



May 21, 2021

Dr. Sandra J. Jordan
Chancellor
University of South Carolina - Aiken
471 University Parkway
Aiken, SC 29803

Dear Dr. Jordan:

Thank you for submitting the following substantive change:

Substantive change:

**OCIS 50% or More of Program
University of South Carolina Union
309 East Academy Street
Union, SC 29379**

Submission date:

12/15/2020

Intended Implementation date:

8/2/2021

Case ID:

SC012900

Consistent with its mission and strategic plan, the University of South Carolina Aiken (USC Aiken) will offer the existing Bachelor of Science in Nursing (B.S.N.) degree program at the University of South Carolina Union (USC Union), a two-year regional campus of the University of South Carolina. The upper-level courses required in the degree program will be offered at the site and initially a cohort of 16 students will be admitted to the program with a total projected enrollment of 44 students. The primary target audience will be USC Union students who complete all general education classes as pre-nursing students on the USC Union campus and who meet all admission standards for the USC Aiken nursing program. The instructional delivery methods will be both traditional and distance education instruction, with all labs on site and all clinicals in the USC Union area. USC Aiken is approved to offer programs using distance education delivery methods. The program will seek to fill a documented growing need for B.S.N. prepared nurses in the state and particularly in Union County's healthcare system. Further, offering the nursing program on the USC Union campus addresses the state and local needs while eliminating the need for long-distance student travel to clinical sites. Evidence of appropriate planning for the program and documentation of approval by the South Carolina Commission for Higher Education were provided.

The 124 semester credit hour program will consist of a general education core of 55 hours which will be completed by USC Union students enrolled in USC Union classes before the student transfers to USC Aiken. After transferring to USC Aiken, the student will complete 69 semester credit hours of USC Aiken nursing classes offered on the USC Union campus through a combination of distance education and onsite instruction. The majority of courses will be delivered by faculty teaching on the USC Aiken campus using synchronous instruction through livestream classrooms. A new faculty member located at USC Union will



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be trained in high fidelity simulation and will be responsible for running and teaching simulation labs. The faculty member will carry responsibility for onsite proctoring; administering and grading exams in nursing courses; grading papers and other assessments; and administering the ATI (Assessment Technologies Institute) proctored exams with each course in which these exams are embedded. An onsite advisor/program coordinator will communicate directly with the Dean of Nursing at USC Aiken regarding administration of the program at the site.

Qualifications of faculty members who will teach in the program appear appropriate. However, the institution is reminded that final judgment concerning appropriateness of qualifications of faculty members qualifications to teach courses assigned to them rests with SACSCOC evaluators during any review of the institution. The number of faculty members appears adequate to support the program. One faculty member will be located at USC Union and will not be a didactic instructor, but rather will be responsible for the lab portion of each class. An anticipated two hospital-based, adjunct, clinical faculty will also be needed for each clinical course. Clinical adjunct faculty will report to the instructor of record (who will be a full-time faculty member) for each clinical class.

There will be no differences in admission, curriculum, or graduation requirements for students enrolled at the new site and students enrolled at the USC Aiken campus or students enrolled at the approved USC Sumter off-campus instructional site where the program is also offered. The assessment processes at the institution will be used to assess effectiveness at the off-campus site. Programs that include offerings at remote sites or online include assessment of all offerings. Data are reported and examined in both aggregated and disaggregated forms to ensure comparable outcomes.

The USC Aiken library provides 2,945 print volumes in medicine (bound periodicals and print books) including 192 print books specifically addressing nursing topics. The library also provides access to over 4,000 e-books in medicine and over 2,000 e-books in nursing. Students have access to 749 e-journals in Nursing and Allied Health. Fifteen databases with access to relevant material and examples of e-journals were listed. Students also have access to PASCAL which provides access to materials in other academic libraries in South Carolina. Interlibrary loan is available as well. Tutorials and research guides on the use of online resources as well as onsite resources will be available to students. Four reference and instruction librarians are available to assist students via chat, email, or telephone. Students will also have access to USC Union library resources and services. Library patrons have access to the library's computers, study rooms, and faxing, printing, and copying services while on campus. Student feedback on the effectiveness of library orientation and services is assessed in a survey that is given every spring semester. Results of the survey is compiled by the Academic Librarian Liaison and used to improve library services.

An array of academic and student support services will be available to students at the site and online. In addition to resources on the USC Union campus, students will have access to USC Aiken resources and services. Prior to entering the program, students will take UNIV 101 for pre-nursing students. The USC Aiken Center for Student Achievement will provide free tutoring and consultations designed to assist students in improving time management, study skills, organizational skills, and other academic skills. The Center also has an early warning process to alert students to issues that may affect their academic



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performance. Other support services include Peer Mentor Tutors; a Writing Center both in person and online; a Help Desk that will serve as the primary Computer Services point of contact regarding software and access issues; disability services; health and counseling services; admission and registrar services; assistance for veterans and military students; and bookstore services. Students in the program will have the opportunity to identify perceived strengths and weaknesses of support functions through programmatic surveys that occur upon graduation and via a biennial survey of student engagement.

Physical facilities to support the program appear adequate. A new nursing simulation and skills lab will be available at the site. The high fidelity simulation labs provide students an opportunity to make critical decisions and perform patient care on simulation patients. Two live stream multimedia classrooms will be available and will be fully funded by grants. Three live stream rooms are already in operation on the campus along with a wet lab with an additional one to be constructed. A Virtual Reality Lab is in existence with a second one to be added. The USC Union Student Academic Success Center will be available to students in the program along with a computer lab. Computers will also be available in the library, in two computer lab classrooms, and a Virtual Reality computer lab in the Science and Nursing Building.

Financial resources appear adequate to support the program. Costs and revenues were provided. Financing includes tuition and fees collected from new students. Reallocation of existing funds include private monies and pre-nursing revenue. The Union County Healthcare Foundation has donated \$25,000 toward the nursing program and USC Union has received a \$750,000 gift. The University is not on reimbursement for Title IV funding and is not on any sanction by SACSCOC for financial reasons.

Because the University currently has only two approved off campus instructional sites, I am authorizing a Substantive Change Committee to visit the site within six months after the August 2021 implementation to determine continued compliance with the *Principles of Accreditation*. In preparation for the visit, the institution will prepare and submit Documentation for the Substantive Change Committee, due six weeks prior to the visit. Templates are available on the SACSCOC website on the list of Institutional Resources under the Accreditation section. Note that there are different templates for different types of substantive change. Your staff representative, Dr. Denise Young, will assist you with preparations for the visit.

The Board of Trustees of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges reviewed the materials seeking approval of the University of South Carolina Union off-campus instructional site (OCIS). It was the decision of the Board to approve the site and include it in the scope of accreditation. A Substantive Change Committee Visit is authorized.

Enclosed is an invoice for \$500 to help defray the cost of reviewing the prospectus.

Should you need assistance, please contact Dr. Denise Y. Young at 404-679-4501 or via email at dyoung@sacscoc.org.

Please include the Case ID number above in all submissions or correspondence about this substantive change.



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Note: The SACSCOC substantive change policy was revised in 2020. It includes many new requirements and changes to previous requirements. The Substantive Change Policy and Procedures and learning resources are available on the substantive change webpage at www.sacscoc.org.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Belle S. Wheelan".

Belle S. Wheelan, Ph.D.
President

BSW/ABC:lp

Enclosure (invoice with liaison's copy only)

cc: Dr. Lloyd A. Dawe, Director of Institutional Effectiveness
Dr. Denise Y. Young