

■ UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH CAROLINA AIKEN

# STUDENT HANDBOOK

2025-2026



USCA

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## Foreword

This 2025-2026 Student Handbook has been prepared so that USC Aiken undergraduate and graduate students may have a better understanding of their institution and its rules and regulations. It contains material about what the student may rightfully expect from the University and what the University may rightfully expect from the student.

No publication can anticipate and cover all situations that may arise, but most matters are covered, at least in principle, in the Handbook. Other relevant USCA resources include the [USCA Bulletin](#) and [the University Policies website](#). Each student is responsible for becoming thoroughly familiar with the Handbook's contents, and it will be assumed that this responsibility has been met and that all students have been informed of policies and regulations. Interpretation of matters in the Handbook is the responsibility of the Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs. The Chancellor of the University has final authority regarding interpretation.

USCA is dedicated to equality of opportunity within its community. Accordingly, USCA does not practice or condone discrimination in any form against students, employees, or applicants on the grounds of race, color, national origin, religion, creed, sex, age, genetics, veteran status, sexual orientation, or disability. USCA commits itself to positive action to secure equal opportunity regardless of these characteristics.

USCA supports the protection available to members of its community under all applicable federal laws. Complaints may be addressed to the Title IX Compliance Officer, Dr. Jamel Hodges, Student Activities Center Room 164 (Student Life Suite), [jamel.hodges@usca.edu](mailto:jamel.hodges@usca.edu), (803) 641-3442.

This handbook is published by the Division of Student Affairs at the University of South Carolina Aiken.

## **A Message from the Chancellor**

Welcome to the University of South Carolina Aiken!

No matter where you are in your academic journey, we are committed to helping you achieve your academic and professional goals through a world-class education that will engage, challenge, and prepare you for a lifetime of success and possibilities.

Our immersive learning experiences take place inside and outside of the classroom, with opportunities to study abroad in fascinating locations, conduct ground-breaking research alongside accomplished faculty and fellow students, or participate in a service-learning project to improve conditions in our community. You also will have the opportunity to gain real-world career experience through one of our many internships and co-ops available through our Career Center.

To maximize your academic experience, I urge you to become involved on campus by participating in sponsored programs, groups, and activities. Here you will make life-long friends and become familiar with your instructors, who will offer support and guidance now and for many years to come.

Join an existing club or create a new one. Get involved in student government or Greek Life. Stay active by participating in intramural or club sports. Attend a concert at the Etherredge Center or an athletic event at one of our stadiums and athletic fields. You will be sure to find groups, activities, and events that will interest and engage you.

The following pages of the 2025-26 Student Handbook provide information about these services, activities, and the many other ways to make the most of your time here at USCA. This handbook also includes important university policies, rules, and regulations that will prove useful during your time at the university.

Our faculty and staff are here for you, so please reach out to them with questions or concerns. And, as always, please visit my office if we can offer support throughout your academic journey.

Go Pacers!



Dan Heimmermann, Ph.D.  
Chancellor



## A Message from the Vice Chancellor of Student Affairs

Welcome to the University of South Carolina Aiken and our Pacer family!

As the Vice Chancellor for the Division of Student Affairs, it is both a privilege and a pleasure to support you throughout your academic, personal, and professional journey. Our division is staffed by a team of talented and experienced professionals who are dedicated to helping you thrive. We are committed to fostering an inclusive and supportive environment where every student is encouraged to reach their full potential. Whether you're seeking guidance on personal matters, navigating academic choices, or looking to get involved on campus, we're here to help you make informed decisions and connect with the right resources—both within Student Affairs and across the broader university community.

We also partner closely with faculty, staff, alumni, and local community members to create meaningful opportunities for students to integrate classroom learning with co-curricular experiences.

This **Student Handbook** is your essential guide to navigating life at USC Aiken. Inside, you'll find key policies, procedures, and helpful information to support your success. If you ever have questions or concerns, please don't hesitate to reach out. My office is located in the Student Activities Center, and our team is always ready to assist you.

We are honored to be part of your journey and are committed to making your experience at USC Aiken powerful, enriching, and rewarding.

Go Pacers!



Ahmed Samaha  
Vice Chancellor of Student Affairs  
803-641-3411  
[ahmeds@usca.edu](mailto:ahmeds@usca.edu)

## Mission Statement

The University of South Carolina Aiken is a regional public comprehensive university that cultivates a diverse population of engaged citizens who provide lifelong contributions in their careers and communities. Our dedicated faculty, staff, and industry partners guide undergraduate and graduate students through a transformative educational journey that uses engaged, accessible teaching and learning practices to blend the liberal arts, sciences, and professional disciplines with research and experiential opportunities that are aligned with economic and societal needs. We are a center for innovation that serves the region through entrepreneurial partnerships, public service, community leadership, relevant research, educational outreach, the visual and performing arts, and intercollegiate athletics.

## Statement of University Values

We at USCA embraces the agreed upon following values:

### 1. Character

We value integrity, honesty, and accountability. We encourage initiative and take pride in hard work and accomplishment.

### 2. Citizenship

We value the rights and responsibilities associated with membership in a community. We embrace efforts to work for the common good and opportunities to enrich the lives of all community members.

### 3. Curiosity

We value and embrace life-long learning and inquisitive pursuits. To that end, we endeavor to impart knowledge, skills, and wisdom in a high-quality learning environment.

### 4. Collegiality

We value a nurturing community where people support one another, embrace diversity, and encourage mutual respect.

## Statement on Holistic Development

Consistent with the University of South Carolina Aiken's dedication to critical thinking and engaged citizenship, we hereby affirm our commitment as a public, Liberal Arts University to embrace individual uniqueness and create a culture of belonging in all aspects of our teaching, scholarship, and professional activities. The University particularly recognizes the need to remove barriers to the recruitment, retention, and advancement of talented students, faculty, and staff with respect to differences in backgrounds, experiences, and perspectives. The University of South Carolina Aiken operates to strengthen our personal and intellectual horizons by preparing

the entire university community to make thoughtful contributions as individuals, Pacers, and professionals in our growing, diverse world.

Our commitment to fostering an inclusive campus community is integral to the University of South Carolina Aiken's success. Our understanding of the make-up of our campus population is broad-based, meaning we rely on empirical research and the lived experiences of our community. We are dedicated to respecting the age, socioeconomic status, culture, ability status, perspective, viewpoint, ethnicity, gender identity, gender expression, immigration status, national origin, race, religion and spirituality, health status (mental, physical, or other), sex, sexual identity, and other characteristics of each member of our campus community. At University of South Carolina Aiken different experiences and perspectives in the classroom is not only encouraged but also expected because we believe they enhance the overall Pacer experience. Educational excellence that truly focuses on student development promotes mutual respect and fosters innovation, helping to train future leaders who are ready for the demands of the twenty-first century workforce and life.

## Statement of Students' Rights and Responsibilities

### Introduction

The purpose of the following statement of students' rights and responsibilities is to reflect the fundamental principles upon which our university functions are built.

### Rights of Students

Students are not only members of the academic community but are also members of the larger society. Students, therefore, retain the rights, guarantees, and protections afforded to and the responsibilities held by all citizens. The university community acknowledges and celebrates the rights of students to:

- **Participate in a Free Exchange of Ideas:** Students have the right to engage in open dialogue and share their perspectives freely.
- **Non-Discrimination:** Students have the right to participate in all areas and activities of the university free from any form of discrimination on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, sex (including pregnancy), sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, veterans' status, genetic information, disability, or other category protected by applicable law.
- **Personal Privacy:** Students have the right to personal privacy except as otherwise provided by law or reasonable campus policy.
- **Fair Conduct Process:** Students have the right to engage in a fundamentally fair process should they be subject to conduct action arising from alleged violations of student codes and campus policies.

