

Division of Academic Affairs

Strategic Plan

Fiscal Year 2002-2006

March 2001

I. Mission Statement

The mission of the Division of Academic Affairs is identical to the Vision Statement for the University, namely:

The University we envision is a unified community of teaching scholars attuned to the needs of the larger state community and acknowledged as one of the finest in the Southeast. Dedicated first to serving its students, USC Columbia will continue to offer high-quality undergraduate and graduate programs with a core curriculum centered in the liberal arts, as it continues to build a nationally recognized research faculty. In addition, as an over-arching goal, the University seeks to become of such quality to deserve membership in the Association of American Universities.

In implementing the Vision Statement of the University, the Division of Academic Affairs has established strategic goals that are identical to the academic priorities established by President Palms in the Vision Statement of the University. This Strategic Plan for the Division delineates the ways and means of achieving these academic priorities. The following report encompasses the strategic plans from every academic unit within the Division, as well as the recommendations for the highly selective enhancement of programs that will bring the University closer to achieving the priorities established by the president.

The timeline for achievement, and perhaps even the continued viability, of the objectives set for the next year will in some instances be dictated by resources available to the University.

II. STRATEGIC GOALS: ASSESSMENT OF CURRENT YEAR

A. GOAL: Increase the Quality of the University's Faculty, and Appoint New Faculty in Strategically Important Programs and Leadership Positions

1. **Objective: Raise faculty salaries to comparable levels at peer institutions.**
 - a. **FY01 Action: USC Columbia increased the average state appropriated salary increase by an additional three percent. Increase was focused on the most productive faculty members of each unit.**

- b. **FY01 Result:** The immediate impact was an increase in faculty morale, and progress on raising the average salaries of faculty members was achieved. The most current data available (Fall 2000) for average faculty salaries by rank on the Columbia campus are:

	<u>Fall 1998</u>	<u>Fall 1999</u>	<u>Fall 2000</u>
Professor:	\$74,766	\$79,284	\$82,859
Associate:	\$55,394	\$58,477	\$60,567
Assistant:	\$45,571	\$48,770	\$50,290
Instructor:	\$34,269	\$36,595	\$37,596

2. Objective: Hire and retain quality faculty in selected areas of academic program development.

- a. **FY01 Action:** The University funded new positions. The USC Educational Foundation continued to assist in retaining key faculty.
- b. **FY01 Result:** Twelve new faculty positions in selected areas were fully or partially funded by the Provost's Office during FY01.

3. Objective: Provide funding for faculty promotions in rank.

- a. **FY01 Action:** The University provided the necessary funding.
- b. **FY01 Result:** The necessary transfer of funding to the unit level occurred.

4. Objective: Fill vacant critical academic leadership positions within the division.

- a. **FY01 Action:** Searches were instituted to fill vacant leadership positions.
- b. **FY01 Result:** Searches were completed for the following positions: Dean – Darla Moore School of Business; Dean – College of Education; Dean – College of Engineering and Information Technology; Vice Provost for Research; and Chief Information Officer. Searches have been initiated, or are in process, to fill the positions of: Dean – College of Journalism and Mass Communications; Associate Provost and Graduate School Dean; and Dean – College of Social Work.

B. GOAL: Improve the Quality of the Student Educational Experiences at the University

- 1. Objective: Improve the quality of the S.C. Honors College experience.**
 - a. **FY01 Action:** The University funded additional expenses relating to the teaching of the sciences within the College.
 - b. **FY01 Result:** The S.C. Honors College initiated infrastructure planning and changes for the research-based learning program; implementation of the program is continuing. The average SAT score of admitted students in the College (Fall 1999 to Fall 2000) increased from 1380 to 1387.
- 2. Objective: Improve programs designed to increase the academic experience of undergraduate students and the visibility of the University's best undergraduate students.**
 - a. **FY01 Action:** The University supplemented funding of program expansion of the Office of Fellowships and Summer Programs, and continued supplemental funding of program initiatives in the Office of Pre-Professional Advising.
 - b. **FY01 Result:** Through the work of the Office of Fellowships and Summer Programs, students received 137 national awards and \$3.25 million in national fellowships since 1994, including the awarding of the University's first Marshall scholarship. A new program to increase student admissibility to medical schools was continued in the Office of Pre-Professional Advising and is showing positive results.
- 3. Objective: Assess and improve the capabilities of graduate teaching assistants.**
 - a. **FY01 Action:** Supplemental funding was provided.
 - b. **FY01 Result:** Training workshops for graduate teaching assistants continued.

