

Focus Carolina

Recognition and Visibility Subcommittee

The Recognition and Visibility Subcommittee framed its recommendations based on three premises. First, the perception of the University of South Carolina is inextricably linked to the perception of the state of South Carolina. Second, the role of the public research University is different from other state-supported institutions of higher education. Third, many faculty, staff, and students on the University of South Carolina's main campus in Columbia do not fully recognize the caliber of scholarship, creative endeavors, teaching, and accomplishments of students, staff, or faculty right here on campus.

Committee Membership: Susan Cutter (Geography); Dennis Pruitt (Student Affairs); Gary Snyder (Office of Advancement); William Bearden (Moore School); Chris Myers (Office of Development); Michael Angel (Chemistry); Christopher Berg (Music); Craig Kridel (Education); Ali Rizvi (Medicine); Jerry Hilbish (Biological Sciences); Thorne Compton (English), Andreas Krammer (SGA, undergrad); Andy Allen (GSA, grad); Edward Munn Sanchez (Honors College)

Goal: To raise the academic visibility and stature of the University through its scholarship and creative endeavors, teaching excellence, and accomplishments of students. Our focus on improving the recognition and visibility and demonstrating the value of the university targets three constituencies: 1) within the University; 2) the state's residents and governing bodies; and 3) national and international audiences.

Promote Excellence (within the University)

1. Refine the mission statement of the University to include a statement on the impact of achieving excellence in our educational mission.

Current Mission statement: The primary mission of the University of South Carolina, a multi-campus public institution serving the entire state of South Carolina, is the education of the state's diverse citizens through teaching, research, creative activity, and service.

Proposed Mission statement: The primary mission of the University of South Carolina, a multi-campus public institution serving the entire state of South Carolina, is to educate the state's diverse citizens through teaching, research, creative activity, and service. An education at the University of South Carolina enables our students to contribute to the economic, civic, and cultural life of our state, nation, and world.

2. Establish an Office of Faculty Excellence and Recognition (OFER) at the VP for Academic Affairs level that would identify our most talented and highly regarded faculty and provide resources to them to pursue scholarship and creative endeavors. This will improve the national and international reputation of the individual faculty (and thus the institution), and help improve retention of our most visible and talented faculty. The OFER would assist unit chairs and deans in identifying and nominating deserving faculty for prestigious and nationally recognized meritorious awards. The OFER would also establish a program to identify our most talented scholar-teachers and provide resources to them to engage more students in their scholarly and creative activities. Once established, the scholar-teaching program could evolve into a formal university-wide peer-mentoring program that assists all units in promoting excellence in teaching.
3. Establish an Office for National Peer Recognition (ONPR) at the level of the VP for Academic Affairs that takes a university-wide leadership role to increase the national ranking and external visibility of the University of South Carolina. Such a focused effort is a critical component in ensuring that USC demonstrates a rising status among peer institutions. Activities could include 1) assist in the development of brochures emphasizing academic aspects of USC to increase external reputation; 2) advise Provost on infrastructure investments, organizational changes, areas for publicity that would enhance external visibility and recognition of academic programs and faculties; 3) disseminate information internally to all academic units demonstrating best practices for publicizing their accomplishments to external audiences. The ONPR will focus on the activities of the University as both an institution that values diversity and one that provides exceptional opportunities for minority faculty, students, and staff through its promotion of the University of South Carolina as a welcoming, supportive environment where all individuals (faculty, students, and staff) can achieve a distinguished career or educational experience.
4. Establish an annual Educational Foundation Award for Technological Innovation, to highlight technological innovations or the pioneering use of technology in teaching, research, or creative endeavors.
5. Create a Multidisciplinary Research and Scholarship Council (MRSC) to advise the Provost and the VP for Research in supporting and sustaining multi-disciplinary scholarship and creative activity. The MRSC would help create and foster the potential for interactions among disparate faculty that are presently limited by traditional disciplinary boundaries and structural impediments. The MRSC would provide university-wide recommendations on reducing such impediments including but not limited to infrastructure investments; organizational or administrative changes; and faculty responsibilities and rewards.
6. Identify and consistently recognize the achievements of non-tenure track faculty and staff, especially those from underrepresented groups and reward them appropriately.

7. Create an Office of Student Excellence and Recognition (OSER) that will coordinate the important, yet diverse efforts of existing student-oriented offices focused on raising the visibility and quality of our student body. Such a coordinating office located under the VP for Student Affairs would help expand the present focus on fellowships, scholarships, and pre-professional advising; foster excellence and recognition of achievements in creative and performing arts; boost involvement in community, national, and international service; and identify other areas of student achievement.

Improve Recognition (regional, national, international)

8. Establish and fund the Provost's Annual Symposium Series (PASS). This program would screen competitive and thematic proposals from across campus to bring national and internationally recognized scholars and artists to campus for lectures, research symposia, master classes, and performances.
9. Develop and fund targeted advertising for faculty, undergraduate and graduate programs, and student recruitment to top-level disciplinary and interdisciplinary publications, stressing the high quality of life in the University and region.
10. Enhance marketing/communications resources so there is more focus on digital (web, podcasts, radio, television) rather than print media/communications outreach to elevate the perception of undergraduate and graduate programs across multiple constituencies.
11. Streamline the internal mechanism for advertising departmental and collegiate colloquium, and creative endeavors. Developing a web-interface for posting such events will facilitate communication across the University. A master calendar of all University events by week and by month, updated daily and readily available on the web would be useful as well.
12. Encourage and reward faculty for exemplary service to scholarly societies' governing boards at the regional, national, or international level, including those who serve on funding agency panels, advisory boards, or study committees of the National Research Council.
13. Establish an annual Public Service, Education, and Outreach Medal that would recognize individual champions, who through their efforts have demonstrated leadership and excellence in the areas of public service, education, and outreach. Recipients could be from within the University community or external to the University.
14. Promote programs and services that highlight the University's commitment to diversity and its many benefits to the campus and the quality of life our community and the region; promote the achievements of minority students, faculty, and staff, as well.

Translate Achievement

15. Redesign and modernize the University's homepage. This includes a web link to student and faculty significant achievements at the state, regional, national, and international levels. Increase the use of digital platforms to regularly showcase achievements and value, employing platforms such as iTunes U, You Tube, Flash presentation and others.
16. Implement a Carolina Distinguished Lecture Series called "South Carolina's Best" that would feature a public lecture and a podcast. This high visibility venue would feature one of the Carolina Distinguished Professors, Endowed, or Named Professors in a well-publicized talk on their research, targeted to a general audience.
17. Establish a centralized "Lectures for the Public" list of speakers and topics and advertise its availability widely throughout the state. This resource would provide a clearinghouse for speakers that local community organizations, non-profits, church groups, etc. could access and help translate the scholarship and creative endeavors of the University to the community.
18. Use advertising spots in broadcasts of athletic events to promote academic achievements of faculty and students (how University research and scholarship helps the state and nation).
19. Develop the "Imagine South Carolina without the University" campaign. This would include a series of maps showing all members in different categories (e.g., doctors, teachers, and entrepreneurs) and then the same map with University alumni removed.
20. Increase the awareness of the Overseas/Study Abroad programs, nontraditional avenues of overseas experiences, and the fact that the University is a clearinghouse for such endeavors for the state. These opportunities should appear prominently on the University's main web page and in electronic media and publications. Increase efforts to provide information about the University and its academic programs to American cultural centers in foreign nations and universities.