### Responsibilities of Students

As members of the university community, students have a responsibility to:



- **Know and Follow Student Codes and Campus Policies:** Students must be aware of and adhere to the established student codes and campus policies.
- **Legal Accountability:** A student is not immune to prosecution by local, state, or federal law enforcement agencies irrespective of whether the university initiates conduct proceedings in a given situation.

### **Behavioral Standards**

The behavioral standards for the University of South Carolina Aiken students are higher than those of communities not engaged in the creation of knowledge, instruction, and the maintenance of a vibrant learning environment. Each of us in this university community is expected to exercise our freedoms in a responsible and careful manner.

### **Commitment to Community Values**

This institution's potential is boundless if we engender and maintain an atmosphere of:

- **Respect for the Individual:** Recognizing the inherent worth and dignity of every person.
- **Cultural Sensitivity:** Being aware of and appreciating diverse cultures and differing points of view.
- **Support for Free Expression:** Upholding the rights of others to freely express their opinions.

By fostering these values, we create a supportive and dynamic environment conducive to learning and personal growth.

<b>A Brief History</b>
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Building partnerships has been the cornerstone of the University of South Carolina Aiken (USCA) since its inception in 1961. It was then that the citizens of the Aiken community voiced the need for a local institution of higher education. In a true demonstration of grassroots politics, the community rallied to support a college to be founded in the area. Through state legislation, the Aiken County Commission for Higher Education was formed. This governing board continues to oversee the university's mission.

The University of South Carolina, the state's flagship university founded in Columbia in 1801, began offering courses in Aiken for students interested in completing their degrees in Columbia. USCA became the fourth campus founded of the eight that would eventually comprise the USC System. Three full-time faculty members, a secretary, and 139 students joined for the university's first academic semester in September 1961. Classes took place in "Banksia," a former winter-colony mansion in downtown Aiken. For 11 years, the university's first students attended college in a structure that was developed as living quarters, studying composition in an area that was once a ballroom and algebra in a former sitting room.

Over the years, the student population grew, and the need for a new physical location for campus arose. The university purchased property from the Graniteville Company and moved from Banksia to its present site in 1972. One multipurpose building was constructed, which was later named

the Robert E. Penland Administration Building. This building's open courtyard features one of the campus' most notable landmarks, the Double Knot sculpture by artist Charles Perry, which symbolizes the University's close ties with the local community.

As a natural next step, USCA began to seek autonomy in the USC system so students could begin and complete their degrees in Aiken. In 1977, the university was fully accredited as a senior college by the Commission on Colleges of the Southern Association of Colleges, now known as the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC), and granted its first baccalaureate degrees.

The institution formed a limited number of sports teams as part of the NAIA in the 1960s. USCA student-athletes adopted the Pacers as their mascot, which was named after Aiken's well-known status as an equestrian community. In 1990, USCA achieved NCAA Division II status and became a highly competitive Peach Belt Conference charter member. Today, Pacer Athletics hosts 11 varsity men's and women's sports teams, including the three-time national champion men's golf team.

Since 1961, six leaders have navigated the university's path. Mr. Chris Sharp (1961-1962), Mr. Bill Casper (1963-1983), Dr. Robert Alexander (1983-2000), Dr. Thomas Hallman (2000-2012), and Dr. Sandra Jordan (2012–2021), and Dr. Daniel Heimmermann (2021-present) have overseen the campus as it has grown from a commuter institution to a more traditional, residentially-based campus.

Today, USCA has ranked in the top three public baccalaureate colleges in the South by *U.S. News & World Report's* guide "Best Colleges" for twenty-two consecutive years. More than 3,500 students attend the university, and approximately 500 graduate yearly. USCA provides bachelor's and master's degrees in over 50 programs of study while delivering many of the offerings of a large university on a small, friendly campus with intimate class sizes and personal attention. The commitment to continuing partnerships is woven into the fabric of the campus culture.

### **The Division of Student Affairs**

The Vice Chancellor of Student Affairs is located in the Student Life Suite in the Student Activities Center. The Vice Chancellor of Student Affairs is responsible for matters related to policies and procedures which affect students and the general quality of life for USC Aiken students. The Vice Chancellor of Student Affairs is responsible for the following departments and functions: Campus Recreation and Wellness, Career Services, Counseling Center, Disability Services, Student Health Center, Student Conduct, Orientation, Student Leadership and Engagement, International Programs, Dean of Students Office, and University Housing and Residence Life. Questions concerning student rights and responsibilities, discipline, and laws or regulations governing or affecting students' rights are handled through this office.

## **Campus Recreation and Wellness**

The mission of the Department of Campus Recreation and Wellness is to enhance and enrich the quality of life of the USC Aiken community by providing education, programs, and services that promote healthy lifestyle choices. This department consists of the Wellness Center, the Natatorium, Intramural Sports and Club Sports and is commonly known as RecWell.

The USCA Wellness Center is made up of a 25,000 square foot facility located in the Business and Education Building (B&E). The Wellness Center includes a large fitness area including cardiovascular equipment (bikes, rowers, treadmills, ski machines, elliptical cross trainers and stair steppers, strength equipment, and dumbbells. There is a studio with wall-to-wall mirrors, a circuit room, and locker rooms. Group fitness classes, wellness education programs, and health-related special events are provided free to students. Services provided for a fee include personal training, fitness evaluations, and group personal training classes. In addition, Exercise and Sport Science has their exercise physiology laboratory and an instructional classroom located in the Wellness Center. The facility is supervised by CPR trained staff.

The Natatorium is connected to the Student Activities Building. The Natatorium includes a six-lane indoor pool and locker rooms. This facility is supervised by certified lifeguards during open swim hours and special programs.

Intramural sports offer men, women, and co-ed divisions in sports such as flag football, softball, basketball, volleyball, soccer, tennis, ping-pong, kickball, dodgeball, and ultimate Frisbee. Any student can participate, and all skill levels are welcome. Sign-up as a team or as a free agent at <https://www.usca.edu/departments/campus-recreation-wellness/intramural-sports/register-for-intramural-sports/>. Club sports are considered a student organization. If a student is interested in forming a new sport stop by the Student Life Office to find out details on how to create the organization. For a list of active club sports and to find out more information visit <https://www.usca.edu/departments/campus-recreation-wellness/club-sports/>.

The Campus Recreation and Wellness professional staff members and programming are housed in the Wellness Center which is located in the lowest level of the Business & Education Building. To activate your membership for a variety of free health and wellness programs please stop by the Wellness Center to complete your paperwork each year.

The WELL is a framework for USC Aiken to provide health and wellbeing programs for the students, faculty and staff. The WELL is a space in the Student Activity Center across from the Student Life suite. This program includes a student staff of (4) individuals that work to provide education and events on wellbeing practices. They collaborate across student organizations and departments including the Counseling Center, the Student Health Center, Campus Recreation & Wellness, Student Life, Housing and a variety of other entities that help people become aware, and make choices toward, a healthier lifestyle.

To activate your membership, please go to the Wellness Center with your USCA ID.

## Career Services

The Career Services Office is available to assist all USC Aiken students and graduates with career-related concerns—choosing a career, choosing a college major, career planning, experiential learning, job search, and graduate school. Students are encouraged to start early and take advantage of the resources offered by the office.

Services offered to students include:

- Individual career coaching/advisement
- Career information including “What can I do with this major?” (<http://whatcanidowiththismajor.com/major/>)
- Career assessment (Pathway U)
- Job vacancy listings for on-campus, off-campus, summer, internship, part-time, and full-time employment through Handshake, our online job board.
- Assisting with job shadowing, informational interviews, internship and cooperative education positions
- Resume and cover letter review
- Job search and interview assistance
- Preparation for graduate and professional schools
- Career events and programs

Career planning and preparation are a continual part of a student’s collegiate experience and should start freshman year. Appointments can be scheduled directly through the *Handshake* platform or requested through the general office address ([Careerservices@usca.edu](mailto:Careerservices@usca.edu)), or by phone (803-641-3440).

