. Additionally, staff observed that because some staff members “don’t pull their weight,” the hard workers are penalized because they take on more work (without extra pay) to pick up the slack. Most agreed strongly that pay for performance raises need to be more widespread across the staff.

As noted in the report on *Perceptions of USC Aiken's Image, Mission, and Values*, however, many staff members expressed ideas about working at USC Aiken that would seem to indicate they were compensated by intangibles such as prestige of working at a university, flexibility, and the cohesiveness of the internal culture.

### **Faculty Workload**

While faculty raised workload as the most significant issue for them, they did not mention low salaries as a particular issue. The most prominent issue was that faculty taught too many courses, and while they reported hearing that the senior administration was concerned about this, they did not feel that they had seen any lightening of the load. Advising load (see above) was also mentioned as a significant workload issue. While some faculty stated that they had the flexibility to design new courses and teach what they wanted to teach, others found they were teaching the same courses over and over again because no one else in their unit could or would teach the courses. The level of opportunity for curricular development and innovation appeared to vary by School and Department.

Faculty too complained there were no opportunities for professional development and that they could not obtain funding for conferences unless they were presenting a paper. Several faculty members observed that the University did not

provide sufficient support for continuing professional development or even required continuing education credits that are required to maintain professional certifications in some fields.

### **Research, University Mission, and Faculty Expectations**

The changing role of research in faculty work was also a topic of significant discussion. There was some variety of opinion about how research should fit into faculty life. Some indicated that research should take a more prominent role to “refresh” faculty, better inform their classroom teaching, and increase institutional prestige. Yet others felt that increasing demands for publication would detract from quality teaching. While some faculty indicated that their departments or schools had very explicitly outlined the publication requirements for tenure, others felt that these were either vague or in flux due to pressure from the USC system administration. A significant proportion of faculty voiced support for more emphasis on the scholarship of teaching and learning, and a few faculty members even expressed some concern that some faculty research on campus was so far above the level of USC Aiken’s students that there was no way such research endeavors could inform their pedagogy in any practical way.



## **Campus Services**

*Faculty and staff effusively praised the number and quality of resources available for students, and while students acknowledged quality and availability of many of these, they were often more critical of specific areas.*

In addition to a quality academic experience and availability of faculty members, faculty and staff identified USC Aiken's technology resources, various co-curricular programs, and the campus grounds as elements that provided a great value to students for the cost. Significantly, one faculty member said, "students can get as plugged-in as they want to be" to these campus opportunities, a comment that was echoed by many students in focus groups. In all instances where this sentiment was voiced, however, the clear implication was that many students do not want to become involved or make use of available facilities. Student sentiment was similar in suggesting that students have the opportunity get involved "if they want to" get involved, but with the implication that many did not want to get involved. It was not clear from the focus groups what the role of the institution should be in inspiring students to become involved or prompting them to want to participate more actively.

Students acknowledged many of these same opportunities, especially the quality of teaching (see "Academics") and orientation (see "Internal Community"). Nevertheless, they had more critical responses to offer of specific services or resources. Student responses about cost were mixed. While five written responses noted how tuition had increased sharply every year in recent years, a few others described USC Aiken as "inexpensive" and "affordable (for now!)."

### **Students' Positive Characterizations of Campus Services**

- **Housing Style.** Students were very complimentary of apartment-style housing on campus. They felt that housing was one of the university's best features for students and recruits. Several students reported that they came to USC Aiken primarily because of the housing in Pacer Commons.
- **Number of Student Activities.** Students, faculty, and staff are impressed with the number of activities and programs provided to students. One student actually repeated a factoid from the USC Aiken Scholar recruitment quiz activity that the university has "sixty-five student organizations and groups." Nevertheless, student comments implied that these activities keep only the *same* students involved. There appears to be no sense of responsibility for engaging students who are not already "plugged in." Further, several students noted that these activities tended to divide students by special interests rather than unify them.

- **Grounds/Housekeeping.** Overwhelmingly, students, faculty, and staff commented positively on the beauty of the campus grounds and cleanliness of campus. One student commented, “You can tell that the school cares about its appearance.”
- **Technology.** Students praised computer resources on campus, the wireless campus, and especially the technology resources available in classrooms.
- **Career Services.** Career Services was identified by freshmen students as helpful in finding a campus job.

