

## ***CR 2.1 - Degree-granting Authority***

The institution has degree-granting authority from the appropriate government agency or agencies.

### **Compliance Finding: In Compliance**

#### **Narrative:**

The University of South Carolina Beaufort (USC Beaufort) boasts one of the oldest traditions in higher education in the nation, dating back to 1795 when the original Beaufort College was chartered. Since that time, the University has undergone numerous transitions as it has evolved to meet changing needs of area residents. From 1959 to 2002, USC Beaufort's mission was to bring the varied resources of the University of South Carolina to the rapidly increasing and geographically isolated population of South Carolina's southernmost rural region, with authorization to confer Associate of Arts and Associate of Science degrees. USC Beaufort was chartered as a regional campus in the University of South Carolina system in 1959 and was first accredited by SACS as a separate, Level I institution in 1968. USC Beaufort was reaffirmed by SACS in 1978. USC Beaufort continued operation as a separately accredited institution until after the 1991 reaffirmation study. In 1992 the institution was reaccredited as a regional campus under the umbrella of USC Columbia. In 2001, USC Beaufort successfully completed a self-study as a part of USC Columbia's reaffirmation and received no recommendations as part of the SACS team's visit. In 2002 we notified SACS of our intention to apply for a substantive change as a separate accredited Level II institution.

This action resulted from an integrated and comprehensive planning process involving the community, faculty, staff, students, the USC Board of Trustees, and the South Carolina Commission on Higher Education.

In July 2004, USC Beaufort received separate accreditation as a Level II baccalaureate-degree-granting university. In a letter to USC Beaufort dated July 9, 2004 [i] from the Commission on Colleges, "The following action regarding your institution was taken at the June meeting of the Commission on Colleges: The Commission awarded initial membership at Level II with the Commission on Colleges...Accreditation is retroactive to January 1, 2004." USC Beaufort awarded its first baccalaureate degrees in Summer 2004.

Degrees are awarded by USC Beaufort at the baccalaureate and associate levels. The institution's degree granting authority comes from the state of South Carolina. All South Carolina college and university programs require oversight approval from the South Carolina Commission on Higher Education (SCCHE). The South Carolina Code of Law, Title 59, Chapter 103, SECTION 59-103-35 [ii] that covers the "Submission of budget; new and existing programs" gives the SCCHE the authority to approve degree programs for colleges and universities in the state of South Carolina. The code states that "*No new program may be undertaken by any public institution of higher education without the approval of the commission. The provisions of this chapter apply to all college parallel, transferable, and associate-degree programs of technical and comprehensive education institutions.*"

The SCCHE authorized USC Beaufort to award the baccalaureate degree in an action taken at their June 6, 2002 meeting [iii] and that authorization is reflected in the meeting minutes. The SCCHE website [iv] lists USC Beaufort as one of the Public Senior Institutions of the State of

South Carolina.

USC Beaufort is a senior campus in the University of South Carolina (USC) system, which includes Columbia campus, three senior campuses (USC Aiken, USC Beaufort, and USC Upstate) and four regional campuses (USC Lancaster, USC Salkehatchie, USC Sumter and USC Union). The South Carolina State Code of Law, SECTION 59-101-10 [v] Designation of State Colleges and Universities lists the University of South Carolina as a university within the state of South Carolina: *“There are universities and colleges as follows: one located in the City of Columbia, styled the University of South Carolina; another in or near the Town of Orangeburg, styled South Carolina State University; Clemson University; Winthrop University; another styled The Citadel, the Military College of South Carolina; the College of Charleston; another in or near the Town of Greenwood, styled Lander University; another in or near the City of Florence, styled Francis Marion University; the Medical University of South Carolina, and another in or near the City of Conway styled Coastal Carolina University. They are separate and distinct institutions, each under its separate board of trustees or visitors.”*

### **Timeline of Approval of USC Beaufort to Grant Baccalaureate Degrees**

From 2002 through 2006, eleven baccalaureate degree programs were approved at USC Beaufort.

*June 6, 2002:* SCCHE letter dated July 3, 2002 [vi] confirming approval of “a change in USC Beaufort’s mission from a two-year regional campus of the University of South Carolina to a four-year, baccalaureate institution.”

*September 5, 2002:* SCCHE letter dated September 10, 2002 [vii] approving “a program leading to the Bachelor of Science degree in Business Administration with a concentration in Management at the University of South Carolina Beaufort to be implemented in Spring 2003 on the Beaufort and new river Campus, provided that no 'unique cost' or other special state funding be required or requested, and provided further that USC-Aiken will discontinue offering its business program at USC Beaufort with no new students accepted as of January 2003.”

*March 6, 2003:* SCCHE letter dated March 12, 2003 [viii] confirming that “final approval was given for the following new programs to be offered by the University of South Carolina Beaufort: (1) Bachelor of Arts in Early Childhood Education, (2) Bachelor of Arts in English, (3) Bachelor of Arts in Liberal Studies, (4) Bachelor of Science in Hospitality Management, and (5) Bachelor of Science in Human Services.”

- Approval of the Early Childhood Education degree program additionally “stipulated that: the program hire the requisite faculty with appropriate terminal degrees and has them on staff by Fall 2003; the program is approved by the State Board of Education; the program seek and obtain NCATE accreditation and NAEYC approval in the next accreditation cycle following graduation of its first full class of students in 2007; USC Aiken discontinue its program with no new students accepted after August 2003 and the data files to close after December 2003.”
- Approval of the English and Liberal Studies degree programs "stipulated that: no 'unique cost' or other state funding be required or requested; that SACS approve USC Beaufort as a four-year institution.”

