

**Office of the Provost
Blueprint Plan for 2012-2013**

Executive Summary

Vision Statement

The University of South Carolina at Columbia is a premier academic institution dedicated to academic excellence and academic integrity that upholds high quality student-centered teaching and learning, nationally and internationally recognized research, scholarship and artistic creation, and community-engaged service. The vision of the Provost's Office is to enhance the reputation and stature of the University of South Carolina at Columbia and the regional campuses through excellence in undergraduate, graduate, and professional education, in scholarship, research, and creative achievement, and in service to and engagement with our community that will enhance the quality of life for our students, faculty, and citizenry.

Mission Statement

The Office of the Provost is dedicated to the faculty and students of the University of South Carolina and to their academic success. The primary mission of the Office of the Provost is to provide leadership for academics at the University of South Carolina and to ensure academic excellence, integrity, and fairness in educating our students, in performing our research, scholarship, and creative works, in serving our university, community, and professions, and in fostering an environment that embraces and promotes diversity of people and ideas.

Planning

In 2008, the University of South Carolina (USC) embarked on an ambitious planning process, *Focus Carolina*, a roadmap for the University to follow in the next decade and beyond. In 2011, the Office of the Provost launched a major initiative targeted at the hiring of faculty to meet the educational goals established for our students and to enhance research and scholarship in areas vital to the recognition of the University of South Carolina as a major research institution. All academic and service units of the University participate in the annual Blueprint process providing updates on the goals and initiatives in support of *Focus Carolina*.

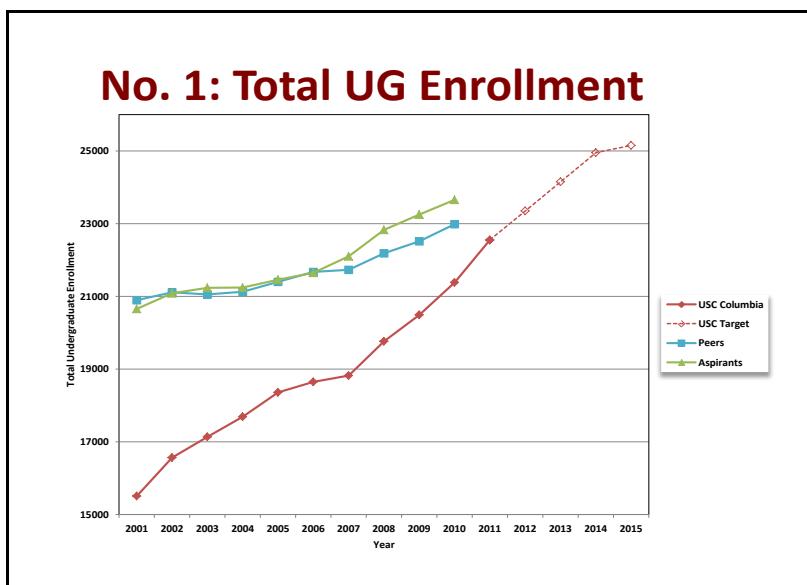
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Academic Dashboard

In 2011-2012, the Provost developed an Academic Dashboard of performance measures by which to evaluate the performance of the University of South Carolina against its past performance and to benchmark against peers and peer aspirant institutions.

1. Total Undergraduate Enrollment

The total undergraduate enrollment at the University of South Carolina's Columbia campus has steadily increased for the past 10 years. Approximately, 40 percent of all students in South Carolina, enrolled in a public university, attend one of the USC system campuses. The Fall 2011 undergraduate enrollment at USC was.



Key Strategies:

