



**Commission on Colleges
Southern Association of Colleges and Schools**

REPORT OF THE REAFFIRMATION COMMITTEE

Statement Regarding the Report

The Commission on Colleges 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 the Commission on Colleges.

Name of the Institution: College of Charleston

Date of the Review: March 20-22, 2007

COC Staff Member: Donna K. Wilkinson

Chair of the Committee: Dr. Susan L. Bosworth
Associate Provost for Planning
and Assessment
The College of William and Mary
Williamsburg, VA

Part I. Overview and Introduction to the Institution

On March 20-22, 2007, a seven member Reaffirmation Committee from the Commission on Colleges (COC) of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS) visited the College of Charleston. Five members were responsible for addressing seven compliance issues identified by the Off-Site Committee. Two of the five members visited the College's off-campus site in North Charleston. The North Campus offers a limited array of undergraduate courses and selected graduate and certificate programs. Two Committee members served as lead evaluators of the College's Quality Enhancement Plan. The lead evaluators were assisted by the other five members. In addition, an observer from an institution about to undergo a decennial reaffirmation of accreditation shadowed the Committee.

The College of Charleston, situated in the heart of historic Charleston, is the oldest institution of higher education in South Carolina and the thirteenth oldest in the United States. The College was founded in 1770 and chartered in 1785 "to encourage and institute youth in the several branches of liberal education." In 1836 it became the first municipal college in the nation. As mandated by the city of Charleston, the College was to be "a Popular institution, intended for the great body of the people." In 1970, the College of Charleston joined the South Carolina State College System, and in 1992 it established The Graduate School of the College of Charleston. The dual commitment to the liberal arts and the citizens of the region continues to define the institution even as it has grown to include students from all fifty states and over 75 countries.

The College's mission emphasizes a commitment to "providing a high-quality education in the arts and sciences, education, and business." To that end, "[t]he College provides students a community in which to engage in original inquiry and creative expression in an atmosphere of intellectual freedom. This community, founded on the principles of the liberal arts tradition, provides students the opportunity to realize their intellectual and personal potential and to become responsible, productive members of society."

The College of Charleston is a state-supported comprehensive institution with six schools and a rich interdisciplinary program. It offers a wide range of baccalaureate degree programs with more than 49 undergraduate majors and 24 interdisciplinary minors. The College also offers five master's degrees in 17 degree programs and certificates in five programs. In Fall 2006, over 11,000 students were enrolled in undergraduate (88%) and graduate (12%) programs. The student population includes 34% men and 66% women; 83% full-time and 17% part-time students; 68% South Carolina residents and 33% non-residents; and students from a variety of racial/ethnic backgrounds including 83% White, 7% African American, 2% Non-Resident Aliens, 2% Hispanic, 1% Pacific Islander or Asian, less than 1% American Indian or Alaskan, and 5% unreported or unknown.

President George Benson and the College of Charleston warmly welcomed the Reaffirmation Committee. The Committee appreciated the hospitality and working environment provided by the College and the level of integrity, transparency, and commitment evidenced throughout the process. The Committee offers special thanks to Dr. Pamela Niesslein, Associate Vice President for Accountability and Accreditation for her outstanding assistance and work. The Committee also commends the excellent support provided by members of the Office of Accountability, Accreditation, Planning & Assessment, and especially recognizes the assistance of Administrative Assistant Takara Chatman, Director of Information and Technology Resources John McCarron, and Director of Assessment Deborah Vaughn.

Part II. Assessment of Compliance

Sections A thru E to be completed by the Off-Site Review Committee and the On-Site Review Committee.

A. Assessment of Compliance with Section 1: The Principle of Integrity

- 1.1 The institution operates with integrity in all matters. **(Integrity)**
(Note: This requirement is not addressed by the institution in its Compliance Certification.)

The Committee finds no evidence of non-compliance.

B. Assessment of Compliance with Section 2: Core Requirements

- 2.1 The institution has degree-granting authority from the appropriate government agency or agencies. **(Degree-granting Authority)**

The institution's degree granting authority comes from the State of South Carolina. The institution has the approval to confer the following degrees: the Artium Baccalaureates, the Bachelor of Arts, the Bachelor of Sciences, the Master of Arts, the Master of Science, the Master of Education, the Master of Arts in Teaching, and the Master of Public Administration. The *State of South Carolina Code of Law*, Title 59, Chapter 103, SECTION 59-103-35 that covers "Submission of budget; new and existing programs" gives the Commission of Higher Education (CHE) the authority to approve degree programs for the institutions in the State of South Carolina.

- 2.2 The institution has a governing board of at least five members that is the legal body with specific authority over the institution. The board is an active policy-making body for the institution and is ultimately responsible for ensuring that the financial resources of the institution are adequate to provide a sound educational program. The board is not controlled by a minority of board members or by organizations or interests separate from it. Both the presiding officer of the board and a majority of other voting members of the board are free of any contractual, employment, or personal or familial financial interest in the institution.

A military institution authorized and operated by the federal government to award degrees has a public board on which both the presiding officer and a majority of the other members are neither civilian employees of the military nor active/retired military. The board has broad and significant influence upon the institution's programs and operations, plays an active role in policy-making, and ensures that the financial resources of the institution are used to provide a sound educational program. The board is not controlled by a minority of board members or by organizations or interests separate from the board except as specified by the authorizing legislation. Both the presiding officer of the board and a majority of other voting board members are free of any contractual, employment, or personal or familial financial interest in the institution. **(Governing Board)**

The institution joined the South Carolina state system of higher education in 1970. The Board of Trustees (Board), comprised of 17 members, derives its authority over the institution through state statute. The by-laws of the Board state that the Board is a policy-making entity and that it delegates to the President the administrative power to manage the institution through the implementation of Board policy.

The Board is not controlled by a minority of its members or any organization. As provided by State statute, the Chair, as presiding officer of the Board, nor any of its members, may have a contractual, employment, or personal or familial financial interest in the institution.

- 2.3** The institution has a chief executive officer whose primary responsibility is to the institution and who is not the presiding officer of the board. **(Chief Executive Officer)**

The authority for the administration of the institution is vested by the Board in the office of the President. The President, the chief executive of the institution, is not the presiding officer of the Board.

- 2.4** The institution has a clearly defined, comprehensive, and published mission statement that is specific to the institution and appropriate for higher education. The mission addresses teaching and learning and, where applicable, research and public service. **(Institutional Mission)**

The institution has a clearly defined mission statement which particularly stresses a strong undergraduate program. The institution recruits students who excel academically and encourages original inquiry and the development of productive citizens. The mission statement of the institution supports research appropriate to undergraduate and master's level programs and delivers public service for the Lowcountry region through continuing education and cultural activities. The new 2006 mission statement is published on the institution's website. The current undergraduate and graduate catalogs went to press before the new mission statement was approved by the Board; the new mission statement will be added in the next publication of catalogs. The printed catalogs include the previously approved mission statement.

- 2.5** The institution engages in ongoing, integrated, and institution-wide research-based planning and evaluation processes that (1) incorporate a systematic review of institutional mission, goals, and outcomes; (2) result in continuing improvement in institutional quality; and (3) demonstrate the institution is effectively accomplishing its mission. **(Institutional Effectiveness)**

The institution engages in internal and external ongoing, integrated, and institution-wide research-based planning and assessment of its programs and services. Strategic planning and budgeting processes are derived from the institution's mission statement. Academic and administrative departments produce strategic plans on a three-year cycle (Three-Year Plans) and on an annual basis (Annual Action Plans) that have as their basis specific goals from the Strategic Plan. The Administrative Committee on Institutional Effectiveness (ACIE) supervises the three-year assessment cycle adopted by the institution.

In addition to the regular assessment cycle, the institution participates in external state-required performance accountability assessments. Each summer, the

institution submits an *Institutional Effectiveness Report* to the South Carolina Commission on Higher Education (CHE), pursuant to the *South Carolina Code of Laws*, Section 59-101-350. This report provides summary information on academic assessment outcomes and plans for improvement, graduation rates, minority enrollment, transfer-in and transfer-out data, professional examination scores, and more.

The institution reported completing the first phase of Strategic Planning and, recognizing that planning is a dynamic process, has entered the second phase. In the second phase four areas will be targeted:

- Academic programs (with particular emphasis on the General Education program and Majors and Multi-disciplinary programs of distinction and distinctiveness)
- Co-curricular programs
- Student success
- Diversity

The institution's documents described an internal three-year planning cycle, as follows.

Year 1 – Initial Assessment Document. During the first year of the three-year cycle, an Initial Assessment Document is written to reflect items from the department's planning documents that it feels are so significant that they should be measured to determine how effectively the goals are being accomplished. The process calls for utilizing well-accepted IE practices.

Year 2 – Data Collection. Data Collection may span several years so that the department may obtain the desired results. The Data Collection phase gives the department the opportunity to carry out the goals from their Initial Assessment (year one) and determine achievement of these goals. Each year, while in the Data Collection phase, the department completes a Data Collection Report to outline the collection measures being used and to recount any results. As with the initial phase, the institution has mapped out a strategy that utilizes appropriate IE strategies, to include: modification of the assessment tools; surveys; employment/placement/retention data; use of departmental exams, capstone courses, senior paper reviews; and focus groups.

Year 3 – Assessment Reports. In year 3 the assessment loop is closed. Departments evaluate their data collection findings and plan a path forward based upon the information they have acquired and the data they have mined in the assessment process. All assessment documents -- Initial Assessment Reports, Data Collection Reports, and Assessment Reports -- are reviewed by either the Faculty Committee on Institutional Effectiveness or the Administrative Committee on Institutional Effectiveness.

When fully followed, this assessment process appears to be well-crafted.

2.6 The institution is in operation and has students enrolled in degree programs. (Continuous Operation)

Founded in 1770 and chartered in 1785, the College of Charleston is the oldest institution of higher education in the state of South Carolina and the thirteenth oldest in the United States. In 1836, it became the first municipal college in the

United States, and it was incorporated into the South Carolina State College System in 1970. The institution has been in continuous operation except from December 19, 1864 until February 1, 1866.

In all, the institution offers undergraduate students 49 degree programs in 44 major fields of study, 54 minor fields of study, and 24 interdisciplinary minor programs. In 1992, The Graduate School of the College of Charleston was established. The Graduate School offers degrees in 17 master's programs and certificates in five programs. Total current enrollment is more than 11,000 students.