The Career Services Office is located in the Penland Administration Building, Suite 108. Further information can be found at <https://www.usca.edu/departments/career-services/>

## Counseling Center

The Counseling Center is located in the Student and Educational Support Building, Suite 107. Counseling is confidential, and services are free. Counselors are available Monday through Thursday from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m and Fridays from 8 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. For after-hours or weekend emergencies, contact: University Police by dialing 6111 from on-campus telephones or 648-4011 or 9-1-1 from off-campus telephones; Aiken Regional Medical Center’s Emergency Department at 641-5000.

**For 24/7 Mental Health Support for emergency/crisis after hours please contact the following:.**

- Aurora Pavilion Behavioral Health Services RESPOND (803-641-5900 or 800-273-7911)
- The SC Department of Mental Health Mobile Crisis Access Phone Line (833-364-2274)
- 988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline (dial or text 988)
- SAMHSA National Helpline (800-662-4357)
- The Crisis Text Line (Text HOME to 741741)

- Aiken Helpline at 2-1-1 or 1 877-877-648-9900 (<https://aikenhelpline211.org/site/>).
- An additional resource is the National Disaster Distress Hotline 24/7/365. Calls (1-800-985-5990; press "2" for Spanish) and texts (text TalkWithUs to 66746) are answered by trained counselors from a network of independently operated crisis centers located across the U.S.

We encourage you to use these resources and to check out our website:

<https://www.usca.edu/departments/counseling-center/>

A variety of different issues can be addressed at the Counseling Center, including but not limited to:

- Time management
- Decision-making
- Adjusting to college
- Communication skills
- Assertiveness training
- Building self-confidence
- Coping with depression and anxiety
- Relationship difficulties
- Drug and alcohol problems
- Conflict and anger management
- Sexual assault and/or harassment issues
- Dating or domestic violence issues

The Counseling Center shares expertise in the areas of human behavior and development through consultation and outreach services. The counselors are available to provide direct services to students, consultation for faculty and staff, or on a variety of emotional and/or academic concerns. Outreach efforts also include availability to make presentations on specific topics for classes, campus organizations, and other groups at the university upon request.

### **Disability Services**

The Office of Disability Services seeks to assist students with disabilities in their college experience through an integration of on-campus services. A “qualified person with a disability” is defined as one who meets the academic and technical standards required for admission or participation in the post-secondary institution’s programs and activities. Appropriate documentation from a medical and/or psychological or psychiatric professional is required. Reasonable Accommodations are made to allow equal opportunity and access in courses, programs, and activities, including co-curricular activities. It is the student’s responsibility to contact the Office of Disability Services regarding their individual needs. Accommodations **may** include:

- Use of the Exam Proctoring Center
- Distraction Reduced Testing
- Extended Testing
- ASL Services
- Priority Classroom Seating
- Priority Registration
- Accessible Parking
- Other services deemed appropriate

For further information, contact the Office of Disability Services by calling 803-643-6815 or stopping by the Exam Proctoring Center, Suite 104/105, Student and Educational Support Building.

### **Office of the Dean of Students**

The Office of the Dean of Students is available to assist students, faculty, staff, and community members, promoting the holistic development of students, focusing on student advocacy, crisis management, and personal accountability. The office is located in the Student Life Suite in the Student Activity Center (488 Scholars Loop, Aiken, SC 29801). The Dean of Students is available to support students through situations that impact their access to a high-quality student experience.

The Office of the DOS will work directly with students on a variety of issues including, but not limited to:

- Academic Support
- Financial Concerns
- Campus Climate Concerns
- On and Off Campus Concerns
- Referrals to Health, Safety and Wellbeing Resources

**Mission Statement:** The mission of the Office of the Dean of Students is to promote student development and self-authorship in undergraduate and graduate students through programs, services, connections, and policy development that creates a campus environment that facilitates the successful navigation of campus life at USCA.

**Values:** Employing an educational prism, the Office of the Dean of Students contributes to students' individual development and facilitates a safe, vibrant, healthy and resilient USCA campus community utilizing the following values:

- **Promote a Safe, Respectful, and Healthy Campus Community:** The Office of the Dean of Students works to establish and enforce community standards and norms for a safe, respectful and healthy environment. The office seeks to be proactive in addressing

concerns that affect students' health and safety, advocates for policies and procedures that provide students with the security and safety needed to be academically successful, and reactive and responsive when campus policies are violated.

- ***Empower Students and Enhance Student Experience:*** Encourage students to step beyond their comfort zones, explore new opportunities, and actively cultivate essential skills to help them access the elements of their desired student experience.
- ***Student Advocacy and Support:*** Students are the heart of USCA. We help students navigate unexpected challenges and find the strategies, resources, and solutions to achieve their goals.

**By Phone:** Call the Office of the Dean of Students at (803) 641-3442 during normal business hours (Monday – Thursday, 8:00am – 5:00pm; Friday, 8:00am – 12:30pm). If it is after business hours, please leave a voicemail.

**By Email:** Email the Office of the Dean of Students at [dos@usca.edu](mailto:dos@usca.edu). You will receive a reply no later than 48 hours after the email is received.

**By Drop-In:** You can come into the office during normal business hours to speak with the DOS.

**Online:** You can submit an [Incident Reporting Form](#) to report time-sensitive requests that requires the attention of the DOS and other campus entities. Submissions are reviewed when University offices are open.

### **International Programs**

The International Programs office seeks to support international students, encourage engagement in study abroad programs, and promotes inclusion of different cultures and ethnic groups on campus through programming and events.

The office provides services to international students prior to their arrival to USCA with pre-departure information packets and student immigration advising. When international students arrive on campus, they attend orientations and workshops to help them transition and fully integrate into the USCA community, and while they reside at USC Aiken with academic, social, and cultural guidance and advising.

The office also provides information to USCA students on study abroad, work abroad, and volunteer abroad opportunities. The office works closely with faculty and staff to develop study abroad programs and opportunities for students and to assist faculty with international research and teaching projects.

Finally, the department strives to increase international awareness on campus and in the larger Aiken community through campus lectures, panel discussions, campus programming, cultural events, and through internationalizing the curriculum when appropriate.

The International Programs office is located in Room 105 in the Student Activities Center.



### **Commuter Student Services**

Commuter Student Services is a vital part of the Division of Student Affairs at USC Aiken, committed to enhancing the college experience for students who live off campus or commute to campus each day.

Whether you're preparing to move off campus, are already settled in off-campus housing, or commute from home, Commuter Student Services is here to support you with the tools, guidance, and resources you need to thrive both academically and personally.

From navigating housing options to building community and staying connected to campus life, Commuter Student Services provides a range of services tailored specifically for commuter and off-campus students. One of our most valuable resources is the Commuter Handbook, which includes tips, policies, and important information to help you make the most of your time at USC Aiken.

Stop by our office in The Student Activities Center, Room 161 (SAC 161) to speak with our team and learn how we can help support your success.

Let Commuter Student Services be your connection to campus life—no matter where you live.

### **Student Health Center**

USCA has a Student Health Center (SHC) for the benefit of undergraduate students who become ill or sustain an injury while attending classes at USCA. The Student Health Center is located in Room 106 of the Student Activities Center, located just past Starbucks, beside the student media room.

Services received in the Student Health Center are free of charge, prepaid as part of tuition. The Student Health Center does provide a few specialty services for which there are nominal charges. These include, but may not be limited to, tuberculosis skin testing, immunizations, and selective health physicals.

The SHC is staffed by both a nurse and a nurse practitioner who provide primary care for common health problems. Nurse practitioners are specially educated registered nurses who have received an advanced practice degree in nursing at the graduate level with a specialized focus in assessment, diagnosis, and treatment of common illnesses and injuries of the college-aged student. USC Aiken's nurse practitioner treats those diagnoses frequently seen on college campuses.