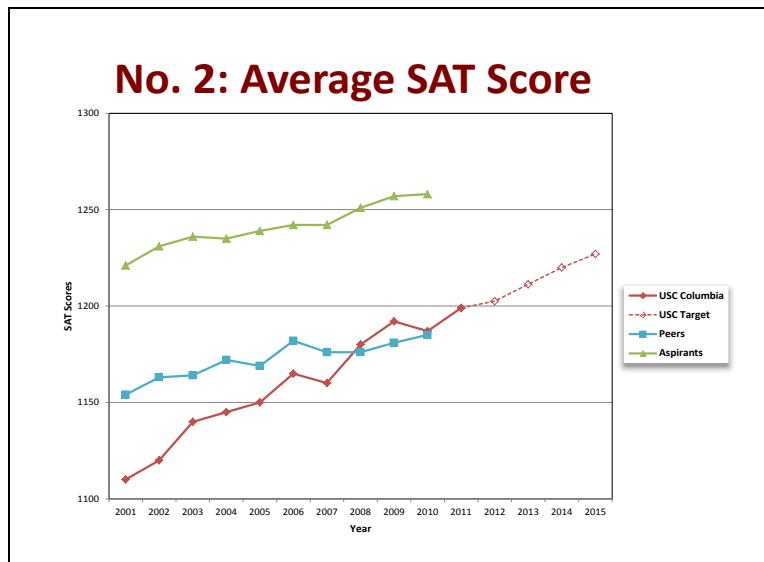
- Continue strong in-state and out-of-state recruiting efforts
- Increase available scholarship funds
- Increase capacity through establishing the Gamecock Gateway, maintaining a strong evening program, providing sufficient laboratory classes, and developing a summermester
- Increase enrollment in majors with capacity for additional students
- Gain more understanding of the challenges faced by transfer students
- Strengthen support for transfer students through advising, supplemental instruction, internship and career planning, etc
- Continue collaboration with all offices and programs working with USC Connect; assess faculty and student perspectives; use results to increase faculty leadership and strengthen integrative learning programs for students

2. Average SAT Score

The University of South Carolina Columbia has systematically improved the SAT scores of its first-time, fulltime freshmen and is proud its SAT score average is the highest in

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history. The University looks forward to continued success by accepting students with the potential to be leading citizens for our state and nation.



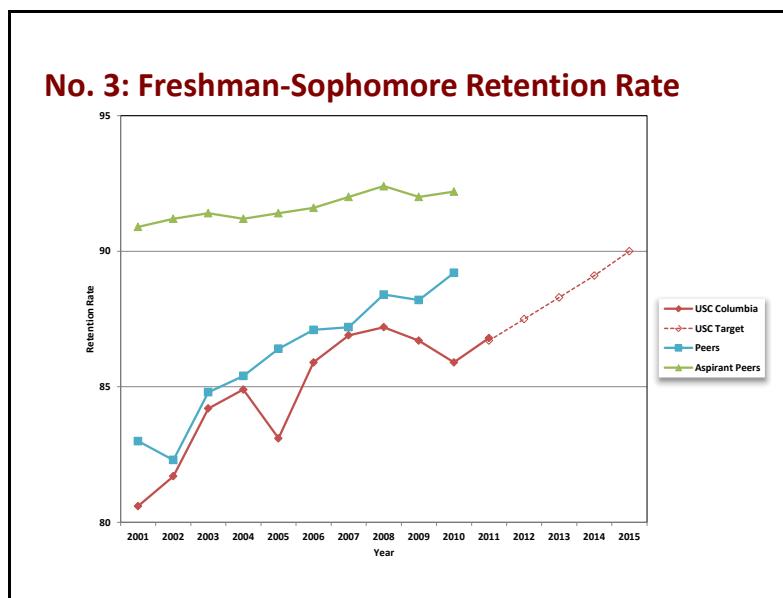
Key Strategies:

- Increase size and further enhance South Carolina Honors College and Capstone programs while providing access and opportunities for students with lower SAT scores

3. Freshman-Sophomore Retention Rate

The University of South Carolina strives to continue to improve its freshman-sophomore retention rate by providing exceptional curriculum and co-curriculum opportunities for students. The First-Year Reading Experience provides all incoming freshman and transfer students with a common reading experience that sets academic expectations for the coming year. University 101 is currently in its 39th year, fostering student success, development and transitions into, through and out of USC.

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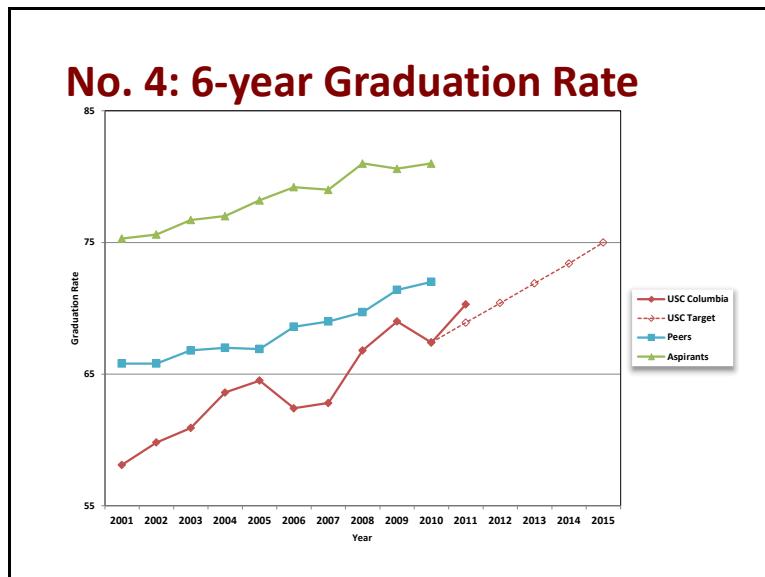
Key Strategies:

- Foster a culture that supports student success by enhancing student orientation, supplemental instruction and support services, and opportunity for participation in thematic residence halls
- Ensure curricular coherence between general education and the program major through implementation of the new Carolina Core
- Strengthen student advising so that standard practices across the University better support student planning, profession and graduation
- Engage students in beyond-the-classroom and life-long learning through USC Connect
- Focus on success in key freshman courses so that courses are more readily available, instructors are oriented to first-year student instructional needs and supplemental instruction is offered where appropriate
- Strengthen key freshman curriculum, including mathematics instruction and learning, laboratory course offerings and instruction and access to foreign languages

4. Six-year Graduation Rate

Developing an aggressive and proactive student retention and on-time graduation program is important to the University of South Carolina.

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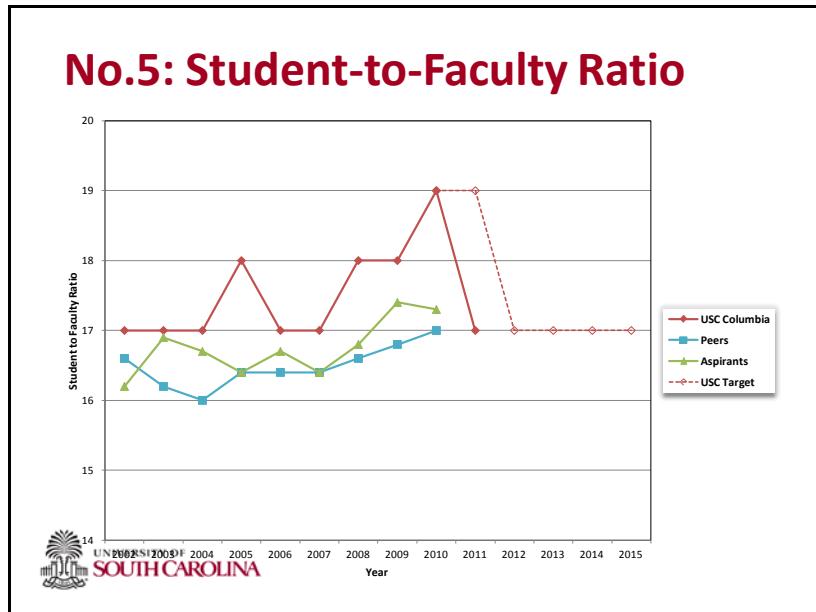
Key Strategies:

- Engage faculty in retaining students and expanding the number and use of supplemental instruction sections
- Improve and enhance tutoring programs provided by the writing and math centers
- Equip students to use DegreeWorks and Graduation Planning Service (GPS) to identify the shortest path to graduation for students
- Standardize advising to facilitate student contact with advisors including online scheduling and student preparation for advising session
- Identify and remove bottleneck courses
- Develop and implement a summer semester