- 2.7.1** The institution offers one or more degree programs based on at least 60 semester credit hours or the equivalent at the associate level; at least 120 semester credit hours or the equivalent at the baccalaureate level; or at least 30 semester credit hours or the equivalent at the post-baccalaureate, graduate, or professional level. If an institution uses a unit other than semester credit hours, it provides an explanation for the equivalency. The institution also provides a justification for all degrees that include fewer than the required number of semester credit hours or its equivalent unit. **(Program Length)**

According to the *Graduate Catalog*, all programs at the graduate level are designed to be at least 30 semester credit hours. In fact, they range from 30 to 54 credit hours. The *Undergraduate Catalog*, on page 20, provides that students must earn a total of 122 semester hours of credit. The 122 semester hours includes general education degree requirements, major requirements, and electives chosen by the student.

- 2.7.2** The institution offers degree programs that embody a coherent course of study that is compatible with its stated mission and is based upon fields of study appropriate to higher education. **(Program Content)**

According to its mission the institution offers programs in “the arts and sciences, education and business” with a “strong liberal arts undergraduate curriculum.” In keeping with this mission, all undergraduate degrees include 56 hours of Liberal Arts and Sciences General Education Requirements. The degree programs described in both the undergraduate and graduate catalogs are offerings which appear very consistent with these objectives.

- 2.7.3** In each undergraduate degree program, the institution requires the successful completion of a general education component at the collegiate level that (1) is a substantial component of each undergraduate degree, (2) ensures breadth of knowledge, and (3) is based on a coherent rationale. For degree completion in associate programs, the component constitutes a minimum of 15 semester hours or the equivalent; for baccalaureate programs, a minimum of 30 semester hours or the equivalent. These credit hours are to be drawn from and include at least one course from each of the following areas: humanities/fine arts, social/behavioral sciences, and natural science/mathematics. The courses do not narrowly focus on those skills, techniques, and procedures specific to a particular occupation or profession. If an institution uses a unit other than semester credit hours, it provides an explanation for the equivalency. The institution also provides a justification if it allows for fewer than the required number of semester credit hours or its equivalent unit of general education courses. **(General Education)**

A review of the *Undergraduate Catalog* confirmed that the institution requires in each undergraduate major the successful completion of a substantial general education component which ensures breadth of knowledge and is based on a coherent rationale. All bachelor's degree programs require a total of 122 hours. Of the total hours for completion, the Liberal Arts and Sciences General Education requirement comprises 44 to 52 hours, depending upon the number of foreign language courses required for a student to demonstrate proficiency at the intermediate level. Course requirements include English (6 hours), history (6 hours), natural sciences (8 hours, including 2 hours of labs), and mathematics or logic (6 hours), social science (6 hours), and humanities (12 hours).

These requirements are consistent with the institution's mission as a "state-supported comprehensive institution providing a high-quality education in the arts and sciences, education and business" and its heritage of retaining a "strong liberal arts undergraduate curriculum" as stated in both the undergraduate (p. 7) and graduate (p. 7) catalogs. Twelve institutional goals provide guidelines for the "design of educational programs, curricula, and support services" and a framework for the articulation of goals by academic and administrative units (*Undergraduate Catalog*, p. 7). These goals focus on developing skills (reading, writing, and oral communication; critical thinking and problem-solving; and computer information retrieval); on lifelong learning and diversity (lifelong commitment to intellectual curiosity and learning; global awareness; and understanding of cultural diversity); on enhancing students' affective development; on developing an understanding of the arts and sciences; on heightening students' consciousness of importance of the political, social, economic, and scientific issues of their time; on developing depth knowledge and competence in at least one academic discipline; on scholarly inquiry and research; and on graduate education.

An *ad hoc* General Education Committee formed by the Provost is assessing how well the general education requirements meet the "holistic goals" of the institution; the "Statement of Purpose for the Common Requirements of the College of Charleston's Undergraduate Curriculum" outlines student learning outcomes for general education and beyond.

- 2.7.4** The institution provides instruction for all course work required for at least one degree program at each level at which it awards degrees. If the institution does not provide instruction for all such course work and (1) makes arrangements for some instruction to be provided by other accredited institutions or entities through contracts or consortia or (2) uses some other alternative approach to meeting this requirement, the alternative approach must be approved by the Commission on Colleges. In both cases, the institution demonstrates that it controls all aspects of its educational program. (*See Commission policy "Core Requirement 2.7.4: Documenting an Alternate Approach."*) **(Course work for Degrees)**

The institution offers all course work for at least one degree at each degree level.

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

The institution employs full-time faculty in sufficient numbers to support its mission as a "state-supported comprehensive institution providing a high-quality education in the arts and sciences, education and business" (*Undergraduate*

Catalog, p. 7), and to ensure the quality and integrity of its academic programs. According to the compliance report, and supporting documentation (Common Data Subsets: 2005-2006) the institution enrolls 9878 students, of which 9055 are full-time, 823 are part-time, and 1,454 are graduate students. Currently, the college employs 515 full-time and 343 part-time faculty for a total of 858 faculty, with full-time faculty teaching 67.3% of undergraduate course sections and 65.4% of all course enrollments. The student:faculty ratio, based on full-time equivalent students (full-time plus 1/3 part-time), is 13.8:1. From fall 1999 through fall 2005 the institution has added 157 full time faculty, and has made an effort to control class size (average undergraduate class size is 24.99; average graduate class size is 11.67). Of the full-time faculty, 56% are tenured, 22% hold the rank of professor, 33% hold the rank of associate professor, and 33% hold the rank of assistant professor; lecturers and instructors comprise the remaining percentage of full-time faculty. The *Faculty Administration Manual* listed workload policies of schools as an appendix.

The *Faculty Administration Manual* addresses the overall responsibility of the faculty for teaching, research, and service; outlines procedures and requirements for promotion and tenure; and describes faculty's role in governance through the committee structure.

- 2.9** The institution, through ownership or formal arrangements or agreements, provides and supports student and faculty access and user privileges to adequate library collections and services and to other learning/information resources consistent with the degrees offered. Collections, resources, and services are sufficient to support all its educational, research, and public service programs. **(Learning Resources and Services)**

The library provides resources and services appropriate to meet its mission and that of the college. The library has an extensive print collection as well as online resources through the South Carolina State Library, a consortium of academic libraries in the state, and additional resources provided with institutional funds. Services (interlibrary loan, remote access, hours of service, etc.) are sufficient and appropriate to meet the information needs of students and faculty.

- 2.10** The institution provides student support programs, services, and activities consistent with its mission that promote student learning and enhance the development of its students. **(Student Support Services)**

Review of the supporting electronic documentation supports that the Division of Student Affairs provides programs, services and activities to help students "realize their intellectual and personal potential and to become responsible, productive members of society" as stated in the institutional mission. As an example, academic support begins with targeted summer program offerings such as SPECTRA and continues with programs of the Academic Advising and Program Center and Center for Student Learning. These programs emphasize the collaboration between Student Affairs and Academic Affairs.

The "students who excel academically" (identified as those the institution seeks to admit in its Mission Statement) are intellectually challenged through programs such as the Honors College.

Traditional student affairs programs provide community building in residence halls and learning communities. Co-curricular activities such as those provided

by Campus Recreation Services contribute to the overall health and well-being of students. Cougar Activities Board, Greeks and other Student Organizations contribute to personal growth and leadership development. Experiential learning is supported by the programs of Career Services and the Office of Service Learning which also facilitates campus/community partnerships.

- 2.11.1** The institution has a sound financial base and demonstrated financial stability to support the mission of the institution and the scope of its programs and services.

The member institution provides the following financial statements: (1) an institutional audit (or *Standard Review Report* issued in accordance with *Statements on Standards for Accounting and Review Services* issued by the AICPA for those institutions audited as part of a systemwide or statewide audit) and written institutional management letter for the most recent fiscal year prepared by an independent certified public accountant and/or an appropriate governmental auditing agency employing the appropriate audit (or *Standard Review Report*) guide; (2) a statement of financial position of unrestricted net assets, exclusive of plant assets and plant-related debt, which represents the change in unrestricted net assets attributable to operations for the most recent year; and (3) an annual budget that is preceded by sound planning, is subject to sound fiscal procedures, and is approved by the governing board. **(Financial Resources)**

The audit report for fiscal year ended June 30, 2006 shows total net assets of \$133,116,695. This reflects an increase of \$9,275,196 (7.5%) over the previous year. For the past five years, net assets have increased by \$25,406,331 (23.6%) which does reflect a steady increase over this period. The unrestricted net assets have declined over this same five year period; however, information provided in the management's discussion and analysis suggests this was a planned event by transferring unrestricted net assets to a capital improvement project. Unrestricted assets at June 30, 2006 were \$5,455,564 or 4.1% of total net assets. The management letter does not indicate any areas of non-compliance or weaknesses in internal controls.

A written explanation of budget process is included in the explanation of compliance documenting the existence of a formal budget process. Budgetary control rests with the departmental chairperson while overall oversight is the responsibility of the executive management. Statistical data indicates that state appropriations have decreased from 28.5% of total revenues to 18.46% between 2001 and 2005, while dependence on tuition and fees has increased from 37.4% to 43.5% of total revenue. A link to the State of South Carolina Appropriations Bill was provided.

- 2.11.2** The institution has adequate physical resources to support the mission of the institution and the scope of its programs and services. **(Physical Resources)**

Physical facilities appear to be adequate to meet institutional needs.

- 2.12** The institution has developed an acceptable Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP) that (1) includes a broad-based institutional process identifying key issues emerging from institutional assessment, (2) focuses on learning outcomes and/or the environment supporting student learning and accomplishing the mission of the institution, (3) demonstrates institutional capability for the initiation, implementation, and completion of the QEP, (4) includes broad-based

involvement of institutional constituencies in the development and proposed implementation of the QEP, and (5) identifies goals and a plan to assess their achievement. **(Quality Enhancement Plan)**

The On-Site Committee judged the College's Quality Enhancement Plan, "Going Further Faster: College of Charleston's First Year Experience," to be acceptable in each of the five areas specified in Core Requirement 2.12.