A student may come in with a complaint similar to:

- "It hurts when I swallow."
- "I was late for class, was running, and fell down the steps. I think I broke my ankle."
- "My whole body aches. I have been hot with the chills."

- “I have the worst headache ever. It especially hurts when I look at the lights or hear loud noises.”
- “I threw up about six or seven times last night”
- “I have this rash on my back.”
- “I haven’t gone to the bathroom in over a week.”

Students are encouraged to visit the Student Health Center if they have an illness or injury that they feel uncomfortable treating independently. A member of the USCA Health Center nursing staff will guide the student through the healing process by assessing and diagnosing the problem, and by providing the necessary treatment and follow-up care. There are times when a student’s illness or injury might be more serious than the Student Health Center staff can handle. During these times the student will need to be referred to a community physician or hospital. For this reason students are encouraged to carry individual health insurance in order to assist with the referral process and financial burden. Students interested in purchasing student health insurance should visit <https://sc.myahpcare.com/> for more information.

The Student Health Staff also provides health promotion, health education, and disease prevention information for the campus. They coordinate activities to ensure the campus is up to date on all health issues confronting the campus and surrounding community.

### **Student Leadership and Engagement**

Student Leadership and Engagement strives to provide excellent opportunities to engage students outside of the classroom and get them involved in meaningful ways both on campus and in the community. There are many reasons why you should get involved while attending USCA. First, it is an excellent way to develop important skills that are integral to being successful in the “real world.” Second, research shows that being involved can make one’s college years more fulfilling. Students who are involved tend to be more successful in college and beyond. Third, it is a great way for students to expand their horizons and experiences. Fourth, it looks good on a resume. Studies show that students who are involved tend to get better and higher paying jobs than non-involved students. Lastly, it is a lot of fun being involved, and it can make your college career more memorable and meaningful.

Student Leadership and Engagement offers a variety of programs including:

- Community Service/Volunteerism
- Student Government Association
- Pacer Union Board and Programming
- Fraternity & Sorority Life
- Leadership Programs
- Traditional Event
- Orientation

- 90+ other student organizations

### **University Housing and Residence Life**

University Housing offers three distinct on campus living communities for USC Aiken students. Pacer Crossings is the designated Freshman Residence Hall (FRH). It is a specially designed residence hall for freshman residents, providing suite living, abundant study rooms, and Resident Mentors (RMs) who are trained to assist Freshmen residents in becoming successful in all their college endeavors, inside and outside the classroom. Pacer Commons is an apartment-style residence hall, with multiple lounges and commons spaces. Honors Program students are housed here. Pacer Downs is the garden-style apartment community, geared towards upperclassmen, with amenities including volleyball and basketball courts, a community center, and a swimming pool in the community.

All areas are staffed by University Housing professional staff members as well as RMs, who are upperclassmen students, trained to assist residents. Laundry facilities, computer labs, community offices, and commons spaces are present in all of the communities.

USC Aiken students who wish to live on campus or have questions concerning housing should contact the University Housing and Residence Life Office online at <https://www.usca.edu/housing>, at 803-641-3790, or via email at [housing@usca.edu](mailto:housing@usca.edu). The University Housing and Residence Life Office is located in 130 Pacer Crossings.

<b>Campus Services and Programs</b>
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### **Admissions Office**

The Admissions Office serves as a hub of information for prospective students and families. Enrollment Counselors are available to meet with new freshmen, transfers, and graduate students to discuss admission requirements, standards, application requirements, and academic major areas of study. Campus visit opportunities and open houses are offered during the week and on Saturdays throughout the year. Please visit <https://www.usca.edu/admissions> for visit days and additional information.

### **Alumni Association**

The mission of the USCA Alumni Association is to serve, inform, and involve the alumni in the educational process of USCA while supporting the interests of USCA. The USCA Alumni Association encourages engagement and camaraderie among alumni, students, faculty, staff, and the community through ongoing social, educational, and professional programs and events. Activities are held on and off campus to help alumni maintain a connection with their alma mater. The association sponsors fundraising activities each year to support three funds which provide scholarships for current students.

## **ATM**

An ATM is located in the Student Activities Center near the Pacer Shoppe bookstore for your convenience.

## **Athletics**

With the goals of winning the 4C's- Campus, Community, Classroom, and Competition, the Division of Athletics at USC Aiken is a well-rounded intercollegiate program. USC Aiken is committed to fielding competitive athletic teams which are comprised of academically qualified student athletes. USC Aiken holds membership in the NCAA Division II and is a charter member of the Peach Belt Conference (PBC). The PBC — consisting of Augusta University, Clayton State University, Columbus State University, Georgia College & State University, Georgia Southwestern State University, Lander University, University of North Georgia, Flagler College, USC Aiken and USC Beaufort — has conference championships in 16 sports. The Pacers compete at a conference and national level in 10 sports including volleyball, men's and women's soccer, men's and women's cross country, men's and women's basketball, softball, golf and baseball.

In addition to the 10 NCAA Division II teams and the Spirit Squad (combined cheer/dance team), nearly 200 students represent the athletic department each year. Facilities are also a plus. The Roberto Hernandez Baseball Stadium is state of the art. Volleyball and both basketball teams compete in the 3,500 seat Convocation Center, which is among the finest in the Southeast. The Pacers opened a new softball facility during the 2025 season and is in the process of building a new soccer field.

During the 2024-25 academic year, volleyball, men's basketball and golf all competed in the NCAA Tournament. The men's basketball team won the PBC Tournament.

USC Aiken hosts over 100 sporting events throughout all the sports, beginning in late August and running through early May. Video streams for all home sporting events as well as rosters, schedules, feature stories, history of USC Aiken Athletics and all news pertaining to USC Aiken Athletics can also be found at PacerSports.com. Additionally, fans can like USC Aiken Athletics on Facebook or follow Pacer Athletics on Twitter and Instagram.

## **Bookstore**

Located within the Student Activities Center (SAC) and near the SAC Café, the Pacer Shoppe is a competitive source for all course materials well as school supplies, study aids and general merchandise. The primary mission of the bookstore is to provide educational materials to students while fostering, enhancing, and supporting the academic and administrative goals of USCA.

The university has implemented a course material delivery program named "off-the-shelf". This course material rental program enables students to receive all required course material \* prior to the first day of class at a significantly reduced cost and with no shopping around, no waiting in lines and no surprises.

\*Excluded from the program are lab goggles, dissection kits and other consumables.

#### How it works:

1. Once you register for classes, you are automatically enrolled in the Off-the-Shelf program and the Pacer Shoppe will begin preparing your materials. The cost will be assessed at \$23 per credit hour. All course material will be bundled together and any digital content will be delivered directly through Blackboard.
2. About 30 days before classes begin, you will receive an email asking you to confirm you materials and to choose your preferred delivery method (in store pick up or shipped to you).
3. You will be notified when you material is ready. Digital material will be available in Blackboard.
4. At the end of each semester, return your books to the bookstore. Please do so by the last day of finals. You will receive email reminders.

#### Opting out:

If you prefer to obtain your course material another way, you may opt out of the program anytime between August 1, 2025 and August 25, 2025. The Pacer Shoppe will remain a source to obtain your course material. To learn more about opting out, visit:

<https://www.usca.edu/departments/business-services/off-the-shelf/> Opting out is required for each semester. Please note that if you do not opt out, your materials will be prepared, and your student account will be charged – even if you do not pick them up.

#### Questions:

Please contact the Pacer Shoppe at (803)641-3457, through email at [sm8546@bncollege.com](mailto:sm8546@bncollege.com) or simply stop by the store located in the Student Activities Center. You may also contact the Customer Care Team at 1-844-932-6657.

#### Bookstore Hours:

Fall and Spring Semesters

Monday through Thursday, 8:30 am to 5:30 pm

Friday, 8:30 am to 12:30 pm

Summer Sessions

Summer Hours will be coordinated with the university's hours of operation.

