Office of Institutional Effectiveness

Mission

The mission of the Office of Institutional Effectiveness is to support and sustain university-wide continuous improvement efforts at the University of South Carolina Beaufort. This will be accomplished by using relevant and appropriate information to support assessment, informed decision making, and policy formation. Continuous improvement efforts at the University will be sustained through ongoing, comprehensive and integrated planning related to the direction and expected outcomes of our academic programs, support services and intellectual capital.

The Office of Institutional Effectiveness will:

- Facilitate USCB’s strategic planning and assessment initiatives with emphasis on supporting USCB’s mission and the South Carolina Commission on Higher Education performance indicators;

- Assist with the identification of key indicators of performance related to the strategic plan, academic programs, and academic support units; and,

- Facilitate all aspects related to accreditation including standards compliance, applications, reviews, and self-evaluation documents.
Preface

The USCB Institutional Effectiveness Manual is a reference document for the educational programs and the administrative and educational support units of the University. The purpose of this manual is to explain the planning and evaluation process at the University. It is intended to assist the educational programs and the support units in developing and implementing institutional planning effectiveness plans and using the results of outcomes assessment to improve the educational programs and services of the institution.

Additional information is provided by the Office of Institutional Effectiveness and Academic Planning. Contact Ann Bowles at abowles@gwm.sc.edu or by phone at 843-521-3137.

(Revised: January 2004)
# Institutional Effectiveness Manual

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INSTITUTIONAL EFFECTIVENESS MANUAL

SECTION ONE

INTRODUCTION
Introduction

USCB has a long history of planning and assessment. Ongoing and systematic assessment is vital to the University’s continuous improvement initiatives, and is critical in demonstrating the quality of the institution to the community and to external agents such as the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools.

Planning, assessment, and improvement at USCB are a shared responsibility. The University has implemented an institutional effectiveness cycle which has a series of activities and a timeline to ensure a continuous planning process and a feedback loop in regard to the desired outcomes of its educational programs and its administrative and educational support services. Annually the Planning Council reviews assessment data in relation to defined outcomes to determine progress, to identify changes that must be considered for the upcoming year, and to make recommendations, including those with budget implications, to the Chancellor of the University. The results of an institutional analysis whereby the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats of the University are identified are discussed at an annual planning retreat of the Administrative Council. The results of the analysis form the basis for the development and revision of the strategic goals and objectives of the University.

USCB’s planning and assessment process is broad-based, systematic, and appropriate to the institution. The process itself has been evaluated as the University prepared for separate accreditation as a four-year institution. With input from all units of the University, the process continues to evolve with the primary goal of serving students in the region of the Lowcountry by continuously improving its educational programs and support services.
INSTITUTIONAL EFFECTIVENESS MANUAL

SECTION TWO

USCB MISSION AND GOALS
Mission

The University of South Carolina Beaufort, a small senior campus of the state's largest public university, brings the University of South Carolina's statewide mission of teaching, research, scholarship, and public service to the rapidly growing Lowcountry of South Carolina. USCB offers baccalaureate degrees that respond to regional needs, draw upon regional strengths, and prepare graduates to participate successfully in communities here and around the globe. The campus also supports the USC Extended Graduate Campus, which provides local access to graduate courses and programs.

USCB offers programs in mathematics and the natural sciences, humanities, and professional and social sciences. Its curriculum is designed to promote acquisition of knowledge and, through it, the intellectual dispositions and skills that encourage depth of understanding, tolerance of others and individual accountability. Attracting a racially and culturally diverse student body of varying ages and experiences, the University of South Carolina Beaufort draws its students primarily from the South Carolina Lowcountry, with representation from other parts of the state, other states, and foreign countries. The University encourages students to think analytically and abstractly, to explore options, to see similarities, to be open to differences, to communicate effectively, and to respect each individual.

The major intellectual and cultural center for the region, the University enriches the quality of life for area residents of all ages through presentations of the performing and fine arts, community service, symposia, research initiatives, and partnerships with area schools, businesses and organizations.

(Approved by the Board of Trustees, February 8, 2002)
USCB Goals

1. Offer undergraduate degrees to meet the needs of the student population.

2. Provide education in the major area which prepares the student for more advanced study and/or for employment in the field.

3. Provide a learning environment that promotes the acquisition of knowledge and the development of skills that demonstrate depth of understanding, tolerance, accountability, and a commitment to diversity.

4. Place value on quality of undergraduate education and an atmosphere of collegial support through the appropriate allocation of resources.

5. Emphasize quality teaching and provide appropriate faculty-development resources to support teaching excellence.

6. Emphasize research as an integral part of teaching in all academic areas of the University.

7. Provide student development services and programs that assist students in achieving educational, career, and personal goals.

8. Emphasize quality service and programs and provide appropriate staff development resources.

9. Provide the appropriate resources and library and information technology services in support of teaching, research, scholarship, and public service.

10. Provide individuals with opportunities for lifelong learning and cultural enrichment.

11. Develop and maintain partnerships with other entities to better serve the educational needs of the geographic region.

12. Demonstrate the accomplishment of the mission of the University and continuous improvement in its educational programs and services.
INSTITUTIONAL EFFECTIVENESS MANUAL

SECTION THREE

INSTITUTIONAL EFFECTIVENESS AND STRATEGIC PLANNING PROCESS
Institutional Effectiveness and Strategic Planning Framework/Process

Phase I Analysis and Input Process

- There is University-wide analysis and input by all areas of the University through responses to surveys and/or questionnaires or by other means (SWOT Analysis).

- Key performance areas (Academic Affairs, Student Development, Finance and Budget, Advancement, Grants and Government Relations, Community Partnerships, and Planning and Construction) analyze and/or identify:
  - The strengths and weaknesses of the internal environment of the University that includes organizational performance and organizational design;
  - The political, economic, sociological, and technological forces of the external environment;
  - The stakeholders of the University;
  - The University’s competition; and
  - Resources of the University.

- The Director of Institutional Effectiveness and Academic Planning compiles and analyzes the data from the University-wide input.

- The Administrative Council Retreat is held to discuss results of the data analysis.

Phase II University-Wide Plan

- Strategic goals and objectives are developed and/or revised for the Strategic Plan of the University.

Phase III Enabling/Unit Plans and IE Plans

- Enabling/Unit Plans to accomplish the Strategic Plan are written by the key performance areas (Academic Affairs, Student Development, Finance and Budget, Advancement, Grants and Government Relations, Community Partnerships, and Planning and Construction).

- The Chancellor reviews the Enabling/Unit Plans.

- Educational Programs and Administrative Support Services develop Institutional Effective Plans that include intended outcomes, assessment strategies, measures, and criteria.

- Academic Program Reviews are conducted according to schedule.
Phase IV Plan Implementation and Evaluation of Progress

- Institutional Effectiveness Plans are implemented.

- The Planning Council reviews the results of the Institutional Effectiveness Plans and Outcomes Assessment Reports and the results of the Academic Program Review(s).

- The Planning Council makes recommendations regarding the results of the Institutional Effectiveness Plans and Outcomes Assessment Reports and submits them to the Chancellor who then submits those with budget implications to the Budget Committee.

- The Planning Council makes recommendations regarding Academic Program Review and submits them to the chair of the Academic Program Review Committee.
# Institutional Effectiveness/Planning/Budgeting Timeline

## 2003-2004

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<th>Timeline</th>
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| **January – February ‘03** | Phase I: Analysis and Input Process  
Key Performance Areas conduct University-wide analysis of: strengths and weaknesses of organizational performance and design; the political, economic, sociological, and technological forces of the external environment; and, resources. |
| **March ‘03** | Phase I continues with the compilation and analysis of input. |
| **April ‘03** | Phase I continues with the Administrative Council Planning Retreat. |
| **May – November ‘03** | Phase II. Strategic goals and objectives are developed and/or revised with University-wide input. |
| **November ‘03** | The Strategic Plan 2003-2008 is approved by the University. |
| **November – Dec ‘03** | Phase III. Enabling/Unit Plans are developed by the Key Performance Areas. Educational Programs and Administrative/Educational Support Services Units develop Annual Institutional Effectiveness Plans that include intended outcomes, assessment strategies, measures, and criteria for 2003-2004. |
| **December ‘03** | Phase III continues with the review of Enabling/Unit Plans by the Chancellor. |
| **December ‘03** | Phase IV: Evaluation of Progress. The Planning Council meets to review the 2003-2004 Institutional Effectiveness Plans and the 2003-2008 Strategic Plan. The Planning Council reviews the results of the 2002-2003 Outcomes Assessment Reports for their impact upon the University and makes recommendations, including those with budget implications, to the Chancellor. |
| **December ’03 – July ‘04** | Phase IV. Implementation of 2003-2004 Institutional Effectiveness Plans |
| **January – February ‘04** | Phase I: Analysis and Input Process |
| **March ‘04** | Phase I continues with the compilation and analysis of input. |
| **April ‘04** | Phase I continues with the Administrative Council Retreat |
| **April ‘04** | Phase II. Strategic goals and objectives are developed and/or revised by the Planning Council. |
| **May ‘04** | The Strategic Plan 2004-2009 is approved by the Chancellor, Administration, and the Faculty.  
Phase III. Enabling/Unit Plans are developed and/or revised by Key Performance Areas for 2004-2005. |
| **June ‘04** | The Planning Council considers the results of the Institutional Effectiveness |
### Institutional Effectiveness/Planning/Budgeting Timeline 2004-2005

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<td>June '04</td>
<td>The Planning Council considers the results of the Institutional Effectiveness Plans and Outcomes Assessment Reports for 2003-2004 for their impact upon the University and makes recommendations, including those with budget implications, to the Chancellor.</td>
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**Budget Cycle** (See following page)
Budget Policy and Procedures

The USCB budget process is based on translating strategic planning priorities into financial resources. The budget is a collaborative effort of the members of the Chancellor’s Administrative Council and the Budget Committee. The guiding budget philosophy is to allocate as many funds possible to the academic areas of instruction, academic support, and the library to most directly serve the students and the faculty.

Allocations to programs are not made with strict percentages. The Planning Council and each fund administrator provide ranked requests for additional funding. The requests are then reviewed by the supervisor. This process allows the University to gain maximum results from limited funds available. The budget planning process, procedures, and cycle are evaluated annually by the Chancellor’s Administrative Council.

Budget Cycle (Calendar)

September – October  
A preliminary base budget for the following year is prepared by the Vice Chancellor for Finance using expected MRR and fee revenue, annualizations of current year expenditures, and known fixed costs.

December – January  
Recommendations from the Planning Council are reviewed and considered by the Budget Committee. The Budget Committee prepares instructions for the department heads to assist them in developing their budget for the following fiscal year. Department prepare prioritized increase requests based on the coming year’s strategic plan objectives and review of the prior year outcomes.

February – May  
The budget is refined using current projections of appropriations amounts and prioritizing of personnel, equipment, and operating fund increase requests on a University-wide basis by the Budget Committee.

May  
Tuition and fee requests are prepared and forwarded to the President for approval by the Board of Trustees. The proposed budget for the next fiscal year is forwarded to the President for approval by the Board of Trustees.

June  
Next year’s fiscal budget is finalized when the appropriations bill is passed by the legislature.

July  
Departments are authorized to commit expenditures of current operating budgets. The current year line item budget is uploaded in the on-line accounting system.

October – November  
The current year budget is reviewed and adjusted for spring enrollment and fixed cost expenditures. Additional revenues (if any) are allocated by the Budget Committee. Should shortfalls occur, the Budget Committee gives input to the Chancellor as to where expense reductions should be made.