C. Assessment of Compliance with Section 3: Comprehensive Standards

- 3.1.1** The mission statement is current and comprehensive, accurately guides the institution's operations, is periodically reviewed and updated, is approved by the governing board, and is communicated to the institution's constituencies. **(Mission).**

The institution has a clear and comprehensive mission statement that guides the institution, as demonstrated in the institution's *Strategic Plan (Phase I and II)* and its *Strategic Plan Goals (Undergraduate Catalog, pp. 7-8)*, as well as the College's *Core Values*. The mission statement that was revised by the Board February 15, 1994 was revised by the Board July 13, 2006, as reflected in the Board minutes. The new mission statement appears on the institution's website. Current undergraduate and graduate catalogs went to press before the new mission statement was approved by the Board but will be added to the next catalogs published. The institution's president sent a memorandum, dated September 6, 2006, to the campus at large confirming the new mission statement.

- 3.2.1** The governing board of the institution is responsible for the selection and the periodic evaluation of the chief executive officer. **(CEO evaluation/selection)**

The President is appointed by the Board to serve for such terms and conditions as it considers appropriate. The Board, following the procedures and policies of the State Office of Human Resources, evaluates the President annually.

- 3.2.2** The legal authority and operating control of the institution are clearly defined for the following areas within the institution's governance structure: **(Governing board control)**

3.2.2.1 the institution's mission;

3.2.2.2 the fiscal stability of the institution;

3.2.2.3 institutional policy, including policies concerning related and affiliated corporate entities and all auxiliary services;

3.2.2.4 related foundations (athletic, research, etc.) and other corporate entities whose primary purpose is to support the institution and/or its programs.

3.2.2.1

Responsibility for approval of the institutional mission is vested in the Board of Trustees.

3.2.2.2

The Board of Trustees and the President have the legal authority for the fiscal stability of the institution. *Section 59-153-20* (Funds and assets held in trust; trustee; investments) of the State of South Carolina Code of Laws provides for the following:

All endowment funds and assets purchased with them are held in trust. The board of trustees of each institution of higher learning is the trustee of all endowment funds held in the name of that institution by the State Treasurer. The trustee has the exclusive authority to invest and manage those funds and assets and may invest and reinvest the funds, subject to all the terms, conditions, limitations, and restrictions imposed by Article 7, Chapter 9, Title 11, upon the investment of sinking funds of the State, and, subject to like terms, conditions, limitations, and restrictions, may hold, purchase, sell, assign, transfer, and dispose of any of the securities and investments in which the endowment funds have been invested, plus the proceeds of these investments and any monies belonging to these funds. Additionally, the trustee may invest and reinvest its endowment funds in equity securities of a corporation within the United States that is registered on a national securities exchange as provided in the Securities Exchange Act, 1934, or a successor act, or quoted through the National Association of Securities Dealers Automatic Quotations System, or a similar service.

3.2.2.3

The *Board of Trustees By-laws* provide for the following:

The final authority and responsibility for the governance and academic programs of the institution is vested in the Board in accordance with the statutes of the State of South Carolina pertaining thereto.

The President, along with the Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs, shares with the Faculty the responsibility for proposing educational programs and policies. He is also responsible for the orderly implementation of educational programs and policies.

3.2.2.4

A memorandum of understanding between the Board and the foundation that supports the academic and financial goal of the institution defines the extent of the institution's operating control. The organization that raises funds for the athletic program has By-Laws that define the formal relationship between the organization and the College.

3.2.3 The board has a policy addressing conflict of interest for its members. **(Conflict of interest)**

The institution's Board has a policy addressing conflict of interest for its members, as stated in *South Carolina Code of Laws*, Section 8-13-700, and in South Carolina State Ethics Commission Rules of Conduct. Each Board member

is required to file the State of South Carolina State Ethics Commission Statement of Economic Interest form.

- 3.2.4** The governing board is free from undue influence from political, religious, or other external bodies and protects the institution from such influence. **(External influence)**

The *South Carolina Code of Laws* and the Rules of Conduct of the State Ethics Commission prohibit Board members from exerting undue influence, whether political, religious, or otherwise, in fulfilling their responsibilities to the institution and the State. There are similar restrictions on external organizations.

- 3.2.5** The governing board has a policy whereby members can be dismissed only for appropriate reasons and by a fair process. **(Board dismissal)**

Trustees may be removed for cause following the procedures outlined in the Articles of Impeachment of the South Carolina Constitution.

- 3.2.6** There is a clear and appropriate distinction, in writing and practice, between the policy-making functions of the governing board and the responsibility of the administration and faculty to administer and implement policy. **(Board/administration distinction)**

The bylaws of the Board state that the Board determines broad administrative and educational policies and vests the authority for the administration of such policies with the President. An examination of the minutes of the Board clearly demonstrates that the Board is a policy-making entity.

- 3.2.7** The institution has a clearly defined and published organizational structure that delineates responsibility for the administration of policies. **(Organizational structure)**

The institution's organizational charts and the *Faculty Administration Manual*, available online, define and delineate the responsibilities for the administration of Board policies.

- 3.2.8** The institution has qualified administrative and academic officers with the experience, competence, and capacity to lead the institution. **(Qualified administrative/academic officers)**

An examination of the credentials of the administration and academic officers indicates that the institution has qualified individuals with appropriate credentials and experience to lead the institution.

- 3.2.9** The institution defines and publishes policies regarding appointment and employment of faculty and staff. **(Faculty/staff appointment)**

Policies related to appointment and employment of faculty and staff are available online at the *Faculty Administration Manual* website, the Academic Affairs website, and the Human Resources website. Certain other departments or units such as the library have these policies on their own websites.

- 3.2.10** The institution evaluates the effectiveness of its administrators on a periodic basis. **(Administrative staff evaluations)**

The Board annually evaluates the President utilizing guidelines provided by the State of South Carolina Agency Head Performance Evaluation procedures. The State of South Carolina's Employee Performance Management System provides the necessary procedures and guidelines for the annual evaluation of administrators other than the President.

- 3.2.11** The institution's chief executive officer has ultimate responsibility for, and exercises appropriate administrative and fiscal control over, the institution's intercollegiate athletics program. **(Control of intercollegiate athletics)**

The bylaws of the Board clearly state that the President is directly responsible for the orderly conduct of the intercollegiate program of the institution. The President also complies with all regulations governing the administration and fiscal authority for the intercollegiate program as required by the NCAA and the institution's athletic conference. The President exercises administrative control over intercollegiate athletics through the following officers who report directly to his office: Executive Athletic Director and the NCAA Compliance Officer.

- 3.2.12** The institution's chief executive officer controls the institution's fund-raising activities exclusive of institution-related foundations that are independent and separately incorporated. **(Fund-raising activities)**.

The bylaws of the Board give the President ultimate control of all fundraising activities conducted by or on behalf of the institution. The Senior Vice President for Institutional Advancement reports directly to the President and is assigned the authority to supervise all fundraising activities, both academic and non-academic.

- 3.2.13** Any institution-related foundation not controlled by the institution has a contractual or other formal agreement that (1) accurately describes the relationship between the institution and the foundation and (2) describes any liability associated with that relationship. In all cases, the institution ensures that the relationship is consistent with its mission. **(Institution-related foundations)**

There are two organizations that support the institution's programs and activities. One works to support the academic and financial goals of the institution while the other focuses on support for athletics.

A memorandum of understanding (MOU) between the first organization and the institution defines the relationship between the institution and the foundation. The purposes and goals appear to be consistent with the institution's mission. The MOU also addresses the liability issues associated with this relationship.

The organization that raises funds for the athletic program is a 501(c)(3) tax exempt corporation. The Certificate of Incorporation and the By-Laws of the organization provide evidence of the formal relationship between the organization and the College. The By-Laws specify that the organization shall "uphold the aims and policies of athletics at the College of Charleston ...". Liaisons are appointed by the College to "oversee fiscal management and monitor all matters and/or transactions relating to the College of Charleston, its resources and name." The Executive Director and support staff who manage the organization's daily affairs are employees of the College and thereby adhere to all rules and regulations of College employees.

- 3.2.14** The institution's policies are clear concerning ownership of materials, compensation, copyright issues, and the use of revenue derived from the creation and production of all intellectual property. These policies apply to students, faculty, and staff. **(Intellectual property rights)**

The institution publishes clear policies concerning ownership of materials, compensation, copyright issues, and the use of revenue derived from the creation and production of all intellectual property. These policies are covered in detail in an addendum to the *Faculty Administration Manual*, the Technology Transfer (Patent) Policy, which is available on the institution website. In addition, Appendix D of the *Faculty Administration Manual*, Patent, Trademark and Copyright Policy provides general information regarding patents, trademarks and copyrights.

- 3.3.1** The institution identifies expected outcomes for its educational programs (*including student learning outcomes for educational programs*) and its administrative and educational support services, assesses whether it achieves these outcomes, and provides evidence of improvement based on analysis of those results. **(Institutional effectiveness)**

The College has established a well-designed assessment process involving all of its units. The overall institutional planning process is described in CR 2.5. Planning and assessment activities take place over a three-year cycle. In the first year, departments prepare an Initial Assessment Document which essentially offers a plan for the assessment cycle. In the second year of the cycle, the measurements listed in the Initial Assessment Document are carried out in order to determine the extent to which goals are being met. This information is compiled and then submitted as a Data Collection Report. In the third year of the assessment cycle, the assessment loop is closed as departments evaluate their data and plan a path forward based upon the data they have mined in the assessment process. The three-year cycle is staggered.

The Off-Site Committee reviewed Three-year Plans, Annual Action Plans, Initial Assessment Documents, and Data Collection documents from 33 departments in seven offices and five schools. A significant majority of the reviewed departments had a Three-year Plan, an Annual Action Plan, and either an Initial Assessment Report or a Data Collection document with a limited number having both an Initial Assessment Report and a Data Collection document. For example, Art History followed the institution's longitudinal institutional effectiveness plan, listed the designated Initial Assessment Document (2003-2004) and Data Collection document (2004-2005), and used the institution's designated reporting forms in an accessible and easily readable format. This plan and report might serve as a model for other departments or offices.

In its Focused Report, the College stated that the Office of Accountability, Accreditation, Planning and Assessment (AAPA) had updated its website to include all electronically-available planning and assessment documents. The On-Site Committee reviewed the updated website and paper copies of assessment reports from two academic departments and a support services unit. In addition, the On-Site Committee met with campus officials from administrative and academic departments. Based on the additional information provided on campus, the On-Site Committee determined that the institution has a well established process of institutional effectiveness through which it identifies expected outcomes for its educational programs and its administrative and educational

support services, was assessing whether those outcomes were being achieved, and had provided evidence of improvement based on an analysis of those results.