There will be extended hours of operation at the beginning of each session.

For more information, contact the Pacer Shoppe at (803)641-3457 or visit the website at:

<https://usca.bncollege.com>

#### **Business Services**

The Business Services Office manages the assessment and collection of tuition payment and other fees and maintains the accuracy of student accounts. The office also manages payment plans, student refunds, and processes third-party sponsor bills. Additional services include assistance

with understanding your bill, payment deadlines, 1098T tuition statements, CarolinaCard and cash payments. The office is in Room 114 in the Penland Building. For more information, please contact us at 803.641-3543 or via email at [busserv@usca.edu](mailto:busserv@usca.edu). Additional information can also be obtained at <https://www.usca.edu/departments/business-services/>.

### **Student Success Center**

Located on the first floor of the Gregg-Graniteville Library, the Student Success Center is to support your academic goals, connect you to campus resources, and help you develop skills that will serve you both in and out of the classroom. Below is a snapshot of our key services. You can explore more at <https://www.usca.edu/departments/student-success-center/>.

#### Academic Advising

All new first-year students are assigned a professional advisor based on their major. You can find your assigned advisor by checking your student profile in Self-Service Aiken (SSA) or by calling 803-643-6742. Still have questions? Stop by anytime—we're happy to help.

Professional advisors can assist with:

- Finding and using academic resources
- Exploring majors and degree requirements
- Changing your major or advisor
- Navigating SSA, DegreeWorks, and Navigate
- Building your class schedule and registering
- Getting connected with campus organizations and support services

#### Subject Coaches & Tutoring

Everyone gets stuck sometimes. Whether you need a quick refresher, help with a tricky concept, or a deep dive into a subject, our Subject Coaches are here to support you, at no cost, both in person and online. Our Subject Coaches love their specialties, are recommended by faculty, and trained to help you succeed.

Visit the Student Success Center website for the latest tutor list and schedule.

#### Academic Coaching

Need help with time management, study strategies, or staying organized? Academic coaching is available for students at all levels. Work one-on-one with a professional staff member to build skills that support your success. Appointments can be scheduled through the "Academic Coaching" link on the SSC website.

### **Children's Center**

The USCA Children's Center offers childcare for children of faculty, staff, students, and the community. It is licensed by the State of South Carolina, is nationally accredited by the NAEYC, and employs qualified teachers as well as students at the university. The Center is open twelve months a year. Full-time care is available for children aged six weeks through five years of age. Parents have easy access to their children and are assured of the highest quality of care.

## Technology Services Division

The mission of the Technology Services Division (TSD) is to provide students, faculty, and staff with the computing, networking, and voice communication tools necessary to support the university's mission. The University of South Carolina Aiken and TSD are committed to providing a reliable, state-of-the-art campus computing environment.

TSD now has two Help Desks to support our faculty, staff, and students. The primary Help Desk is located in suite 100 of the Business and Education building. The second Help Desk is located on the first floor of the Gregg-Graniteville Library. That location specializes in addressing and resolving student technology issues.

All academic computing is supported in the Windows and Mac environments.

Wired and Wireless network services through USC Aiken's state-of-the-art network provide gigabit wired connectivity and WiFi connectivity on campus. TSD manages several servers providing the campus community with network printing, file sharing, and network applications. More information about TSD and the services it provides can be found at <http://www.usca.edu/csd>.

## Dining Services

The university contracts with one of the country's premier food service operators to provide food services on campus and offers many dining options at USCA including:

- The **SAC Café** is located in the Student Activities Center. It is a full service "all you care to eat" café featuring a fresh salad bar, made-to-order station, pizza, deli sandwiches, grilled entrees, and a comfort food station. (It operates for breakfast, lunch, and dinner with extended hours Tuesday through Thursday.)
- **The Station** is located in the Humanities and Social Sciences Building and offers gourmet coffee, fresh build-to-order subs, and much more. It is open for breakfast and lunch.
- **Starbucks Coffee** is located in the Student Activities Center and serves freshly brewed coffee, specialty drinks, and a variety of sandwiches, muffins, and pastries.
- **The Pacer Market** is located at Pacer Downs and serves snacks, supplies, and household essentials.
- **Ace's**, a mobile food venue, will operate at various locations throughout the campus during select times.

All Housing students are required to have a meal plan. Freshman and sophomore students may choose from Meal Plans A, B or C. Junior and Senior students may choose from Meal Plans A, B, C, or D. USC Aiken housing residents will sign up for a meal plan when they complete their housing application. All other students should sign up during the registration process. To activate their meal plan, all students must present a valid USC Aiken ID.



## Resident Meal Plan Options

Meal Plans are an excellent way to ensure proper nutrition and budgeting. Additionally, they offer the best dining value. There is a meal plan to suit the needs of every student and everyone should consider purchasing a meal plan.

- Plan A: Unlimited meals plan - \$1,781.00 per semester. It provides unlimited full, hot meals in the cafeteria each week. This plan also offers a bonus \$105 in declining balance money, which may be used in any campus dining location.
- Plan B: 11 meal plan - \$1781.00 per semester. This plan provides 11 full, hot meals in the cafeteria each week. This plan offers a bonus \$315.00 in declining balance money, which may be used in any campus dining location.
- Plan C: 6 meal plan - \$1781.00 per semester. This plan provides 6 full, hot meals in the cafeteria each week plus \$630 in declining balance dollars.
- Plan D: Declining balance plan - \$958.00 per semester

All non-declining balance meal plans (A, B, or C) offer a breakfast meal equivalency which may be used in the H&SS Station between the hours of 7:30 a.m. and 11:00 a.m. as well a lunch meal equivalency which may be used in the H&SS Station, or Pacer Market between the hours of 11:30 a.m. and 4:00 p.m.

Commuter Meal Plan Options – Although anyone can purchase a residential meal plan, two meal plans have been designed specifically with the commuter student in mind.

- Block 30 - \$380 per semester. This meal plan provides 30 meals per semester and includes \$84 of declining balance dollars.
- Block 50 - \$589 per semester. This meal plan provides 50 meals per semester and includes \$132 of declining balance dollars.
- Beginning Spring 2026, all commuter students will be enrolled with a commuter meal plans with \$75 declining balance dollars. These dollars may be used at any dining services locations: SAC Café, The Station, USCA Starbucks, The Market, USCA Concessions, Ace's Food Truck and our dining services partner Domino's Pizza. Students may opt out of this program during the first two weeks of each major semester, coinciding with the last day to add/drop classes and receive a refund of any unused balance.

**\* All meal plans are priced on a semester basis.** Meals and declining balance dollars do not roll over from semester to semester.

**\*\* USCA has partnered with a third party vendor who accepts declining balance dollars as a form of payment.** Our current vendor is Domino's Pizza.

## Other Campus Dining Options:

Pacer cards are ideal for those students who are not required to purchase a meal plan, commuter students, faculty, staff, or as a supplement to an existing meal plan. Pacer Cards only cost \$40.00

but grant \$44.00 of purchase power. Pacer Cards may be purchased in the Business Services department located in the Penland Administration Building. When one card runs out, just stop by and purchase another. Meal Plan Options can be found on the dining services webpage.

Rates and meal plans may be subject to change.

### **Online Learning and Support**

The Office of Online Learning and Support (OLS) is committed to supporting online education and distance learning at USC Aiken for all instructors, faculty, staff, and students interested in utilizing technology for online learning. Our mission is to promote quality learning experiences for all by providing professional development opportunities in course design, promoting best practices in instructional design, and building a supportive campus network to meet the needs of our online faculty members and students.

