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📄 Item CR - 2.8

CR - 2.8

Faculty
The number of full-time faculty members is adequate to support the mission of the institution and to ensure the quality and integrity of each of its academic programs. *(Core Requirement 2.8)*

Judgment
☑ Compliant   ☐ Non-Compliant   ☐ Not Applicable

Narrative

Columbia

Faculty Support of the University Mission

According to the University mission statement, "The primary mission of the University of South Carolina Columbia is the education of the state's citizens through teaching, research, creative activity, and community engagement." Clearly, the University must ensure that the number of full-time faculty addressing these areas is sufficient and routinely monitored.

It is the policy of the University, according to ACAF 1.00, Recruitment and Appointment of Tenured, Tenure-Track, and Non-Tenure-Track Faculty, to hire faculty who will complement and contribute to that mission. According to ACAF 1.00, "The University of South Carolina is committed to recruiting, retaining, and promoting an outstanding faculty who demonstrate excellence in teaching, research, service, and outreach. The University believes that the presence of a high quality and diverse community of scholars is necessary to achieve such excellence. To that end, the hiring practices adopted by the University are designed to seek out and welcome quality and diversity to its faculty ranks through search processes that are conducted in a fair and open manner."

To meet its mission, the University maintains an adequate balance of full-time to part-time faculty to allow full-time faculty to engage in all aspects of faculty responsibilities. Each college/ school relies on the use of part-time faculty, graduate assistants, and others for a variety of reasons that all support the mission of the university and the academic programs of that college/school. The number of full-time faculty in the individual programs across the University is adequate to fulfill the mission of the University and to ensure that the quality and academic integrity of all of the University's academic programs are the highest possible.

Definitions of Faculty

The definition of full-time faculty as defined by the Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS) glossary as, "Persons identified by the institution as such and typically those whose initial assignments are made for the purpose of conducting instruction, research or public service as a principal activity (or activities)."

Faculty positions at the University follow the definitions listed below:

Professor:
To be eligible for appointment at the rank of professor, a faculty member must have a record of superior performance usually involving both teaching and research, or creativity or performance in the arts, or recognized professional contributions. The faculty member normally is expected to hold the earned doctor's degree and have at least nine years of effective, relevant experience.

Associate Professor:
To be eligible for appointment at the rank of associate professor, a faculty member must have a record of strong performance usually involving both teaching and research, or creativity or performance in the arts, or recognized professional contributions. The faculty member normally is expected to hold the earned doctor's degree and must possess strong potential for further development as a teacher and scholar.

Assistant Professor:
To be eligible for appointment at the rank of assistant professor, a faculty member normally is expected to hold the earned doctor's degree or its equivalent and must possess strong potential for development as a teacher and scholar.

Instructor:
To be eligible for appointment at the rank of instructor, a faculty member normally is expected to possess a master's degree in the teaching discipline or a master's degree with a concentration in the teaching discipline (a minimum of 18 graduate semester hours in the teaching discipline).

The qualifications for appointment to these faculty positions and positions bearing other titles, such as lecturer, clinical professor, or research professor, are specified in the University Policy ACAF 1.06, Academic Titles for Faculty and Unclassified Academic Staff Positions, and specified in the USC Columbia Faculty Manual dated June 10, 2016, p. 18-19.

Duties of Faculty

The faculty of the University has legislative authority over matters pertaining to the curriculum on the campus where they serve. The Office of the Provost oversees the academic program system-wide approval process and ensures that all ongoing academic program development is in compliance with the South Carolina Commission on Higher Education (CHE) and the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC) regulations and in alignment with University strategic goals and priorities.

