Dear USC Aiken Colleagues,

As the fall semester and 2015 draw to a close, I want to wish you and your loved ones a peaceful and Happy New Year. This has been an extraordinary year at USC Aiken. We made a difference in students’ lives, our faculty continue to work with students on original research that expands knowledge, the staff continue to support student achievement and development, and the University continues to form deep and meaningful connections in our community. We welcomed newcomers and said good-bye to dear friends who retired from the University.

I’ll certainly remember 2015 for the many excellent achievements, including:

• Ranked #1 for the 11th time by U.S. News and World Report for Public Regional Universities in the South
• USC Aiken was recognized as a Tree Campus USA
• Launched the new MBA and the Industrial Process Engineering programs
• Student Life and Career Services continued the second year of the College To Career Readiness Program sponsored by a SC Chamber of Commerce Grant
• Governor Nikki Haley signed Bill 391 into law on our campus, and our Veteran and Military Student Success Center helped the University gain national attention and awards
• USC Aiken celebrated becoming a “Tobacco Free” University and continued to expand upon the Healthy 4 Life Campaign
• The System completed a 1 billion dollar Fundraiser and USC Aiken completed our first Capital Campaign
• USC Aiken forged new partnerships in India, strengthening our connections abroad
• SRNS established a new Endowed Professorship in Engineering

• The University launched the Fair Wage Plan to enhance staff and faculty salaries and 80% of employees at USC Aiken received a salary adjustment in Round One
• USC Aiken marked the 25th Anniversary of the Peach Belt Conference and NCAA Division II
• The University partnered with the new Aiken Symphony Orchestra
• International week hosted thirteen events in one week and hosted an International Awards Ceremony
• Women’s Volleyball spiked their way to the Southeast Regionals and Coach Cox was recognized with Coach of the Year

It is a privilege to be at this remarkable institution and a great pleasure to work with all of you. I want to thank our staff and faculty for their devotion to students and tireless effort. I also want to thank our students for their curiosity and drive, their open minds and commitment to learning. Thanks, too, to our campus leaders who work harder than any University Cabinets I’ve ever seen. All of this is what makes USC Aiken a special, vibrant place to live, work, play, and learn. I look forward to working with you and making 2016 USC Aiken’s brightest year yet!

Wishing you and your families a warm and wonderful Holiday Season, and a Healthy 2016!

Sincerely,
Sandra Jordan
Chancellor
The Campus Citizen of the Month award is given in recognition of good citizenship. All faculty, classified and unclassified staff, and university partners who have been with the University for one year and are in good standing are eligible. The nomination remains active indefinitely in the pool of candidates. The nomination form must be signed by the nominee’s supervisor and sent to the nominee’s Vice Chancellor in that unit. The criteria to be used in the nomination are:

- Initiative/Creativity: Exhibits ingenuity and resourcefulness. Examples: Improved work methods, efficiency within the department.
- Loyalty/Dedication: Willing to go the “extra mile” without being asked.
- Positive Attitude: Maintains effective relationships with others both on and off campus; serves as role model. Example: Consistently delivers prompt, friendly service.
- Leadership: Acknowledge those whose efforts have inspired and supported the performance and achievement of others.

Angel Miano
Associate Director of Student Life

Congratulations Angel Miano, Associate Director of Student Life, USC Aiken’s Campus Citizen of the Month for October 2015.

In her nomination, a co-worker stated how she was worthy of the nomination due to being an outstanding member of our community. She is a loyal Pacer who goes above and beyond the call of duty. She is a doer who puts students first and challenges them to develop into the best they can be. She is currently the CEA chair and serves on a number of committees. While at USC Aiken, she has creatively developed new programs and events.

In recognition of her hard work, creativity, and leadership, Angel Miano has been named the October Campus Citizen of the Month. Congratulations Angel!

Candy Mitchell
Custodial Services

Congratulations to Candy Mitchell on receiving USC Aiken’s Campus Citizen of the Month for November.

In her nomination, a faculty member stated how she was worthy of the nomination due to her tireless efforts to keep our buildings clean and organized, while maintaining a pleasant approach to work and people around her.

In recognition of her hard work, creativity, and leadership, Candy Mitchell has been named the November Campus Citizen of the Month. Congratulations Candy!

Monday Group will review the nominations and select each month’s winner.

Contact Maria Chandler at MariaC@USCA.edu for more information.
From the Office of Informational Technology, Ernest Pringle and the RFP Review Team:

As we move closer to replacing our current voicemail system I want to take a moment to update you on the procurement of the new system. Since the Avaya system’s failure, we have implemented a number of “workarounds” that have allowed us to continue receiving voicemail messages. Unfortunately, the workarounds do not allow us to use voicemail as efficiently as we need to, which is why replacing the system has become one of our top priorities.

South Carolina law requires us to send out a request for proposals (RFP) when purchasing a product or service of this size and scope. Vendors then determine whether they want to bid on the request for a chance to win our business. Once we receive those bids, an RFP review team, along with purchasing professionals here at USC Aiken and USC Columbia, review the bids and score them based on a set of criteria we establish. From beginning to end, the process is long and time consuming but I am pleased to announce that we recently accepted the bid of a vendor that meets all the criteria of the modern voicemail system our university needs.