- Approval of the Hospitality Management degree program “stipulated that: no 'unique cost' or other state funding be required or requested; USC Columbia discontinue its existing program at Beaufort in December 2003; that SACS approve USC Beaufort as a four-year institution.”
- Approval of the Human Services program “stipulated that: no 'unique cost' or other state funding be required or requested; USC Beaufort conclude articulation agreements with the technical colleges that have associate degree programs in this field and report finalization of these agreements to the commission by September 1, 2004; and SACS approve USC Beaufort as a four-year institution.”

*June 10, 2003:* SCCHE letter dated June 10, 2003 [ix] stating “This letter verifies that the Commission on Higher Education has authorized USC Beaufort to offer programs leading to the associate degrees and the bachelors’ degrees.”

*May 6, 2004:* SCCHE letter dated May 14, 2004 [x] “confirming that at its meeting on May 6, 2004, the commission approved the following programs at USC Beaufort pending approval of USC Beaufort as a four-year institution by SACS:

- B.A. in History to be implemented in Fall 2005, at both North and South Campuses, provided that no “unique cost” or other state funding be required or requested; and provided further that the existing option within the Liberal Studies program be discontinued;
- B.A. in Psychology to be implemented in Fall 2005, at both North and South Campuses, provided that no “unique cost” or other state funding be required or requested; and provided further that the existing Psychology option within the Liberal Studies program be discontinued;
- B.A. in Spanish to be implemented in Fall 2005, at both North and South Campuses, provided that: 1) no “unique cost” or other state funding be required or requested; 2) at least three full-time faculty members with Ph.D. degrees in either Spanish or Romance languages are in place to teach when this program is implemented; and 3) the existing Spanish option within the Liberal Studies program be discontinued;
- B.S. in Biology to be implemented in Fall 2005, at both North and South Campuses, provided that no “unique cost” or other state funding be required or requested.”

*May 13, 2004:* USC Beaufort letter dated May 13, 2004 to the SCCHE, [xi] acknowledging the “Notification of Change in Program Status” form submitted by the University of South Carolina Beaufort to establish a Certificate in Spanish with options in Hispanic Studies/Culture and Professional Spanish/Business.” (Concentrations that total 18 or fewer credit hours of coursework do not require SCCHE approval. The institution’s only responsibility is to notify the SCCHE of the Concentration).

*May 13, 2004:* SCCHE letter dated March 20, 2006 [xii] confirming “receipt of the Notification of Change in Program Status” form from the University of South Carolina, dated May 13, 2004, but received at the Commission March 15, 2006, advising us that the University of South Carolina Beaufort will be offering an Undergraduate Certificate in Spanish with concentrations in Hispanic Studies/Culture and Professional Spanish/Business.”

*July 18, 2006:* SCCHE letter dated September 12, 2006 [xiii] confirming “receipt of the Notification of Change in Program Status” form from the University of South Carolina, dated

July 18, 2006, advising us that the Sea Islands Institute will begin operation in Fall 2006 at the University of South Carolina Beaufort.” (SCCHE approval is not required for Institutes that do not request or require additional appropriations from the state. The institution’s only responsibility is to notify the SCCHE of the Institute).

*August 22, 2006:* SCCHE letter dated August 22, 2006 [[xiv](#)] approving the “University of South Carolina Beaufort’s request to modify the existing Bachelor of Arts in Liberal Studies program to establish a concentration in Security Studies for implementation in Fall 2006 provided that no “unique cost” or other special state funding be required or requested.

*October 5, 2006:* SCCHE letter dated October 10, 2006 [[xv](#)] confirming “that at its meeting on October 5, 2006, the commission approved the following program at USC Beaufort: Bachelor of Science in Nursing, with a major in Nursing through two tracks: the BSN-Completion track, to be implemented in Fall 2007; and the BSN-Generic track, to be implemented in Fall 2008, provided that no “unique cost” or special state funding be required or requested; and provided also that the Generic track receives State Board of Nursing approval prior to the matriculation of students into it in Fall 2008; and provided further that the program of study receives Collegiate Council on Nursing Education (CCNE) accreditation within the first five years of its implementation.”

### **Supporting Documentation**

- [i Commission on Colleges, letter July 9, 2004](#)
- [ii South Carolina Code of Law Title 59, Chapter 103, SECTION 59-103-35](#)
- [iii SCCHE, June 6, 2002 , minutes](#)
- [iv South Carolina Commission on Higher Education website](#)
- [v South Carolina State Code of Law, SECTION 59-101-10](#)
- [vi SCCHE letter of mission change, July 3, 2002](#)
- [vii SCCHE approval of B.S. in Business Administration, September 10, 2002](#)
- [viii SCCHE approval letter for new baccalaureate programs ,March 12, 2003](#)
- [ix SCCHE letter, June 10, 2003](#)
- [x SCCHE letter, May 14, 2004](#)
- [xi USC Beaufort letter to SCCHE May 13, 2004](#)
- [xii SCCHE letter, March 20, 2006](#)
- [xiii SCCHE letter, September 12, 2006](#)
- [xiv SCCHE letter, August 22, 2006](#)
- [xv SCCHE letter, October 10, 2006](#)