## Students’ Negative Characterizations of Campus Services

- **Housing Rules.** As observed in previous studies of housing, students are unhappy with housing rules, especially the visitation policy. Several complaints were voiced that students “are not treated like adults.”
- **Parking.** Inadequate parking was a universal and immediate complaint, with one student suggesting that faculty and staff should have to park further away from buildings since the students are paying to attend the university. But when pressed, students reported it was rare that they had to park on the softball field, and problems were only experienced between 11am and 1pm.
- **Dining Services.** Students complained quite forcefully that dining service hours did not meet their needs – the cafeteria should be open later. A wider selection of food and better quality of food were also desired as well as the choice to opt out of meal plans (“Why pay for meals when we have a kitchen?”).

Further investigation with the Director of Procurement Services revealed that student traffic in the cafeteria was extremely light between 7pm and 7:30pm, which prompted some additional questions to be posed to selected freshmen. Their responses seemed to indicate that they believed that the cafeteria was not open much past 7pm and that food was being put away by 6:50pm. While these responses are only anecdotal, they suggest that some direct observation of service and traffic might reveal the quality and level of food service being delivered toward the end of hours of operation.

- **Academic Advisement.** Students felt that advisors should pay more attention to what the student is taking instead of “just signing off” on what the student proposes. Students shared stories of others who were not able to graduate on-time because of their advisor’s counsel. Although students claimed some responsibility, they noted, “We trust them.”

- **Finance Office.** Students indicated that they got “the runaround” when trying to pay their bill at the Finance Office. This complaint was voiced by several students in all of the focus groups.
- **Bookstore.** Students expressed indignation at the price of books available at the USC Aiken Bookstore. About two-thirds of the upperclassmen in the study reported purchasing their books online at 50-60% of the price charged by the Bookstore.
- **Coffee Shop.** Described derogatorily and identified as very expensive.
- **Help Desk.** Poor customer service skills.
- **Technology.** Descriptions of technology were not entirely positive. Students complained that the environment of computer labs was uncomfortably “hot” and crowded. One student complained loudly about the lack of bandwidth on campus.

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## **Appendix: Aspects of USC Do Away With or Discontinue**

<b>Category</b>	<b>Aspect to Discontinue</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>Academics</b>		
<b>Ease Requirements</b>	Assignments that require you to go somewhere out of class time.	1
	Cumulative finals	1
	Do away with Junior Writing Portfolio	1
	Grading Policy	1
	I would do away with some of the degree requirements	1
	I would do away with the Junior Writing Portfolio	2
	I would do away with the Junior Writing Portfolio	1
	I would do away with the Writing Portfolio	1
	Junior Writing Portfolio	1
	Requirement of communications internship when no other major requires one, very few students gain valuable knowledge from this	1
	Rising Junior Writing Portfolio	1
	The fact that we have to apply to get into some of the programs (Nursing, Exercise and Sports Science	1
	Writing portfolio	1
<b>Teaching Quality</b>	do away with student evaluations for annual evaluations	1
	Do away with teachers in science dept because they are terrible! I'd get new ones	1
	I would do away with tenure for professors and add more masters degree professors with extensive experience in the field.	1
	Professors deemed ineffective	1
	some faculty/staff (Answer #2)	1
	Tenure - if a professor is failing to meet the expectations of the students (the people paying them to be here) it shouldn't matter how long they've been here. If they need to go they need to go.	1
	The horrible professors at the college	1
<b>Scheduling</b>	Classes that are only taught by one professor	1
	Do away with Friday classes	1
	Friday Classes	1
	Friday classes and book prices	1
	I would do away with 8AM Classes(sike) the small desk and make them bigger or put in tables like other classes or those rolling chairs.	1
	Only having one professor teaching Mgmt and leadership. Need more sections for Mgmt Graduates.	1

<b>Category</b>	<b>Aspect to Discontinue</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>Advising</b>	Do away with faculty advisement	1
<b>Other</b>	Attitude toward customer service and customer recognition	1
	being in the shadow of USC	1
	Do away with billing process	1
	Do away with transfers to Columbia being so easy	1
	Emphasis on treating all people as equal-there are good students and bad. Recognize this and reward people accordingly.	1
	Leniency of breaking rules on campus and	1
	low standards of admission	1
	paperwork method - change to computer based	1
	Pool	1
	student cell phones (Answer #2)	1
	The double knot, but express it more and emphasize and install the meaning and valuing of it. So that students can be proud of it.	1
<b>Aramark/ Meal Plans</b>	Aramark	3
	cafeteria food/food services	1
	Do away with mandatory meal plans	1
	I would do away with Aramark	1
	mandatory meal plans for on campus students	1
	Meal Plan Process	1
	The food in the cafeteria (Meal Plans)	1
	The Grill	1
<b>Governance</b>	all non-required red tape	1
	Chancellor Hallman	1
	faculty assembly	1
	faculty assembly-elect faculty	1
	senate to work with administration	1
	faculty committees that meet and make decisions	1
	Limitations imposed by USCA (implementing good programs)	1
	movement towards centralization	1
	overlapping committees and those with superficial functions	1
	Reactive style of upper administration, change to proactive (seeing things before they occur)	1
<b>Look of Campus/Facilities</b>	add space for more classrooms/offices (Answer #2)	1
	Decoration of SAC	1
	I would do away with the small desks in classes such as Finance.	1
	old equipment that has to be repaired on regularly	1