3.4.1 The institution demonstrates that each educational program for which academic credit is awarded is approved by the faculty and the administration. **(Academic program approval)**

Policies and procedures governing the role of the faculty and the administration in approving each educational program for which academic credit is awarded are clearly outlined in *Faculty Administration Manual*. Article IV, Section 1 of the Faculty Senate By-Laws addresses the Senate's responsibility in matters "relating to academic programs, the curriculum, admissions and continuation standards, the grading system, degree and certificate requirements, and utilization of intellectual resources of the College." It further specifies that the Senate "shall have the right and obligation to initiate needed institutional and academic studies, either directly or through appropriate committees" (p. 31). A policy on New Program Proposals (*Academic Affairs General Policy Manual*, Policy #6, 5.2) outlines the process: proposed programs are submitted to the appropriate standing committee of the Faculty Senate (Senate By-Laws, p. 40 & 44). Once approved, the committee forwards proposals to the full Senate for discussion and vote. The Faculty Senate forwards programs for the approval of the Provost, the President, and the Academic Affairs Committee of the Board of Trustees; final approval must be granted by the State of South Carolina Commission on Higher Education (CHE). CHE review examines program objectives, need, compatibility with institutional mission, role and scope, cost, and available resources (Guidelines for New Academic Programs, Section I). Minutes of the Faculty Senate demonstrate that the institution follows its policies and procedures.

3.4.2 The institution's continuing education, outreach, and service programs are consistent with the institution's mission. **(Continuing education/service programs)**

The institution delivers several continuing education, outreach, and service programs consistent with its mission. The programs described represent a well-designed mix of community-directed activities and programs.

3.4.3 The institution publishes admissions policies that are consistent with its mission. **(Admissions policies)**

Undergraduate admission policies are found beginning on page 9 of the *Undergraduate Catalog*. They are consistent with the mission, which states "The College of Charleston seeks applicants capable of successfully completing degree requirements and pays particular attention to identifying and admitting students who excel academically." The Graduate School admissions policy is found on page 8 of the *Graduate Catalog*. Graduate admissions criteria are specific to individual programs. Admission policies and other information for application are easily found on the College's Undergraduate Admissions and Graduate Admissions websites.

3.4.4 The institution has a defined and published policy for evaluating, awarding, and accepting credit for transfer, experiential learning, advanced placement, and professional certificates that is consistent with its mission and ensures that

course work and learning outcomes are at the collegiate level and comparable to the institution's own degree programs. The institution assumes responsibility for the academic quality of any course work or credit recorded on the institution's transcript. **(Acceptance of academic credit)**

The *Undergraduate Catalog* and the *Graduate Catalog* both contain policies regarding transfer and advanced placement credit. The institution awards credit based on Advanced Placement courses, International Baccalaureate courses, College Level Examination Program and local language placement tests. The policies also are available on the institutional website. The institution does not award credit for experiential learning or life experience. Courses from other institutions that have no comparable course at this institution are not accepted.

- 3.4.5** The institution publishes academic policies that adhere to principles of good educational practice. These are disseminated to students, faculty, and other interested parties through publications that accurately represent the programs and services of the institution. **(Academic policies)**

A review of publications such as the *Undergraduate Catalog*, the *Graduate Catalog*, the *Faculty Administration Manual*, and the *Student Handbook* confirms that the institution publishes academic policies that adhere to the principles of good academic practice. These policies are disseminated to students, faculty, and other interested parties through the publications mentioned and through institutional websites, including those of the Office of the Registrar, Student Affairs and Academic Affairs. The publications accurately represent the programs and services of the institution.

- 3.4.6** The institution employs sound and acceptable practices for determining the amount and level of credit awarded for courses, regardless of format or mode of delivery. **(Practices for awarding credit)**

The institution has provided evidence that it employs acceptable practice for determining the amount and level of credit awarded for courses. The institution follows the definition of a credit hour from the South Carolina Commission on Higher Education Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System Glossary. A fixed amount of time (2100 minutes for a 3 credit course during a fall or spring semester) is required. Courses taught in a shortened format (such as summer school) meet for the same total amount of time as a traditional course.

- 3.4.7** The institution ensures the quality of educational programs and courses offered through consortia relationships or contractual agreements, ensures ongoing compliance with the comprehensive requirements, and evaluates the consortial relationship and/or agreement against the purpose of the institution. **(Consortia relationships/contractual agreements)**

The institution participates in a consortium of five institutions (called the Cross Registration Agreement) which allows students who take at least 50% of their hours at the institution to take additional hours at one of the consortium institutions for no additional tuition charges. The institution periodically reviews its participation in this program.

The institution has five joint programs at the graduate level with three other institutions. Each of these programs involves one degree program, and each

program has some form of an agreement detailing the oversight of the program, the responsibilities of each participant, and a periodic review of the program.

- 3.4.8** The institution awards academic credit for course work taken on a noncredit basis only when there is documentation that the noncredit course work is equivalent to a designated credit experience. **(Noncredit to credit)**

The institution does not award academic credit for course work taken on a noncredit basis. Additionally, the institution does not accept transfer credit from other institutions for such course work.

- 3.4.9** The institution provides appropriate academic support services. **(Academic support services)**

The *Undergraduate Catalog* (p. 29) and the *Graduate Catalog* (p. 20) outline available support services. The Academic Advising and Planning Center (AAPC), staffed by full-time advisors, provides services for all new students; once a student declares a major, that student is assigned a faculty advisor. Students are provided information regarding academic advising at the New Student orientation; they can access Degree Worksheets and Four-Year Academic Planning Navigator through the center's website and through an automated degree audit system. Training is provided to faculty and staff through the Center and resources such as the *Advisor Handbook* and the *Advisory*, a web newsletter. Office visits are tracked, weekly reports submitted by advisors, and a student satisfaction survey conducted. The center is developing an Advising Portfolio for students entering fall 2006, including an advising syllabus, objectives/mission statement, goals and outcomes, policies and procedures, timeline/calendar and campus resources, etc. The center develops annual and three year plans as part of the campus assessment and is conducting a longitudinal study.

The Center for Disability Services (CDS) assures protection from discrimination and equal access to all programs and services offered by the institution. The Student Needing Access Parity Program (SNAP), one of the units reporting to CDS, provides a variety of services to students with documented disabilities, including special advising and registration, special/reasonable accommodations, assistance to faculty upon request, and assistive technology. Policies and procedures including appeal and grievance procedures are clearly outlined in the *Undergraduate Catalog*. Information about CDS/SNAP is also available on the CDS website, the *Graduate Catalog*, and the *Student Handbook*. In April 2005 the institution undertook a review of its services to disabled students.

The Center for Student Learning (CSL), located on the first floor of the library, provides a professional study skills staff; faculty members from English, foreign language, biology, communications and mathematics; and student tutors to assist students. Labs are provided for accounting, foreign language, information technology fluency, mathematics, natural sciences, and writing/speaking. CSL also provides assistance with standardized tests such as the GMAT, LSAT, CRE, MCAT, and NTE. Other support services are offered through Counseling and Substance Abuse Services; Language Resource Center; the New Student Programs, including New Student Orientation, Family Orientation, New Student Mentors; Technology Support; and Writer's Group which focuses only on students enrolled in English 101 to help them with each stage of the writing process. The Library provides a one-hour credit course for students entitled

Electronic Resources for Research; provides lectures at the request of faculty, works with students groups; and maintains two blogs, the *Addlestone Report* and *From Your Science Librarian's Desk* to keep the college community apprised of latest news and updates in information and educational technology and science- and technology-related Internet resources.

3.4.10 The institution places primary responsibility for the content, quality, and effectiveness of its curriculum with its faculty. **(Responsibility for curriculum)**

The institution places primary responsibility for the content, quality, and effectiveness of its curriculum with its faculty as outlined in *Faculty Administration Manual*. Article IV, Section 1 of the Faculty Senate By-Laws addresses the Senate's responsibility in matters "relating to academic programs, the curriculum, admissions and continuation standards, the grading system, degree and certificate requirements, and utilization of intellectual resources of the College." It further specifies that the Senate "shall have the right and obligation to initiate needed institutional and academic studies, either directly or through appropriate committees" (p. 31). Several committees elected by the faculty oversee the quality of the curriculum. The Academic Planning Committee, a standing committee of the Faculty Senate, considers and recommends long-range programs and goals for the institution, including general education programs (p. 37). Three standing college committees are responsible for curriculum oversight: the Committee on Academic Standards, Admissions and Financial Aid, which rules on matters relating to interpretation or application of academic standards (p. 42-43); the Curriculum Committee, which considers "all courses, programs, and changes in the undergraduate curriculum" (p. 44), and the Committee on Graduate Education, Continuing Education and Special Programs (p. 40).

The policy on New Program Proposals (*Academic Affairs General Policy Manual*, Policy #6, 5.2) outlines the process through which new programs are established: proposed programs are submitted by departments/deans to the appropriate committee, which forwards approved proposals to the full Senate for discussion and vote. Once approved by the Faculty Senate, proposals are submitted for approval of the Provost, the President, and the Academic Affairs Committee of the Board of Trustees in succession. Final approval must be granted by the State of South Carolina Commission on Higher Education (CHE). Minutes of the Faculty Senate demonstrate that the institution follows its policies and procedures.

3.4.11 For each major in a degree program, the institution assigns responsibility for program coordination, as well as for curriculum development and review, to persons academically qualified in the field. In those degree programs for which the institution does not identify a major, this requirement applies to a curricular area or concentration. **(Academic program coordination)**

Program coordination and curriculum development and review are the responsibility of department chairs or program directors that teach in the discipline and hold faculty credentials which make them academically qualified in their field.

3.4.12 The institution's use of technology enhances student learning and is appropriate for meeting the objectives of its programs. Students have access to and training in the use of technology. **(Technology use)**

Technology on this campus is driven by a Strategic Technology Plan. The approach to technology at the institution is comprehensive. Seventy-five percent of classrooms are technology enriched. There are many activities providing student access and support, including a Center for Student Learning. Each School has specific initiatives related to technology. In addition, the institution assesses student and faculty technology capability.

3.5.1 The institution identifies college-level competencies within the general education core and provides evidence that graduates have attained those competencies. **(College-level competencies)**

The institution has identified college-level competencies in general education. These competencies are presented in a *Draft Proposal for General Education at the College of Charleston* which was presented at a faculty retreat in August 1998; however the institution's response indicates that the current general education goals were approved by the faculty senate in April 1997. There also is an effort underway to develop a new set of goals for the general education core. At the time of the Off-Site review, this effort was in the early stages. Prior to the On-Site Committee visit, general education goals were approved as part of the approval of an Online Record/Advising Proposal. The goals are not yet linked to the curriculum, but a process was identified whereby a set of specific learning objectives, currently in draft form, will be used as criteria to certify general education courses.

