9.1

Program Content

Educational programs (a) embody a coherent course of study, (b) are compatible with the stated mission and goals of the institution, and (c) are based upon fields of study appropriate to higher education.

Judgment

☑ Compliant ☐ Non-Compliant ☐ Not Applicable

Narrative

As stated in the University of South Carolina Columbia's mission statement, the University offers over 300 degrees at the bachelor's, master's, doctoral, and professional program levels, affording students the most comprehensive array of educational programs in the state. The program offerings at each level are described in the Undergraduate, Graduate, Law, Medicine and Pharmacy Bulletins.

The undergraduate academic bulletin was re-formatted in 2019-2020 to include a standard program of study with 4 components: Carolina Core, College Requirements, Program Requirements, and Major Requirements thus providing more coherence in course sequencing and general program clarity. The re-format included a review by each department of their program(s) for any requirements needing clarification or revision. The standard format provides universal academic terminology and promotes curricular cohesion across colleges and technology platforms (DegreeWorks, Major Maps, APPS). An effort has been made over the last four years to eliminate the repetition of curricular information on websites, in advising guidelines books, and any internal department handouts to avoid any chance of inconsistencies in curricular information. Instead, a move has been made toward using the academic bulletin as the one official source of curricular information. Colleges and departments are encouraged to link to the academic bulletin and major map repository (created in 2016) when referencing curricular information. A sample of undergraduate degree program Major Map are included below:

- B.S. in Biological Sciences
- B.S.in Hospitality Management
- B.S.in Integrated Information Technology
- B.S in Nursing (Generic)
- B.A. in Political Science
- B.S.B.A. in Real Estate.

Both the institutional and state program approval processes ensure educational programs embody a coherent course of study, are compatible with the stated mission and goals, and are based upon fields of study appropriate to higher education. As stated in ACAF 2.00 *Creation and Revision of Academic Programs*, each new program must undergo a rigorous program approval process. This process takes a minimum of five months to complete. The development of a new program normally begins in a department or academic unit of a college or school, and is first vetted by the unit faculty and chair, then by the campus/college/school curriculum committee. After this vetting in the college or school, the unit submits a Program Pre-Authorization Request Form to be reviewed and approved by the Provost prior to the submission of a new program proposal. The Pre-Authorization request for new programs asks questions regarding how the program is critical to advancing the University's mission, the demand for the program, new resources required, and sustainability of the program (see Pre-Authorization Form for New Programs or Units). After securing Office of the Provost approval to proceed, proposals are submitted via the electronic Academic Program Proposal System (APPS) for faculty governance consideration. As part of the program proposal process, a justification and rational for the new program, curriculum, resources required to implement the program, and budget is required (the University uses the South Carolina Commission on Higher Education's New Program Proposal form). Proposals are reviewed first by the relevant curriculum committee, and then by the Faculty Senate (undergraduate programs) or Graduate Council (graduate programs). New programs (and major program revisions) then receive final Provost approval, and are reviewed by the President, and then Board of Trustees approval. The minutes of faculty governance (Faculty Senate and Graduate Council) and Board meetings offer evidence of program approval by the appropriate governing bodies. See example new program, program modification, and program termination approval process exhibits in the document directory.

The Office of Academic Programs assists academic units in navigating the approval process and provides guidance and links to the required forms. In addition, each college or school at the University of South Carolina Columbia has an Academic Program Liaison tasked with monitoring the progress of program proposals in their respective units and working closely with the faculty chairs and undergraduate and graduate program directors to help them review new or revised programs and curricula at the unit level, and for transmitting program proposals to the campus, college or school level for approval.

Another level of review guaranteeing that programs conform to best practices in higher education is provided for in the South Carolina Code of Laws, Section 59-103-35, which requires all new programs undertaken by public institutions of higher education to be approved by South Carolina Commission on Higher Education (SC CHE). After Board of Trustees approval, requests for new programs are submitted to CHE for review and approval. The new program proposal is reviewed by the Advisory Committee on Academic Programs comprised of academic affairs representatives from public institutions in South Carolina, SC CHE's Committee on Academic Affairs and Licensing, and then finally the full SC CHE Commission. The SC CHE review process ensures new programs are appropriate for and compatible with the mission and goals of the institution, are based upon fields of study appropriate to higher education, and are not unwarranted duplication of other programs offered in the state. Programs are entered into the Academic Bulletin only after the Office of the Provost receives formal notification of approval from both SC CHE and SACSCOC.