The responsibilities of the tenure-track and tenured faculty are provided in the USC Columbia Faculty Manual. As stated in the Faculty Manual,

The Board of Trustees is the governing body of the university, and it delegates to the president and the faculty their powers. The faculties of the Aiken, Beaufort, Columbia, and Upstate campuses, subject to the review of the president and the Board, have legislative powers in all matters pertaining to standards of admission, registration, requirements for and the granting of earned degrees, curriculum, instruction, research, extracurricular activities, student discipline, educational policies and standards of the university, and all other matters pertaining to the conduct of faculty affairs, including the discipline of their own members. (FM, p. 4)

The Faculty Senate is charged with carrying out the legislative responsibilities of the faculty, and through the processes and committees stated in the Faculty Manual, with ensuring that the faculty meet the qualifications for each faculty rank and annual performance expectations as defined in the Faculty Manual. The responsibilities of non-tenure-track faculty are defined by academic policy, ACAF 1.06, Academic Titles for Faculty and Unclassified Academic Staff Positions. The responsibilities are as follows:

The primary responsibility of an individual appointed as an Instructor or Lecturer is teaching; however, other duties may be assigned.

Clinical Faculty appointments are regular, full-time or part-time appointments of individuals of substantial professional caliber to supervise and instruct students in clinical, field, classroom, or
laboratory settings, and/or to engage in practice and outreach, and/or have substantial professional caliber to administer academic programs and other administrative activities.

Research faculty appointments are regular, full-time or part-time appointments of individuals who have research expertise and experience and evidence of scholarly accomplishment. Research faculty will be engaged primarily in independent research such as serving as principal investigator or co-principal investigator on externally funded research and having significant refereed publications.

Ensuring an Adequate Number of Full-time Faculty

As part of the University strategic plan, a "Blueprint for Academic Excellence" with Academic Dashboard targets is developed each year. Each college/school must submit an annual Blueprint, which provides information on its strategies and performance in meeting the University's Academic Dashboard targets during the current academic year along with the unit's plans for meeting the next year's Dashboard targets. Each college/school must discuss the four key performance parameters required for the success of that unit and institution as a whole and how the unit contributes to these key performance measures. These key performance parameters are: 1) teaching excellence; 2) research/scholarship reputation and productivity; 3) service to state, community, profession and university; and 4) sustainability of the University mission fiscally and through effective decision-making and actions. In order to address those key performance parameters, Academic Dashboard targets are established by each college/school for faculty hiring and retention. Each college/school has the goal to maintain an appropriate student-faculty ratio to fulfill the University's mission and status as a world-class research institution.

All of this information contributes to the "four pillars" of the institution: research, a superior student experience, flexible models for access and affordability, and our state's economic and overall well-being.

In order to maintain an appropriate student-faculty ratio, academic program coordinators in each college or school review their full-time/part-time faculty ratio of student semester hours taught to determine the percentage of student semester hours taught by full-time faculty and make recommendations to the Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs and Provost regarding the need for full-time faculty positions in specific areas of study. The goal of this process is to ensure that full-time faculty in any academic year teach sufficient numbers of student semester hours, while providing resources to all faculty to ensure the integrity of academic programs.

The Office of Institutional Research, Assessment, and Analytics (OIRAA) produces four reports that assists academic program coordinators with making recommendations with faculty hiring. Two of the reports provide a closer look at the percent student credit hours taught by faculty at the combined Graduate/Professional course level faculty and faculty at the Undergraduate course level. The other reports provide a detailed look at the number of student credit hours taught by Graduate/Professional course level faculty and faculty at the Undergraduate course level. These four reports provide a granular multi-semester look at faculty treads at the department/program level. Finally, these reports provide academic program coordinators with the tools needed to compare levels of faculty student credit hours taught in face to face traditional courses with distance education courses. The four reports are provided as supporting documentation:

Percent Student Credit Hours Taught by Graduate and Professional Faculty Fall 2014-Fall 2016
Percent Student Credit Hours Taught by Undergraduate Faculty Fall 2014-2016

Student Credit Hours Taught by Graduate and Professional Course Level Faculty Fall 2014-Fall 2016
Student Credit Hours Taught by Undergraduate Course Level Faculty Fall 2014-Fall 2016

Each college/school has one or more administrators responsible for allocation and management of all resources pertaining to graduate assistants, non-tenure-track instructional staffing, adjunct staffing and summer instructional staffing. This entails close analysis of enrollment trends and staffing patterns to provide efficient and responsive allocation of annual budgetary authority for full-time equivalent positions and additional funding for adjunct positions. This person works closely with the department chairs/directors to review the unit curricular plans and faculty workload.

