Perceptions of Administration, Work Load, and Academic and Campus Services at USC Aiken

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Campus Administration

- The Chancellor was viewed very positively
- Communication
  - Area for improvement among senior administrators
  - “They listen but they don’t hear you”
- Organizational structure
  - Less flat
- Implementation
  - Leadership is “reactive rather than proactive”
  - Some leaders are not “champions for their divisions”
Academics & Teaching

- Size & Overall Quality
- Student Abilities and Academic Standards
- Quality of Teaching
- Academic Advising
All participants conceptualized academic quality as related to small class size. “Small” was almost used as a shorthand or proxy for “good.”

When participants mentioned institutional growth, they typically made the qualification that small class size should be maintained.
Student Abilities & Academic Standards

- Faculty and Staff:
  - Critical of student ability levels
  - Critical of grade inflation, esp. in some Departments.

- Students:
  - USCA is hard work, some said harder than Columbia
  - Wanted fewer requirements, out-of-class projects
  - Very critical of Junior Writing Portfolio
Quality of Teaching

- Quality of teaching was source of pride for most faculty and also recognized by students.
- Both groups acknowledged there were some poor teachers on the faculty.
  - Student: 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!”
Academic Advising

- **Students:**
  - Complaints about misinformation in advising sessions.

- **Faculty:**
  - Advising loads are too heavy
  - Support from Advisement Office does not meet faculty needs.
Work Environment

- Faculty and Staff called work environment:
  - Cooperative
  - Collaborative
  - Faculty: “I don’t hear the word ‘no’ a lot”

- Work Load is heavy
  - Staff: more compensation
    (adding staff was also mentioned)
  - Faculty: lighter teaching load, less advising
    (faculty did not once mention salary levels)
Work Environment (cont’)

- The role of research in faculty life:
  - Opinions varied:
    - Some maintained additional research expectations would damage teaching.
    - Others indicated research should have a more prominent role at USCA
  - Most agreed pressure for research came from USC System
  - Most agreed there should be more emphasis on and support for Scholarship of Teaching and Learning.
Campus Services

- Faculty and Staff generally praised availability of wide range of services

- Students praised some services, but offered numerous critiques as well
Aspects to Discontinue

Aspects or Elements of USC Aiken to Discontinue by Category

- Academics
- Aramark/Meal Plans
- Governance
- Look of Campus/Facilities
- Parking
- Pricing
- Housing
- Staff/Faculty Divide
- Smoking
- Student Life
- Workload & Incentives
- Technology
- Other

Percent of Responses

0% 5% 10% 15% 20% 25% 30% 35%

Academics: 30%
Aramark/Meal Plans: 25%
Governance: 10%
Look of Campus/Facilities: 10%
Parking: 10%
Pricing: 10%
Housing: 10%
Staff/Faculty Divide: 10%
Smoking: 5%
Student Life: 5%
Workload & Incentives: 5%
Technology: 5%
Other: 5%
Aspects to Change

Aspects or Elements of USC Aiken to Change

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<th>Aspect</th>
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Campus Services (cont’)

- Positive Characterizations of Services
  - Housing Style
  - Number of Student Activities
  - Grounds/Housekeeping
  - Career Services
Campus Services (cont’)

- Negative Characterizations of Services
  - Housing Rules
  - Parking
  - Dining Services
  - Academic Advising
  - Finance Office
  - Bookstore
  - Coffee Shop
  - Technology