Although there was evidence of assessment related to general student outcomes and evaluations of course syllabi and graded student work in general education courses by individual department chairs, the Off-Site Committee found no evidence of assessment that constitutes the type of objective evidence linked specifically to the general education goals as called for in the Standard. The additional information submitted in the *Focused Report* and provided in interviews conducted on campus provided no reason to question the Off-Site Committee's finding on non-compliance. The *Focused Report* does indicate that the College "anticipates implementing a goal-based general education program evaluated via student learning outcomes ... [and] will thus be able to effectively and efficiently assess general education at both the course level and program level ...". The On-Site Committee found a strong commitment to general education during its interviews on campus and believes that the issues raised here can be addressed as the institution carries through with the planned revamping of its general education program.

(Recommendation 1) The Committee recommends that the institution develop and implement an assessment plan that provides evidence that its graduates have attained those college-level competencies identified in its general education program.

3.5.2 At least 25 percent of the credit hours required for the degree are earned through instruction offered by the institution awarding the degree. In the case of undergraduate degree programs offered through joint, cooperative, or consortia arrangements, the student earns 25 percent of the credits required for the degree through instruction offered by the participating institutions. **(Institutional credits for a degree).**

The institution provided evidence in the graduation requirements listed in both the *Undergraduate Catalog* and the *Graduate Catalog* that at least 25 percent of the credit hours required for the degree must be earned at the institution.

3.5.3 The institution defines and publishes requirements for its undergraduate programs, including its general education components. These requirements conform to commonly accepted standards and practices for degree programs. **(Undergraduate program requirements)**

The institution defines and publishes general education requirements for its undergraduate programs and major program requirements for all of its programs in its catalogs and on its website, and these requirements conform to commonly accepted standards and practices.

According to the *Undergraduate Catalog*, the institution offers the Bachelors of Arts, Bachelors of Science, and the *Artium Baccalaureates*. The B.A. and B.S. degree programs require a total of 122 hours with a grade point average of 2.0 (p. 20). The A.B. degree requires students to complete all required courses in any major, 18 hours in Latin or in Ancient Greek, and six hours in classical civilization (p. 21). Of the total hours for completion, the Liberal Arts and Sciences General Education requirement comprises 44 to 52 hours, depending upon the number of foreign language courses required for a student to demonstrate proficiency at the intermediate level. General Education course requirements include English (6 hours), history (6 hours), natural sciences (8 hours, including 2 hours of labs), and mathematics or logic (6 hours), social science (6 hours), and humanities (12 hours). These requirements are consistent with the institution's mission as a "state-supported comprehensive institution providing a high-quality education in the arts and sciences, education and business" and its heritage of retaining a "strong liberal arts undergraduate curriculum" as stated in both the undergraduate (p. 7), and graduate (p. 7) catalogs. Institutional goals that provide the guidelines for the "design of educational programs, curricula, and support services," and the framework for articulation of goals by academic and administrative units are also published in the *Undergraduate Catalog* (p. 7). The goals are as follows: to develop (1) reading, writing, and oral communication skills, (2) critical thinking and problem-solving skills, (3) computer information retrieval skills, (4) lifelong commitment to intellectual curiosity and learning, (5) global awareness, (6) understanding of cultural diversity; (7) to enhance affective development; (8) through the core to develop an understanding of the arts, humanities, mathematics, the natural sciences, and the social sciences; (9) to encourage students to become conscious of the importance of the political, social, economic, and scientific issues of their time; (10) to help students acquire depth, knowledge and competence in at least one academic discipline; (11) to train students in the method of scholarly inquiry and research; and (12) to design and conduct graduate programs which meet the needs of the community and are consistent with the academic mission of the College.

Major programs require from 27 to 54 hours, except business administration and accounting due to accreditation requirements. Those departments offering majors of more than 36 hours also are required to offer a major of not more than 36 hours for the students' choice, except those in Business & Economics (*Undergraduate Catalog*, p. 21). Concentrations or minors require 18 hours from a designated group of courses (the business administration minor requires 24 hours), at least 9 hours of the minor must be at or above the sophomore level,

and both concentrations and minors require a minimum grade point average of 2.0. Within major requirements, programs specify introductory courses, required major courses, co-requisites, capstone courses, etc. Although the catalog does not specify elective hours, degree worksheets assist students in planning for electives. College of Charleston programs are accredited by the Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business, the Commission on Accreditation of Allied Health Education Programs, the Computing Science Accreditation Board; the National Association of Schools of Music, the National Association of Schools of Public Affairs and Administration; and the National Council of Accreditation of Teacher Education.

- 3.5.4** At least 25 percent of the discipline course hours in each major at the baccalaureate level are taught by faculty members holding the terminal degree—usually the earned doctorate—in the discipline, or the equivalent of the terminal degree. **(Terminal degrees of faculty)**

This requirement was adopted at the annual meeting of the Southern Association of Colleges and School in December 2006. The Off-Site Committee did not review this Standard. The On-Site Committee reviewed data from faculty credentials files identified in the *Focused Report*. The Committee determined that 25 percent or more of the discipline course hours (defined as 200-level or higher course sections for courses fulfilling requirements in a major) in each major at the baccalaureate degree are being taught by faculty with the terminal degree.

- 3.6.1** The institution's post-baccalaureate professional degree programs, and its master's and doctoral degree programs, are progressively more advanced in academic content than its undergraduate programs. **(Post-baccalaureate program rigor)**

The program approval process, admission requirements, and assessment program are all designed to ensure that the graduate student experience is advanced compared to the undergraduate student experience. A sampling of the course outline and course descriptions for the 17 masters programs and five certificate programs described provides an indication that the graduate student experience is advanced.

- 3.6.2** The institution structures its graduate curricula (1) to include knowledge of the literature of the discipline and (2) to ensure ongoing student engagement in research and/or appropriate professional practice and training experiences. **(Graduate curriculum)**

Based on the *Focused Report*, the *Graduate Catalog* and a review of syllabi, graduate curricula incorporate knowledge of the literature in reading and writing assignments. Small class sizes and capstone experiences required of all graduate programs are the primary basis given for student independent learning. A sampling of student projects and research suggests that graduates are enabled to contribute to a profession.

- 3.6.3** The majority of credits toward a graduate or a post-baccalaureate professional degree are earned through instruction offered by the institution awarding the degree. In the case of graduate and post-baccalaureate professional degree programs offered through joint, cooperative, or consortia arrangements, the student earns a majority of credits through instruction offered by the participating institutions. **(Institutional credits for a degree)**

The majority of credits for all graduate programs are earned at the institution. The institution's *Graduate Catalog* specifies that transfer credit for any graduate program be limited to 12 semester credit hours. A joint program in Historic Preservation has a transfer limit of one-third of the semester credit hours.

- 3.6.4** The institution defines and publishes requirements for its graduate and post-graduate professional programs. These requirements conform to commonly accepted standards and practices for degree programs. **(Post-baccalaureate program requirements)**

The institution offers the Master of Arts, the Master of Science, the Master of Arts in Teaching, the Master of Education, and the Master of Public Administration degrees and graduate certificate programs in Bilingual Legal Interpreting, English to Speakers of Other Languages, Medical and Health Care Interpreting, Organizational and Corporate Communication, and in Statistics. Requirements, including core courses, electives, thesis or non-thesis, grade point average, etc., are specified in the *Graduate Catalog*. College of Charleston programs are accredited by the Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business, the Commission on Accreditation of Allied Health Education Programs, the Computing Science Accreditation Board, the National Association of Schools of Music, the National Association of Schools of Public Affairs and Administration, and the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education.

- 3.7.1** The institution employs competent faculty members qualified to accomplish the mission and goals of the institution. When determining acceptable qualifications of its faculty, an institution gives primary consideration to the highest earned degree in the discipline. The institution also considers competence, effectiveness, and capacity, including, as appropriate, undergraduate and graduate degrees, related work experiences in the field, professional licensure and certifications, honors and awards, continuous documented excellence in teaching, or other demonstrated competencies and achievements that contribute to effective teaching and student learning outcomes. For all cases, the institution is responsible for justifying and documenting the qualifications of its faculty. **(Faculty competence)**

The institution publishes its policies and procedures for hiring faculty and evaluating faculty for promotion, tenure, and merit in the *Faculty Administration Manual*. Minimum requirements for each rank are specified, highest degree, teaching excellence, service, and research and professional development; and standards in each category outlined. In addition, the institution has developed a certification system for verifying credentials, including Guidelines for Chairs, Summary of Guidelines for Chairs, Credentials Check Sheet for Faculty Teaching Undergraduate Courses, Credentials Check Sheet for Faculty Teaching Graduate Courses, Guidelines for Foreign Transcripts, and Guidelines for Writing a Justification of Alternative Qualifications which are posted on the website of the Office of Accountability, Accreditation, Planning and Assessment (AAPA). Original documentation of faculty credentials is also housed in AAPA.

The Guidelines for Chairs specify that normally faculty will hold the doctorate or MFA (considered a terminal degree), or a master's degree with 18 hours in the teaching discipline. In cases where a degree is not held or the faculty member lacks at least 18 hours in the teaching discipline, the department chair provides a

statement of alternative qualifications which must be approved by the Office of AAPA.

The Committee examined the list of faculty with alternative qualifications for fall 2006; a total of 58 were listed, of which a significant number had only the bachelor's degree. Files contained the certification check sheet, the transcript of the highest degree attained, and a justification statement. Based on a review of the alternative qualifications, the Off-Site Committee identified 7 faculty members without the master's and 18 hours in the teaching discipline and insufficient information to determine qualifications.

The Focused Report provided information to respond to the issue of faculty competence of those specific faculty who were identified by the Off-Site Committee. The College reported that six of the seven faculty members will not be returning to the College after this semester. After a review of the remaining faculty credential file and based on evidence of teaching effectiveness (National Board Certification) and teaching excellence (The Coca Cola Scholars Foundation Award), the On-Site Committee is satisfied that the faculty member is qualified to teach introductory level mathematics courses at the College.