March – April  
The current fiscal year budget is reviewed for spring enrollment and fixed cost expenditures. Additional revenues (if any) are allocated by the Chancellor’s Administrative Council. Should budget shortfalls occur, the Council gives input to the Chancellor as to where expense reductions should be made.

April  
All significant expenditures for the fiscal years should be committed by April 15. Failure to do this may jeopardize the receipt of goods and payment of the invoice prior to the end of the year. Final months’ expenditures are monitored by the Business Office.

The members of the Chancellor’s Administrative Council receive monthly computer printouts of budgets and expenditures for their own departments, as well as for anyone under their supervision. The Vice Chancellor for Finance updates the Council on a quarterly basis of the overall budget revenue and expenditure picture as well as any specific budget items of concern.
INSTITUTIONAL EFFECTIVENESS MANUAL

SECTION FOUR

PLANNING AND OUTCOMES ASSESSMENT
### Institutional Effectiveness Plan and Outcomes Assessment

#### ANNUAL REPORT

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USCB
Planning Units

1. Division of Social and Professional Studies – Rick Boulware
2. Division of Humanities – Sheila Tombe
3. Division of Science and Math – Gordon Sproul
4. AA, AS, General Education – Carl Eby
5. BS in Business with a Concentration in Management – Dean Cleavenger
6. BA in Early Childhood Education – Belinda Eggen
7. BA in English – Sheila Tombe
8. BS in Hospitality Management – Charlie Calvert
11. Academic Affairs – Rayburn Barton
12. Information Technology – Troy Travis
13. Library – Ellen Chamberlain
14. Environmental Science – Alan Warren
15. Institutional Effectiveness – Ann Bowles
16. Student Development – Joan Lemoine
17. Financial Aid – Joan Lemoine
18. Military Programs – Joan Lemoine/Melissa Hibbs
19. Registrar – Mary-David Fox
20. Admissions – Tinker Folsom
21. Academic Success Center – Gay Birnbaum
22. Hilton Head – Robert Hohman
23. Opportunity Scholars Program – Aaron Marterer
24. Finance and Business Office – Leslie Brunelli
25. Bursar (Accounts Receivable) – Leslie Brunelli (Karen Thomas)
26. Human Resources – Leslie Brunelli (Amanda Hayman)
27. Bookstore – Leslie Brunelli (Linda Mack)
28. Advancement – Lila Meeks
29. Community Partnerships – Marge Yanker
30. The Learning Exchange (aka Creative Retirement Center) – Marge Yanker
31. Pritchards Island/Center for Coastal Ecology – Marge Yanker
32. Continuing Education – Marge Yanker
33. Grants – Gail Quick
34. Government Relations – Gail Quick
35. USCB/Penn Center Partnership and Early Childhood Initiative – Sally LaPoint
36. USCB/Jasper County School District Partnership – Maryellen Ham
37. Planning and Construction – Leslie Brunelli (Ed Bass)
38. Facilities – Leslie Brunelli (Ed Bass)
Conditions for Effective Planning and Evaluation Processes
SACS Resource Manual on Institutional Effectiveness

The following self-assessment items address conditions which are likely to facilitate the effectiveness of institutional planning and evaluation processes.

- Expressed leadership and support from the chief executive officer is evident.
- Appropriate staff expertise is available in planning and evaluation.
- Appropriate fiscal support is provided for planning, evaluation, and institutional research.
- Plans identify major issues and priorities for the institution.
- Plans are based upon ongoing assessment of the external environment, internal factors, and institutional abilities.
- Well-written procedures and schedules have been developed.
- Integration of major institutional processes is emphasized (e.g., results of assessment, personnel evaluation, program review, etc., provide input for planning.)
- Planning/evaluation processes are coordinated with external entities/demands (e.g., state-level planning and budgeting, federal reports, accreditation processes, etc.)
- Procedures are established for monitoring progress and implementing appropriate modification within the planning/evaluation cycle.
- Procedures are established for annual update of plans, incorporating assessment results into plans for institutional improvement.
- Clear linkages are established between institutional goals, plans, and the allocation of resources.
- Planning and evaluation procedures take into account the Core Requirements and the Comprehensive Standards of the Principles of Accreditation: Foundations for Quality Improvement that apply to each functional area of the institution.
- Outcomes of assessment are “fed back” to decision makers.
- Clear and explicit goals (also called objectives, desired outcomes, and/or expected results) are formulated for each functional unit of the institution.
- Emphasis is placed on the identification of specific educational goals/outcomes.
- Provisions are made for broad-based involvement of faculty members and administrators in the development and implementation of planning and evaluation processes.
Inventory of Assessment Measures
SACS Resource Manual on Institutional Effectiveness

Much of the data that can be used for assessment in an institution’s planning and evaluation process are already available since most institutions collect large volumes of data for routine reports and for special purposes. Such data may be dispersed throughout the institution, having been collected by diverse units at different times and for greatly varying purposes.

The following inventory may be helpful to you as you determine how to assess intended academic program outcomes, student outcomes in both academic programs and courses, and administrative and educational support unit intended outcomes.

**Institutional surveys and studies**
- Entering student surveys
- Non-returning student surveys
- Exit interview
- Graduate/completer surveys
- Faculty/staff surveys
- Retention/attrition studies
- Student demographic studies
- Transfer studies
- Placement studies
- Employer opinion surveys
- Program/course evaluations
- Self-study reports
- Special committee reports
- Alumni surveys
- Community needs assessments
- Labor market surveys

**Studies of student performance**
- On admissions and/or achievement tests
- In credit courses, internships, competitions, etc.
- After transfer
- In graduate school
- In jobs related to area of study
- On standardized or locally constructed exams
- On pre-or post-tests
- On licensure examinations
Routine reports and publications
- Enrollment reports
- Course schedules
- Financial reports
- Audit report
- IPEDS (HEGIS) reports
- Reports for government offices/agencies (student financial aid, veterans’ programs, etc.)

Reports or studies by other organizations
- Chamber of Commerce
- Utility companies
- Newspaper research offices
- Trade associations
- Census Bureau
- Employment offices
- State education agencies
- University research projects
- Program review and personnel evaluations
- Advisory committee recommendations
- Governing board directives
- Formal hearings
- Informal hearings
Guidelines for Assessment

Educational (Academic) Programs

- Assessment works best when the educational (academic) program it seeks to improve has a clear and explicitly stated purpose.

- The assessment of student learning begins with educational values.

- Assessment is most effective when it reflects an understanding of learning as multidimensional, integrated, and revealed in performance over time.

- Assessment requires attention to outcomes; however, the learning experiences that lead to the intended (desired) outcomes require equal attention.

- Academic programs must identify what it is that a student must know or be able to do upon graduation from the degree program (student learning outcomes). An academic program also has operational or programmatic outcomes. For example, an intended operational/program intended outcome might be to acquire accreditation within a certain period after implementation of the degree program. Some researchers write that intended outcomes are all student outcomes for an academic program.

- It is suggested in a recent SACS publication developed to accompany the Principles of Accreditation: Foundations for Quality Enhancement that supporting documentation needed when an institution is being reviewed for accreditation (or reaffirmation of accreditation) include:
  - Documents listing expected outcomes (program and student learning outcomes) for all educational programs along with assessment procedures;
  - Evidence that learning outcomes (student) and program outcomes are evaluated and achieved.

- Assessment is most effective when it is ongoing, and not episodic or sporadic to meet accreditation requirements.

- Assessment promotes wider improvement when various individuals representing the educational community are involved.

- Assessment at all levels of the institution – from the mission statement to the divisional level to the program level and to the course level – is most likely to lead to improvement when it is part a larger set of conditions that promote change, such as an implemented strategic plan developed in relation to the university-wide goals that operationalize the mission statement of the university.
It is through assessment and using the results of it for improvement that educators make themselves accountable to students, to the university, and to the public.

The process of institutional effectiveness (planning and evaluating/assessing to determine the achievement of an institution’s mission) is:

1. Setting goals (intended outcomes);
2. Identifying at what level (criteria) the goal is to be achieved;
3. Assessing by already identified measures and procedures that the goal/intended outcome has been achieved;
4. Analyzing the data; and
5. Using the result for improvement.

The institutional effectiveness process is most effective when assessment is undertaken in an environment that is accepting, supportive, and enabling.
Guidelines for Assessment
*Administrative and Educational Support Units*

- Assessment works best when the unit it seeks to improve has a clear and explicitly stated mission or purpose statement.

- Assessment is ongoing, and not episodic or sporadic to meet accreditation requirements.

- Assessment at all levels of the institution is most likely to lead to improvement when it is part of a larger set of conditions that promote change, such as an implemented strategic plan developed in relation to the university-wide goals that “operationalize” the mission statement of the university.

- It is through assessment and using the results of it for improvement that administrators and staff make themselves accountable to students, to the university, and to the public.

- Assessment produces the data or evidence required to consider the current quality of what a unit is doing.

- The process of institutional effectiveness (planning and evaluating/assessing to determine the achievement of an institution’s mission) is:
  1. Setting goals (intended outcomes);
  2. Identifying at what level (criteria) the goal is to be achieved;
  3. Assessing by identified measures and procedures that the goal/intended outcome has been achieved;
  4. Analyzing the data; and,
  5. Using the results for improvement.

- The institutional effectiveness process is most effective when assessment is undertaken in an environment that is accepting, supportive, and enabling.

- All of the individuals in a unit should be involved in the development of institutional effectiveness plans.

- Intended outcomes (goals) must be linked to the mission and goals of the institution and/or the strategic plan of the institution (which is linked to the mission and goals of the institution).

- Assessment is not an end in itself but a vehicle for improvement.

- SACS validates institutional effectiveness by evaluating the modifications (improvements) an institution makes to its processes in response to data gathered about outcomes.
Developing Outcomes for Annual Institutional Effectiveness Plans and Outcomes Assessment Reports

Educational Programs

- The identified outcomes to be assessed on an annual basis are derived from the on-going student learning and academic program outcomes.

- For academic units, the most important component of institutional effectiveness is an annual student learning outcomes assessment process.

- About three (and no more than five) intended outcomes related to student learning are identified and measured annually and the results considered for program improvement. Other intended outcomes, however, can be derived from the assessments of these annual ones and may lead into the next year's institutional plan (intended outcome and assessment).

- Identified outcomes must be measurable or ascertainable, and at least one or two assessment methods should be done for each identified outcome.

- Each assessment method for an identified outcome should specify an expectation of the desirable level of performance (criteria).

- The desirable level of performance should be realistic, and not unreasonably high or low.

- The majority of the faculty in an academic/educational program must actively participate in developing the identified outcomes (expected results).

Examples

1. *Intended Outcome*: Graduating seniors will demonstrate a broad-based knowledge of research design. (Student Outcome) *Assessment Strategies/Measures/Criteria*: 90% of seniors complete the Senior Comprehensive Exam with a score of at least 75% on the research design component.

2. *Intended Outcome*: Faculty are active scholars. (Academic Program Outcome) *Assessment Strategies/Measures/Criteria*: 85% of the faculty in the BA with a Major in English Program will average “X” articles published in professional peer-reviewed publications per (time frame).
Developing Outcomes for Annual Institutional Effectiveness Plans and Outcomes Assessment Reports

Educational and Administrative Support Services Units

- Assess only three to five outcomes on a yearly basis. The identified outcomes should capture the primary goals of a unit.

- Intended outcomes must be related to the Mission and Goals of the University and/or the Strategic Plan.

- The intended outcomes should include at least one that refers to customer satisfaction where applicable.

