



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: **March 22 – 25, 2021**

SACSCOC Staff Member: **Dr. Linda Thomas-Glover**

Chair of the Committee: **Dr. Laurie Casteen**
Associate Dean of Students
University of Virginia
Charlottesville, VA

the University for sexual assault. The university filed a position statement with OCR on February 12, 2019. To date, OCR has not responded to the position statement or corresponded with the university.

Finally, the institution provided discussion and evidence of additional training and programming across the university. Beginning in fall 2020, all incoming freshman and transfer students must complete an electronic diversity training module. The university offers student programs from offices such as Sexual Assault and Violence Intervention and Prevention Office, the Office of Equal Opportunity Programs, and Alcohol Edu. University employees must complete mandatory harassment and discrimination prevention training. Employees are also invited to complete Safe Zone Ally training programs for lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender individuals, and well as intercultural training. The Office of Equal Opportunity Programs provides ongoing workshops upon request in unconscious bias, microaggressions, search committee anti-discrimination training, sexual harassment recognition and prevention, and anti-discrimination and prevention training.

During the on-site visit, the On-Site Reaffirmation Committee interviewed the Associate Vice President and Chief of Police, Dean of Students and Deputy Title IX Coordinator, Interim Director and Director of Training and Development and the Deputy Title IX Coordinator, Vice President for Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion, and the Associate Deans for Academic and Student Affairs at the Lancaster, Salkehatchie, Sumter, and Union campuses. Based on the evidence provided in the original submission, the Focused Report, and the interviews, the On-Site Reaffirmation Committee found evidence of compliance with this standard.

Section 14: Transparency and Institutional Representation

- 14.1 The institution (a) accurately represents its accreditation status and publishes the name, address, and telephone number of SACSCOC in accordance with SACSCOC's requirements and federal policy; and (b) ensures all its branch campuses include the name of that institution and make it clear that their accreditation depends on the continued accreditation of the parent campus.
(Publication of accreditation status) [Off-Site/On-Site Review]

The institution provided documentation for its flagship campus in Columbia in the form of live links (not screen shots or PDFs) to web pages that identify its accreditation status and publish the name, address, and telephone number of SACSCOC in accordance with SACSCOC's requirements and federal policy. The accreditation statement for the Columbia campus reads as follows:

The University of South Carolina Columbia is accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges to award associate, baccalaureate, master's, and doctoral degrees. Contact the Commission on Colleges at 1866 Southern Lane, Decatur, Georgia 30033-4097 or call 404-679-4500 for questions about the accreditation of the University of South Carolina Columbia.

The Off-Site Reaffirmation Committee also reviewed live links to web pages (not screen shots or PDFs) for its Palmetto branch campuses (Lancaster, Salkehatchie, Sumter, and Union).

The accreditation statement for the Palmetto branches reads as follows:

The regional Palmetto College campuses (Lancaster, Salkehatchie, Sumter, Union) are branch campuses of the University of South Carolina Columbia. The University of South Carolina Columbia is accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges to award associate, baccalaureate, master's, and doctoral degrees. Contact the Commission on Colleges at 1866 Southern Lane, Decatur, Georgia 30033-4097 or call 404-679-4500 for questions about the accreditation of the University of South Carolina Columbia.

The Off-Site Reaffirmation Committee is unable to determine compliance because it was unable to locate documentation (a) that its accreditation representation is consistent across multiple publications, and (b) while the statement is clear that the Palmetto College campuses are branch campuses, it is not clear that the branch campuses' accreditation is dependent on the accreditation of the institution.

In the Focused Report the institution provided evidence that, in response to the findings of the Off-Site Reaffirmation Committee, the institution had amended the statement of accreditation for all campuses (Palmetto College campuses and the central Columbia campus) to be inclusive of the various locations and unified. The new statement has been published in all relevant bulletins and websites associated with all campuses and the institution sent letters to all accrediting agencies to alert them to the new, unified accreditation statement.

The On-Site Reaffirmation Committee met with the Interim Director of the Office of Academic Programs/Director of Distributed Learning, the Vice Provost and Dean of the Faculty, the Director Institutional Effectiveness and Accreditation/SACSCOC Liaison, and the University Registrar and discussed the institutional process for ensuring that the statement remains updated and consistent across all campuses. They also discussed a plan for an annual review of this, and related, standards to ensure annual compliance. The institution is now using a new product for bulletin publishing that will facilitate this process.

- 14.2 The institution has a policy and procedure to ensure that all substantive changes are reported in accordance with SACSCOC's policy.
(*Substantive change*)

The institution's policy ACAF 2.11 Substantive Change provides clear procedures and lines of authority for the notification and approval of substantive change. The procedures are also embedded within the various clauses, appendices, and procedures in the institution's policy ACAF 2.00, Creation and Revision of Academic Programs. The policies are disseminated publicly in the institution's Policies and Procedures manual via the Provost's website. All policies are reviewed and revised as necessary each quinquennium. The president holds policy enforcement authority.