Some of the more exciting features are:
• The ability to establish our own conference call bridges. Currently, we rely on USC Columbia or Spirit Communications for our teleconferencing.
• Users will have the option to receive e-mails and texts when they receive a voice message.
• When searching for a number, new search features allow the caller to find the person they are looking for by saying that person’s name.
• Multi-party workstation video conferencing that includes white boarding and file sharing.
• Voicemail blasting to reach groups of users all at once.

Once all the final approvals are received and all the equipment is delivered to campus, we are still on schedule to implement the new voicemail system over the Christmas break. You will be hearing much more about the system’s implementation in the coming weeks.

Finally, I would like to thank you all for your patience while we work through this process. I would also like to thank the USC Aiken Purchasing staff and the RFP Review Team for their diligence and hard work. Stay tuned for more updates.

Happy Holidays from our USC Aiken Chancellor Ambassadors

T J Brantley
Victoria Burkett
Kirsten Ceron
Ashley Diedrich
Meredith Hawcroft
Michaela Howard
Hazel Kelly
Spencer LaMunion
Tyler McIntosh
Christian Medders
Sheluni Patel
Ryan Rafanan
Dean Smith
London Vickers
Anyone listening, watching, or reading the news will find increased attention placed on crimes and violence occurring on college campuses across the United States. As a result of the added attention it is reasonable to be concerned and ask questions about our campus and your safety. I am often asked two questions: “Do we have many crimes on campus?” and “Are we prepared should an emergency occur?” This article will address both of these questions and provide further information to increase your safety.

First, the best starting point is perspective and you will be glad to find that we have very few incidents of violence at the University of South Carolina Aiken. We make our crime data available through the Annual Safety Report (ASR), located on our website at http://web.usca.edu/university-police/campus-crime-statistics.dot and we distribute this electronically in October of each year. These numbers are gained through the careful analysis of each incident that University Police responds to during the previous calendar year and includes many categories of violent crime. The crimes contained in this report include dating violence, burglaries, and aggravated assaults. Most of the crimes on our campus fall under two categories, “crimes of opportunity” and “inconsiderate acts”. Examples include the thefts of items left unattended and calls for loud music. Both of these types of cases are usually remedied through increased student awareness. We approach cases of violent crime with diligence where we conduct investigations and make arrests in accordance with the law. This is the benefit of having a department of sworn law enforcement officers.

The safety of students, faculty, staff, and visitors to our campus is the primary focus of University Police. We believe that we should give this our focused attention in order that the process of education can be enjoyed by everyone else. This attention starts with our training and every officer within our department has graduated from the state criminal justice academy. All law enforcement officers (state troopers, police officers, and county deputies) gain their state certification through this process and also complete annual training to maintain certification. Aside from mandated training we conduct specific training to our campus and to the college environment such as active shooter preparation, how to deal with sexual assaults in accordance with Federal guidelines, and how to de-escalate potentially violent interaction. This process of training is based on trends and we are constantly evolving.

To increase the university’s overall safety requires the assistance of everyone on our campus. Departments across campus are in different stages of developing their response plans. This is nothing more than the plan of how you would respond to major incidents should they arise and it is specific to your location on campus. It is important that these plans be developed and understood by everyone within your department in order that anxiety is reduced and response is automatic. The more you are familiar with these plans, the more comfortable you will be in an emergency. Along with these plans, the Department of Environmental Health and Safety at USC Aiken, has developed a set of quick access spiral bound booklets that are in each classroom across campus. These booklets are for fast access and provide everything from emergency phone numbers to how to respond to a fires and active shooters on campus.

There are many pieces of the puzzle to safety and emergency preparedness on our campus. We each have an important role to play and we ask your proactive participation in the process through awareness and response. Should you see anything of concern, call University Police at 641-6111, and we will assist you through the process. Officers are on campus 24 hours a day to assist those on our campus. It is our goal to increase preparedness and ensure your safety.
Save the Date
Aiken Technical College
and University of South Carolina Aiken present
Aiken Community
Martin Luther King, Jr. Celebration
with Judge Glenda Hatchett
January 24, 2016 at 2:30 pm
USC Aiken Convocation Center
"If you can't fly, then run. If you can't run, then walk. If you can't walk, then crawl. But whatever you do, you have to keep moving forward."
-Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Save the date for the Aiken Regional & University of South Carolina Aiken present Ladies Lifestyle Show. The event is scheduled for Saturday, January 16, 2016, from 9:00 AM to 2:00 PM at the USC Aiken Convocation Center. The event is free and open to the public.

Holiday Hours
The last official work day prior to the holiday break will be Tuesday, December 22, 2015. Offices will reopen on Monday, January 4, 2016.

If anyone receives year-end gifts that need processing, please call Mary Driscoll at (803) 645-2995 or Judy Waters at (803) 641-3334.