<b>Category</b>	<b>Aspect to Discontinue</b>	<b>Total</b>
	Quad fountain/Replace	1
	Too many signs in Quad	1
<b>Parking</b>	parking (Answer #2)	1
	Do away with student and faculty parking. It is a waste and causes animosity in students toward faculty and staff.	1
	Parking restrictions	1
	Parking zones for students and faculty	1
	residents not being able to park in A, B,C, D lot until after a certain time.	1
	so many faculty parking (Answer #2)	1
	The parking space that we have. We need more parking spaces	1
<b>Pricing</b>	extremely expensive book prices	1
	High Cost of textbooks (purchase on line)	1
	How expensive the books in the bookstore are compared to other stores and online stores	1
	I would do away with the extremely high cost of textbooks.	1
	Tuition hikes every year	1
<b>Housing</b>	I would do away with the dorm rule that no friend can stay over after 12. I don't live in the dorms, but I think that if they are to be considered a student's home, many rights in a real home should be allowed.	1
	I would not keep the Pacer Downs, it is out dated and it is not as safe as the commons, therefore I would get rid of that.	1
	parking regulations (housing students can't park before 2)	1
	Strict rules	1
<b>Staff/Faculty Divide</b>	Divisions between faculty and staff	1
	faculty vs. staff mentality	1
	Gap between faculty and staff	1
	Separation or division between faculty and staff. Treat groups the same.	1
<b>Smoking</b>	Do away with smoking on campus	1
	Smoking at door entrances	1
	Smoking on campus	1
<b>Student Life</b>	Hostilities between some of the Greek Organizations	1
	Student news emails	1
<b>Workload &amp; Incentives</b>	Salaries	1
	Salary inequities	1
<b>Technology</b>	Cisco Clean Access System	1
	Do away with Technology	1

<b>Category</b>	<b>Aspect to Discontinue</b>	<b>Total</b>
	leadership (in its present state)	
<b>Internal Environ</b>	All negative comments on campus	1



## Appendix: Aspects of USC Aiken to Change or Alter

Category	Aspect to Change	Total	
<b>Academics</b>			
<b>Scheduling</b>	Allow more classes to be taught in consecutive semesters and at evening hours	1	
	Days that classes were scheduled. Have different classes offered at different times in school of business mostly	1	
	Having to go to Spanish classes in the nursing building	1	
	I would have class from every other day to every day but Friday	1	
	More professors teaching the same classes	1	
	Not enough sections for certain classes	1	
	Number of classes offered (ex. More demography) (Answer #2)	1	
	Offer classes at more times	1	
	Offer degrees that you can get totally with night classes	1	
	The class schedules-not have the afternoon and early evenings so cluttered. More morning class offerings.	1	
	weekend classes (Answer #2)	1	
	<b>Add Programs, Faculty</b>	Add more Academic programs	1
		expansion of Grad Programs and expansion of the	1
Fine Arts (visual) program. Increase technology computer memory, internet speed, etc.		1	
I would change the music department to focus on the more technical side.		1	
Keep academics and standards but add more majors - like pre-law program		1	
Large number of adjunct positions, instead hire full-time faculty		1	
<b>Ease Requirements</b>	Offer more majors, also be more involved with the main campus	1	
	Bring in grade switch/swap	1	
	I would change the Probation GPA levels: reduce the GPA requirements for each level	1	
	Less papers to write	1	
	Some of the academic equirements (foreign language and lab hours	1	
	Writing Portfolio requirement for transfer students who have met requirement at former school or state	1	
<b>Advising</b>	Change the way advisors are chosen. I believe theystricker training because sometimes they give bad advice and people end up with longer to graduate, etc	1	
	getting faculty ready for advisement before time- by several days	1	