5. Student to Faculty Ratio

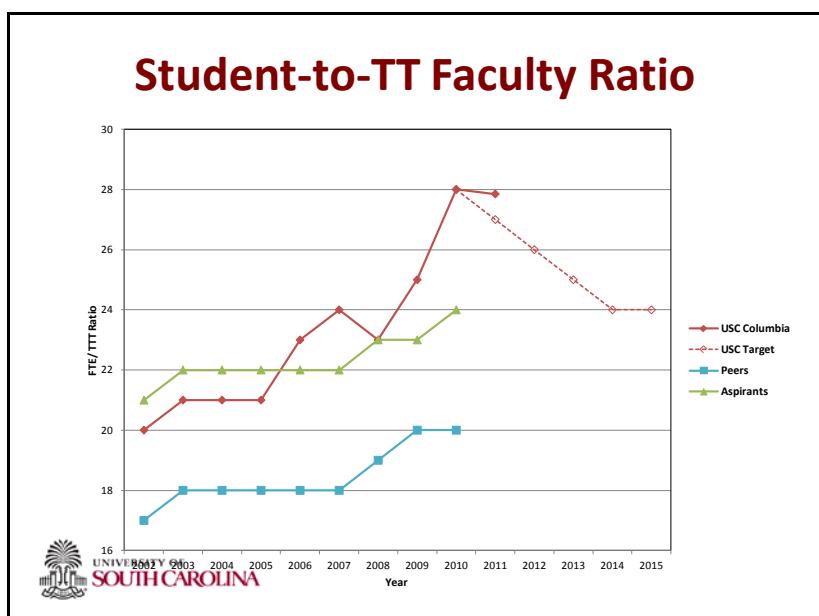
The University of South Carolina's student-to-faculty ratio is similar to that of peer and peer aspirant universities. Through a faculty replenishment initiative, USC is adding new *tenure-track/tenured* faculty which will improve the student to faculty ratio. Although these additional tenure-track/tenured faculty members will improve USC's student to tenure-track/tenured faculty ratio, the ratio will still be higher than those of peer or peer aspirant universities. However, USC believes attracting new talent to academic disciplines, including arts and sciences, business, education, engineering and computing, health sciences, mass communications and information studies, music, law, and hospitality, retailing and sports management and enhancing the economic vitality of our communities will improve the overall quality of the education USC offers to its students.

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Key Strategies:

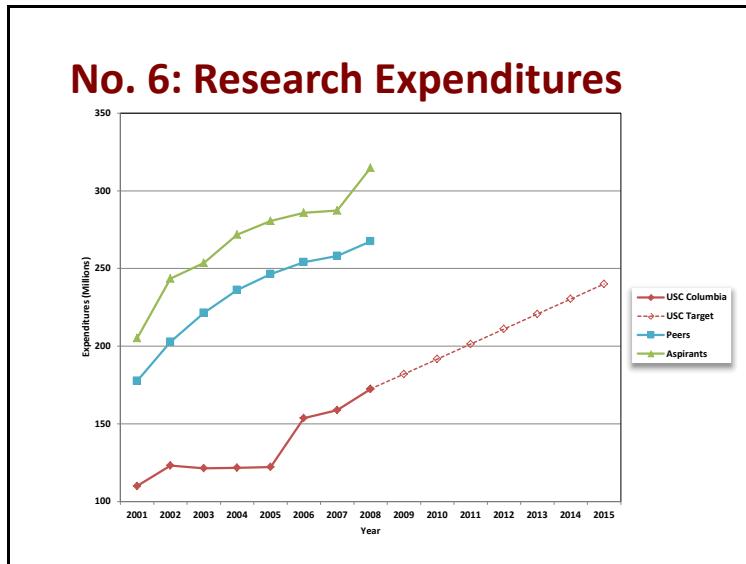
- Aggressively recruit and hire 200 tenure-track/tenured faculty to reduce the student to faculty ratio
- Increase full-time faculty with terminal degrees
- Have smaller sections and recitation sections in larger courses



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6. Research Expenditures

The University of South Carolina is dedicated to its continued success as a global research university. USC, designated as Carnegie's Very High Research Activity University with nearly a quarter billion dollars in research funding, continues to make research, scholarship and creative activity a top priority for its faculty and students.



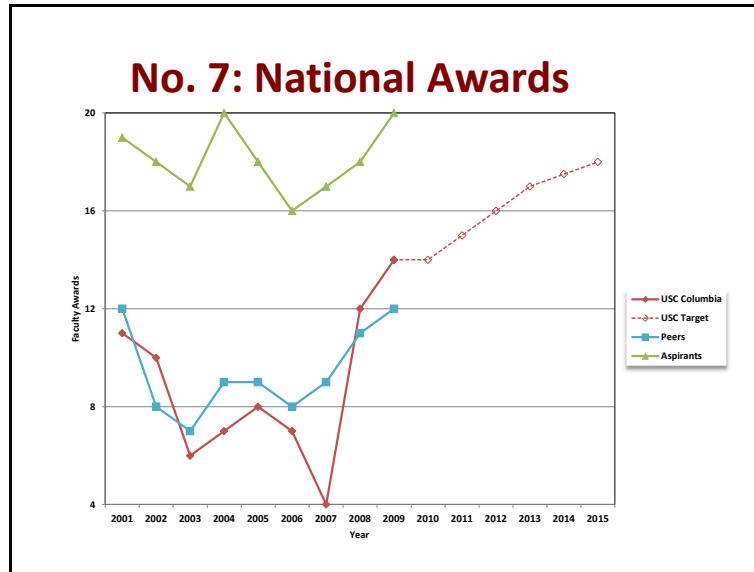
Key Strategies:

- Increase faculty activity in external research
- Support the VPR's plan of developing cross disciplinary research teams to conduct research and seek funding in niche areas and in areas where there is robust funding

7. National Honors and Awards for Faculty

The University of South Carolina continues to encourage and support its faculty to compete for national faculty awards and fellowships. USC is committed to supporting opportunities for its faculty to apply for these prestigious awards.

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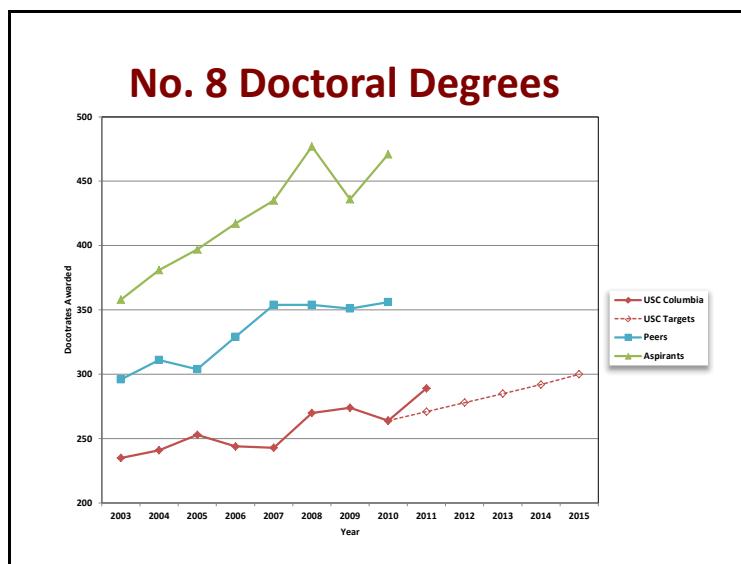


Key Strategies:

- Hire SmartState chairs and senior faculty in Faculty Replenishment Initiative
- Encourage faculty to compete for national honors and awards
- Increase awareness of their importance
- Provide incentives, support and recognition for faculty scholarship
- Support faculty scholarship through the Provost internal grants program and through the VPR ASPIRE grants

8. **Doctoral Degrees**

Increasing the production of doctoral degrees conferred by the University of South Carolina is an important dashboard initiative. An increase in the number of doctoral degree holders contributes to regional and national economic growth and is the principal means of sustaining international competitiveness.



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Key Strategies:

- Increase the number of Ph.D. candidates
- Increase total number of external fellowships
- Increase number and amount of graduate assistantship stipends
- Facilitate timely graduation by streamlining process and removing any unnecessary obstacles
- Modernize our Graduate School
- Develop and implement a professional development program for Ph.D. students

GOALS

Goal 1: Enhance the Quality of Undergraduate, Graduate and Professional Education

Undergraduate Studies

In December 2011, the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS) approved USC's quality enhancement plan (QEP), *USC Connect: Integrated Learning Within and Beyond the Classroom*. This plan is intended to integrate coursework with experiences outside the classroom. *USC Connect* encourages beyond-the-classroom engagement through undergraduate research and discovery, service learning, global engagement, and other experiences that allow students to apply what they know to a variety of situations, reflect on what they observe, deepen learning, and establish habits of mind for lifelong learning.

Through participation in *USC Connect* and engagement in a variety of leadership learning opportunities all students are encouraged to develop as campus and community leaders. The Carolina Leadership Initiative offers a student and a faculty grant program, a speaker series, the President's Leadership Dialogue, a website with information on leadership opportunities, and other resources to encourage student development as leaders during college and throughout life. A new leadership minor is offered beginning Fall 2012 to provide an academic curriculum for students interested in studying leadership. Increased opportunities for students to engage in other leadership building activities include undergraduate research, internships where students can apply their knowledge, service learning and community service, and international activities either through study aboard or immersion in international activities on campus such as living in the Carolina International House at Maxcy College.