- Intended outcomes must be measurable and ascertainable, and it is suggested that at least two assessment measures should be identified for each intended outcome.

- Each assessment measure or method for an intended outcome should specify an expectation of the desirable level (criteria) of performance.

- The desirable level (criteria) should be realistic and not unreasonably high or low.

- All members of a unit should play an active role in developing institutional effectiveness plans and outcomes assessment reports.

Examples

*Intended Outcome:* The Career Center provides job information that meets the needs of graduating students.

*Administrative Strategies/Measures/Criteria:* 90% of students completing a survey at the close of a job search strategy workshop will “agree” or “strongly agree” with the statement: “This workshop provided clear, useful advice in the job search.”

*Intended Outcome:* Increase development activity by contacting and soliciting gifts for the major campaign.

*Administrative Strategies/Measures/Criteria:* “X” amount will be raised during the 2003-2004 academic year. Ten major solicitations will be requested.
9 Principles of Good Practice for Assessing Student Learning*

1. **The assessment of student learning begins with educational values.** Assessment is not an end in itself but a vehicle for educational improvement. Its effective practice, then, begins with and enacts a vision of the kinds of learning we most value for students and strive to help them achieve. Educational values should drive not only *what* we choose to assess but also *how* we do so. Where questions about educational mission and values are skipped over, assessment threatens to be an exercise in measuring what's easy, rather than a process of improving what we really care about.

2. **Assessment is most effective when it reflects an understanding of learning as multidimensional, integrated, and revealed in performance over time.** Learning is a complex process. It entails not only what students know but what they can do with what they know; it involves not only knowledge and abilities but values, attitudes, and habits of mind that affect both academic success and performance beyond the classroom. Assessment should reflect these understandings by employing a diverse array of methods, including those that call for actual performance, using them over time so as to reveal change, growth, and increasing degrees of integration. Such an approach aims for a more complete and accurate picture of learning, and therefore firmer bases for improving our students' educational experience.

3. **Assessment works best when the programs it seeks to improve have clear, explicitly stated purposes.** Assessment is a goal-oriented process. It entails comparing educational performance with educational purposes and expectations -- those derived from the institution's mission, from faculty intentions in program and course design, and from knowledge of students' own goals. Where program purposes lack specificity or agreement, assessment as a process pushes a campus toward clarity about where to aim and what standards to apply; assessment also prompts attention to where and how program goals will be taught and learned. Clear, shared, implementable goals are the cornerstone for assessment that is focused and useful.

4. **Assessment requires attention to outcomes but also and equally to the experiences that lead to those outcomes.** Information about outcomes is of high importance; where students "end up" matters greatly. But to improve outcomes, we need to know about student experience along the way -- about the curricula, teaching, and kind of student effort that lead to particular outcomes. Assessment can help us understand which students learn best under what conditions; with such knowledge comes the capacity to improve the whole of their learning.

5. **Assessment works best when it is ongoing not episodic.** Assessment is a process whose power is cumulative. Though isolated, "one-shot" assessment can be better than none, improvement is best fostered when assessment entails a linked series of activities undertaken over time. This may mean tracking the process of individual students, or of cohorts of students; it may mean collecting the same examples of student performance or using the same instrument semester after semester. The point is to monitor progress toward intended goals in a spirit of continuous improvement. Along the way, the assessment process itself should be evaluated and refined in light of emerging insights.
6. **Assessment fosters wider improvement when representatives from across the educational community are involved.** Student learning is a campus-wide responsibility, and assessment is a way of enacting that responsibility. Thus, while assessment efforts may start small, the aim over time is to involve people from across the educational community. Faculty play an especially important role, but assessment's questions can't be fully addressed without participation by student-affairs educators, librarians, administrators, and students. Assessment may also involve individuals from beyond the campus (alumni/ae, trustees, employers) whose experience can enrich the sense of appropriate aims and standards for learning. Thus understood, assessment is not a task for small groups of experts but a collaborative activity; its aim is wider, better-informed attention to student learning by all parties with a stake in its improvement.

7. **Assessment makes a difference when it begins with issues of use and illuminates questions that people really care about.** Assessment recognizes the value of information in the process of improvement. But to be useful, information must be connected to issues or questions that people really care about. This implies assessment approaches that produce evidence that relevant parties will find credible, suggestive, and applicable to decisions that need to be made. It means thinking in advance about how the information will be used, and by whom. The point of assessment is not to gather data and return "results"; it is a process that starts with the questions of decision-makers, that involves them in the gathering and interpreting of data, and that informs and helps guide continuous improvement.

8. **Assessment is most likely to lead to improvement when it is part of a larger set of conditions that promote change.** Assessment alone changes little. Its greatest contribution comes on campuses where the quality of teaching and learning is visibly valued and worked at. On such campuses, the push to improve educational performance is a visible and primary goal of leadership; improving the quality of undergraduate education is central to the institution’s planning, budgeting, and personnel decisions. On such campuses, information about learning outcomes is seen as an integral part of decision making, and avidly sought.

9. **Through assessment, educators meet responsibilities to students and to the public.** There is a compelling public stake in education. As educators, we have a responsibility to the publics that support or depend on us to provide information about the ways in which our students meet goals and expectations. But that responsibility goes beyond the reporting of such information; our deeper obligation -- to ourselves, our students, and society -- is to improve. Those to whom educators are accountable have a corresponding obligation to support such attempts at improvement.

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Guidelines for Completing the Institutional Effectiveness Plan and Outcomes Assessment Annual Reports

2002-2003
2003-2004

These forms are to be filled in by all USCB faculty and staff with program responsibilities. They are annual reports, so each of you should be submitting one (retrospectively) for 2002-2003 and one (currently) for 2003-2004.

The 2002-2003 Report

In this report, all columns should be filled in. Remember what you accomplished last year, and go from there.

Column 1: Identified Outcomes
These are general, long-term goals that do not change from year to year. You may list all of your goals for all of your activities if you wish, but you should only be assessing 2 or 3 of them each year. Since this is an annual plan, think in terms of making progress toward your goals, rather than meeting them.

Column 2: Assessment Strategies/Measures/Criteria
Describe how you intend to measure progress overall toward realizing each goal. Your assessment strategies must be relevant to USCB’s mission. They should be time specific, quantifiable, and measurable. This is where you put in the numbers, i.e., X% increase, etc. If you are asking for additional hires, explain and justify your request.

Column 3: Realized Outcomes
These are the actual results from Column 2. What did you find out?

Column 4: Schedule for Reporting Outcomes
Think about this. How often do you need to assess/measure progress toward this goal?

Column 5: How Results Are to be Used for Program Improvement
OK, you had a goal, you assessed and measured activities relating to this goal, you got some results – now, how is the information you acquired going to help improve your program? What kind of use are you going to make of it?

Column 6: Actual Use Made of Results
Well, did you make use of it? If so, how? What did you do?
The 2003-2004 Report

In this report, only Columns 1, 2, and 4 should be filled in now. The rest will be filled in at the end of the academic year.

Column 1: Identified Outcomes
Goals will probably remain the same. If you list them all, you will need to decide which ones you are going to target this year.

Column 2: Assessment Strategies/Measures/Criteria
Some of these assessment measures may change, some may stay the same. If you are assessing a new area, the measures will be new as well.

Column 3:
Leave blank for now.

Column 4:
Think about it and fill in this column.

Column 5:
Leave blank for now.

Column 6:
Leave blank for now.

(Guidelines developed by Ellen Chamberlain, Director of the Library, Fall 2003)
INSTITUTIONAL EFFECTIVENESS MANUAL

SECTION FIVE

STRATEGIC PLAN 2003 - 2008
Strategic Plan  
2003-2008

Vision

Located in the southernmost quarter of South Carolina, the University of South Carolina Beaufort has brought associate degree programs to area residents for over 40 years. Now serving the most rapidly growing region of the state, we seek to respond to a broader spectrum of critical educational needs and interests of our citizens by becoming the region’s first baccalaureate degree-granting institution.

Recognizing teaching as its primary function, USC Beaufort recruits and continuously develops highly qualified faculty members with current content knowledge, outstanding instructional skills, and a student-centered philosophy of education.

USC Beaufort, through its dedicated professional administration, faculty and staff, seeks to provide a learning environment, which is technologically current, supportive of students with diverse interests and abilities, and dedicated to student success.

This institution also strongly supports the study and appreciation of the area’s unique geography, ecology, history and culture. As this region grows in population and complexity, USC Beaufort will be the primary resource for the intellectual, social, cultural and economic life of the region.

GOAL I: Strengthen and expand academic offerings.
GOAL II: Expand and strengthen student support services.
GOAL III: Expand and diversify the student population.
GOAL IV: Support scholarship and the pedagogy of the faculty.
GOAL V: Provide an environment conducive to teaching and learning.
GOAL VI: Broaden community awareness and support.
GOAL VII: Develop appropriate partnerships that support the University’s mission.
GOAL VIII: Evaluate annually the University’s progress toward attaining its goals, objectives, strategies, and tactics.
GOAL IX: Strengthen planning, budget, and assessment.
GOAL X: Attain appropriate accreditations.
GOAL I: STRENGTHEN AND EXPAND ACADEMIC OFFERINGS

Objective: Develop and implement degree programs to meet baccalaureate-level needs of the region.

Strategies
1. Identify and adapt those baccalaureate degrees for which a strong needs-based case can best be made and for which USCB can most reasonably provide the necessary infrastructure.
   - Collect statistical evidence regarding student enrollment patterns in existing baccalaureate degree programs.
   - Review USCB’s common general education curriculum to determine if it fully supports all baccalaureate degree programs presently offered through other campuses.
   - Develop program-specific upper-level course requirements for each degree program.

2. Obtain funding to increase USCB salaries and academic support budgets to four-year degree-granting, public institutions’ averages.
   - Identify, seek, and secure grants to support increases in academic support funding.
   - Increase faculty endowments.
   - Increase salaries through a combination of local and state funding sources.

3. Provide an academic infrastructure for a baccalaureate degree-granting campus.
   - Structure faculty and staff organization to accommodate baccalaureate status.
   - Recruit and hire qualified faculty sufficient to offer baccalaureate degree programs.
   - Identify and hire sufficient support staff for baccalaureate degree programs.
   - Evaluate and provide sufficient databases and other electronic resources which support the baccalaureate degree programs offered by USCB.
   - Procure adequate educational equipment and materials to support all courses in the baccalaureate degree programs.
   - Develop meaningful incentives and support for faculty research.
   - Establish institutional priorities for teaching, research and service.

4. Establish policies and procedures that support additional baccalaureate programs.

Objective: Develop the general education core of course offerings sufficiently broad to provide the basic courses for students who plan to transfer.

Objective: Establish institutes which support study and research in fields specifically appropriate to this region.
GOAL II: EXPAND AND STRENGTHEN STUDENT SUPPORT SERVICES

Objective: Provide high quality and accessible student support services, with extended office hours.

Strategies
1. Examine the organizational structure of Student Services to determine most effective utilization of personnel.
   - Hire a full-time staff member in the Financial Aid Office to assist students with procedures associated specifically with FAFSA process and to serve as a liaison to area high schools.
   - Study the organizational structure of Student Services at various baccalaureate institutions.

2. Establish a full-time, permanently staffed Advisement Center to operate year round.
   - Examine and/or visit comparable campuses with Advisement Centers.
   - Develop referral service arrangements with community mental health individuals and organizations for students in need of personal counseling.

3. Broaden the scope and availability of academic support services.
   - Increase the availability of academic support services at the Hilton Head campus.
   - Hire/train appropriate personnel to provide these additional services.

