EXCERPT FROM THE PRELIMINARY REPORT
OF THE REAFFIRMATION COMMITTEE

Statement Regarding the Report

The Board of Trustees of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC) is responsible for making the final determination on reaffirmation of accreditation based on the findings contained in this committee report, the institution's response to issues contained in the report, other assessments relevant to the review, and application of the Commission's policies and procedures. Final interpretation of the Principles of Accreditation *and final action on the accreditation status of the institution rest with SACSCOC Board of Trustees.*

Name of the Institution: **University of South Carolina - Columbia**

Date of the Review: **November 3-4, 2020**

SACSCOC Staff Member: **Dr. Linda Thomas-Glover**

Chair of the Committee: **Dr. Timothy S. Brophy**
Director, Institutional Assessment
and Professor, Music Education
University of Florida
Gainesville, FL 32606

13.7
Physical Resources

13.7   The institution ensures adequate physical facilities and resources, both on and off campus, that appropriately serve the needs of the institution's educational programs, support services, and other mission-related activities.
(Physical resources) **[Off-Site/On-Site Review]**

Non-Compliance

The institution's response is in violation of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC) policy, "Reports Submitted for SACSCOC Review," by including live links in its response and electronic documentation that is not consistently bookmarked, indexed, searchable, and readable.

The institution serves more than 5,000 students at the Columbia campus and nearly 52,000 students system-wide based on 2019-2020 enrollment data. In addition to the Columbia Campus, the system includes the regional Palmetto College campuses that includes four additional regional campuses distributed across the state of South Carolina. The institution has 12.92 million gross square feet in 234 buildings on the Columbia campus and another 594,000 cumulative square feet in 35 buildings on the regional Palmetto College campuses.

The University of South Carolina Lancaster campus is comprised of nine buildings containing 301,741 GSF. Of these nine buildings, four buildings are owned by the university, (141,036 cumulative GSF), and five other buildings are leased, (160,705 cumulative GSF). Approximate FTE enrollment for fall of 2019 is 1097 students. The University of South Carolina Salkehatchie campus is comprised of 23 buildings containing 203,404 GSF. Of these 23 buildings, 18 buildings are owned by the university, (167,551 cumulative GSF), and five other buildings are leased, (35,853 cumulative GSF). Approximate FTE enrollment for fall of 2019 is 636 students. The University of South Carolina Salkehatchie has two campuses, one in Allendale and a second campus in Walterboro. The University of South Carolina Sumter campus is comprised of eight university-owned buildings containing 222,948 GSF. Approximate FTE enrollment for fall of 2019 is 846 students. The University of South Carolina Union campus is comprised of eight buildings containing 71,899 GSF. Of these eight buildings, 5 buildings are owned by the university, (62,486 cumulative GSF), and three other buildings are leased, (9,413 cumulative GSF). Approximate FTE enrollment for fall of 2019 is 687 students. The institution stated that it maintains control over and ensures adequate physical facilities and resources at all its campuses and its off-site locations, but additional information and evidence is needed.

The institution has contracted with Sasaki and Associates since 1994 to update the university's Campus Master Plan. The Master Planning process is orchestrated by the institution's architect who also contributes to the vision and priorities of the plan. Representatives from Sasaki conduct extensive interviews with the President, the Provost, Vice Presidents, Deans, the Capital Planning Committee, the Capital Operations Planning Subcommittee (COPS), the Registrar's Office, Student Government Leadership, the City of Columbia planning officials, and local neighborhood associations to identify the

needs of various constituents within and around the campus. The emerging content and recommendations of the plan is first reviewed by the institution's architect and subsequently members of the Capital Planning Committee. Once the plan has the endorsement of institution's leadership staff, it is graphically presented to the Board of Trustees before being formally accepted and approved by a Board action.