In addition, under the leadership of Vice Provost and Dean of Undergraduate Studies, Helen Doerpinghaus, the Carolina Core will be launched in fall 2012 with the revision of many general education courses and the creation of new core courses. Faculty members at Columbia, the regional campuses and the extended university are engaged in the development and subsequent implementation of the Carolina Core and *USC Connect*.

To provide increased access to the University of South Carolina to entering freshman, Gamecock Gateway, a residential bridge program, has been developed and will be implemented in fall 2012 to provide students access to USC student services for one year while taking classes at the Midlands Technical College Airport Campus. Students will pursue transfer-compliant coursework at Midlands, while benefitting from a variety of support programs and student services offered by both institutions.

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Continued support for USC transfer students provides the foundation for their success. Moreover, continued commitment to living-learning communities at USC will offer opportunities for students to engage fully in *USC Connect* and college life. In addition, to expand access to bachelor's degrees to time and place-bound, former Carolina students across the state, Distributed Learning initiatives will provide on-line learning courses, thereby, enhancing learning resources for students throughout the state. USC developed, promoted, and began enrolling students in a fully on-line degree completion program, "Back to Carolina," for those who are over 25 years of age with 60 hours of previously earned credit. The first "Back to Carolina" students will begin course work in fall 2012.

Plans for next year include focusing on the success of our students through proactive advising, by engaging them in supplemental instruction and increasing supplemental instruction coverage of courses with high drop, fail, and withdraw (DFW) rates, in University 101, and in other curricular enhancements, and by helping students cope with issues that are detrimental to their retention and progress toward graduation. Expanded career services personnel will provide better experiential learning opportunities for students. In addition, participation in international activities will be promoted by providing scholarships and finding other ways to make international study more affordable for undergraduate students. Gamecock Gateway will be implemented in fall 2012.

Graduate Studies

The Vice Provost and Dean of Graduate Studies, Lacy Ford, implemented strategies to improve graduate education, to provide better training for graduate teaching assistants, to create a better working relationship with the Graduate Student Association, and to increase the efficiency and effectiveness of the Graduate School. Two new associate dean positions were established: one was filled by Dr. Jessica Elfenbein and the other will be filled this summer. The Graduate School also intensified its efforts to provide non-academic services to graduate students through the creation of a part-time position for that purpose and a closer working relationship with the Graduate Student Association. Continued support of graduate travel grants and Presidential Fellowships, and the reestablishment of a Presidential Doctoral Diversity Fellowships program are providing support to masters and doctoral candidates. In addition, in an effort to continually increase the quality of graduate students enrolling at USC and in collaboration with the deans, an effort will be made to increase the minimum stipend level.

Plans for this academic year are to develop effective grievance processes for graduate students and to establish an ombudsman or advocate for graduate students to assist graduate and professional students in making satisfactory progress toward graduation. In addition, an internal study will be conducted to evaluate the role and effectiveness of master's and professional master's degree programs and to determine how the graduate school can better serve their needs. The graduate school will provide support for travel to conferences for graduate students giving presentations and for summer dissertations fellowships.

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International

Vice Provost Timothy Doupnik facilitates the expansion of international programs and international associations with the University of South Carolina. The global presence of the university has been increased by garnering more student and faculty interest in applications for both national and international fellowships and increased student participation in beyond-the-classroom activities.

The development of international agreements with foreign institutions in Chile, China, and Libya has facilitated faculty and Ph.D. student involvement overseas. The creation of the Institute for Visiting Scholars grant program will bring three international scholars to the university in the next year. Increases in students studying abroad and international students attending USC have been achieved in the past year, which were facilitated by increased student support through the Beyond Boundaries and Passport Travel grant programs and through an expanded international student recruiting effort.

Plans for the Carolina International House at Maxcy College as well as its construction are underway under the direction of the new faculty principal, Dr. Lee Walker, and the Facilities Division, respectively.

