

**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**

## 13.8

### Institutional Environment

- 13.8 The institution takes reasonable steps to provide a healthy, safe, and secure environment for all members of the campus community.  
(*Institutional environment*)

#### Non-Compliance

The Division of Law Enforcement and Safety (DLES) is an institutional department consisting of the University of South Carolina Police Department, Environmental Health and Safety, and Enterprise Risk Management and Insurance. An Associate Vice President oversees the Division of Law Enforcement and Safety. The Division and Law Enforcement and Safety is a direct report to the institution's Senior Vice President for Administration who, in turn, reports directly to the president of the institution. The Division of Law Enforcement and Safety's Police Department is nationally accredited by the Commission on Accreditation for Law Enforcement Agencies (CALEA).

The institution's Police Department works with local law enforcement agencies, particularly the Richland County Sheriff's Office and the City of Columbia Police Department. The institution's Police Department maintains concurrent jurisdiction of campus properties with both entities but serves as the primary law enforcement response to university-owned property. Additionally, the institution's Police Department partners with local law enforcement to share crime trend analysis and provide mutual support for operations involving the institution.

The Investigations Unit oversees longer term criminal investigations arising from criminal incidents occurring on the institution's property to include sexual assaults. Per state law all higher education institutions in South Carolina must notify the South Carolina Law Enforcement Division, the state's primary investigative agency, of sexual assaults or deaths occurring on campus.

The DLES manages keyed and electronic access to buildings responding to after-hours call events for access from authorized institutional staff. The institution provided examples of event reports for officer responses. DLES also manages security design in facilities. Interior cameras and exterior site cameras and emergency call boxes are planned and installed in conjunction with Facilities. Routine assessments are done to evaluate performance and make repairs as needed.

DLES also coordinates the mass notification system and the institution provided samples but it was difficult to read the information provided or discern the information that was provided to the campus community. It is recommended that a more detailed set of examples, be provided as evidence of the notifications. Examples of crime bulletins (issued after an event) were also provided. Further, the annual Security and Fire Safety Report is published with information related to criminal activity, security, and fire safety.

The University of South Carolina Columbia Campus has an Emergency Operations Plan (EOP) – 2019 and a draft Emergency Operations Plan - 2020, that are designed to provide

responders with a framework and guidance to assist in protection of life, safety, and property. The institution states that the EOP is reviewed annually and tested a couple times a year by workshops, tabletop exercises, or real-world events. The Emergency Notification System (ENS) is guided by the Emergency Notification Plan and EM 1.00 University Policy. It would be helpful to provide additional evidence and documentation.

The institution provided the EOP documents for the Columbia campus and indicated that the regional Palmetto College campuses are responsible for implementing their own EOP and Emergency Notification System but are supported by the University of South Carolina Columbia campus. The institution recently added a position of Emergency Management Coordinator at the regional Palmetto College campuses to ensure these procedures are created and implemented appropriately. The Emergency Operations Plan documents submitted for the Lancaster, Salkehatchie, Sumter, and Union campuses expired in July 2020 and appeared to be unsigned versions.

The Department of Environmental Health and Safety (EHS) works to provide health and safety services to the institution through technical support, information and training programs, consulting services, and periodic auditing of health and safety practices and regulatory compliance. EHS employees work in a coordinated effort to address and help resolve environmental health and safety issues for the institution. Areas of employee expertise include: OSHA safety, chemical safety, radiation safety, biosafety, industrial hygiene, fire safety, hazardous waste management, environmental quality, and risk management. EHS developed and implemented an overall Environmental and Occupational Safety Management System (EMS) utilizing guidelines contained within the ISO 14001 and OHSAS 18001 standards.

The Division of Law Enforcement and Safety provides safety and security support for the regional Palmetto College campuses. The institution's Police Department is responsible for establishing and maintaining security cameras on all the regional Palmetto College campuses. Additionally, the institution's Police Department has one law enforcement officer assigned to the regional Palmetto College campuses to assist in developing emergency management, active shooter, and law enforcement programs tailored to each campus.

The Off-Site Reaffirmation Committee was unable to locate sufficient evidence in support of compliance with this standard. Evidence should be included to show that the institution takes reasonable steps to provide a healthy, safe, and secure environment. One possible example of this might be to include evidence of publication of Clery Act reports. The Off-Site Reaffirmation Committee was also unable to locate documentation of the institution's crisis communications plan or a statement or documentation from the institution regarding any investigations by the U.S. Department of Education's Office of Civil Rights for possible violations alleging sexual violence. This should include any open investigations as well as closed investigations that were active at the time of the last SACSCOC comprehensive review or occurred since the last SACSCOC comprehensive review.