Most recently, the institution contracted with Sasaki and Associates in 2017 for a complete review and update to the Columbia Master Plan. Undergraduate enrollment had grown approximately 23% since the previous space needs assessment documented in the 2010 Master Plan. This extensive and comprehensive Master Planning process was completed in 2018, resulting in a plan that provides a current view of the campus and its long-range needs, and reflects priorities established by the Board of Trustees and the institution's administration, based on 10 Planning Priorities. The Master Plan considered the implications of enrollment growth based on a predictive growth plan. The 2018 Master Plan concluded that the institution's current and planned facilities are adequate to meet the needs of educational programs and support services considering the institution's mission. The study noted that the 2018 classroom resources are nearing capacity; however, in accordance with the Capital Improvement Plan, classrooms have since been renovated and returned to service in the fall and spring of the 2019/2020 academic year restoring classroom capacity. In 2019, the old Law Center, now known as the Science and Technology Building, was repurposed to become an undergraduate chemistry lab facility which addressed significant concerns for both the quantity and quality of instructional labs. Attention is now being turned to creating and modernizing instructional Biology Labs. Furthermore, approximately 80,000 GSF of shell space exists in the Science and Technology Building for future renovation and upfitting to support future classroom and lab needs. The 2018 Master Plan concludes that these academic improvements and future expansions prepare the institution for growth in accordance with its enrollment plan. The conclusions of the Master Plan are something that it would be helpful to have more information about. How were the conclusions reached regarding adequacy?

The institution described an extensive capital project planning process that considers the academic and administrative units as well as the regional Palmetto College campuses and prioritizes these needs through the work of the Capital Planning Committee. To further ensure the ability to match facility resources with the institution's needs, the Five-Year Capital Improvement Plan outlines the institution's facilities-related capital renewal and new construction for capital projects in excess of $250,000. Individual work units make their requests for space and renovation needs through the Annual Blueprints for Academic Excellence and Service Excellence as a precursor to review by the Capital Review Committee.

The institution's capital planning process has a two-fold purpose: 1) to define procedures that systematically set priorities and thoroughly consider the institution's capital needs; and 2) to ensure the appropriate mix of funding sources and provide guidance on the strategic use of debt. All activities related to project approval, new construction, renovation, and major maintenance of the institution's capital assets are subject to the institution's Capital Planning Policy.

In accordance with the Capital Planning Policy, all capital planning activities are overseen by the Capital Planning Committee (CPC), and are integrated with other institutional strategic planning activities. The Senior Vice President for Finance and Administration, the Chief Operating Officer, and the Provost, through their roles as chairs of the Capital Planning Committee, are responsible for integrating capital planning throughout the institution's strategic planning process. To assist the CPC, the Capital Operations Planning Subcommittee (COPS) has been established and is made up of senior staff members designated by CPC chairs. Capital projects that are forthcoming for approval and implementation are documented in the institution's Five-Year Capital Improvement Plan which provides fund sources and a construction commencement schedule for every project exceeding $250,000. The Five-Year Capital Improvement Plan is developed based on requests from within the institution and presented to the Board of Trustees each year. Projects in the Five-Year Capital Improvement Plan are individually approved by the Board and other state regulatory agencies as required at the appropriate time in accordance with the Plan. In addition to the Capital Project approval process, the CPC oversees the allocation of institution's space and makes recommendations to the President for consideration.

While a great deal of information was presented, the documents did not clearly address how the institution's facilities and resources are adequate, both on and off campus nor how they appropriately serve the needs of the institution's educational programs, support services, and other mission-related activities. The Off-Site Reaffirmation Committee was unable to locate documentation that the physical facilities of the institution are adequate to support the mission of its programs and services. Comparative benchmarking data, surveys from faculty, staff, and students, and/or data comparing facility needs to actual available facilities may be helpful to establish this. This information was also lacking for the institution's off-campus instructional sites. No statements were made as to the extent of deferred maintenance on the campus, nor were documents provided regarding an equipment inventory or disposal policy.

There were numerous links to live websites provided, some documentation was illegible in the format provided and at least two links went to sites that were unrelated to the institution (Camtasia, Adobe Connect).