Goal 2: Enhance Scholarship, Research and Creative Achievements

Faculty

The Office of the Provost launched a major faculty replenishment hiring initiative targeted at hiring new faculty to meet our educational and research goals vital to the recognition of the University of South Carolina as a major research institution. Faculty research, scholarship, and creative activities have been promoted through the 2011-2012 faculty grant programs that include over \$900,000 in funding for the Creative and Performing Arts, Humanities, Social Sciences, Clinical Incentive, Visiting Scholar, and Distributed Learning Programs. A total of 200 new faculty positions are planned by 2015 with more than 100 faculty positions already awarded to the colleges which are now being recruited. The initiation of a spousal hiring program has improved recruitment and successful hiring. In addition, SmartState endowed chairs are actively being recruited and it is likely that six endowed chairs will be hired by summer 2013. Moreover, all vacant tenured and tenure track positions, are being filled. Retention efforts for faculty are strong. Providing a salary increase for faculty and staff is a Provost Office priority.

The university is developing distributed education and blended classes through the focused efforts of the Center for Teaching Excellence (CTE). Distributed education will facilitate access to USC and learning through the newly established Palmetto College and the "Back to Carolina" degree completion program. Additionally, in leading the integrated learning initiative, the CTE is engaging faculty in training and in grant funded programs to develop classes and instructional strategies.

Plans for the academic year are to continue to recruit faculty to meet the goal of 200 new faculty, to continue spousal hiring, to hire six to eight SmartState endowed chairs, to replace faculty who leave the university, to increase faculty retention, and to enhance the scholarly productivity, teaching expertise, and reputation of the faculty and, hence, the university.

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Goal 3: *Provide Adequate Facilities for Student Learning, Faculty Research, and Scholarship and Administration of Academic Programs*

Classroom and Research Space Upgrades

Classrooms are upgraded each year to improve classroom quality and technology. Construction drawings for research space in Horizon I and Discovery I are currently under development. The CFO and Facilities developed a capital renewal plan and a capital building plan in conjunction with several committees staffed by faculty and staff. These plans were approved by the Board of Trustees and are being implemented.

Goal 4. *Increase the number of South Carolinians who hold graduate/professional and baccalaureate degrees. Increase access to higher education through the Palmetto College which includes strong and vigorous USC regional campuses and “Back to Carolina” Program*

Palmetto College

The University of South Carolina is committed to expanding opportunities and increasing educational attainment for all South Carolinians. Debuting in fall 2013, the Palmetto College will encompass the regional associate degree-granting campuses, which provide the first 60 hours of a bachelor's degree. Through the University's Columbia, Aiken, Beaufort and Upstate campuses, Palmetto College will also make it possible to earn four-year degrees via the world-wide web and through interactive video for place-bound students from all regions within the state. “Back to Carolina,” a quality, manageable and affordable degree completion program for students who have previously earned 60 credit hours; are at least 25 years of age; are place-bound and who want to complete their degree, will enroll its first students fall 2012.

Goal 5: *Engage the Community and Improve the Quality of Life for South Carolinians*

Community Engagement and Distance Education

The USC Coordinating Office for Community Engagement and Service (COCES) has been established to support and enhance faculty, staff, and students' involvement with the community. The COCES Leadership Council has helped to conceptualize the functions and responsibilities of the Office. The COCES has assumed responsibility for creating a new faculty orientation to the State through the Carolina Nexus tour which highlights the challenges and opportunities that exist in the State. The inaugural tour will occur May 2012. Plans for the upcoming academic year include refining the Carolina Nexus experience, orienting faculty, staff, and students to new community engagement and service opportunities, and assessing the impact of USC community engagement and service initiatives.

Access to the university through the Palmetto College and Back to Carolina requires the development of on-line courses and degree programs. These courses and programs include blended learning experiences that effectively decrease difficulties in classroom scheduling. Faculty participation in developing and delivering on-line courses is encouraged through course development grants and professional technical and design assistance through the CTE, Distant Learning Student Support (DLSS), and University Technology Support (UTS). Plans for the

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coming year involve moving all aspects of distributed learning forward. This includes strengthening support services, ensuring accessibility for students with disabilities, ensuring compliance with all federal and state laws and regulations, marketing the courses and degree programs, and developing stable funding sources for development and maintenance of on-line courses and degree programs.

Big Idea(s)

At the request of President Pastides, the offices of Academic Affairs, Student Affairs, Business and Finance, Communications and Marketing, and Development have worked together to formulate concepts and programs to address increasing student retention, decreasing the time to graduation, and increasing student success both in college and in the job market. The students will be encouraged to be engaged fully in their curricular activities and beyond the classroom experiences and to move expeditiously toward graduation.