Finally, the University ensures that the curriculum carries out the goals of its academic programs, and is appropriate to the diplomas, certificates, and degrees it awards, through the required program accreditation and external program review process. Program review was initially mandated and conducted by the state through SC CHE, although budget constraints eliminated this SC CHE function. Since the late 2000's, the Office of the Provost has assumed oversight of program review. The university is committed to the comprehensive periodic review of all degree-granting academic programs. External program review complements the program approval process by ensuring that programs of study are coherent and current and as stated in ACAF 2.20 *Academic Program Review*. Each fall, the Office of Academic Programs sends a memo to all academic deans reemphasizing the importance of external review and recommending that all programs accredited by a professional accrediting agency remain accredited; and for those programs not undergoing a professional program accreditation, external reviews should be conducted at least every seven years. The external program review schedules of all colleges were incorporated into a University of South Carolina Columbia Program Accreditation and Review spreadsheet. Please note that some Spring 2020 reviews were postponed due to COVID-19. Examples of recent accreditation and external review materials are provided below:

- M.A., Athletic Training – Approval of substantive change from B.S. to M.S. degree (Spring 2020) and continuing accreditation letter Spring 2019
- B.S., M.S., and Ph.D., Biological Sciences – Self-Study Spring 2020
- B.A., in Chinese Studies, French, German, Classics, Russian, Spanish, and Comparative Literature; M.A., in French, German, Spanish, and Comparative Literature; and Ph.D. in Spanish and Comparative Literature – External Review Fall 2019
- Ed.D., Curriculum and Instruction - External Review Spring 2020
- M.A. and Ph.D., Linguistics – External review Fall 2019
- M.P.A. – Program Review Fall 2019
- M.N.A., Nurse Anesthesia – Self Study and Accreditation Letter Fall 2019
- Ph.D., Nursing Science – Self-Study Spring 2019
- D.P.T., Physical Therapy – Accreditation Letter and Report Spring 2019
- B.S., M.S., and Ph.D., Physics – External Review Fall 2019
- B.S. and M.R, Retailing – External Review Spring 2020
- Ph.D., Social Work – External Review Spring 2019
- B.A., B.S., M.A., and Ph.D., Sociology – External Review Spring 2019
- B.A., M.A., M.A.T., and M.F.A., Theatre – Accreditation Letter and Report Spring 2019

Regional Palmetto College Campuses

The four regional campuses of University of South Carolina (Lancaster, Union, Sumter, and Salkehatchie) fall under the authority of the Columbia campus and reside in a central administrative unit known as Palmetto College, headed by a Chancellor and Associate Provost; these campuses are referred to as regional Palmetto College campuses. The campuses exist as part of the University of South Carolina System as denoted in Board of Trustees Bylaws. The administrative unit also houses the academic unit the Palmetto College Columbia, which offers courses on the Columbia campus and metropolitan Columbia area as well as AA/AS programs and courses at Fort Jackson. This unit also provides instruction, guidance and support for the delivery of the university's undergraduate online degree completion programs.

As noted in the University of South Carolina system Mission Statement, "The primary mission of the University of South Carolina system is the education of the state's diverse citizens through teaching, research, creative activity, and community engagement." The regional Palmetto College campuses of the University play a vital role in the fulfillment of this mission. In addition to the system Mission Statement, each regional Palmetto College campus Mission Statement states, "Through classroom and laboratory instruction delivered in a variety of face-to-face and distance learning formats and modalities, the institution awards the Associate in Arts and Associate in Science degrees..." The campuses also serve as providers of coursework leading to baccalaureate degrees offered by the comprehensive universities (Aiken, Beaufort, and Upstate) and the flagship, Columbia. These associate degrees are described in the respective bulletins of Lancaster, Salkehatchie, Sumter, and Union. In addition to providing these programs, the regional campuses bring the resources of the entire university to citizens throughout the state.

Accredited with the University of South Carolina Columbia by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges, the regional Palmetto College campuses of Lancaster, Salkehatchie, Sumter, and Union principally provide the first two years of undergraduate education, focusing on general education, as well as, at Lancaster, selected associate degree programs mainly for their locales. Based on the student learning outcomes and rationale of the University of South Carolina Columbia general education requirements, called the "Carolina Core," the associate in arts and the associate in science degrees share the same program learning outcome goals for all campuses as the general education goals:

> The Carolina Core develops competency in communication, analytical reasoning and problem-solving, scientific literacy, information literacy and the arts. Topics in global citizenship and multicultural understanding as well as values, ethics and social responsibility are explored."

The degree requirements for the associate degrees differ from the Carolina Core requirements in one aspect: recognizing that many students start at one of the regional campuses without the same preparation in math and science as many of their Columbia campus counterparts, introductory math courses that do not count as a Carolina Core course requirement still provide credit toward the student's associate degree.

The associate degree requirements are also designed to allow for flexibility within the student's ultimate baccalaureate degree program, as the student can choose among three Carolina Core learning outcome areas to meet the requirements for

the associate degree. Many of the Carolina Core requirements can be met by students in their junior or senior years, depending on their degree programs, and the design of the associate degree programs reflect this. The rationale for the degree requirements, therefore, is to provide the same mix of communication skills, analytical skills, introduction to foreign language and cultures, fundamental understandings of science and the humanities that the Carolina Core requires, so that students can both prepare themselves for their four-year degree without fear of losing credits or time to earn their degrees, while also exploring potential new majors or careers during the early years of their college education.