- 3.7.2** The institution regularly evaluates the effectiveness of each faculty member in accord with published criteria, regardless of contractual or tenured status. **(Faculty evaluation)**

The institution's *Faculty Administration Manual* provides standards, criteria, evidence, and process for regular faculty evaluations. All untenured faculty members are fully evaluated annually. Tenured faculty are required to undergo a full evaluation at least once every three years. In the Focused Report, the College of Charleston provided evidence of the faculty evaluation process. This process incorporates standards and criteria from the *Faculty Administration Manual* for regular faculty evaluations. The evidence includes a random sample of faculty letters for (1) faculty evaluation, (2) third-year reviews, (3) promotion and/or tenure, (4) post-tenure reviews, and (5) merit increases. This documentation provides evidence that evaluations have been conducted, and that the data are used for decision making relative to the above referenced actions. Further, the data represented a measure of teaching effectiveness at all levels of faculty appointment.

- 3.7.3** The institution provides evidence of ongoing professional development of faculty as teachers, scholars, and practitioners. **(Faculty development)**

The focal point for professional development at the institution is the Center for Faculty Development. The institution provides many activities in support of faculty development including a formal program of New Faculty Orientation to Teaching, financial support for research and professional meeting attendance, release time, sabbatical leave, and formal recognition. In addition, faculty development activities are counted towards faculty evaluation.

- 3.7.4** The institution ensures adequate procedures for safeguarding and protecting academic freedom. **(Academic freedom)**

The institution ensures adequate procedures for the safeguard and protection of academic freedom as documented through the *Faculty Administration Manual*, Section IV.F: Statement of Academic Freedom, which is "based on and quoted

from '1940 Statement of Principles on Academic Freedom and Tenure' and 1970 Interpretive Comments" of AAUP (p. 60). The Statement asserts that "academic freedom is essential to these purposes [promoting the common good through the free search for truth and the free exposition of truth] and applies to teaching and research." It further asserts that "[a]cademic freedom in its teaching aspects is fundamental for the protection of the rights of the faculty member in teaching and of the student in learning." The Statement also addresses a faculty member's protection from institutional censorship or discipline when that faculty member speaks as a private citizen, cautioning faculty when doing so to make every effort to indicate that he or she is not an institutional spokesperson (p. 61). Other sections address academic freedom and protection against discrimination (p. 61), academic freedom for administrative personnel holding faculty status, political activities of faculty members (p. 62), and the academic freedom of graduate students. Violations of academic freedom may be reported to the Faculty Hearing Committee (p. 62) or the Faculty Grievance Committee (p. 63) as appropriate.

3.7.5 The institution publishes policies on the responsibility and authority of faculty in academic and governance matters. **(Faculty role in governance)**

The institution's *Faculty Administration Manual* contains the institution's policies on the faculty's responsibility and authority in academic and governance matters. This publication also includes the Bylaws of the Faculty and specifies the Faculty Senate as the primary vehicle for overseeing faculty governance, primarily through Faculty Senate Committees.

3.8.1 The institution provides facilities and learning/information resources that are appropriate to support its teaching, research, and service mission. **(Learning/information resources)**

The institution has excellent library facilities, including a main library and four branch satellite libraries that serve special programs. The main library, opened in early 2005, doubled the floor space available in its previous facility and now provides the "intellectual commons" for the campus. Serving a largely resident student population, the library is open 112.5 hours per week. Library assessment is provided through an in-house user survey and the LibQUAL+ survey. In addition to the library's extensive print collection, online resources are available through the South Carolina State Library ("Discus") with additional resources through a consortium of academic libraries ("Academic Discus").

3.8.2 The institution ensures that users have access to regular and timely instruction in the use of the library and other learning/information resources. **(Instruction of library use)**

The institution provides multiple ways for students to receive instruction and assistance, including traditional reference services, telephone reference, virtual reference (instant messaging, chat, and e-mail), consultation by appointment, instruction for classes, and a one-hour course in library research. Additional assessment of this program may be appropriate since the library's lowest satisfaction rating in the National Student's Voice survey was the area of library instruction.

- 3.8.3** The institution provides a sufficient number of qualified staff—with appropriate education or experiences in library and/or other learning/information resources—to accomplish the mission of the institution. **(Qualified staff)**

The institution employs 21 librarians, all with the appropriate credentials (M.L.S., M.L.I.S., and/or specialized degrees) and 26 support staff. The librarians are members of the college faculty.

- 3.9.1** The institution publishes a clear and appropriate statement of student rights and responsibilities and disseminates the statement to the campus community. **(Student rights)**

Student rights are clearly and appropriately published in the *Undergraduate Catalog*, *Graduate Catalog*, and *Student Handbook*. The information is also available electronically through these publications. Student Rights and Responsibilities are disseminated to the college community in additional publications such as the *Guide to Residence Living* and *The Compass*. Other offices print and distribute material related to rules, regulations, specific policies and related services. These are distributed and discussed at activities such as orientation sessions and mandatory meetings with specific student populations.

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) was not specifically referenced in the *Graduate Catalog*. The *Graduate Catalog* did contain a statement that policies and procedures could be found in their entirety in the student handbook and could be accessed from the institution's homepage. No active link was found in the on-line version (page 20). The *Graduate Catalog* (on-line and hard copy formats) has been amended with the inclusion of a statement of student rights and the *Focused Report* indicated that "changes have been submitted for the 2007-2008 catalogs to include FERPA guidelines using identical verbiage as that found in the undergraduate catalog."

- 3.9.2** The institution protects the security, confidentiality, and integrity of its student records and maintains special security measures to protect and back up data. **(Student records).**

The South Carolina Public Records Act provides the guidance for record management. The Institutional Records Officer is responsible for ensuring compliance to these regulations related to retention, disposal and response to requests for confidential information. FERPA regulations are clearly communicated to the College community through various publications and training sessions.

The examples provided within the Divisions of Student Life demonstrated diligent care in protecting the security, confidentiality, and integrity of student records. Counseling and Substance Abuse Services and Residence Life and Housing could strengthen their measures to ensure confidentiality if they, as other offices cited, had staff (especially student staff) sign a Memorandum of Understanding regarding the confidentiality of records and student information.

A review of supporting documents (the *Undergraduate Catalog*, Student Information Release Form, The FERPA website, the *Student Handbook*) indicates that the institution protects the confidentiality of students' academic records by complying with the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act.

Students are informed of their rights under FERPA via the *Undergraduate Catalog* (p. 28) and *Student Handbook* (p. 52). The *Graduate Catalog* (on-line and hard copy formats) has been amended with the inclusion of a statement of student rights. FERPA reminders are provided students and parents at orientations and sent via email to faculty by the Registrar.

Student records are maintained either in print or electronically (microfiche or in the Student Information System). Transcripts in microfiche (those prior to 1977) are stored in a locked area; those subsequent to 1977 are stored in secured computerized databases and servers. The institution follows the guidelines and security measures of the South Carolina Department of Archives and History and of the American Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers (AACRAO). Security personnel of the IT Division are charged with the user-authorization process and procedures, which include standard protocols. The institution has moved to a campus-wide identification system (CWID) in place of social security numbers, except WebCT which it expects to migrate to CWID in December of 2006.

Recently, two positions have been added to the institution's staff to improve security, confidentiality and integrity of records: a records analyst responsible for educating the campus on record storage, retention, and destruction according to state regulations and to provide ongoing training to end users; and the chief information security officer who is charged with investigating two-factor authentication for access to sensitive data, out of city and/or state disaster recovery arrangements, and better dissemination of security best practices to all users and stewards of confidential data.

The institution follows acceptable procedures for the release of student information. The *Undergraduate Catalog* specifies that student information the institution designates as public or "Directory Information" may be released at its discretion unless a student has a request on file in the Registrar's Office to prevent its disclosure [Request for Withholding of Personal (Directory) Information]. Other forms required for release of student information are the Student Information Release Authorization Form, a HIPPA for the release of student's health records, and a form for release of records in the Center for Disability Services. Student data are backed up regularly to secure offsite tape libraries.

The College has sufficiently addressed the security, confidentiality and integrity of its student records by providing policies and guidelines for accessibility, utilization, and retention in its *Undergraduate Catalog*, *Student Handbook*, relevant forms, and Student Affairs webpage links.

The College demonstrates its adherence to the Family Education and Privacy Rights Act (FERPA) through its public statements and publications. On an annual basis, graduate and undergraduate students are advised of their rights regarding academic records. More than adequate measures have been adopted to protect the integrity of student records in both physical and electronic formats. Specific staff members maintain records in secured environments on campus and at off-site tape libraries. The *Focused Report* provided sufficient evidence that print files and microfiche transcripts are secured in file cabinets which are locked, fireproof, and protected from natural disasters.

3.9.3 The institution employs qualified personnel to ensure the quality and effectiveness of its student affairs programs. **(Qualified staff)**

The College has assembled a highly qualified and diverse staff of student affairs personnel to deliver an array of student development programs, activities, and services. Student affairs services and programs address student success, co-curricular activities, and student learning by offering a comprehensive set of supportive services. Services in such areas as counseling and substance abuse, Greek life, health, residence life, leadership, multiculturalism, career preparation, TRIO programs, disability services, campus recreation and college activities are available for students.

The institution provided *State of Carolina Position Description* forms in support of the qualifications of personnel. There were several positions for which not enough information was available for the Off-Site Committee to make a determination. Also, there were discrepancies in the organizational chart presented in the printed material and the organizational chart link from the on-line narrative (a more drilled down organizational chart).

An updated organizational chart, additional position descriptions and credential information were provided to the On-Site Committee. The additional information clarified the organizational structure and areas of responsibilities for student affairs personnel. Qualifications and training for each staff member within the Division of Student Affairs are appropriate to ensure the quality and effectiveness of the student affairs programs.

3.10.1 The institution's recent financial history demonstrates financial stability. **(Financial stability)**

Annual financial reports for the most recent five years are provided. These reports demonstrate overall financial stability. Overall, net assets have increased by 23.6% over the past five years; however, most of that increase is attributable to investments in capital assets. Long term debt has increased over this same period by approximately \$68.6 million which would be expected based on investment in new buildings and property.

3.10.2 The institution provides financial profile information on an annual basis and other measures of financial health as requested by the Commission. All information is presented accurately and appropriately and represents the total operation of the institution. **(Submission of financial statements)**

Financial reports for the most recent five years and various other internal financial reports were provided. The most recent SACS financial profile was included. None of the reports provided indicated any reportable findings.