C. GOAL: Increase the Amount of Funded Research to a Level Comparable to That of Our Aspirant Peer Institutions

- 1. Objective: Increase the amount of funded research for the University by at least five percent.**
 - a. **FY01 Action:** Increase the level of funding for the Research Incentive Fund. The Research Incentive Fund is indexed to the level of qualified funded research at the University, and provides funds for startup and matching costs.

- b. **FY01 Result:** The level of qualified funded research at the University increased 24.7 percent to \$121.3 million in FY2000.

2. Objective: Fill leadership positions within the Office of Research.

- a. **FY01 Action:** Successfully complete the searches for a Director of Research Compliance; and a Director of the Intellectual Property Management Office.
- b. **FY01 Result:** Searches were successfully concluded and the positions filled.

D. GOAL: Improve the Academic Support Infrastructure to Levels Comparable to Our Aspirant Peer Institutions

1. Objective: Make the University Library one of the top forty-five research libraries in the nation.

- a. **FY01 Action Requested:** Increase the budget of the University library to cover the cost of serials inflation, online catalog improvements, operations costs, and provide access to the regional campuses for selected electronic databases.
- b. **FY01 Result:** The budget of the University library was maintained at current levels. Access to selected databases was provided to the regional campuses. Significant research collections were added through private donation and purchase. The University's libraries rose in the rankings of the Association of Research Libraries in the United States from forty-ninth to forty-seventh among all institutions. Among public universities, the University's libraries rose in the rankings from thirty-seventh to thirty-first. In the ARL ranking for number of volumes in the Library, the University is ranked 39th among all United States research libraries (up from 42nd in 1997) and 25th among public universities. New Rankings will be released in April, 2001.

2. Objective: Improve the University's Information Technology Infrastructure.

- a. **FY01 Action:** Complete critical projects in the areas of networking, research support, administrative computing, and student access.
- b. **FY01 Result:** Rewiring of most academic units to fast Ethernet was completed during FY2001. The data warehouse for University financial services was completed and is operational. The data warehouse for human resources is completed, beta testing is currently underway, and the warehouse is expected to be operational before the end of FY2001. Network security continued to be improved. With the hiring of a new CIO, and using the results of the SACS focused self-study, extensive planning is currently underway.

3. Objective: Expand the University's distance education infrastructure.

- a. **FY01 Action Requested:** Equip and provide the salaries of staff necessary to migrate twenty off-site courses per year to a distance education format.
- b. **FY01 Result:** Funding was maintained while additional planning for off-site course migration continued.

<p>E. GOAL: Improve Academic Evaluation and Accountability</p>

1. Objective: Articulate the University's vision as it relates to higher education performance funding.

- a. **FY01 Action:** Represent the University's interests in the formulation of Performance Funding at the Commission on Higher Education.
- b. **FY01 Result:** The Dean of the Graduate School and the Assistant Provost for Institutional Planning and Assessment and his staff spent countless hours attending meetings at the Commission on Higher Education and preparing numerous data analysis reports related to performance funding.

2. Objective: Prepare for the successful SACS reaffirmation of accreditation of the University in 2001.

- a. **FY01 Action:** Continue actions needed to prepare for the University's process reaffirmation of accreditation.
- b. **FY01 Result:** Preparation is now complete.

3. Objective: Provide a training program for individuals beginning new appointments in academic leadership positions as well as additional instruction for individuals continuing in academic leadership positions.

- a. **FY01 Action:** Coordinate and conduct the training programs.

b. **FY01 Result:** The Division of Human Resources and the Division of Business and Finance have developed an extensive training program for both new academic leaders and unit budget officers. Initial level one and advanced training have been offered and is continuing.