These campuses offer a thorough and comprehensive array of course, program, and degree offerings designed to provide access and opportunity to the populations they serve. In 2013, in conjunction with the establishment of the Carolina Core, the general AA and AS degree programs were aligned across all four campuses (and the Ft. Jackson Program), therefore creating common degrees. The offering of these degrees allows the campuses to provide students the opportunity to pursue a degree either as a "terminal" outcome or as a pathway to additional coursework that applies toward a baccalaureate degree. The common AA and AS programs follow a multi-step review/approval process beginning with the faculty of the respective campus (see narrative in each campus section below) followed by the Palmetto College Campuses' Faculty Senate. Ultimately necessary approvals are forwarded though the Palmetto College Chancellor's Office and the Office of the Provost to the Columbia Faculty Senate where final approval resides.

While proposed changes to these programs may be for submitted by an individual campus faculty, because the degrees are common across all campuses, changes must be approved by the faculties of all campuses through the regional Palmetto College campuses Faculty Senate. Sample excerpts from Palmetto College Faculty Senate discussion may be found at this link: Faculty Senate Minutes Excerpt. Full Faculty Senate activity found at this link: Palmetto College Campuses Faculty Senate. Minute archives may be found at the following link: Palmetto College Campuses Faculty Senate Minutes.

Curriculum Review

The curriculum is subject to continual review, and revisions are made when necessary. The most recent revision was in 2013, when a common curriculum for the A.A. and A.S. degree programs was adopted by all the regional Palmetto College campuses. Full implementation took place fall 2014. Responsibility for curriculum development and review rests with the faculty who, in cooperation with the campus and university administrators, define the elements necessary for approvals of changes to degree curricula, in accordance with the processes established by the Palmetto College Campuses Faculty Manual (see specifically, pp. 1-Functions at campus level and 4 – Functions at Senate level). Faculty review curriculum relative to general education goals as outlined by the University of South Carolina Carolina Core and the Palmetto College campuses maintain representation on the Carolina Core Committee. Faculty review requirements for associate degrees both in light of the Carolina Core and individual campus missions and community needs. Faculty also review curriculum to insure successful transitions for students from associate degree programs to baccalaureate programs. The process of curricular change can be initiated by any faculty member, although it is normally initiated by the Academic Council, which is a committee of the faculty organization composed of the associate dean for academic affairs and the chairs of the four academic divisions (Arts and Languages, Math & Science, Social Sciences, and Professional Studies).

Lancaster

Lancaster also offers three specialized associate degrees. The members of the campus Faculty Organization elect representation from each of the three academic divisions to serve on a local Curriculum Committee, which may make recommendations for changes to programs to the Lancaster Faculty Organization. The Faculty Organization may approve those revisions by a simple majority, after which those proposals are first submitted to the Associate Dean, then to the Campus Dean, and if approved, are then forwarded to the Palmetto College Campuses Faculty Senate System Affairs Committee and then to the full Senate. Curriculum changes for specialized associate degrees that are not common to all campuses require a simple majority vote. The Lancaster curriculum committee also regularly reviews and revises advising worksheets presenting approved curriculum, including updating the lists of Carolina Core courses offered at Lancaster that appear in associate degrees programs. See excerpts from the Faculty Organization minutes: Faculty Organization Minutes, February 2018; Faculty Organization Minutes, February 2019; Faculty Organization Minutes, September 2019.

Salkehatchie

Excerpts of faculty organization minutes describing actions related to the campus' degrees may be found at the following link: Salkehatchie Faculty Organization Minutes, February 2019. If approved, the proposed change is forwarded to the Palmetto College Campuses Faculty Senate for consideration. If approved, the changes are addressed by the central Palmetto College office as described above in Regional Palmetto College campuses section.

Sumter

Suggestions for new programs or changes to the existing Sumter Associate Degree programs are initiated by the Academic Planning Committee at the request of the Faculty Organization. Upon completion of the changes and approval by the Faculty Organization, they are sent to the Associate Dean of Academic and Student Affairs and then to the Campus Dean for their review and approval. Excerpts of faculty organization minutes describing actions related to the campus' degrees may be found at the following link: Sumter Faculty Organization Minutes, April 2013. If approved, the Campus Dean then forwards them to the Palmetto College Campuses Faculty Senate for consideration. If approved, the changes are addressed by the central Palmetto College office as described above in Regional Palmetto College campuses section.

Union

Suggestions for new programs or changes to the existing Union Associate Degree programs are initiated by the Academic Affairs Committee at the request of the Faculty Organization. Upon completion of the changes and approval by the Faculty Organization, they are sent to the Associate Dean and then to the Campus Dean for their review and approval. Excerpts of faculty organization minutes describing actions related to the campus' degrees may be found at

the following links: Union Faculty Organization Minutes, February 2016 (two highlights), Union Faculty Organization Minutes, April 2018 (one highlight). Upon completion of the changes and approval by the Faculty Organization, they are sent to the Academic Dean and then to the Campus Dean for their review and approval. If approved, the Campus Dean then forwards them to the Palmetto College Campuses Faculty Senate for consideration. If approved, the changes are addressed by the central Palmetto College office as described above in Regional Palmetto College campuses section.

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