Objective: Provide a more student-friendly enrollment and registration process.

Strategy
Strengthen the interrelationships between admissions, registration, and financial aid to create a unified process for students.

Objective: Enhance student retention by offering career planning and placement services.

Strategy
Establish a career planning/placement office.

Objective: Increase and strengthen connectedness among students, faculty, and staff.

Strategies
1. Offer campus-wide activities involving students, faculty, and staff.
   - Offer convocations at the beginnings of each semester.
• Study other campuses offering convocations to determine their structure and strategies for participation and effectiveness.
• Re-examine the Orientation programs to include more faculty and staff participation.

2. Survey the student population to determine the interests and needs of students as related to extra-curricular activities.
• Enhance the presence of student clubs and activities, both on campus and on the USCB Web site, and survey the student population to determine the extra-curricular needs and interests of the students.

3. Supplement the process of collecting feedback from students by using an exit questionnaire, which assesses student satisfaction and their perception of the institution’s strengths and weaknesses.

GOAL III: EXPAND AND DIVERSIFY THE STUDENT POPULATION

Objective: Develop and implement an enrollment management system.

Strategies
1. Develop a comprehensive recruitment plan (including a marketing plan).

2. Explore nontraditional calendars, course times and locations for degree programs to recruit students.

3. Develop and implement an application management process.

• Explore application process at similar institutions within the state.
• Review the current application process which exists at each of our sites.
• Define elements to be incorporated into the management of the application process.
• Develop and utilize admissions letters specific to academic majors.
• Develop and utilize a calendar of follow-up activities related to the application process.
• Develop and utilize a tracking system for those applicants accepted but not enrolled (cards, phone calls, etc.).

4. Improve access and opportunity for student financial support.

• Schedule informational sessions regularly on each campus.
• Add financial aid paragraph to admission letter.
• Publish dates for ongoing financial aid advisement in the course offering schedule.

5. Increase Retention and Graduation Rates.
• Explore the technology necessary to upgrade existing computer equipment to facilitate better web-based admission procedures.
• Develop a marketing campaign to encourage students to take advantage of pre-registration periods.
• Reinstate placement exams.
• Develop special classes for Math 111 and English 101, which would have either additional class time or lab sessions.
• Identify, in a more systematic manner, students who would benefit from the Opportunity Scholars Program.
• Encourage faculty to make appropriate referrals for students to use the Academic Success Center.
• Offer a variety of workshops (e.g., study skills, career development, etc.) to facilitate student success and retention.
• Encourage students to register for University 101.
• Maintain data on retention and graduation rates and incorporate into planning.
• Improve advisement.

GOAL IV: SUPPORT SCHOLARSHIP AND THE PEDAGOGY OF THE FACULTY

Objective: Increase scholarship and research opportunities for faculty.

Strategies
1. Develop a policy for establishing flexible partnership arrangements to assist
   faculty in working with other institutions.
2. Develop a policy for and encourage sabbaticals and leaves of absence.
3. Increase course reduction awards offered by the institution.
4. Aggressively explore funding sources for research and scholarship.
5. Increase student involvement in faculty research projects.

(Fall, 2003)

GOAL V: PROVIDE AN ENVIRONMENT CONducive TO TEACHING AND LEARNING

Objective: Provide adequate maintenance, custodial service and landscaping on all campuses.
**Strategies**

1. Provide maintenance, custodial service and landscaping for each campus.
   - Identify systems, areas, and utilities that need maintenance, custodial service and landscaping.
   - Identify maintenance, custodial service, and landscaping on campus that can be done in-house.
   - Identify maintenance, custodial service, and landscaping on campus that must be completed by contractors.
   - Ensure that properly trained personnel have been hired for each of the areas of in-house maintenance, custodial service and landscaping.
   - Ensure effective maintenance, custodial service and landscaping on all campuses.

2. Reduce deferred maintenance to minimum levels on all campus facilities.
   - Identify deferred maintenance on each campus facility.
   - Compile and prioritize the deferred maintenance on campus.
   - Identify deferred maintenance on campus that can be done in-house.
   - Identify deferred maintenance on campus that must be completed by contractors.
   - Identify sources and budgeting strategies to fund deferred maintenance.
   - Ensure deferred maintenance is accomplished in a timely fashion.

**Objective:** Provide adequate and appropriate facilities, utilities, storage, and furnishings for instruction including undergraduate course offerings, continuing education, extended graduate offerings and support (e.g., library, OSP, ASC, labs and networked classrooms) for these activities.

**Strategies**

1. Evaluate current and future physical environment needs.
   - Develop a detailed list of current and anticipated facilities.
   - Identify the facilities, utilities, storage, and furnishings needed for undergraduate course offerings.
   - Identify the facilities, utilities, storage, and furnishings needed for continuing education.
   - Identify the facilities, utilities, storage, and furnishings needed for extended graduate offerings.
   - Identify the facilities, utilities, storage, and furnishings needed for the libraries.
   - Identify the facilities, utilities, storage, and furnishings needed for the computer, science, and art labs and networked classrooms.
   - Identify the facilities, utilities, storage, and furnishings needed for support activities (e.g., OSP, ASC).
2. Provide mechanisms for meeting the physical environment needs.

- Develop a space utilization plan.
- Identify possible additional space that could be utilized.
- Seek additional funding for buying and/or leasing space.
- Purchase additional furnishings.

**Objective:** Provide adequate and appropriate facilities, utilities, storage, and furnishings for faculty, staff, administration, and student organizations.

**Strategies**

1. Evaluate current and future physical environment needs.

   - Develop a detailed list of current facilities.
   - Identify the facilities, utilities, storage, and furnishings needed for faculty.
   - Group faculty offices by discipline.
   - Identify the facilities, utilities, storage, and furnishings needed for staff.
   - Identify the facilities, utilities, storage, and furnishings needed for administration.
   - Identify the facilities, utilities, storage, and furnishings needed for student organizations.

2. Provide mechanisms for meeting the physical environment needs.

   - Develop a space utilization plan.
   - Identify possible additional space that could be utilized.
   - Seek additional funding for buying and/or leasing space.
   - Purchase additional furnishings.

**Objective:** Come into compliance with all governmental safety, workplace, access, and historic district regulations.

**Strategies**

1. Identify those facilities that are not in compliance.

   - Attain historic district guidelines from the city or the Board of Architectural Review.
   - Attain federal, state, and county guidelines.
   - Establish an outside evaluation team comprised of governmental safety, workplace, access, and historic district specialists.

2. Identify sources to fund the needed improvements.

   - Obtain possible grant sources from the Development Office.
• Apply for grants.
• Obtain funds from budget.
• Obtain funds from governmental sources.

3. Correct conditions of non-compliance.

• Utilize appropriate reference materials, individuals or organizations to determine appropriate course to come into compliance.
• Take corrective action.

Objective: Improve the level of multimedia support within the university.

Strategies
1. Determine campus needs.
   • Identify multimedia support needed within the university.
   • Survey faculty, staff, and administration on needed multimedia equipment.
   • Visit other institutions to observe use of multimedia.

2. Address needs.

   • Purchase additional multimedia equipment and software.
   • Provide development opportunities in multimedia technologies including training, resource availability, and actual applications.
   • Provide a “multimedia help desk.”
   • Provide training to Computer Service Personnel.
   • Hire qualified students to help staff the desk.
   • Provide intranet and Internet access to all facilities including classrooms, offices, and labs.

Objective: Meet communication technology needs.

Strategies
1. Evaluate current and anticipated needs.

   • Identify the bandwidth needed for communication among USC Beaufort’s campuses and with other institutions.
   • Determine bandwidth needed for state-of-the-art equipment.
   • Determine bandwidth needed for voice communication.
   • Determine bandwidth needed for Internet access.
2. Purchase and install appropriate hardware and software.
   - Replace all copper data links with fiber optic cable.
   - Upgrade all network equipment to current standards.
   - Improve the phone and voice mail system on all campus sites.
   - Install a voice mail system on the Hilton Head site.
   - Replace the current PBXs with new PBXs.
   - Install additional central office truck lines on both sites.
   - Improve the communication link between the military campus sites and USC Beaufort’s main campus.
   - Provide state-of-the-art equipment for all modes of instruction.

GOAL VI: BROADEN COMMUNITY AWARENESS AND SUPPORT

Objective: Increase community awareness of the continuing education programs the University affords to citizens.

Strategies
1. Develop the recognition of USCB as the center for life-long learning.
2. Develop consistent messages and communication with community partners.
3. Develop and produce a consistent image which is easily recognizable to the public.
4. Develop a marketing program and calendar to get the message to the public on a regular ongoing basis.
5. Develop a consistent, timely and identifiable mailing process for invitations, flyers, newsletters, lectures, etc.
6. Develop good relationships with local communications media.
7. Expand and further develop website and its links (feature our partnerships).

Objective: Increase community support for University programs.

Strategies
1. Develop procedures and guidelines for establishing and coordinating existing and prospective partnerships.
2. Identify those partnerships, which will lend support to those baccalaureate degree programs most urgently needed in the region.
Objective: Improve military access and participation in the programs and activities of the University.

Strategies
1. Develop a schedule and a location for classes that are conducive to military life.
2. Identify and offer curricula which has appeal for the military.

GOAL VII: DEVELOP APPROPRIATE PARTNERSHIPS THAT SUPPORT THE UNIVERSITY’S MISSION

Objective: Establish partnerships in the area of education (including life-long learning).

Strategies
1. Expand and further develop partnerships with area public and private schools.
2. Expand and further develop the partnership with Sun City.
3. Expand and further develop partnerships with day care facilities for both infants, toddlers and aging adults.
4. Expand and further develop partnerships with Boys and Girls Clubs, YMCA and Youth Advocacy Program.
5. Expand and further develop partnerships with literacy programs and English as a second language programs.
6. Expand and further develop partnerships with Penn Center, the Gullah Festival Committee, the Native Islander Business Committee and others.

Objective: Establish partnerships in the areas of artistic and cultural offerings.

Strategies
1. Expand and further develop partnerships with local arts organizations.
2. Expand and further develop our offerings of lectures, exhibitions and symposia.
3. Become a resource for the presentation of world-class arts activities and productions.

Objective: Establish partnerships in the area of stewardship of land and water.
**Strategies**
1. Develop relationships with national, regional and local agencies that work to support education, preservation and conservation of land and water.

2. Develop a center for research related to stewardship of land and water.

3. Expand and further develop the preservation and the programming of Pritchards Island.

4. Become a resource for the presentation of lectures, exhibitions and symposia related to stewardship of land and water.

5. Become a center for nature-based tourism.

**Objective:** Establish partnerships in the areas of science, technology and health.

**Strategies**
1. Develop relationships with area hospitals, assisted living facilities, public health clinics, and hospices for support of future degree programs.

2. Expand and further develop course offerings relative to the needs of the health care providers and technology industries.

3. Develop a center for research related to science, technology and health.

4. Develop relationships with local agencies such as Mental Health Association, Family Resources, Rape Crisis Center, CODA, CAPA, United Way, etc.

5. Expand and further develop partnerships with local businesses related to the field of technology.

**Objective:** Establish partnerships in the area of tourism.

**Strategies**
1. Develop an advisory board of tourism industry leaders.

2. Expand and further develop course offerings relative to the needs of the tourism industry (golf course management, horticultural, marina management, nature-based tourism, etc.).