3.10.3 The institution audits financial aid programs as required by federal and state regulations. **(Financial aid audits)**

The institution provided copies of the audits for financial aid programs for the past three years. There were no reportable findings or responses.

3.10.4 The institution exercises appropriate control over all its financial resources. **(Control of finances)**

The institution utilizes an automated accounting system for all revenues and expenditures. An annual internal control review is conducted to ensure adequate separation of duties. Periodic financial reports are distributed to campus departments. External audits, inventories and review of deferred maintenance needs are performed on a regular basis.

3.10.5 The institution maintains financial control over externally funded or sponsored research and programs. **(Control of sponsored research/external funds)**

The institution has provided documentation of various policies and procedures utilized for administering externally funded and sponsored research programs. An established indirect cost rate has been negotiated and approved by the Department of Health and Human Services. The approved rate expired as of June 30, 2006 and documentation of a new rate has not been provided. Based on the audited reports provided, there did not appear to be any reportable findings or conditions. A policy statement requiring indirect costs for each proposal was provided. The Office of Research and Grants manages the pre-award procedures and the Vice President for Fiscal Affairs is responsible for the post award accounting and reporting.

3.11.1 The institution exercises appropriate control over all its physical resources. **(Control of physical resources)**

The institution utilizes an automated accounting system for all revenues and expenditures. An annual internal control review is conducted to ensure adequate separation of duties. Periodic financial reports are distributed to campus departments. External audits, inventories and review of deferred maintenance needs are performed on a regular basis.

3.11.2 The institution takes reasonable steps to provide a healthy, safe, and secure environment for all members of the campus community. **(Institutional environment)**

The institution utilizes a campus police department and safety office to provide a healthy, safe and secure environment. Detailed policies and procedures are in place to guide the employees and campus about questions or issues related to health and safety. The campus police department is composed of both sworn and non-sworn officers that enforce the laws of South Carolina on the campus and provide security services to student housing and academic buildings. The most recent crime statistics are available on the police web site.

3.11.3 The institution operates and maintains physical facilities, both on and off campus, that appropriately serve the needs of the institution's educational programs, support services, and other mission-related activities. **(Physical facilities)**

The institution has completed several new buildings in the past couple of years. A master plan statement exists under the Planning Division that lists buildings under construction, designated for maintenance or planned for future construction. The departments of Physical Plant and Student Housing have internal systems for identifying maintenance needs. Physical Plant has a deferred maintenance plan covering fifteen years.

- 3.12.1** The institution notifies the Commission of changes in accordance with the substantive change policy and, when required, seeks approval prior to the initiation of changes. **(Substantive change)**

In a review of graduate programs offered at the North Campus, the On-Site Committee identified the addition of a new Master of Arts in Communication offered exclusively at the Lowcountry Graduate Center on the North Campus.

(Recommendation 2) In accordance with the substantive change policy, the Committee recommends that the institution notify the Commission of a new Master of Arts in Communication.

- 3.13.1** The institution complies with the policies of the Commission on Colleges. **(Policy compliance)**

(Note: This requirement is not addressed by the institution in its Compliance Certification.)

The Committee found no evidence of non-compliance.

- 3.14.1** A member or candidate institution represents its accredited status accurately and publishes the name, address, and telephone number of the Commission in accordance with Commission requirements and federal policy. **(Publication of accreditation status)**

The name, address, and phone number of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools appears in both the Graduate (Table of Contents page) and Undergraduate (facing page to Table of Contents) catalogs of the institution. It is clear that the agency should only be contacted about accreditation status.

D. Assessment of Compliance with Section 4: Federal Requirements

- 4.1** The institution evaluates success with respect to student achievement including, as appropriate, consideration of course completion, state licensing examinations, and job placement rates. **(Student achievement)**

Student achievement is evaluated using persistence and graduation rates as well as undergraduate and graduate degrees awarded by major provided by the Office of Institutional Research. Alumni Surveys administered both six months and two years after graduation collect data related to employment status and employment as relates to majors and other factors. The Institutional Effectiveness Report submitted annually to the South Carolina Commission on Higher Education provides professional examination data.

- 4.2** The institution's curriculum is directly related and appropriate to the purpose and goals of the institution and the diplomas, certificates, or degrees awarded. **(Program curriculum)**

The institution maintains a curriculum that is directly related and appropriate to its purpose as "a state-supported institution providing a high-quality education in the arts and sciences, education, and business" and its heritage of retaining "a strong liberal arts undergraduate curriculum." Although its focus is on undergraduate education, the institution offers an increasing number of master's programs which are compatible with the needs of the community and the state.

The curriculum is also directly related and appropriate to the institutional strategic goals and to the degrees and certificates awarded. Institutional goals that provide the guidelines for the “design of educational programs, curricula, and support services,” and the framework for articulation of goals by academic and administrative units address general education (skills and knowledge), discipline knowledge, and graduate education (*Undergraduate Catalog*, p. 21).

- 4.3** The institution makes available to students and the public current academic calendars, grading policies, and refund policies. **(Publication of policies)**

The institution makes academic calendars, grading policies and the institutional refund policy available to students and the public on the institution’s website and in the *Undergraduate Catalog* and the *Graduate Catalog*. The institution adopted a new grading policy in fall 2006, and widespread distribution of the changes was made using a variety of modalities.

- 4.4** Program length is appropriate for each of the institution’s educational programs. **(Program length)**

Undergraduate programs are a minimum of 122 semester credit hours. Graduate programs are a minimum of 30 semester credit hours. Both undergraduate and graduate programs are consistent with those of other universities on this dimension.

- 4.5** The institution has adequate procedures for addressing written student complaints and is responsible for demonstrating that it follows those procedures when resolving student complaints. **(Student complaints)**

The College has a well-defined student grievance process and an Honor Code structure which provides specific actions and steps for addressing complaints and concerns. The Senior Vice President for Student Affairs, Dean of Students, and the Honor Board, composed of students, faculty and staff, are involved in a process which addresses student grievances regarding academic and social disciplinary issues. This process is described in the *College of Charleston Student Handbook: A Guide to Civil and Honorable Conduct, 2005-2006*.

Board of Trustees minutes document that the Discrimination and Harassment Policy was presented to the Board and accepted. A report by the Student Affairs Committee provided information on Student Honors violations. The report included information as to the criminal status of the students involved in the incident. University related sanctions were reported. The *Focused Report* and associated documentation included samples of mediated complaints related to Honor Code violations that demonstrated fair process and the appeal procedures.

- 4.6** Recruitment materials and presentations accurately represent the institution’s practices and policies. **(Recruitment materials)**

The primary recruitment/marketing material, both print and on-line, accurately presents the institution’s policies and practices in admission of students. Costs and programs requirements are clearly presented. The electronic information is easily navigated. Material is comprehensively reviewed no less than annually by

a committee of representatives from admissions and marketing to ensure accuracy. Online information is reviewed and updated on a more frequent basis.

4.7 The institution is in compliance with its program responsibilities under Title IV of the *1998 Higher Education Amendments*. **(Title IV program responsibilities)**

The institution has provided documentation to demonstrate compliance with Federal guidelines. An approval letter dated February 2006 from US Department of Education granting full compliance to participate in the Federal Student Financial Aid programs including Title IV of the 1998 High Education Amendments is included. There are no reportable findings.

E. Additional Observations regarding strengths and weaknesses of the institution. (optional).

Part III. Assessment of the Quality Enhancement Plan

A. Brief description of the institution's Quality Enhancement Plan

The College of Charleston identified strengthening the first year of college as the focus for engaging the entire campus in an informed and action-based Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP). The 2003 Strategic Plan, approved by the Board of Trustees, documents the need to "create a coordinated, comprehensive, and unified First Year Experience." Additionally, the Fourth Century Initiative capital campaign provided many of the financial resources to support this and other priorities. The campus has had a Freshman Seminar since the mid-1980s, but as early as the mid-1990s a campus conversation among faculty has sought an opportunity to revise or revamp this freshman offering.

Since the 2003 strategic plan was adopted, campus administrators have identified and coordinated a group of first year student service and support programs including orientation, summer reading, convocation, academic advising, service learning and learning support. Directors of these programs have been intentionally engaged in work to reinforce communication without unnecessary duplication of effort in their contact with first year students. As these support programs were more clearly organized and strengthened for first year students, a more challenging and rigorous curriculum was explored. Thus, the College of Charleston's selected QEP is a logical and appropriately ambitious focus.

Specifically, the QEP consists of two curriculum-based components: revitalizing the Freshman Seminar course and implementing Learning Communities. These are two nationally recognized educational practices found to provide a curricular solution for supporting students in their transition from high school to college. More importantly, they set the stage for improving student learning. Additionally, because they are curricular-based programs, faculty are at the heart of implementation which further strengthens the case for the selected direction of the College of Charleston's QEP. Intentional engagement in the creation and integration of a multi-faceted and academically focused experience for first year students is fundamental to the student learning outcomes that are expected by graduation.

B. Analysis of the Acceptability of the Quality Enhancement Plan

1. Broad-based Process

The campus selected the QEP through a broad-based institutional process that was supported by institutional assessment. Since June 30, 2003, a series of discussions and decisions, guided by assessment, led to the ultimate selection of the QEP's focus and verifies the commitment the College of Charleston holds with regard to improving the academic experience of its students, particularly those in their first years. The greatest challenge rested in deciding the specific area of contact with students that would be most appropriate for the resources and timing of the 2007 SACS visit. In a dynamic process, the campus leadership experimented with various directions that included general education, retention, academic advising, first year experience and undergraduate programs. Initially, the SACS Executive Steering Committee, comprising the most senior campus administrators (President, Provost, Senior Vice President for Strategic Planning and Administration) and the Director of the Office of Institutional Research, agreed on the preparation strategy for the 2007 SACS visit. Eventually, this committee was broadened to include faculty leadership (deans and faculty members) and a student affairs administrator.

During the site visit, it was discovered that students have been an integral part of the development process of the QEP as well. Through conversation, examination of existing assessment findings, and external consultation, the various topics under consideration either failed to meet the standard of an issue directly related to student learning (retention), required immediate attention (academic advising) or were too broad for a focused plan (general education reform). The campus reports that it was a three-year process of uncovering information and consulting with various campus groups before the direction of improving the first year experience was agreed upon. This indicates a constant and evolving campus conversation which supports the notion that this is a genuine interest for the College of Charleston.