The Office of Online Learning and Support also oversees the administrative support and academic advising for all undergraduate online degree programs. USC Aiken online degree completion programs, which we call Aiken Online, are a flexible and convenient way to complete your degree if you have some previous college credit but never graduated. All of USC Aiken's online programs are developed and taught by the same professors who teach statewide in the nationally renowned University of South Carolina system. As an online students, you will have access to the university's academic resources. Online students will also have access to academic advisors who are trained specifically on working with online students.

For information, please go to the [USCA Online Learning and Support website](#) or review our current offering of [USCA's online programs](#).

### **External Programs**

The Office of External Programs has three divisions: Conference Center and Facility rentals, Continuing Education, and the Center for Lifelong Learning. External Programs is the all-inclusive department for events, functions and non-collegiate education (such as certifications and senior education courses).

- Conference Center  
Looking for a place to host an event, training, seminar, or conference? USCA's Office of External Programs can host events in a variety of venues for various sizes of groups. The professional coordinators offer extensive support from booking through billing. We want to ensure that your event not only meets your goals but also exceeds your expectations. To book an event, contact [Kari Williamson](#) kari.williamson@usca.edu
- Continuing Education  
The office of External Programs provides professional development courses for individuals or for large businesses and organizations. The office of External Programs will help you

design customized programs to enhance professional advancement that will provide continuing education units needed to further career requirements.

Through the Office of External Programs, the department offers a selection of certificate and non-credit learning opportunities for your personal enrichment and professional development which include:

- Online Learning

These certificate programs offer instructor facilitated online classes that you can complete from your home or office. These classes run for six weeks, with a two-week grace period at the end. There are many programs to choose from, such as Ed2Go, Condensed Curriculum International (CCI), Equestrian Online, Legal Studies, Business, Education, and Computers, just to name a few.

- The Center for Lifelong Learning

This program targets mature adults and provides an opportunity for seniors to explore many fascinating subjects, take day trips, and meet other seniors with similar interests. This program offers technology classes tailored for adults of all experience levels which include personalized instruction as well. They hold open lab hours where registered students can use computers to practice their skills or to work on individual projects.

### **Fees and Privileges**

Tuition and fees are approved by the University of South Carolina's Board of Trustees and are included as part of the overall tuition paid by USCA students, except as noted. Students enrolled for less than twelve hours pay the part-time rate but have the same privileges as full-time students for these services and activities. Full-time fees are \$545 of the current full-time tuition, and part-time fees are \$45.25 of the current part-time per hour tuition.

- Athletics - \$288.00 per semester, \$23.50 per part-time hour. Ten intercollegiate sports are partially funded through the athletic fee: men's and women's basketball, men's baseball, men's and women's soccer, men's and women's cross country, women's volleyball, women's softball, and men's golf.
- Debt Service - \$166.00 per semester, \$13.75 per part-time hours. This is a fee to pay off the remaining balance on the bonded indebtedness on certain construction and renovation projects for the campus.
- Health Fee - \$42.00 per semester; \$3.75 per part-time hour. This fee allows students access to a range of health services. Information about the services provided can be obtained in the Student Life & Services office located in the Student Activities Center.
- Renovation Reserve - \$12.00 per semester; \$1.00 per part-time hour. This fee is used to fund maintenance and repairs to ensure sustainable and optimal utilization of campus buildings and property.

- Campus Activities - \$32.00 per semester; \$2.75 per part-time hour). This fee is used to fund the operations of the Student Activities Center and to fund Student Government, student organizations, and the Pacer Union Board.
- Media - \$5.00 per semester; \$.50 part-time hour. The funding for Pacer Times (student newspaper) and Broken Ink (literary magazine) are included in this fee.
- Parking and Security Fee - \$25.00 per semester. This separate fee is required of all students and includes a parking permit as well as security and parking lot maintenance.
- Technology - \$156 per semester; \$13.00 per part-time hour). This separate fee is used for the acquisition and support of information technology (including computers) on the campus.
- Off-the-Shelf Book Fee - \$23 per credit hour per semester. This separate fee ensures students have required course materials on or before the first day of class. This fee is optional.

Fees are subject to change. Fees listed above are for the 2025-2026 academic year.

### **Financial Aid**

USCA participates in an array of financial aid programs which consists of scholarships, grants, loans, and student employment opportunities. Most programs require students to complete the Free Application for Student Aid (FAFSA) every year. The FAFSA can be found at [www.studentaid.gov](http://www.studentaid.gov). The Financial Aid office is located in Room 102 in the Penland Administration Building. For additional information, please visit the Financial Aid office or contact a financial aid representative at 803-641-3476, [StuAid@usca.edu](mailto:StuAid@usca.edu), or fax 803-643-6840.

### **Graduate Office**

The Enrollment Management Office coordinates the offering of graduate degrees and courses on campus. Graduate degrees offered at USCA include the Master of Business Administration (MBA), M. Ed. in Educator Leadership and the M.S. in Applied Clinical Psychology. More information can be obtained at <https://www.usca.edu/admissions/admission-types/graduate/> or by visiting the Enrollment Management Office in Penland Administration Building, Room 101.

### **Graduation Instructions**

The Graduation Application is the first step you will need to take in order to graduate from your academic program. Completing a Graduation Application means you want your degree conferred and officially recorded on your academic transcript. During the application process, you will be asked to verify your program, name, and diploma address. You will also be given the option to attend the Commencement Ceremony.

#### USC Aiken has Three Graduation Applications with Separate Deadlines:

May Graduation Application – Available online through Self Service Aiken December 15 – January 31

August Graduation Application – Available online through Self Service Aiken May 15 – June 15

December Graduation Application – Available online through Self Service Aiken July 15 – August 31

Students can check the status of their Graduation Application through Self Service Aiken:  
Log into SSA à Click on Student à Click on Student Profile à You should see Graduation  
Information: Graduation Applications: à Click on Active (1)

This will take you to a Graduation Application Information Page. From here you can check your Diploma Name, Diploma Mailing Address, and Degree Status. Please note that your status will remain Pending until Final Grades are entered.

USC Aiken has two Commencement Ceremonies: May and December

May and December Graduation Candidates will answer Yes or No if they want to attend commencement on their Graduation Application. August Graduation Candidates have the choice to participate in either the May or December Commencement Ceremony. You **MUST** complete the Early/Late Commencement Participation Form found on the USC Aiken Registrar webpage at [https://uscaiken.formstack.com/forms/early\\_commencement\\_participation](https://uscaiken.formstack.com/forms/early_commencement_participation). For More Information, please visit the Graduation Webpage: <https://www.usca.edu/commencement/>

For Graduation Application Questions, Please contact the Registrar's Office – 803-641-3550

For Ceremony Questions, Please contact the Office of Student Life - 803-641-3588

For Update Form and Ticket questions, Please contact the Office of Alumni Relations – 803-641-3408

For Cap and Gown questions, Please contact the bookstore – 803-641-3457

### **ID Cards**

All currently enrolled USCA students are required to have a USCA ID card and have it in their possession while on campus. The ID card is an important item that allows access to university facilities and services and is designed to be checked by computer for validity. Certain services will be denied without the issued ID card. The ID card is a permanent card and is valid as long as a student is officially registered. The card is the property of USCA and is intended solely for its use. It is not transferable and must be returned upon request. Upon request of law enforcement, faculty, and staff, students must produce and provide their USCA ID.

Students are responsible for reporting lost or stolen cards promptly; otherwise, they may be liable for debts incurred using the cards. Replacement cards cost \$25.00 and the charge will be billed through the Business Services Office.

ID cards are valid only when a student is enrolled in classes. Should a student withdraw or be suspended during the semester, the card will no longer be recognized by the computer system. If a student leaves USCA and later returns, the student will not need to have a new ID card made.

By registering and paying fees, the computer will recognize the card as valid once again. Questions concerning the ID card system can be answered in the University Police Office.

The ID card also can be used anywhere on campus that Carolina Cash is accepted such as campus dining, Starbucks, vending machine, Laundry services, the Pacer Market, the Pacer Shoppe, and PacerPrint. You may add Carolina Cash to your ID card through Self Service Aiken (SSA) account or by visiting business services.

