

**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

7.1: Institutional Planning

- 7.1 **The institution engages in ongoing, comprehensive, and integrated research-based planning and evaluation processes that (a) focus on institutional quality and effectiveness and (b) incorporate a systematic review of institutional goals and outcomes consistent with its mission.**
(Institutional planning) [CR]

Compliance

The Off-Site Reaffirmation Committee found support for the institution's case for compliance.

In 2019, after the appointment of the president, the institution reviewed the existing Focus Carolina plan, the Advance Carolina implementation guide, and the Blueprint for Academic and Service Excellence—the structured method for annual planning, evaluation, and assessment for each academic and service unit at the institution. After the review by the senior leadership team, it was decided to expand on the tenants of the Focus Carolina plan. Additionally, the administration desired to combine academic and administrative units into a single, aligned planning, budgeting and evaluation system during this review process. The president hosted a multi-day offsite retreat with nearly eighty academic and administrative leaders to develop eight new strategic priorities for the institution to better reflect its academic, research, and community mission. The institution provided a crosswalk to ensure continuation of the critical components of the Focus Carolina plan during the transition to the new and broader plan.

The institution stated that South Carolina Code of Laws, Sections 1-1-810 and 1-1-820 requires all state agencies to submit an Agency Accountability Report (AAR). The institution provided a link to the law, but the Off-Site Reaffirmation Committee was not able to confirm this evidence with the link provided.

The institution provided AARs for the institution and the regional campuses for 2017, 2018, and 2019. The evaluation of the Focus Carolina 2023 plan is included in the AAR. After reviewing these reports, the Off-Site Reaffirmation Committee determined that the institution does have an ongoing, comprehensive, and integrated research-based planning and evaluation process. The plan focused on institution quality and effectiveness and incorporated a systematic review of institutional goals that are consistent with the institutional mission. The institution evaluated the eight priorities identified in the Focus Carolina 2023 plan. In 2017 and 2018, the institution and the regional campuses evaluated the Focus Carolina plan.