<b>Teaching Quality</b>	Some of the attitudes of the nursing faculty	1
	Some of the professor's that teach some specific classes get more professor's to teach each course	1
<b>Tighten Requirements</b>	13th grade-more collegiate	1
	AFYS 101 required for 1st-year students (Answer #2)	1
<b>Misc</b>	tenured professors-feeling of job security (prevents possibility of change), staff perceptions	1
<b>Other</b>	Change how USCA's students seem not as united as other college's. May better the relationship between age differences, races, sexes, etc. of students	1
	expand faster/branch away from Columbia Campus	1
	I would change the cost of tuition	1
	I'd either find tasks for these USCA men to work on or let some go because I do not see some do anything.	1
	Include more groups/ organized for non-traditional students	1
	library open more hours	1
	more marketing in local area (Answer #2)	1
	more open environment participating spirit	1
	Perception that USCA is a 2 year "satellite" school	1
	Procedures/Columbia	1
	Public safety	1
	student motivation	1
	The plans to build larger convocation center when one is not necessary. School should focus on lowering costs, not raising them.	1
	the way registration/advisement is handled	1
<b>Student Life</b>	Certain sports	1
	focus on student life/organizations in Orientation (Greek Life, PUB, etc.)	1
	Get a football team	1
	Greek Housing-Have a Greek Colony	1
	I would change the Stall Wall so that it better reflected events on campus; the website gives more information.	1
	Add a football team	1
	increase student engagement opportunities	1
	More emphasis on Greek life and student organizations, and sports	1
	Student Activities	1
	Student body school paper	1
	Student Life on Campus in terms of activities	1
<b>Workload &amp; Incentives</b>	Allow flexibility in work loads-differentials in teaching assignments	1
	decrease course load for	1

	faculty (3/3 instead of 4/4) decrease course load for faculty (3/3 or 3/2) increase staff size (Answer #2) Merit system needed to reward innovation pay for housekeeping and grounds employees reduce teaching load reward teaching more effectively Salaries! Salary levels (bring more in line with "outside world")	1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1
<b>Aramark/Meal Plans</b>	cafeteria food dining services (Answer #2) I would change the food services because Aramark is awful, the food is terrible and as an athlete I think you should have more choices of food. I would put a dining area in the B&E building since it takes to long sometimes to walk to the H&SS or the SAC buildings make some faculty/staff more open to new students ideas/ fire them and meal plan options meal plans-I don't think they should be mandatory for on campus students OR if you must have them make them more flexible the food in the cafeteria (Answer #2) The selection of places were you can eat on campus	1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1
<b>Parking</b>	Add a parking building and more public safety officers I would change the amount of parking available I would have the overflow lot paved More student parking Number of parking spaces Parking Parking Lots (Answer #2) Residents can't park on campus before 2pm	1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1
<b>Pricing</b>	I would change tuition prices lower tuition Price of tuition and housing to make it cheaper to afford prices of books (Answer #2) Prices on books Tuition cost make the tuition include more, but not so costly	1 1 1 1 1 1
<b>Housing</b>	First year live on requirement I would change the furniture in Pacer Downs I would change the living atmosphere	1 1 1

	Increase on campus housing opportunities	1
	Student Options for Pacer Downs	1
<b>Look of Campus/Facilities</b>	add classrooms	1
	Building Design/Color	1
	Change the color in some of the buildings to be more cheerful. These are the last years that the students have to enjoy being young and unprofessional. Make being professional an option while walking the halls.	1
	Change the hang out area in the SAC, providing more couches and big chairs	1
	The B&E Gym	1
<b>Size</b>	Increase enrollment slightly	1
	If I could change one thing it would be to have a larger campus and student body without jeopardizing the small class sizes.	1
	increase enrollment	1
	Increase size of campus (answer #2)	1
	The size, I would want it a little bigger.	1
<b>Governance</b>	faculty structure to senate	1
	Including staff in the decision-making process. (example) Choosing new computer system (IMS) staff who use it on a daily basis.	1
	put more trust in the faculty (most do really good work, don't fault majority for the failure of a few)	1
<b>Mission</b>	emphasis on research/lack of emphasis on teaching	1
	not knowing future USCA plans	1
	the idea that we have a teaching mission translates to "just teach"	1
	We need more scholarships and service.	
<b>Diversity</b>	Focus on diversity	1
	More minority faculty	1
<b>Internal Environment/Community</b>	Faculty/staff barriers (differentiated treatment)	1
	get rid of "ivory tower" attitude some faculty have toward students (Answer #2)	1
<b>Technology</b>	Add on to pre-existing computer lab in B&E to retain at least twice the current level	1
	The amount of bandwidth on campus	1
<b>Smoking</b>	Smoking	1