Policy on Part-time Faculty

ACAF 1.16, Non-Tenure Track Faculty, defines the roles of non-tenure track faculty, along with appointment requirements, performance review, and promotion procedures. According to ACAF 1.16, the roles of non-tenure track faculty vary by college, school and academic unit. For that reason each college, school, and academic unit develops policies to address its particular academic environment. Policies created by colleges, schools, and academic units regarding non-tenure track faculty must be approved by the dean, and then forwarded to the Office of the Provost for final approval. The dean of the college or school may authorize separate policies and procedures for the different academic units within the college or school or may have one policy for all academic units within the college or school. The dean is responsible for ensuring that all approved policies regarding non-tenure track faculty are implemented within the college/school.

ACAF 1.06, Academic Titles for Faculty and Unclassified Academic Staff Positions, defines the academic titles authorized for faculty appointments and appointments of other academic personnel engaged in instruction, research and clinical activities for the University of South Carolina system. Faculty and unclassified academic staff may only be appointed to positions using one of the academic titles specified in the policy. Additionally, all University faculty and other academic personnel involved in instruction must meet the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools and Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC) credential requirements for teaching at the appropriate level. The hiring authority (the Dean of each college/school unless otherwise specified by the Provost) will confirm that the correct title is used and that the candidates meet the required criteria for appointment.

ACAF 1.20, Credential Verification for Instructors of Record, ensures compliance with accreditation requirements regarding teaching faculty. The teaching credentials of all instructors of record must be systematically reviewed by the hiring authority at the time of hire and must meet all credential requirements of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC). Additionally, credentials must be reviewed when instructors of record are assigned to a course they have not previously taught. The credentials of all instructors of record must be verified in accordance with this policy and its accompanying procedures.

Faculty Distribution

The University of South Carolina has a faculty comprised of qualified and dedicated educators and scholars.   As of fall 2016, there were 2372 full-time faculty, 592 part-time faculty, 388 graduate assistants, and 355 staff/administrators that taught courses.

The Office of Institutional Research, Assessment, and Analytics (OIRAA) produces four reports that assists academic program coordinators with making recommendations with faculty hiring. Two of the reports provide a closer look at the percent distribution of faculty at the combined Graduate/Professional course level faculty and faculty at the Undergraduate course level. The other reports provide a detailed look at the number of Graduate/Professional course level faculty and faculty at the Undergraduate course level. These four reports provide a granular multi-semester look at faculty treads at the department/program level. Finally, these reports provide academic program coordinators with the tools needed to compare faculty distribution levels in face to face traditional courses with distance education courses. The four reports are provided as supporting documentation:

Graduate and Professional Course Level Faculty Distribution Percentage Fall 2014-Fall 2016

Undergraduate Course Level Faculty Distribution Percentage Fall 2014-Fall 2016

Graduate and Professional Course Level Faculty Distribution Fall 2014-Fall 2016

Undergraduate Course Level Faculty Distribution Fall 2014-Fall 2016

The University of South Carolina has consistently maintained a relatively low faculty to student ratio (18:1), another indication that faculty are being recruited and retained to the institution. Over 83% of faculty members have terminal degrees in their field, indicating a dedication to hiring highly qualified candidates. USC Columbia faculty are provided with development opportunities through the Center for Teaching Excellence and other enrichment initiatives. In 2014-2015, the Center for Teaching Excellence sponsored or co-sponsored 108 seminars and workshops that were offered to faculty and graduate teaching assistants, accounting for 8,597 hours of professional development. Additionally, multiple orientations, symposia, and faculty learning communities were available, as well as several workshops designed specifically for graduate teaching assistants. The University encourages and supports faculty pursuit of their scholarly research.

Regional Palmetto College Campuses

The four regional campuses of USC (USC Lancaster, USC Union, USC Sumter, and USC Salkehatchie) fall under the authority of the Columbia campus and reside in a central administrative unit known as Palmetto College, headed by a Chancellor and Associate Provost/Dean. Resultantly, these campuses are referred to as regional Palmetto College campuses. The campuses exist as part of the University of South Carolina System as denoted in Board of Trustees Bylaws (p.2).