New Students: The ID card process is now completed through a new online process. Following the below listed steps will greatly reduce your time waiting in line. Complete these steps at least 72 hours prior to picking up your ID:

- Take a photo of yourself meeting the mandatory requirements\*
- Go to <http://my.carolinacard.sc.edu> and log in using your VIP ID
- Complete the cardholder agreement
- Submit your photo by clicking "Photo Upload"
- You will receive a confirmation that the submitted photo was acceptable
- Retrieve your student ID from the University Police Department

\*These photographs should be of the same quality and have the same characteristics required for driver's license, military identification, or passports. They should be taken with a solid background, you must be facing the camera, it must be a photo from head to shoulders, and it must be in color. Photographs will not be accepted if you are wearing a hat, sunglasses, halter top, sleeveless shirt, or bathing suit. The display of offensive language or inappropriate behavior will disqualify the photograph.

### **Multimedia Services Department**

The primary goal of the Multimedia Services Department is to serve the academic mission of the University of South Carolina Aiken by developing video and interactive media promoting college activities and events, interdepartmental communications, and training, and by offering instructional enhancement that assists with bettering the professional experience of students and faculty.

We offer the following services:

- Video production
- Livestream services
- Audiovisual equipment support (microphones, speakers, mixers, screens, and projectors)
- Classroom technology troubleshooting
- Event support for internal events
- Selective event support to outside organizations using USCA facilities

Our regular hours are from 8:00 A.M. to 5:00 P.M. For audiovisual support submit your tickets here <https://help.usca.edu/> or contact us at [multimedia@usca.edu](mailto:multimedia@usca.edu) for more information. The Department of Multimedia Services studio is located on the third floor of the Ruth Patrick Science Education Center.

### **Gregg-Graniteville Library & Archives**

The faculty and staff of the Gregg-Graniteville Library are here to support you throughout your academic journey at USCA. Whether you need help with a research paper, a quiet place to study, or someone to walk you through citations, we're here for you.

Our priority is helping you succeed, and we do that by offering:

- **In-person and virtual research help** from USCA faculty librarians
- **Citation support** in any format—APA, MLA, Chicago, AMA, or others
- **Instruction sessions** and classroom visits tailored to your assignments
- **Curated research guides** for your courses and majors
- **Study rooms** for group projects or quiet work time
- **Student-use computers**, plus **printing, copying, and scanning** services
- **Extended hours and free snacks** during exam weeks
- A **“Chat with a Librarian”** feature right on our website when you need help fast

We also have a lot of amazing resources! The library offers:

- Over **130,000 print books** and more than **a million e-books**
- Access to **250+ research databases**
- **Interlibrary loan and PASCAL Delivers** to borrow from other libraries
- A large collection of **government documents, South Carolina state publications**, and the **Department of Energy Public Reading Room**
- The **Gregg-Graniteville Archives and Museum** and **USCA University Archives**
- A **technology lending program** that includes laptops, scientific calculators, webcams, and more

Explore everything we have to offer by visiting us in person or online at <https://library.usca.edu>. And if you ever feel stuck, we are just a click away. Look for the red **“Ask a Librarian”** button on our homepage—we're always happy to help.

### **Lost and Found**

Lost and found items may be turned in or claimed at the University Police Department located at 805 Leadership Drive which is located in front of the Pacer Downs housing complex.

### **Math Lab**

The missions of the Math Lab is to provide support for students enrolled in mathematics courses at USCA and ultimately enable students to be successful in classes that use mathematics. This is accomplished by providing students with free peer tutoring in any freshman level and selected sophomore level mathematics classes. The Math Lab is located on the first floor of the Gregg



Graniteville Library.

### **Registrar/Records Office**

The Office of the Registrar is responsible for a variety of ongoing services for the current student population at USCA.

The office gathers and records the grades for all undergraduate students and implements the university's suspension and probation policy by tracking and keeping all related records of students on suspension and probation. Other services pertaining to a student's permanent record include name and address updates and proper recording and filing of all academic decisions and exceptions on students.

Students wishing to graduate from USCA must complete a graduation application available in Self Service Aiken no later than the published date for that semester.

This office provides an academic calendar used by the entire university and also produces the USCA Bulletin and the master schedule of classes. Room scheduling for campus functions is handled in this office as well.

The Registrar's office also provides Self Service Aiken, which is a web system for students to use in registration and financial transactions. Students can access SSA from anywhere they have internet access. SSA is also the only means by which students receive final grades. The address <http://my.usca.edu/> provides instructions on how to set up and use this type of account.

Students and alumni can also request official transcripts of their courses and grades by going to [www.usca.edu](http://www.usca.edu) and in the "A to Z" index, click on the "T" for transcripts.

### **University Publications**

*USCA Bulletin* – Available online at <https://www.usca.edu/departments/registrar/academic-bulletins/>. it lists the academic programs of study, general university rules and regulations, admission policies, information on student activities, and other comprehensive information about USCA.

*USCA Magazine* – Annual magazine published by the University Advancement office containing news and feature articles about faculty, staff, students, and alumni.

*Student Handbook* – Resource guide available online at <https://www.usca.edu/departments/student-affairs/> which includes student rights and responsibilities, policies, and services.

*Master Schedule of Classes* – Available online through SSA, it lists the academic calendar, information concerning registration and withdrawal procedures, the university's refund policy, and the final exam schedule.

*Stall Wall Weekly* – Published weekly by the Student Life office, they include information on campus events for the week.

*Student Media* - Pacer Times virtual newspaper and Broken Ink literary magazine.

### **Veteran and Military Student Success**

The Office of Veteran and Military Student Success (VMSS) supports Veterans, Service Members, and their families as they transition from military service to college and beyond. We provide educational support, military specific training and education benefit (GI Bill<sup>®</sup>, & State ) processing and transition services to help students reach their academic and career goals.

Our goal is to help Veteran and Military-Connected students succeed in school, prepare for careers, and thrive in life.

The VMSS Center, located in Penland 107, is a resource hub for all Veteran and Military-Connected students. It's a place to study, relax between classes, or get help with benefits and transition-related questions.

We support students through:

- Pre-orientation support and peer connections (benefits, admissions, enrollment, transcripts, academic and career planning)
- Veteran and Military-specific orientation sessions
- Assistance with VA education benefits (GI Bill<sup>®</sup>), DoD Tuition Assistance, enrollment, and certification
- Help with using VA.gov, and other transition services
- Career development programs for Veterans
- Access to Veteran-specific scholarships
- Membership in Pi Alpha Sigma, the Veterans Honor Society
- The USCA Student Veterans Organization

Our staff works with students to connect them with the right benefits, services, and resources. Current Veteran and Military students also help incoming students through peer mentoring and support.

### *School Certifying Official (SCO)*

The School Certifying Official is part of the VMSS Team located in Penland 107 and is responsible for submitting enrollment information to the Department of Veterans Affairs. This includes certifying course loads, reporting changes, and confirming benefit eligibility. The SCO helps ensure students receive their VA education benefits accurately and on time.

### *Veteran Transition Success Advocates (VTSA's)*

Veteran Transition Success Advocates are part of the VMSS Team located in Penland 107 and are responsible for providing continued support services to Veteran and Military students. VTSA's provide services related to interpersonal issues, study skills, time management, goal setting, coping skills, academic

concerns, financial concerns, and stress management. VTSA's are your resource to the resources. Connect with your VTSA today in Penland 107 or by email at [VTSA@usca.edu](mailto:VTSA@usca.edu).