Since the decision of a QEP topic, the campus has expanded the number of individuals formally responsible for making recommendations about the implementation of the QEP with four committees: First Year Seminar, Learning Communities, Student Support Service, and Assessment. Some members are purposely assigned to multiple committees to ensure communication among and between these groups. And, since academic efforts in the first year are closely tied to discussions about the revision of general education, overt efforts have been made to communicate, coordinate, and plan with individuals from the General Education Committee. Finally, the process has engaged the thinking and approval of the Faculty Senate and has informed the Board of Trustees.

2. **Focus of the Plan**

The College's focus on the first year experience was determined as a way both to improve the education of first time, full time students on campus and also as a way to influence upper division student performance and graduation. The origins of the QEP, springing from long standing faculty discussions regarding their role and responsibilities in a growing institution with changing demographics and one not immune to larger forces impacting the role of higher education in modern society, bodes well for its chances of successful implementation. The faculty "buy in" and commitment is high – i.e. the Faculty Senate's approval of the plan as part of the general education core, makes it fundamental to the mission rather than supplemental.

A variety of outcomes for student learning, faculty engagement, and campus assessment are supported through the implementation of the two major components of the QEP – revitalizing the Freshman Seminar and implementing Learning Communities. According to ***Going Further Faster: College of Charleston's First Year Experience***, the College's 2007 QEP report, eight specific learning outcomes have been identified as important to the focus of this plan and include:

1. Effective reading, writing, and speech;
2. Use of academic resources and student support services;
3. Familiarity with appropriate data, information, and knowledge-gathering techniques and research skills;
4. Using appropriate critical thinking skills and problem-solving techniques in a variety of contexts;
5. Understanding and respecting the values of academic integrity, including the College Honor Code;
6. Using effective skills and strategies for working collaboratively;
7. Engaging constructively in the College and local communities.

Students are expected to demonstrate improvement in the first three of these areas at the conclusion of the First Year Seminar (the new name for the Freshman Seminar) or Learning Community experience.

Additionally, QEP leadership recognized the direct benefits of engaging in this work as it relates to faculty development and assessment. The campus mission makes clear that teaching is the

highest priority of the faculty and that the teaching scholar model is highly valued. Both the faculty-led and recreated First Year Seminar and newly implemented Learning Communities programs provide an opportunity for roster faculty to engage in the lives of first year students. Furthermore, the data collected about the effectiveness of these pedagogical practices can and should be used to produce much needed research about the first year of college.

3. **Institutional Capability for the Initiation and Continuation of the Plan**

College of Charleston has the will and the way to implement and sustain over a reasonable period the proposed QEP. All levels of administration and all key stakeholder groups are committed to the plan's principles and anticipated outcomes. The faculty, administrators and staff involved in the plan's conception and current timetable for action are cognizant of the strategic planning cycle of idea, implementation, assessment and adaptation and appear to be thoroughly engaged in that process. Finally, the budget as presented in the plan and as discussed in various sessions seems appropriate and achievable.

The plan calls for the addition of 9 FTE faculty over the next five years at a cost of approximately \$500,000 on a recurring basis. An innovative aspect of the plan that enhances its chances of success from the perspective of management oversight is the fact these faculty lines will be embedded in existing departmental structure and will NOT constitute a specially hired cadre. This will allow departments to opt into the QEP and deploy senior faculty to the project without jeopardizing their ability grow the ranks of roster faculty and support specialized courses. To sustain the QEP over time under this model, however, the institution will need to formalize the value placed on departmental and individual faculty engagement in the curricular aspects of the QEP. Traditional faculty evaluative categories should be elaborated to accommodate QEP participation commensurate with the institution's stated commitment to the project and its expected outcome on holistic learning. The resources allocated to departments should be protected to the extent feasible as they may be put in a position of trading off QEP engagement with credit hour productivity targets.

While any new initiative results in re-tasking and difficult-to-measure consequential costs, the overall QEP budget is rational and achievable. The President, Provost, and CFO all expressed an understanding of the level of financial resources needed for the successful implementation of the QEP and were fully cognizant of the plan's impact on ongoing programming. In addition, it is clear that the College intends to utilize the plan to further its goal of reaching underrepresented groups by widely advertising the plan's focus on small class sizes, contact with mainstream faculty leaders, practical information regarding the resources of the university and guided engagement. These elements may well be encouraging to first generation learners who might otherwise not choose the College as an option.

4. **Broad-based Involvement of the Community**

The College provided a detailed description of the methodology employed in developing the Quality Enhance Plan and appears to have involved critical stakeholders from its community in the formation of the document ***Going Further Faster: College of Charleston's First Year Experience***. Ideas generated through discussions among and presentations to College of Charleston faculty, staff, Board of Trustees members, administrators, and other community members were later combined into a single focus plan regarding the first year student experience in First Year Seminar and Learning Communities. Subcommittees were tasked with developing a plan to fund, implement, evaluate personnel needs, and define the assessment plan. As the QEP is carried out, these committees will continue. It will be critical to continue to involve students and inform constituents such as the Board of Trustees and alumni.

5. **Assessment of the Plan**

The QEP will be assessed through a menagerie of models, activities, and instruments including the revised Bloom's Taxonomy, the ABCD model, National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE), Association of College and University Housing Officers (ACUHO)-I Resident Survey, CIRP's Your First College Year survey, papers, quizzes, analyses of English 101 and 102 grades, attendance records, the Self Assessment Guide (SAG) from the Council for the Advancement of Standards in Higher Education (CAS), participation in the Assessment of Learning in Learning Communities project sponsored by the Washington Center for Improving the Quality of Undergraduate Education, and involvement in the Foundations of Excellence Program monitored by the Policy Center on the First Year of College. Each of these is an appropriate tool for gathering feedback about student learning and campus engagement in that process. No doubt, the College of Charleston will have a rich database to mine in the coming years. And, there are timelines for administration of the assessment plan with identification of individuals responsible for overseeing this work. Documenting modifications and decisions based on regular assessment will be an important factor in preparing for the QEP's five-year report. It makes sense that through the coordination of first year student activities, integration of course learning outcomes, engagement of faculty and student services personnel in a stated set of learning goals, that student learning will be improved. The assessment plan does not explicitly identify when or how assessment findings will be disseminated in order to make program modifications, but it was apparent during the site visit that the campus culture supports such action. The Office of Accountability, Accreditation, Planning and Assessment indicated its responsibility in overseeing this activity and documenting these actions.

C. Analysis and Comments for Strengthening the QEP

The topic has been well researched and has engaged the broader campus through consultation with nationally respected experts, programs and resource centers appropriate for the development of learning communities and the revitalization of the first year seminar. This high level of engagement is critical to maintaining the momentum created by the synergistic opportunities of General Education revision (and approval), SACS review, strategic planning, and leadership.

As a result of the site visit interviews and presentations, the Committee offers the following list of areas to consider as the QEP is implemented and assessed:

- Connect the QEP to the recruitment and marketing plans for students, faculty, and staff.
- Continue to hold conversations about faculty workload issues and identify incentives for involvement in the QEP that are meaningful to the campus culture and that are sustainable.
- Develop a strategy for researching and disseminating pedagogical and innovative practices; specifically study the Keystone Project and its implications for working with transfer students and under-prepared students.
- In the QEP report on page 52, the question is asked "What about the 'year' in the First Year Experience?" Continue working on this question.
- Determine the extent to which it can be assessed that these first year experiences (First Year Seminar and Learning Communities) positively influence the college career of undergraduates. Some outputs might include: time to degree, declaration of major, reduction of judicial offenses, higher graduation rates, greater acceptance to graduate school.
- Assess how the student learning outcomes are impacted by changes in course frequency, class size, and course sequencing as the QEP is implemented.

- Disaggregate data by type of First Year Seminar (thematic, introduction to the discipline) and use results to modify and strengthen existing courses and to ensure that future seminars are based on the types of seminars with documented success in achieving the identified shared learning outcomes.
- Ensure that campus software programs support rather than limit innovative educational practices.
- Providing two curricular options – learning communities and the First Year Seminar – appears to be a good mechanism for broad participation among departments across the campus.
- The Peer Facilitator program is an excellent way to engage upper class students in the success of first year students.
- The College finds itself in a rather unusual and somewhat enviable position: enrollment growth is not currently planned, in part due to physical plant constraints, and its tuition is relatively low. This combination yields the ability to develop new tuition resources for the support of the QEP and, indeed, other mission driven initiatives if the collective will can be sustained.

APPENDIX A

Roster of the On-Site Review Committee

Dr. Susan L. Bosworth - **CHAIR**
Associate Provost for Planning
and Assessment
The College of William and Mary
Williamsburg, VA

Dr. J. David Fairbanks
Associate Vice President
for Planning & Analysis
University of Houston - Downtown
Houston, TX

Dr. Randy S. Gunter
Vice President for Student Affairs
Savannah State University
Savannah, GA

Dr. Robert W. Herron
Vice President for Academic Affairs
Southeastern University, Inc.
Lakeland, FL

Dr. Tim W. Hudson
President
University of Houston - Victoria
Victoria, TX

Dr. Kenneth Mitchell
Program Director and Associate Professor
Shaw University
Raleigh, NC

QEP EVALUATOR

Ms. Joni Webb Petschauer
Director, Western North Carolina Network
for Access and Success
Appalachian State University
Boone, NC

APPENDIX B

Off-Campus Sites or Distance Learning Programs Reviewed

Off-Campus Sites: The College of Charleston includes two campuses, the primary campus located in downtown Charleston and an additional site referred to as North Campus.

North Campus

5300 International Boulevard, Building B, Suite 100, North Charleston, SC 29418

The North Campus is located about 20 minutes from the main campus and offers courses in general education, the Master of Arts in Teaching, and Master of Education, and at least 50% of credits toward a BA - Communication: Corporate and Organizational Communication concentration and a Master of Arts in Communication. The North Campus was visited by representatives of the On-Site Reaffirmation Committee. In accordance with CS 3.12.1, the Committee recommended that the College contact the Commission about the new Master of Arts in Communication taught exclusively at the off-campus site.

Distance Learning Programs: Not applicable

APPENDIX C

List of Recommendations Cited in the Report of the Reaffirmation Committee

CS 3.5.1, Recommendation 1

The Committee recommends that the institution develop and implement an assessment plan that provides evidence that its graduates have attained those college-level competencies identified in its general education program.

CS 3.12.1, Recommendation 2

In accordance with the substantive change policy, the Committee recommends that the institution notify the Commission of a new Master of Arts in Communication.