The campuses, in their respective Mission Statements each state the following: "The University of South Carolina (campus), a regional campus of the University of South Carolina, has as its mission to provide higher education and intellectual leadership for its service area. At the heart of this mission is a teaching faculty of high quality dedicated to excellence in instruction, scholarship, public and professional service and creative endeavor which enrich the classroom experience. The (campus) offers a varied curriculum grounded in the liberal arts and focused on preparing students to continue their education in the University and throughout life."

Employing and maintaining a sufficient number of full-time faculty constitutes a critical component for fulfilling the missions of the campuses. The faculty of the regional Palmetto College campuses are subject to the following policies listed above in the Columbia description: ACAF 1.00, ACAF 1.06 and ACAF 1.20. This section covers the slight differences in faculty definitions and faculty manuals as well as how monitoring faculty hiring, course approval, and advancement assures that sufficient full-time faculty are in place to meet the needs of the campuses respective service areas.

The categories of faculty are defined in the Palmetto College Campuses Faculty Manual (2016). These categories are: Professor, Associate Professor, Assistant Professor, and Instructor. In addition to teaching faculty, all of these ranks include provisions for evaluation of library faculty. The manual details the criteria for the hiring and promotion of faculty (pp. 8-14). These criteria are centered on the following:

1. Effectiveness as a Teacher and/or Librarian
2. Scholarship
3. Service

The central Palmetto College office works closely with each regional Palmetto College campus to assess faculty hiring needs. Campus Blueprints for Academic Excellence are prepared as described in the Columbia section above with Dashboard targets for the regional Palmetto College campuses being strategically focused on their respective service areas. Like Columbia, targets addressing faculty are established and monitored. In hiring full time faculty it is common practice for a Columbia faculty member from the discipline for which the campus is searching to serve on the search committee. In 2015-2016, four faculty members were hired in tenure-track positions from nationally recognized institutions.

All instruction is performed by approved instructors meeting SACSCOC criteria with approval coordinated with the Columbia campus academic departments. Close coordination on curriculum matters is assured through regional Palmetto College campuses' representation on the USC Columbia Campus Faculty Senate (Palmetto College Campuses Faculty Manual – pp.5-6). No graduate assistants are utilized as the campuses do not offer graduate degrees thus making none available.

Service area students present a diverse group including traditional-age students, adults and high school dual enrollment students. Effectively reaching these students necessitates that the regional Palmetto College campuses maintain a significant part time instruction pool. It should be noted that across the campuses the part time instruction classification includes former full time professors who have retired but continue to teach, some full time.

Also influencing the use of part time faculty is the common practice at the regional Palmetto College campuses to reduce faculty load from eight courses per academic year to seven for full time tenure-track faculty in order for them to better pursue tenure-driven scholarship opportunities as well as service. This strategy has proven effective as the 2015-2016 accomplishments include 14 faculty earning tenure and/or promotion, 150 scholarly works, 46 grants, 165 presentations, exhibits/productions, 12 awards, and 42 discipline-based consultations. Advising is considered as part of the duties of faculty at all of the campuses.

With these instructional needs and full time faculty advancement support established, our goal is to maintain a minimum 50 percent full time/part time average across the four campuses. Progress addressed below. A group of national regional campus peers, in a peer review in 2015, reported that our full time part time ratio goal is in line with national peer staffing patterns (p.4-5).

<div align="center">

Regional Palmetto College Campuses Faculty

Source: Regional Palmetto College Campuses

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	Semester						
	Fall 2013	Spring 2014	Fall 2014	Spring 2015	Fall 2015	Spring 2016	Fall 2016
USC Lancaster							
% of Total Credit Hours Taught By Full time Faculty	76%	78%	77%	79%	76%	74%	78%
% of Total Credit Hours Taught By Faculty Holding Terminal Degrees	56%	58%	56%	54%	56%	51%	55%
USC Salkehatchie							
% of Total Credit Hours Taught By Full time Faculty	41%	39%	37%	42%	40%	37%	43%
% of Total Credit Hours Taught By Faculty Holding Terminal Degrees	49%	46%	47%	49%	48%	47%	35%
USC Sumter							
% of Total Credit Hours Taught By Full time Faculty	70%	68%	70%	73%	64%	68%	65%
% of Total Credit Hours Taught By Faculty Holding Terminal Degrees	57%	52%	49%	48%	53%	56%	58%
USC Union							
% of Total Credit Hours Taught By Full time Faculty	39%	36%	41%	41%	36%	24%	23%
% of Total Credit Hours Taught By Faculty Holding Terminal Degrees	46%	50%	49%	40%	47%	32%	41%
Palmetto College Campuses (all, combined)							
% of Total Credit Hours Taught By Full time Faculty	57%	55%	56%	59%	54%	51%	52%
% of Total Credit Hours Taught By Faculty Holding Terminal Degrees	52%	51%	50%	48%	51%	47%	47%