In the event of an emergency over the break, please contact the University Police at 641-6111, or your appropriate Vice Chancellor. Thank you and have a great holiday!
SC Aiken is committed to protecting and nurturing the strong sense of community that exists across the campus. Thus, this year we will be focused upon improving communication, both vertically and horizontally, throughout the university. Communication is always a challenge in organizational environments where the work is carried out by individuals in numerous offices with a high degree of autonomy; and where the institution’s members may be on different schedules, working in separate buildings, and/or focused on different aspects of the mission.

In order to improve campus communications, we first need to determine our communication strengths and weaknesses. “Communications” is a broad subject so it is necessary to pinpoint particular areas of concern, where the gaps in communication may exist, how effective our current communications habits may be, and which modes of communication are most effective.

The Staff Assembly has been asked to form a sub-committee to work with the office of Institutional Effectiveness to develop and disseminate a more detailed survey to help us focus on communications. Similarly, the provost will ask the Faculty Welfare Committee to review and revise the survey to determine faculty opinions regarding communications. Meanwhile, the Extended Cabinet is looking at the same issue and will participate in a workshop that will provide an example of how a local business tackles communications across a complex corporation, and aided by the faculty expertise on our campus, they will work to identify which practices may work best for our individual campus community.

At USC Aiken, we place a high value on having an inclusive and close-knit university family. Thus, when the time comes for you to participate, I hope you will do so. Together we should be able to make institutional communications a point of pride using approaches that reflect our community values. Commitment to a thoughtfully crafted and robust communication process should help ensure that each and every member of this university community feels engaged and well-informed.

Update on Projects from the Department of Operations

The University has updated information on two ongoing projects and include our recycling goals, and our greenhouse.

**Recycled**

All data reported in cubic yards

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<th>Month</th>
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<th>OCC Container</th>
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<td>November</td>
<td>96</td>
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USC Aiken recycling counts in cubic yards since we started requiring reporting from our contractor. This is total for main campus and housing. The chart shows cardboard and comingled material. Comingled material is mixed paper, plastic, aluminum cans.

Greenhouse structure is erected and currently installing gas, electricity, and equipment inside the greenhouse. It should be ready for use by Spring Semester, 2016.
SC Aiken's Fifth Year Compliance Report will be due to SACSCOC in approximately a year. This mid-point report will include a thorough assessment of institutional accomplishments on 17 standards, which includes the federal requirements. Since we are in the midst of preparing the Fifth Year Report, it seems like a good time to discuss regional accreditation, its role and elements of accreditation. For all of us working in higher education, it is important to understand the purpose of accreditation...especially this year, since the discussions on Capitol Hill include possible changes to accreditation that may be highly disruptive and potentially damaging to public universities.

One of the most frequently misunderstood concepts about regional accreditation is that it is an "us and them" proposition: in other words that the process pits the university or college (us) against a regulatory agency (them). Nothing can be farther from the truth, because in terms of accreditation, "them is us." In plain language, regional accreditation is a voluntary system of self regulation carried out by peers. With the exception of a handful of Federal requirements, the principles, standards, and requirements of accreditation are created by the member institutions and not, as some believe, imposed on us by a separate agency. There are several types of accreditation: national, regional and specialized or programmatic accreditation. The gold standard for any public or private university is Regional Accreditation. There are several regional accrediting commissions. In addition to the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (whew...long name, which is why it is always referred as SACSCOC! ) to which we belong, there are the following: the Higher Learning Commission of the North Central Association, Middle States Commission on Higher Education, The Commission on Institutions of Higher Education, New England, the Northwest Commission of Colleges and Universities, the Western Association of Schools and Colleges Senior College and University Commission, and the Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges, Western Association of Schools and Colleges. The accrediting bodies represent regions of the U.S. and work closely with each other.

The purpose of all of the regional accrediting bodies can be summarized into four categories: 1. to enhance the quality of higher education through a rigorous peer review process, 2. to foster improvement within an institution, 3. to protect the integrity of the degree, and 4. to preserve the autonomy and diversity of higher education. These are values we all hold dear.

The Accreditation process includes a periodic review of institutions and an evaluation conducted by the college or university that determines the institution's operations against a set of published standards or principles. In SACSCOC, the full review takes place every ten (10) years, with a midpoint review at the five year mark. If an institution falls on difficult times or is faced with substantial change (such as forced mergers), that may trigger a review "out of sequence."

When a fifth year or a decadal review takes place, peers from institutions similar to the institution under review, read the materials submitted and make recommendations. These peers go through training to help ensure consistency and the integrity of the process. There is a separate off site and on site review, then every case is reviewed a third time by one of the SACSCOC committees, then by the Executive Board, and finally approved by the full Board. This process of checks and balances works very well and tends to control for the issues associated with peer review subjectivity.

The process of peer review, used also in the Medical and the Legal professions, is based upon a belief that professionals in Higher Education are the best, most knowledgeable, and least likely to bring external expectations and assumptions to the process. Additional information about USC Aiken's Fifth Year Review process will be forthcoming throughout the spring semester.