3. Expand and further develop partnerships with local chambers of commerce and hospitality associations.

4. Develop additional services and promote the Institute of Tourism.
• Continue to apply to the Hilton Head Island Accommodations Tax Advisory Committee to receive sponsorship to support tourism research, lecture series, etc.
• Apply for ATAX funding from Beaufort and Jasper Counties.
• Serve as a research facility for the Tourism Community.

5. Develop, with the input of the local tourism community, additional, pertinent continuing education offerings to support their endeavors.

• Conduct a needs assessment to determine program needs for the local industry.
• Work with the Hospitality Association, the National Restaurant Association and the American Hotel and Motel Association to bring high quality, pertinent seminars to the community.

6. Develop a job placement service to facilitate student employment in the tourism industry as a service to the local industry.

GOAL VIII: EVALUATE ANNUALLY THE UNIVERSITY’S PROGRESS TOWARD ATTAINING ITS GOALS, OBJECTIVES, STRATEGIES AND TACTICS

Objective: Determine status of stated goals, objectives, strategies, and tactics.

Strategies
1. Determine whether an individual, office, administrator or committee should check for satisfactory progress of stated goals, objectives, strategies and tactics.

2. Appoint or designate appropriate individual, office, administrator or committee to evaluate and report to the administration on progress of stated goals, objectives, strategies and tactics.

GOAL IX: STRENGTHEN PLANNING, BUDGET AND ASSESSMENT

Objective: Secure financial resources that will support the University’s strategic plan and promote institutional improvement.

Strategies
1. Campaign for operations funding parity for USC Beaufort among South Carolina teaching sector institutions.

2. Complete a grant application to obtain funding for tuition elasticity study.

Objective: Prepare and annually revise a five-year pro-forma budget reflecting institutional priorities for use in department budget planning.
**Strategies**
1. Evaluate financial performance and develop budgetary assumptions to build a realistic five year budget plan.

2. Complete a grant application to obtain funding for budget model software.

**GOAL X: ATTAIN APPROPRIATE ACCREDITATIONS**

**Objective:** Comply with the Core Requirements, Comprehensive Standards, and the Federal Requirements as found in SACS *Principles of Accreditation: Foundations for Quality Enhancement.*

**Strategies**
1. Provide resources to support accreditation process.

2. Establish appropriate relationships with SACS liaison.

3. Prepare for site visit from SACS team.

4. Prepare documentation for SACS team visit

5. Attend Annual SACS Conference.

**Objective:** Establish plan for securing academic program accreditations.

**Strategies**
1. Initiate the process for NCATE accreditation for the BA in Early Childhood Education.

2. Develop a plan to obtain AACSB accreditation for the BS in Business Administration with a Major in Management.

3. Determine compliance with the national standards for human services worker education and training in the BS in Human Services in order to obtain accreditation by the Council for Standards in Human Service Education.
INSTITUTIONAL EFFECTIVENESS MANUAL

SECTION SIX

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN USCB GOALS AND STRATEGIC PLAN GOALS
The Relationship between USCB Goals and Goals of the Strategic Plan 2003-2008

1. Offer undergraduate degrees to meet the needs of the student population.
   - Goal I. Strengthen and expand academic offerings.
   - Goal IV. Support scholarship and the pedagogy of the faculty.

2. Provide education in the major area which prepares the student for more advanced study and/or for employment in the field.
   - Goal I. Strengthen and expand academic offerings.
   - Goal IV. Support scholarship and the pedagogy of the faculty.

3. Provide a learning environment that promotes the acquisition of knowledge and the development of skills that demonstrate depth of understanding, tolerance, accountability, and a commitment to diversity.
   - Goal I. Strengthen and expand academic offerings.
   - Goal II. Expand and strengthen student support services.
   - Goal III. Expand and diversify the student population.
   - Goal IV. Support scholarship and the pedagogy of the faculty.
   - Goal V. Provide an environment conducive to teaching and learning.
   - Goal VII. Develop appropriate partnerships that support the University’s mission.
   - Goal VIII. Evaluate annually the University’s progress toward attaining its goals, objectives, strategies, and tactics.

4. Place value on quality of undergraduate education and an atmosphere of collegial support through the appropriate allocation of resources.
   - Goal I. Strengthen and expand academic offerings.
   - Goal II. Expand and strengthen student support services.
   - Goal III. Expand and diversify the student population.
   - Goal IV. Support scholarship and the pedagogy of the faculty.
   - Goal V. Provide an environment conducive to teaching and learning.
   - Goal VI. Broaden community awareness and support.
   - Goal VII. Develop appropriate partnerships that support the University’s mission.
   - Goal VIII. Evaluate annually the University’s progress toward attaining its goals, objectives, strategies and tactics.
   - Goal IX. Strengthen planning, budget and assessment.
   - Goal X. Attain appropriate accreditations.

5. Emphasize quality teaching and provide appropriate faculty-development resources to support teaching excellence.
   - Goal IV. Support scholarship and the pedagogy of the faculty.
• Goal V. Provide an environment conducive to teaching and learning.
• Goal VII. Develop appropriate partnerships that support the University’s mission.
• Goal VIII. Evaluate annually the University’s progress toward attaining its goals, objectives, strategies and tactics.
• Goal IX. Strengthen planning, budget and assessment.
• Goal X. Attain appropriate accreditations.

6. Emphasize research as an integral part of teaching in all academic areas of the University.
   • Goal I. Strengthen and expand academic offerings.
   • Goal IV. Support scholarship and the pedagogy of the faculty.

7. Provide student development services and programs that assist students in achieving educational, career, and personal goals.
   • Goal II. Expand and strengthen student support services.
   • Goal V. Provide an environment conducive to teaching and learning.
   • Goal VI. Broaden community awareness and support.
   • Goal VIII. Evaluate annually the University’s progress toward attaining goals, objectives, strategies and tactics.
   • Goal IX. Strengthen planning, budget and assessment.
   • Goal X. Attain appropriate accreditations.

8. Emphasize quality service and programs and provide appropriate staff development resources.
   • Goal V. Provide an environment conducive to teaching and learning.
   • Goal VIII. Evaluate annually the University’s progress toward attaining its goals, objectives, strategies, and tactics.
   • Goal IX. Strengthen planning, budget and assessment.

9. Provide the appropriate resources and library and information technology services in support of teaching, research, scholarship, and public service.
   • Goal II. Expand and strengthen student support services.
   • Goal IV. Support scholarship and the pedagogy of the faculty.
   • Goal V. Provide an environment conducive to teaching and learning.
   • Goal VII. Develop appropriate partnerships that support the University’s mission.
   • Goal VIII. Evaluate annually the University’s progress toward attaining its goals, objectives, strategies and tactics.
   • Goal IX. Strengthen planning, budget and assessment.
   • Goal I: Attain appropriate accreditations.

10. Provide individuals with opportunities for lifelong learning and cultural enrichment.
    • Goal I. Strengthen and expand academic offerings.
• Goal II. Expand and strengthen student support services.
• Goal III. Expand and diversify the student population.
• Goal IV. Support scholarship and the pedagogy of the faculty.
• Goals V. Provide an environment conducive to teaching and learning.
• Goal VI. Broaden community awareness and support.
• Goals VII. Develop appropriate partnerships that support the University’s mission.
• Goal IX. Strengthen planning, budget and assessment.

11. Develop and maintain partnerships with other entities to better serve the educational needs of the geographic region.
• Goal VI. Broaden community awareness and support.
• Goal VII. Develop appropriate partnerships that support the University’s mission.
• Goal VIII. Evaluate annually the University’s progress toward attaining its goals, objectives, strategies and tactics.

12. Demonstrate the accomplishment of the mission of the University and continuous improvement in its educational programs and services.
• Goal VIII. Evaluate annually the University’s progress toward attaining its goals, objectives, strategies and tactics.
INSTITUTIONAL EFFECTIVENESS MANUAL

SECTION SEVEN

THE PLANNING COUNCIL
The Planning Council

Purpose

To review, monitor, and revise the institutional effectiveness and strategic planning framework, processes, and procedures of the University.

Responsibilities

- Conduct:
  - an annual review of the Mission and Goals of the University;
  - an annual review of the Strategic Plan to determine achievement of goals and objectives and the need for revision with recommendations to the Chancellor.
  - an annual assessment of the Institutional Effectiveness Plan(s) and Assessment Report(s) from the educational programs, academic divisions, and the administrative/educational support services and provide feedback to those areas;
  - an annual review of the results of the Institutional Effectiveness Plan(s) and Assessment Report(s) and their impact upon the University with recommendations, including those with budget implications, to the Chancellor for final decision
  - an annual review of the results from academic program review with recommendations to the chair of the Program Review Committee; and
  - an annual evaluation of the functioning of the Planning Council and revision as necessary.

- Evaluate the institutional effectiveness and strategic planning framework, process, and procedures of the University.

- Report after every scheduled meeting (minimum of four per year) the findings of the Planning Council to the Chancellor of the University and to the Chancellor’s Administrative Council and/or the Chancellor’s Cabinet.

- Communicate on an ongoing basis the institutional effectiveness and strategic planning process, procedures, and findings to the educational programs, academic divisions and to the administrative and educational support services units through minutes, reports, and direct contact of members with their respective divisions.

- Prepare an annual report of the work of the Planning Council.

Membership

- Representation on the Planning Council is broad-based and includes:
  - all academic divisions;
  - administrative/educational support units representatives
Individuals will be appointed to serve a two-year term. An individual may serve more than one term. Terms will be staggered for the purpose of continuity. The Planning Council shall elect from its membership a Chair, Vice Chair, and Secretary. These officers shall serve for a period of two years. The Vice Chair will succeed the Chair.

Actual membership will include the following:

To serve a one-year term 2003-2004:

- Roy Darby, Chair of the Faculty
- Conrad Hartz, President of BEACON
- Jennifer Manly, President of SGA
- Dottie Madl, University Partnerships
- Chuck Lanigan, Facilities and Maintenance
- Geni Flowers, Library

To serve two-year terms, 2003-2004 and 2004-2005:

- Leslie Brunelli, Director of Business Affairs
  - Colleen Callahan, Director of Development
  - Joan Lemoine, Vice Chancellor for Student Development
  - Division Coordinators (3): Humanities, Professional and Social Science, and Science and Mathematics
  - Jennifer Read
  - Troy Travis, Information Technology

For 2003-2005, there are one-year and two-year appointments that are staggered for the purpose of continuity. At the end of 2004, individuals will be appointed only for two-year terms.

- Ex-officio Members (non-voting): Director of Institutional Effectiveness, Chancellor of the University, and the Executive Vice Chancellor of the University.
- The head of the educational/administrative support unit selects a replacement if someone cannot serve.

Reporting Structure
The Planning Council reports directly to the Chancellor of the University. It serves in an advisory capacity to the academic divisions and to the administrative and educational support units of the University and to the Director of Institutional Effectiveness.

(Revision of the structure, role, and responsibilities of the Planning Council, Fall 2003)
Section I. PRINCIPLES AND PHILOSOPHY OF ACCREDITATION

OVERVIEW

Purpose and Philosophy of Accreditation

The Commission on Colleges of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools is the regional body for the accreditation of higher education institutions in the southern states (Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, and Virginia) and Latin America awarding associate, baccalaureate, Master's, or doctoral degrees.

Accreditation of an institution by the Commission on Colleges signifies the institution has a purpose appropriate to higher education and has resources, programs, and services sufficient to accomplish that purpose on a continuing basis. Accreditation evaluates whether an institution maintains clearly specified educational objectives that are consistent with its mission and appropriate to the degrees it offers and whether it is successful in achieving its stated objectives.