The introduction of four-year degree-completions offerings through the USC System Campuses to regional Palmetto College campus students has, de facto, expanded the availability of qualified faculty to each campus as the delivery of core programs courses is accomplished through cross-campus distance delivery. This arrangement exposes students at each campus to faculty from the other campuses, thus expanding the pool of faculty from which students may take courses. Further, a regional Palmetto College campus faculty member teaching a distance delivery course represents additional credit hour production by that faculty member that is not reflected in the data presented above, therefore slightly under representing credit hour production originating from the campus.

The combined student/faculty ratio for the four campuses was 17/1 for fall 2015 (IPEDS) representing a reduction in size from that previously reported (19/1 in 2008). Comparisons to several peer lists (described below) yield 17/1 and 18/1 ratios. Efforts to maintain or reduce this ratio are ongoing and are affected by budgetary constraints and prudent resource utilization strategies.

Financial resources devoted to instruction are monitored. Comparison data related to peer institutions (IPEDS 2015) reveals competitive Core Expense per FTE with a cohort of 48 other institutions from across the US as well as one from Puerto Rico. Specifically, the four regional Palmetto College campuses combined spent an average of $5692 on the instructional function compared to $5497 by the peers. A more refined peer list of ten institutions representing considered to be "best fit" peers to USC's regional Palmetto College campuses reveal an average of $5778.

Distance Education

Staffing of online courses draws from the same faculty as traditional courses – there is no separate online faculty. The normal procedure for creating an online section of an existing course is as follows: Palmetto College determines the need for the course to be delivered online and/or a faculty member expresses a desire to create an online course. Usually, the faculty member applies for a course development grant. If awarded, the faculty member is assigned a course development specialist from USC's Center for Teaching Excellence (CTE). The faculty member works with the specialist to develop the course, using Quality Matters criteria, and receives training in online delivery. The course undergoes a rigorous review through the CTE, as well as the Instructional Development Committee of the USC Columbia Faculty Senate. Once the online course is developed, it is submitted for approval to the USC Columbia Faculty Senate. See the Distance Education Delivery Schedule for more information. If the course is approved, it is scheduled and evaluated in the same manner as traditional courses. The course management web site used by USC, Blackboard, is used for traditional courses as well.

Sources

📄 ACAF 1.00
📄 ACAF 1.06

- ACAF 1.16
- ACAF 1.20
- BTRU 1.03
- Columbia Mission Statement
- Faculty_Manual_Columbia
- Graduate and Professional Course Level Faculty Distribution Fall 2014-Fall 2016
- Graduate and Professional Course Level Faculty Distribution Percentage Fall 2014-Fall 2016
- Palmetto College Faculty Manual 2016
- Palmetto College Peer Review Report July 2015
- Percent Student Credit Hours Taught by Graduate and Professional Faculty Fall 2014-Fall 2016
- Percent Student Credit Hours Taught by Undergraduate Faculty Fall 2014-Fall 2016
- Student Credit Hours Taught by Graduate and Professional Course Level Faculty Fall 2014-Fall 2016
- Student Credit Hours Taught by Undergraduate Course Level Faculty Fall 2014-Fall 2016
- USC_ Office of the Faculty Senate_ Distributed Education Delivery (DED) Schedule
- Undergraduate Course Level Faculty Distribution Fall 2014-Fall 2016
- Undergraduate Course Level Faculty Distribution Percentage Fall 2014-Fall 2016

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