The first section below focuses on student retention, student success, and decreasing the time to graduation for the student. The second section describes the leadership initiative, Leaders for Today, to enhance student success and to prepare the students to be more competitive in the marketplace.

1. USC on My Time

USC on My Time will benefit all students at the University of South Carolina, permitting them to venture away from campus more flexibly for internships or to study abroad, to make progress toward a degree more speedily and with more certainty, to graduate more quickly, and even to graduate early so that they might enter the job market or begin graduate or professional school ahead of schedule.

Building on USC's strong foundation in the liberal arts, USC on My Time will improve progression and completion among USC students while providing for greater flexibility in study options, while lowering DWF rates across the student body. The elements of USC on My Time that will make possible these improvements are 1) bolstered advising, 2) additional class sections, 3) additional methods for course delivery, and 4) new opportunities within the academic calendar.

Bolstered Advising. With more and better advising opportunities for students, beginning with improved orientation programs, students will make more educated selection of courses and plot their pathways toward a degree with greater certainty and success. Advisors will assist students as they develop their own academic plans according to their own academic goals, using the new Graduate Planning Services (GPS) program. Giving students a sense of ownership and control in this self-directed method of course planning will fit with the preferred modes of operating among today's enrollees.

Additional Class Sections. Adding more class sections for popular or "bottleneck" courses will move students forward in their academic progress. Students will be able to enroll in classes that previously would have been capped classes because of oversubscription or limited sections. These additions will provide opportunity for students to enroll in classes they need at the time that they need them.

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Additional Methods for Course Delivery. Online and blended-delivery classes provide additional access to courses that students need. By utilizing USC's existing curricular platforms for online ventures, these classes will permit students to attend classes and to learn from their homes, from their offices, or as they travel. These class options are especially appealing to working and non-traditional students whose opportunities to focus on class work are not available during standard class hours.

New Opportunities within the Academic Calendar. The addition of a summer semester to USC's academic calendar will provide flexibility to students who have a variety of needs and desires. The opportunity to complete a semester's worth of course credit during the summer permits many students to graduate more quickly—on time or ahead of schedule. Graduating early will be especially appealing to USC's most motivated students—those who are anxious to begin graduate or professional school or to begin a job while reducing costs associated with more time enrolled and more tuition dollars. The option of a summer semester will be just as appealing to students who, through maintaining their progress toward a degree with a course load during the summer, will have the latitude to study abroad, to work in an internship, or to take part in co-operative education during some other semester.

These combined additions and improvements make USC on My Time more amenable to the needs and aspirations of each individual student. USC on My Time's hallmarks are flexibility, speed, and efficiency—enabling students to graduate more quickly while simultaneously accomplishing their foremost academic goals. This is success without compromise. Students, parents, and the public expect nothing less of USC.

2. The University of South Carolina's Leaders for Today Leadership Initiative through *USC Connect* Pathways

All University of South Carolina undergraduate students are strongly encouraged to participate in a leadership initiative, Leaders for Today, that is tailored to each student's personal and career goals. Students will participate in this leadership initiative through a portfolio of USC Connect pathways that includes: 1) research and discovery; 2) peer and professional engagement; 3) community engagement; and 4) global engagement. Upon selecting one of these four areas, USC students participating in Leaders for Today will engage in a set of integrated learning experiences inside and beyond the classroom to develop their expertise and knowledge in their chosen fields of study while simultaneously pursuing one or more pathways to develop leadership knowledge, expertise, and experience. USC graduates will demonstrate essential thought leadership qualities including courage, creative and critical thinking, commitment to civil discourse, and self-discipline.

Each student involved in Leaders for Today will anchor their studies in the liberal arts through the Carolina Core and have at least one academic major which will be expanded and supplemented by a leadership pathway. Each student engaged in a leadership pathway will receive proactive advising, participate in a reflective e-Portfolio, and be actively engaged in integrated learning through one of the four USC Connect pathways. Students will graduate with

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a baccalaureate degree in their academic majors and with acknowledgement of their achievement as Leaders for Today in one or more of the USC Connect pathways.

Through this leadership initiative, the University expects to produce graduates who not only are knowledgeable in their given discipline, but also have developed and practiced the leadership skills and knowledge necessary to lead in their profession and as citizens. As Leaders for Today, USC graduates will be not only highly competitive in their disciplines' job market, but also at the forefront in the contemporary market for leaders and critical thinkers.