The regulation of accreditation relates to a traditional U.S. philosophy—that a free people can and ought to govern themselves, which is done best through a representative, flexible, and responsive system. Accordingly, accreditation is best accomplished through a voluntary association of educational institutions. Accreditation enhances educational quality throughout the region by improving the effectiveness of institutions and ensuring to the public that institutions meet standards established by the higher education community. Accreditation is a common denominator of shared values and practices among the diverse range of institutions within the higher education community.

Both a process and a product, accreditation relies on integrity, thoughtful and principled judgment, the rigorous application of requirements, and a context of trust. It provides an assessment of an institution’s effectiveness in the fulfillment of its mission, its compliance with the requirements of its accrediting association, and its continuing efforts to enhance the quality of student learning and its programs and services. Based upon reasoned judgment, the process serves to stimulate evaluation and improvement, while providing a means of continuing accountability to constituents and the public. The “product” of accreditation represents a public statement of an institution’s continuing capacity to provide effective programs and services based on agreed-upon requirements. The statement of an institution’s accreditation status with the Commission on Colleges is also an affirmation of an institution’s continuing commitment to the Commission’s principles and philosophy of accreditation.
The Commission on Colleges supports the right of an institution to pursue its established educational mission; the right of faculty members to teach, investigate, and publish freely; and the right of students to opportunities for learning and the open exchange of ideas. However, the exercise of these rights should not interfere with the overriding obligation of an institution to offer its students a sound education.

The fundamental characteristics of accreditation outlined by the Commission on Colleges are these:

- Participation in the accreditation process is voluntary and is an earned and renewable status.
- Member institutions develop, amend, and approve accreditation requirements.
- The process of accreditation is representative, responsive, and appropriate to the types of institutions accredited.
- Accreditation is a form of self-regulation.
- Accreditation requires institutional commitment and engagement.
- Accreditation is based upon a peer review process.
- Accreditation is based upon an institutional commitment to student achievement.
- Accreditation acknowledges an institution’s prerogative to articulate its mission within the recognized context of higher education and its responsibility to provide evidence it is accomplishing its mission.
- Accreditation expects an institution to develop a balanced governance structure designed to promote institutional autonomy and flexibility of operation.
- Accreditation expects an institution to ensure that its programs are complemented by support structures and resources that allow for the total growth and development of its students.

**Principles of Accreditation**

The first task of the Commission when considering an institution’s accreditation status is to determine the institution’s integrity and its commitment to quality enhancement. These two principles serve as the foundation of the relationship between the Commission and its member and candidate institutions.
Integrity

Integrity is a core value essential to the purpose of higher education, functioning as the basic social contract defining the relationship between the Commission and each of its member institutions. It is a relationship in which all parties agree to commit themselves to honesty and openness in their dealings with their constituencies and with one another. Without this commitment, no relationship can exist or be sustained between the Commission and its member institutions. The Commission’s requirements, policies, processes, procedures, and decisions are predicated on integrity.

The Commission on Colleges expects integrity to govern the operation of institutions. Therefore, evidence of intentionally withholding information, deliberately providing inaccurate information to the public, or failing to provide timely information to the Commission will be construed as an indication of the lack of a full commitment to integrity and may result in the loss of membership in the Commission on Colleges.

Quality Enhancement

The Commission on Colleges expects institutions to dedicate themselves to enhancing the quality of their programs and services within the context of their missions, resources, and capacities, and creating an environment in which teaching, research, and learning occurs. The concept of quality enhancement is at the heart of the Commission’s philosophy of accreditation; this presumes each member institution is engaged in an ongoing program of improvement and can demonstrate how well it fulfills its stated mission. Although evaluation of an institution’s educational quality and its effectiveness in achieving its mission is a difficult task requiring careful analysis and professional judgment, an institution is expected to document quality and effectiveness in all its major aspects.
AN ORGANIZATIONAL OVERVIEW

The Southern Association of Colleges and Schools is a private, nonprofit, voluntary organization founded in 1895 in Atlanta, Georgia. The Association is comprised of the Commission on Colleges, the Commission on Secondary and Middle Schools, and the Commission on Elementary and Middle Schools. The three commissions carry out their missions with considerable autonomy, developing their own standards and procedures, and governing themselves by a delegate assembly. All three operate under the Association’s board of trustees.

The College Delegate Assembly is comprised of one voting representative (the chief executive officer or the officer’s designee) from each member institution. Its responsibilities include electing the 77-member Commission on Colleges to guide the organization’s work, to approve all revisions in accrediting standards as recommended by the Commission, to approve the dues of candidate and member institutions as recommended by the Commission, and to elect an Appeals Committee to hear appeals of certain accreditation decisions.

As elected by the College General Assembly, the 77-member Commission on Colleges is responsible for preparing a statement on the standards for candidacy and membership; authorizing special visits; taking final action on the accreditation status of institutions based only on its published standards, policies, and procedures; nominating to the College Delegate Assembly persons to succeed those members of the Commission whose terms expire; electing an Executive Council of the Commission that will act for the Commission while it is not in session; appointing special study committees as needed; and approving the policies and procedures consistent with the Association’s charter and Bylaws.

The 13-member Executive Council is the executive arm of the Commission and functions on behalf of the Commission and the College Delegate Assembly between sessions. However, the actions of the Council are subject to the revision and approval of the Commission. The Council interprets Commission policies and procedures; develops procedures for and supervises the work of special and standing committees of the Commission; approves goals and objectives of the Commission; reviews and approves the Commission’s budget; oversees and annually evaluates the work of its executive director; and initiates new programs, projects, and policy proposals.

The Council receives and acts on reports from all special and standing committees and submits them to the Commission. In the case of institutions applying for candidacy, membership, or reaffirmation of accreditation, the Executive Council receives recommendations from the Committees on Criteria and Reports, standing evaluation committees of the Commission, and in turn submits its recommendations on these institutions to the Commission for final action.
THE PROCESS OF ACCREDITATION

The process for initial and continued accreditation involves a collective analysis and judgment of an institution’s internal constituencies, an informed review by peers external to the institution, and a reasoned decision by elected representatives to the Commission on Colleges. Institutions accredited by the Commission periodically conduct internal reviews involving their administrative officers, staffs, faculties, students, trustees, and others appropriate to the process. The internal review provides an institution the opportunity to consider its effectiveness in achieving its stated mission and its compliance with the accreditation requirements established by the Commission’s membership.

Furthermore, it helps an institution to evaluate its efforts in enhancing the quality of student learning and the quality of programs and services offered to its constituencies as well as challenging itself in examining its successes in accomplishing its mission. At the culmination of the internal review, peers who represent the higher education community assess an institution’s compliance with the Commission’s accreditation requirements and its efforts to enhance the quality of its programs and services.

Although peer evaluators representing the Commission apply their professional judgment in conducting a preliminary assessment of the institution, elected Commissioners make the final determination of an institution’s compliance with the Commission’s accreditation requirements.

The Application of the Requirements

The Commission on Colleges accredits degree-granting higher education institutions and entities based on requirements defined in its Principles of Accreditation: Foundations for Quality Enhancement. The requirements apply to all institutional programs and services, wherever located or however delivered. The Principles of Accreditation is designed to guide institutions in all stages of membership, from application through initial accreditation and reaffirmation of accreditation.

Compliance with the requirements is intended to help an institution achieve overall effectiveness. The Commission on Colleges applies the requirements of its Principles to all applicant, candidate, and member institutions, regardless of the type of institution—private for-profit, private not-for-profit, or public.
The Commission evaluates an institution and makes accreditation decisions based on the following:

Compliance with the *Principles of Accreditation* defined as integrity and commitment to quality enhancement.

- Compliance with the Core Requirements.
- Compliance with the Comprehensive Standards.
- Compliance with additional requirements related to participation in Title IV programs.

The Commission’s philosophy of accreditation precludes denial of membership to a degree-granting institution of higher education on any ground other than an institution’s failure to meet the above requirements in the professional judgment of peer reviewers, or failure to comply with the policies and procedures of the Commission.

**Compliance with the Core Requirements for Candidacy and Membership**

Compliance with the Core Requirements is essential for gaining and maintaining accreditation with the Commission on Colleges. The requirements establish a level of development required of an institution seeking initial or continued accreditation. Compliance with the Core Requirements is necessary but not sufficient to warrant accreditation or reaffirmation of accreditation. To maintain accreditation, an institution must meet all Core Requirements, including Requirement 12. An institution responds to each Core Requirement by either confirming compliance or explaining those situations for which there is less than compliance.

**Core Requirement 12 requires an institution to develop an acceptable Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP) and show that the plan is part of an ongoing planning and evaluation process.**

Engaging the wider academic community, the QEP is based upon a comprehensive and thorough analysis of the effectiveness of the learning environment for supporting student achievement and accomplishing the mission of the institution. It is used to outline a course of action for institutional improvement by addressing one or more issues that contribute to institutional quality, with special attention to student learning.

An applicant institution seeking membership with the Commission on Colleges is required to document compliance with Core Requirements 1-11 in order to be awarded candidacy, candidacy renewal, or membership.
Compliance with the Comprehensive Standards

The Comprehensive Standards set forth requirements in the following three areas: (1) institutional mission, governance, and effectiveness; (2) programs; and (3) resources. The Comprehensive Standards establish a necessary level of accomplishment expected of all member institutions. Institutions respond to each Comprehensive Standard either by confirming compliance or by explaining those situations that constitute less than compliance.

Guidelines pertaining to the academic and professional preparation of faculty function as the evidence the Commission normally would expect to be present when determining the overall quality of an institution. These are not Comprehensive Standards.

Although Comprehensive Standards do not represent the only means by which institutions might make such determinations, they do represent the norms or commonly accepted standards of good practice within the larger community of the Commission’s membership.

Compliance with Federal Requirements Related to Participation in Title IV Programs

The U.S. Secretary of Education recognizes accreditation by the Commission on Colleges in establishing the eligibility of higher education institutions to participate in programs authorized under Title IV of the 1998 Higher Education Amendments and other federal programs. Through its compliance with these federal regulations, the Commission ensures the public that it is a reliable authority regarding the quality of education provided by its member institutions.

The federal statute includes mandates that the Commission review an institution in accord with criteria outlined in the regulations of the Amendments developed by the U.S. Department of Education. As part of the review process, institutions are required to document compliance with those criteria and the Commission is obligated to consider compliance when the institution is reviewed for initial membership or continued accreditation.

COMPONENTS OF THE PEER REVIEW PROCESS

The Internal Review

The institution will provide three separate documents as part of its internal review.

1. Expanded Annual Institutional Profiles
The two annual profiles will be expanded to include currently requested information and address additional areas such as management and governance, enrollment trends, financial indicators, and program location and delivery.

2. **Compliance Certification**

During the eighth year following an institution’s most recent reaffirmation, the Commission will request that it submit a completed compliance certification by a specified date. The certification will represent the institution’s internal analysis of its compliance with each Core Requirement and Comprehensive Standard. Signatures by the institution’s chief executive officer and accreditation liaison will be required to certify compliance. If an institution concludes it does not meet a specific requirement, it will stipulate its reasons for noncompliance and the actions necessary to make sure it comes into compliance.

3. **Quality Enhancement Plan**

The Commission will request submission of the Quality Enhancement Plan at the beginning of the tenth year. Engaging the wider academic community and addressing one or more issues that contribute to institutional improvement, the plan should be focused, succinct, and limited in length (no more than seventy-five pages of narrative text and no more than twenty-five pages of support documentation or charts, graphs, and tables).