4. **Objective:** For those academic units not subject to discipline-specific reaccreditation, provide for a systematic evaluation of units and programs by external and internal review teams.

a. **FY01 Action:** Continue the systematic evaluation of academic units by external and internal review teams.

b. **FY01 Result:** Outside review teams completed, or are scheduled to complete, evaluations of the Department of English, Department of Geological Sciences, Marine Science Program, and the Science Education Program.

F. GOAL: Improve the General University, Academic Disciplines, and the Citizens of South Carolina Through Service Activities

1. **Objective:** Provide service expertise to the University, academic disciplines, and the citizens of South Carolina.

a. **FY01 Action:** The faculty and staff of the Division have provided tireless service to the University via the unit and University faculty governance structure. The division's faculty hold a number of key leadership positions within their respective academic disciplines. They also provide countless hours of pro bono service to the community and to the state.

b. **FY01 Result:** The University, academic disciplines, and the citizens of the state of South Carolina have greatly profited from the professional and humanitarian assistance of the faculty and staff of the University.

2. **Objective:** Provide academic community service programming.

a. **FY01 Action Needed:** Provide financial support for University Bicentennial activities.

b. **FY01 Result:** A great number and variety of University Bicentennial activities are well underway.

III. STRATEGIC GOALS: OBJECTIVES FOR FY2002

A. GOAL: Increase the Salaries of the University's Faculty to Competitive Levels, and Make New Faculty Appointments in Strategically Important Programs and Leadership Positions

1. **Objective: Raise faculty salaries to comparable levels at peer institutions.**

FY2002 Action Needed: USC Columbia will increase faculty salaries by the average state appropriated salary increase based on merit.

2. **Objective: Hire and retain quality faculty in selected areas of academic program development, and selective program enhancement.**

FY2002 Action Needed: The University needs to fully or partially fund new faculty positions in selected programs of the University, and provide for selective program enhancement.

3. **Objective: Provide funding for faculty promotions in rank.**

FY2002 Action Needed: The University needs to fund faculty rank promotional salary increases that are the result of the formal tenure and promotion process.

4. **Objective: Fill Critical Vacant Academic Leadership Positions Within the Division.**

FY2002 Action needed: Searches will be continued or instituted to fill vacant leadership positions.

B. GOAL: Improve the Quality of the Student Educational Experience at the University

1. **Objective: Improve the quality of the S.C. Honors College experience.**

FY2002 Action Needed: Continue to expand new programmatic initiatives.

2. **Objective: Assess and improve the capabilities of graduate teaching assistants.**

FY2002 Action Needed: Re-examine the costs and benefits of various types of graduate assistantships and scholarships.

C. GOAL: Increase the Amount of Funded Research to a Level Comparable to That of Our Aspirant Peer Institutions

1. **Objective: Increase the amount of funded research for the University at least five percent.**

FY2002 Action Needed: Continue to provide funds for startup and matching costs on promising new research initiatives through the Office of Research.

D. GOAL: Improve the Academic Support Infrastructure to Levels Comparable to Our Aspirant Peer Institutions

1. **Objective: Make the University Library one of the top forty-five research libraries in the nation.**

FY2002 Action Needed: Continue the budget of the University library to cover the cost of materials and operations. Continue to explore cost-effective electronic access of services to the academic community.

2. **Objective: Improve the University's Information Technology Infrastructure.**

FY2002 Action Needed: Complete University-wide participation in the IT planning phase and begin implementation of approved components.

E. GOAL: Improve Academic Evaluation and Accountability

1. **Objective: Articulate the University's vision as it relates to higher education performance funding.**

FY2002 Action Needed: Represent the University's interests with the formulation of Performance Funding at the Commission on Higher Education.

2. **Objective: Conclude Actions Necessary for the Successful SACS Reaccreditation of the University.**

FY2002 Action Needed: Continue actions needed to conclude the University's reaccreditation.

F. GOAL: Improve the Functioning of the University, Academic Disciplines, and the Citizens of South Carolina Through Service Activities

1. **Objective: Provide service expertise to the University, academic disciplines, and the citizens of South Carolina.**

FY2002 Action Needed: The faculty and staff of the Division have provided tireless service to the University via the unit and University faculty governance structure. The division's faculty hold a number of key leadership positions within their respective academic disciplines. They also provide countless hours of pro bono service to the community and to the state. These activities should continue.