**The External Review**

1. **The Off-Site Peer Review**

A small committee of individuals will meet at an off-site location to review the institution’s Compliance Certification and other support documentation it provides (i.e., expanded Institutional Profiles, financial audit reports, catalogs, and other information provided by the institution). The team will function as advisors to the on-site peer review committee by making observations about the information the institution provides and by determining an institution’s compliance with standards.

2. **The On-Site Peer Review**

Following review by the off-site peer review committee, a team of peers will conduct a focused on-site review, the purpose of which will be to verify the institution’s statement of its compliance with the Core Requirements and Comprehensive Standards, evaluate actions proposed and/or taken regarding the institution’s statements of noncompliance, evaluate the acceptability of the Quality Enhancement Plan, and provide consultation regarding issues addressed in the plan. At the conclusion of its visit, the on-site peer review committee will prepare a written report of its findings—noting areas of noncompliance—and will make a recommendation to the Commission on Colleges regarding the institution’s accreditation status. The
committee’s report, along with the institution’s response to areas of noncompliance, will be forwarded to the Commission for review and action.

INSTITUTIONAL RESPONSIBILITY
FOR REPORTING SUBSTANTIVE CHANGE

The Commission on Colleges accredits the entire institution and its programs and services, wherever they are located or however they are delivered. Accreditation is specific to an institution, is based on conditions existing at the time of the most recent evaluation, and is not transferable. When an accredited institution significantly modifies or expands its scope, or changes the nature of its affiliation or its ownership, a substantive change review is required. The Commission is responsible for evaluating all substantive changes that occur between an institution’s decennial reviews to determine whether the change has affected the quality of the total institution and to ensure the public that all aspects of the institution continue to meet defined standards.

A member institution is responsible for following the Commission’s substantive change policy and its procedures by informing the Commission of such changes in accord with those procedures, and, when required, seeking approval prior to the initiation of the change. If an institution fails to follow the procedures, its total accreditation may be placed in jeopardy. (See “General Substantive Change Policy for Accredited Institutions” and “Procedure One” and “Procedure Two,” outlining the types of substantive changes, their respective approval and notification requirements, and their reporting timelines.) If an institution is unclear as to whether a change is substantive in nature, it should contact Commission staff for consultation.

An applicant or candidate institution may not undergo substantive change prior to action on initial membership.

REPRESENTATION OF STATUS

An institution must be accurate in reporting to the public its status and relationship with the Commission. In catalogs, brochures and advertisements, a member institution describes its relationship with the Commission only according with the following statement:
(Name of institution) is accredited by the Commission on Colleges of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools to award (name specific degree levels).

A candidate institution describes its relationship with the Commission only according to the following statement:
(Name of institution) is a candidate for accreditation with the Commission on Colleges of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools to award (name specific degree levels).
No statement may be made about the possible future accreditation status with the Commission on Colleges. Nor may an institution use the logo or seal of the Southern Association in any of its publications or documents.

Section II. CORE REQUIREMENTS

For every Core Requirement mandating a policy or procedure, it is implicit that the policy or procedure is in writing, approved through appropriate institutional processes, published in appropriate institutional documents accessible to those affected by the policy or procedure, and implemented and enforced by the institution.

For obtaining or maintaining accreditation with the Commission on Colleges, an institution must meet the following Core Requirements:

1. The institution has degree-granting authority from the appropriate government agency or agencies.

2. The institution has a governing board of at least five members that is the legal body with specific authority over the institution. The board is an active policy-making body for the institution and is ultimately responsible for ensuring that the financial resources of the institution are adequate to provide a sound educational program. The board is not controlled by a minority of board members or by organizations or interests separate from it. Neither the presiding officer of the board nor the majority of other voting members of the board have contractual, employment, or personal or familial financial interest in the institution.

   A military institution authorized and operated by the federal government to award degrees has a public board in which neither the presiding officer nor a majority of the other members are civilian employees of the military or active/retired military. The board has broad and significant influence upon the institution’s programs and operations, plays an active role in policy-making, and ensures that the financial resources of the institution are used to provide a sound educational program. The board is not controlled by a minority of board members or by organizations or interests separate from the board except as specified by the authorizing legislation. Neither the presiding officer of the board nor the majority of other voting board members have contractual, employment, or personal or familial financial interest in the institution.

3. The institution has a chief executive officer whose primary responsibility is to the institution and who is not the presiding officer of the board.

4. The institution has a clearly defined and published mission statement specific to the institution and appropriate to an institution of higher education, addressing teaching and learning and, where applicable, research and public service.

5. The institution engages in ongoing, integrated, and institution-wide research-based planning and evaluation processes that incorporate a systematic review of
programs and services that (a) results in continuing improvement and (b) demonstrates that the institution is effectively accomplishing its mission.

6. The institution is in operation and has students enrolled in degree programs.

7. The institution

   a. offers one or more degree programs based on at least 60 semester credit hours or the equivalent at the associate level; at least 120 semester credit hours or the equivalent at the baccalaureate level; or at least 30 semester credit hours or the equivalent at the post-baccalaureate, graduate, or professional level. The institution provides a written justification and rationale for program equivalency.

   b. offers degree programs that embody a coherent course of study that is compatible with its stated purpose and is based upon fields of study appropriate to higher education.

   c. offers a general education program at the collegiate level that is (1) a substantial component of each undergraduate degree, (2) ensures breadth of knowledge, and (3) is based on a coherent rationale. For degree completion in associate programs, the component constitutes a minimum of 15 semester hours or the equivalent; for baccalaureate programs, a minimum of 30 semester hours or the equivalent. These credit hours are to be drawn from and include at least one course from each of the following areas: humanities/fine arts; social/behavioral sciences; and natural science/mathematics. The courses do not narrowly focus on those skills, techniques, and procedures specific to a particular occupation or profession. The institution provides a written justification and rationale for course equivalency.

   d. makes arrangements for some instruction to be provided by other accredited institutions or entities through contracts or consortia, where appropriate. The institution itself, however, provides instruction for all course work required for at least one degree program at each level at which it awards degrees, or provides an alternative approach to meeting this requirement. The alternative approach is approved by the Commission on Colleges. In all cases, the institution demonstrates that it controls all aspects of its educational program.

8. The number of full-time faculty members is adequate to support the mission of the institution. The institution has adequate faculty resources to ensure the quality and integrity of its academic programs. In addition, upon application for candidacy, an applicant institution demonstrates that it meets the comprehensive standard for faculty qualifications.
9. The institution, through ownership or formal arrangements or agreements, provides and supports student and faculty access and user privileges to adequate library collections as well as to other learning/information resources consistent with the degrees offered. These collections and resources are sufficient to support all its educational, research, and public service programs.

10. The institution provides student support programs, services, and activities consistent with its mission that promote student learning and enhance the development of its students.

11. The institution has a sound financial base and demonstrated financial stability, and adequate physical resources to support the mission of the institution and the scope of its programs and services. The institution provides the following financial statements: (a) an institutional audit (as distinct from a systemwide or statewide audit) and management letter for the most recent fiscal year prepared by an independent certified public accountant or an appropriate auditing agency employing the appropriate audit guide; (b) an annual budget that is preceded by sound planning, is subject to sound fiscal procedures, and is approved by the governing board; and (c) an audited statement of financial position of unrestricted net assets, exclusive of plant assets and plant-related debt, which represents the change in unrestricted net assets attributable to operations for the most recent year.

12. The institution has developed an acceptable Quality Enhancement Plan and demonstrates the plan is part of an ongoing planning and evaluation process.

Section III. COMPREHENSIVE STANDARDS

For every Comprehensive Standard mandating a policy or procedure, it is implicit that the policy or procedure is in writing, approved through appropriate institutional processes, published in appropriate institutional documents accessible to those affected by the policy or procedure, and implemented and enforced by the institution.

For obtaining or maintaining accreditation with the Commission on Colleges, an institution must meet the following Comprehensive Standards:

INSTITUTIONAL MISSION, GOVERNANCE, AND EFFECTIVENESS

Institutional Mission

1. The institution has a clear and comprehensive mission statement that guides it; is approved by the governing board; is periodically reviewed by the board; and is communicated to the institution’s constituencies.
Governance and Administration

2. The governing board of the institution is responsible for the selection and the evaluation of the chief executive officer.

3. The legal authority and operating control of the institution are clearly defined for the following areas within the institution’s governance structure:

   a. the institution’s mission;
   b. the fiscal stability of the institution;
   c. institutional policy, including policies concerning related and affiliated corporate entities and all auxiliary services;
   d. related foundations (athletic, research, etc.) and other corporate entities whose primary purpose is to support the institution and/or its programs.

4. The board has a policy addressing conflict of interest.

5. The governing board is free from undue influence from political, religious, or other external bodies, and protects the institution from such influence.

6. Members of the governing board can be dismissed only for cause and by due process.

7. There is a clear and appropriate distinction, in writing and practice, between the policy-making functions of the governing board and the responsibility of the administration and faculty to administer and implement policy.

8. The institution has a clearly defined and published organizational structure that delineates responsibility for the administration of policies.

9. The institution has qualified administrative and academic officers with the experience, competence, and capacity to lead the institution.

10. The institution defines and publishes policies regarding appointment and employment of faculty and staff.

11. The institution evaluates the effectiveness of its administrators, including the chief executive officer, on a periodic basis.

12. The institution’s chief executive officer has ultimate responsibility for, and exercises appropriate administrative and fiscal control over, the institution’s intercollegiate athletics program.
13. The institution’s chief executive officer has ultimate control of the institution’s fund-raising activities.

14. An institution-related foundation, not controlled by the institution, has a contractual or other formal agreement that (a) accurately describes the relationship between the institution and the foundation, and (b) describes any liability associated with that relationship. In all cases, the institution ensures that the relationship is consistent with its mission.

15. The institution’s policies are clear concerning ownership of materials, compensation, copyright issues, and the use of revenue derived from the creation and production of all intellectual property. This applies to students, faculty and staff.

Institutional Effectiveness

The institution identifies expected outcomes for its educational programs and its administrative and educational support services; assesses whether it achieves these outcomes; and provides evidence of improvement based on analysis of those results.

PROGRAMS

Educational Programs

*Standards for All Educational Programs*

1. The institution demonstrates that each educational program for which academic credit is awarded is (a) is approved by the faculty and the administration, and (b) establishes and evaluates program and learning outcomes.

2. The institution’s continuing education, outreach, and service programs are consistent with the institution’s mission.

3. The institution publishes admissions policies consistent with its mission.

4. The institution has a defined and published policy for evaluating, awarding, and accepting credit for transfer, experiential learning, advanced placement, and professional certificates that is consistent with its mission and ensures that course work and learning outcomes are at the collegiate level and comparable to the institution’s own degree programs. The institution assumes responsibility for the academic quality of any course work or credit recorded on the institution’s transcript.

5. The institution publishes academic policies that adhere to principles of good educational practice. These are disseminated to students, faculty, and other interested parties through publications that accurately represent the programs and services of the institution.
6. The institution employs sound and acceptable practices for determining the amount and level of credit awarded for courses, regardless of format or mode of delivery.

7. The institution ensures the quality of educational programs/courses offered through consortia relationships or contractual agreements, ensures ongoing compliance with the comprehensive requirements, and evaluates the agreement against the purpose of the institution.

8. The institution awards academic credit for course work taken on a noncredit basis only when there is documentation that the noncredit course work is equivalent to a designated credit experience.

9. The institution provides appropriate academic support services.

10. The institution defines and publishes general education and major program requirements for all its programs. These requirements conform to commonly accepted standards and practices for undergraduate programs as well as graduate and post-baccalaureate professional degree programs.

11. The institution protects the security, confidentiality, and integrity of its student academic records and maintains special security measures to protect and back up data.

12. The institution places primary responsibility for the content, quality, and effectiveness of its curriculum with its faculty.

13. For each major in a degree program, the institution assigns responsibility for program coordination, as well as for curriculum development and review, to persons academically qualified in the field. In those degree programs for which the institution does not identify a major, this requirement applies to a curricular area or concentration.

14. The institution’s use of technology enhances student learning, is appropriate for meeting the objectives of its programs, and ensures that students have access to and training in the use of technology.

* Includes all on-campus, off-campus, and distance learning programs

**Standards Specific to Undergraduate Programs**

15. The institution identifies competencies within the general education core and provides evidence that graduates have attained those college-level competencies.
16. The institution awards degrees only to those students who have earned at least 25 percent of the credit hours required for the degree through instruction offered by that institution.

Standards Specific to Graduate and Post-Baccalaureate Professional Programs

17. The institution’s post-baccalaureate professional degree programs, and its master’s and doctoral degree programs are progressively more advanced in academic content than undergraduate programs.

18. The institution ensures that its graduate instruction and resources foster independent learning, enabling the graduate to contribute to a profession or field of study.

19. The majority of credits toward a graduate or a post-baccalaureate professional degree is earned through the institution awarding the degree. In the case of graduate and post-baccalaureate professional degree programs offered through joint, cooperative, or consortia arrangements, the student earns a majority of credits from the participating institutions.

Faculty

20. The institution employs competent faculty members qualified to accomplish the mission and goals of the institution. When determining acceptable qualifications of its faculty, an institution gives primary consideration to the highest earned degree in the discipline in accord with the guidelines listed below. The institution also considers competence, effectiveness, and capacity, including, as appropriate, undergraduate and graduate degrees, related work experiences in the field, professional licensure and certifications, honors and awards, continuous documented excellence in teaching, or other demonstrated competencies and achievements that contribute to effective teaching and student learning outcomes. For all cases, the institution is responsible for justifying and documenting the qualifications of all its faculty.

Credential Guidelines:

a. Faculty teaching general education courses at the undergraduate level: a doctoral or a master’s degree in the teaching discipline or a master’s degree with a concentration in the teaching discipline (a minimum of 18 graduate semester hours in the teaching discipline).

b. Faculty teaching associate degree courses designed for transfer to a baccalaureate degree: a doctoral or a master’s degree in the teaching discipline or a master’s degree with a concentration in the teaching discipline (a minimum of 18 graduate semester hours in the teaching discipline).
c. Faculty teaching associate degree courses not designed for transfer to the baccalaureate degree: a baccalaureate degree in the teaching discipline, or an associate degree and demonstrated competencies in the teaching discipline.

d. Faculty teaching baccalaureate degree courses: a doctoral or a master’s degree in the teaching discipline or a master’s degree with a concentration in the teaching discipline (minimum of 18 graduate semester hours in the teaching discipline). At least 25 percent of the discipline course hours in each undergraduate major are taught by faculty members holding the terminal degree–usually the earned doctorate--in the discipline.

e. Faculty teaching graduate and post-baccalaureate course work: earned doctorate/terminal degree in the teaching discipline or a related discipline.

f. Graduate teaching assistants: master’s in the teaching discipline or 18 graduate semester hours in the teaching discipline, direct supervision by a faculty member experienced in the teaching discipline, regular in-service training, and planned and periodic evaluations.

21. The institution regularly evaluates the effectiveness of each faculty member in accord with published criteria, regardless of contractual or tenured status.

22. The institution provides evidence of ongoing professional development of faculty as teachers, scholars, and practitioners.

23. The institution ensures adequate procedures for the safeguard and protection of academic freedom.

24. The institution publishes policies on the responsibility and authority of faculty in academic and governance matters.

**Library and Other Learning Resources**

25. The institution provides facilities, services, and other learning/information resources that are appropriate to support its teaching, research, and service mission.

26. The institution ensures that users have access to regular and timely instruction in the use of the library and other learning/information resources.

27. The institution provides a sufficient number of qualified staff—with appropriate education or experiences both in library or other learning/information resources-to accomplish the mission of the institution.
Student Affairs and Services

28. The institution publishes a clear and appropriate statement of student rights and responsibilities and disseminates the statement to the campus community.

29. The institution protects the security, confidentiality, and integrity of its student records.

30. The institution provides services supporting its mission with qualified personnel to ensure the quality and effectiveness of its student affairs programs.

RESOURCES

Financial and Physical Resources

1. The institution’s recent financial history demonstrates financial stability.

2. The institution provides financial statements and related documents, including multiple measures for determining financial health as requested by the Commission, which accurately and appropriately represent the total operation of the institution.

3. The institution audits financial aid programs as required by federal and state regulations.

4. The institution exercises appropriate control over all its financial and physical resources.

5. The institution maintains financial control over externally funded or sponsored research and programs.

6. The institution takes reasonable steps to provide a healthy, safe, and secure environment for all members of the campus community.

7. The institution operates and maintains physical facilities, both on and off campus, that are adequate to serve the needs of the institution’s educational programs, support services, and mission-related activities.
Section IV. FEDERAL REQUIREMENTS

In addition to the Core Requirements and Comprehensive Standards outlined above that have incorporated some of the requirements mandated by the 1998 Higher Education Amendments and its attending regulations, institutions also are responsible for complying with the following requirements that are more specifically stated in federal laws. Compliance will be considered when the institution is reviewed for initial membership and for continued accreditation.

1. When evaluating success with respect to student achievement in relation to the institution’s mission, the institution includes, as appropriate, consideration of course completion, state licensing examinations, and job placement rates.

2. The institution maintains a curriculum that is directly related and appropriate to the purpose and goals of the institution and the diplomas, certificates or degrees awarded.

3. The institution makes available to students and the public current academic calendars, grading policies, and refund policies.

4. The institution demonstrates that program length is appropriate for each of the degrees offered.

5. The institution has adequate procedures for addressing written student complaints and is responsible for demonstrating that it follows those procedures when resolving student complaints. (See Commission policy “The Review of Complaints Involving the Commission or its Accredited Institutions.”)

6. Recruitment materials and presentations accurately represent the institution’s practices and policies.

7. The institution publishes the name of its primary accreditor and its address and phone number. (The publication of this information is presented so that it is clear that inquiries to the Commission should relate only to the accreditation status of the institution, and not to general admission information.)

8. The institution is in compliance with its program responsibilities under Title IV of the 1998 Higher Education Amendments. (In reviewing the institution’s compliance with these program responsibilities, the Commission relies on documentation forwarded to it by the Secretary of Education.) (Applies only to those institutions receiving Title IV funding.)
INSTITUTIONAL EFFECTIVENESS MANUAL

SECTION NINE

GLOSSARY
Accreditation: is both a process and a product that relies heavily on integrity, thoughtful and principled judgment, the rigorous application of requirements, and a context of trust. It provides an assessment of an institution’s effectiveness in fulfillment of its mission, its compliance with the requirements of its accrediting association, and its continuous efforts to enhance the quality of student learning and its programs and services. Based on reasoned judgment, the process serves to stimulate evaluation and improvement, while providing a means of accountability to constituents and the public. The “product” of accreditation represents a public statement of an institution’s continuing capacity to provide effective programs and services based on agreed-upon requirements. The Commission on Colleges of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools is the regional body for the accreditation of higher education in 11 southern states and Latin America awarding associate, baccalaureate, master’s, or doctoral degrees. (SACS Principles of Accreditation: Foundations for Quality Enhancement)

Assessment (Outcomes Assessment): the process of identifying, collecting, and interpreting data (quantitative and qualitative) to determine the extent to which intended outcomes (expected results) are actually achieved. It implies both measurement and analysis.

Enabling/Unit Plans: are plans developed by the key performance areas of the University to carry out (accomplish) the strategic plan of the University, thus to accomplish the mission and goals of the institution.

Goals (Institutional): broad, general statements that operationalize the mission of an institution. They usually are written as action verb statements that accompany the mission statement so that they can be assessed or measured to determine the extent to which the mission of the institution is being achieved. At USCB, institutional goals refer to the 12 statements that accompany the mission of the University.

Goals (Strategic Goals): more specific statements found in an institution’s strategic plan used by the institution to set its future direction.

Institutional Effectiveness and Strategic Planning Framework (Model): a graphic depiction (diagram) developed by USCB that depicts the relationships among all parts of the institutional effectiveness plan and process. Specifically, the framework for USCB consists of four phases that include the components of institutional analysis by the key performance/functional areas of the University; compilation of the results of analysis that is presented to the Chancellor’s Administrative Council; the revision/development of the strategic plan; enabling/unit plans to accomplish the strategic plan; and institutional effectiveness plans and outcomes assessment reports that are reviewed by the Planning Council with recommendations made by it to the
Chancellor, particularly those regarding budget implications. This framework (model) also encompasses the results of academic program review by the Planning Council. An institutional effectiveness planning and budgeting timeline is an integral component of the model.

**Institutional Effectiveness Plan and Outcomes Assessment Report:** a six-column document used by all areas of the University to record institutional effectiveness efforts. The document records identified/expected outcomes; assessment (strategies, measures, criteria); realized outcomes; a schedule for reporting outcomes/plans for future reports; how results are to be used for program improvement, and; actual use made of results.

**Institutional Effectiveness Plan and Process:** an on-going, comprehensive, broad based and institutionally integrated system for planning and evaluation designed to enhance and improve the institution, as well as demonstrate to what degree the institution has been effective in fulfilling or achieving its stated mission and goals. It involves a process of continually reviewing and articulating the mission and goals of the University, setting intended/expected outcomes (results), assessing these results, analyzing the data from the assessment, and using the results for improving educational programs and services.

**Institutional Plan:** may be any of several plans developed by an institution such as its strategic plan, campus safety plan, master plan, financial plan, etc.

**Key Issues:** At USCB, these are issues/weaknesses or consensus areas of focus identified in the institutional analysis done during Phase I of the institutional effectiveness and strategic planning process.

**Key Initiatives:** are strategic goals/objectives/intended outcomes/areas of focus arising from key issues (consensus areas of focus) identified in the institutional analysis of Phase I or by key performance areas in and of themselves. They are actions to be taken and intended to lead to the improvement of the educational programs and support services of the University. They are listed in the Enabling/Unit Plans and are used to develop institutional effectiveness plans and outcomes assessment reports.

**Key Performance Areas:** are the functional areas of the University and include Academic Affairs, Student Development, Finance and Business Office, Office of Advancement, Grants and Government Relations, Community Partnerships, and Planning and Construction.

**Planning Council:** an internal group which has existed at USCB for many years and which is now functioning with revised roles and responsibilities. The purpose of the Planning Council is to monitor, review, and revise the institutional effectiveness and strategic planning processes and procedures of the University. The membership of the council is broad based with representatives from all academic divisions, educational and administrative support units, the President of the Faculty, the President of SGA, and the
President of BEACON. Ex-officio members are the Chancellor, the Executive Vice Chancellor, and the Director of Institutional Effectiveness and Academic Planning. The Planning Council reports directly to the Chancellor of the University.

**Strategic Plan**: a document describing the components of planning used by the USCB to ascertain that the mission and goals of the University are accomplished and to set its future direction. The plan itself is part of the institutional effectiveness and strategic planning processes and procedures of the University, ensuring that it is mission and goals driven, is broad based, comprehensive, and integrated with institutional effectiveness efforts. The specific components of the Strategic Plan 2003-2008 are a vision statement, ten specific goals, and objectives and strategies to accomplish the ten goals.