Using VA, DoD, or State Education Benefits

- VA GI Bill ® (Post 9/11 Chapter 33, Fry Scholarship, Montgomery GI Bill ® Active-Duty program and Reserve 1606)
- Federal Tuition Assistance (Active Military and National Guard)
- Veteran Readiness and Employment Benefits (Chapter 31)
- Survivors' and Dependents' Educational Assistance (Chapter 35)
- SC Tuition Assistance for Certain War Veterans' Children

Students must request certification of their benefits each semester. To do this, students must submit the following documents to the School Certifying Official:

- 1) New Student Intake Form (Completed at Initial Connection Only)
- 2) Certification Request Form (CRF)
  - a. Detailed Student Schedule
  - b. Advisement Form signed by the student's advisor, or Degree Works/Navigate notes confirming that all listed courses count toward the student's degree.
    - i. **Graduate Student Exclusion:** Students enrolled in a USC Aiken Graduate program of study are not required to upload advisement notes to their Certification Request Form.

The CRF is the student's formal request for VA benefit processing. It is available in the VMSS Center or on the VMSS webpage.

Students are responsible for:

- Using education benefits only for courses required for their degree, as listed in the USCA undergraduate or graduate academic bulletin. Any balance for tuition and fees resulting from registration in a course(s) not required for the student's degree path will be the responsibility of the student.
- Completing and submitting Tuition Assistance (TA) Authorizations through your service component education office at least 7 days before the term starts, or as directed by the service branch. All information must be accurate (courses, hours, and dates). Incorrect information will delay processing or cause you to miss the submission deadline.
- Report any changes in enrollment (adds, drops, withdrawals, major changes) within 5 business days by submitting an updated schedule and updated advisement notes
  - **Note:** Changes in enrollment may affect tuition payments and monthly stipend payments.

- Submitting a new Certification Request Form and required documentation each semester. Benefits cannot be processed without a completed request.

For help or questions, contact 803-643-6767, email [vmss@usca.edu](mailto:vmss@usca.edu), or visit us in Penland 107.

### **Writing Center**

The Writing Center is in H&SS 112, with a complete computer lab, citation guides, and printing resources. Walk-ins are welcome but based on availability; online and in-person appointments can be made at <https://usca.mywconline.com>.

The Writing Center provides support for USCA students of all majors, backgrounds, and skill levels throughout the writing process. The center's tutors are trained to assist students during personal sessions and provide students with resources to improve their writing and help them feel more confident in their written work across the disciplines. Online and face-to-face workshops are offered each semester--see the university calendar for details. All services provided are free of charge. For additional information, visit [here](#) or email the Writing Center at [WritingCenter@usca.edu](mailto:WritingCenter@usca.edu).

<b>Safety at USCA</b>
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USCA is concerned about safety issues for all students. The Student Right to Know Act gives all interested parties information concerning on-campus safety and crime.

Annual crime statistics are updated annually and posted at:

<https://www.usca.edu/departments/campus-safety/campus-crime-statistics/>

### **University Police**

The University Police office is located at 805-B Leadership Drive in front of Pacer Downs. The USC Aiken campus is staffed 24 hours a day, 7 days a week by state-commissioned police officers. These officers are responsible for protecting members of the campus community, enforcing the law, and maintaining the physical security of the campus. The officers also attempt to deter crime through the application of crime prevention techniques and high visibility. For information go to <https://www.usca.edu/departments/campus-safety/>.

The office provides many services to the campus community including:

- Criminal investigations
- Parking lot assistance
- Escorts
- Lost and Found
- Emergency phones
- Enforcement of university rules
- Enforcement of all state and local laws
- General information and assistance

- After hours building entry assistance
- Police reports
- First Responder medical assistance
- Issuance/replacement of ID cards
- Issuance of vehicle decals

University Police may be reached by dialing 6111 on-campus, 648-4011 off-campus, or by using one of the emergency call boxes located around campus.

### Emergency Notification

University of South Carolina Aiken students are automatically enrolled in campus emergency siren, text, phone and email alerts on their first day at the university. Your emergency contact information is available and can be updated at <https://myaccount.sc.edu>.

We encourage all students to add their parents, guardians or other emergency contacts as a secondary contact to ensure they receive alerts about campus emergencies or safety practices. You can do that by visiting <https://myaccount.sc.edu>.

When students are no longer enrolled at the university, their emergency contact information as well as that of their contacts is automatically purged from the system.

### Emergency Telephones

Emergency telephones are provided at multiple locations on the campus. These devices provide direct access to University Police at all times. Additionally, University Police may be reached by dialing 6111 from any on-campus phone or 648-4011 from any other phone.

### Escorts

To ensure safe passage to and from vehicles, university housing, classes, and buildings on campus, University Police officers will serve as escorts upon request. Students desiring this assistance should request it by calling University Police at 648-4011 or 6111 from an on-campus telephone or from one of the emergency phones located throughout the campus.

### Cameras

Security cameras are located across campus. As areas are identified, additional cameras are added. The cameras can be monitored in the police department as well as patrol cars.

### Off-Campus Housing

If off-campus housing is being considered, students and parents should be aware that Aiken County is served by three separate law enforcement departments, with jurisdiction determined by the location within the City of Aiken, the City of North Augusta, or the balance of the County, which is served by the office of the Sheriff of Aiken County.

Please contact rental agents for the County or City emergency numbers that might be helpful such as fire, police, and hospital. In addition, USC Aiken strongly suggests that all students considering off-campus housing contact the appropriate law enforcement department for specific crime and safety information about the residential areas under consideration.

Local Law Enforcement Contact Points

Aiken County Sheriff's Office

803-642-1761 or 911 for emergencies – [www.aikencountysheriff.org](http://www.aikencountysheriff.org)

City of Aiken Public Safety

803-642-7620 or 911 for emergencies - [www.adps.aiken.net](http://www.adps.aiken.net)

City of North Augusta Public Safety

803-279-2121 – [www.northaugusta.net](http://www.northaugusta.net)

<b>Student Judicial Process</b>
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The University of South Carolina Aiken, as an institution of higher education, accepts its obligation to provide for its students, faculty, and staff an atmosphere that protects and promotes its educational mission and guarantees its effective operation. To accomplish these goals, the university requires certain standards of conduct. All students, faculty, and staff at the university share the responsibility to respect:

- The fundamental rights of others as citizens;
- The rights of others based upon the nature of the educational process;
- The rights of the institution;
- The rights of everyone to fair and equitable procedures for determining when and upon whom sanctions for violations of University standards should be imposed.

The Student Judicial Policy is the essential component in guaranteeing due process for students at the University of South Carolina Aiken. This policy describes procedures for addressing: 1) Violations of the Academic Code of Conduct; and 2) Violations of the Non-Academic Code of Conduct, including violations by student organizations. Each of these processes is addressed in a separate section of this document. Procedures for redress in cases of sexual harassment are outlined in the USCA Policy Against Discrimination, Harassment, and Sexual Misconduct, which can be found at [www.usca.edu/title-ix](http://www.usca.edu/title-ix). Paper copies can be obtained from the Office of the Dean of Students.

**Definitions**

Class Day

A class day is any weekday in which the university is in session according to the academic calendar. This does not include reading days, exam days, May term, or summer term. If the student is unable to meet stated deadlines due to the end of the semester or due to the summer

school schedule, the student must, within ten (10) days of receipt of notification of being charged with a violation of the Academic or Non-Academic Code of Conduct, notify the appropriate Judicial Officer or Chair of the University Judicial Board that he/she intends to file a formal response to the charge when classes resume at the beginning of the next full semester.

#### *Delivery of Written Notice*

After the initial investigation of charges, all written communication with the student in the judicial process must be delivered either by certified mail, via email, or delivered in person, with a signed and dated acknowledgement of receipt, or electronic notice delivery.

#### *Hearing Officer*

A hearing officer is a professional staff member designated by the Non-Academic Judicial Officer to adjudicate minor violations of the non-academic student code of conduct. Hearing officers include, but are not limited to, the Vice Chancellor of Student Affairs, Director of Student Leadership and Engagement, Assistant Director of Campus Recreation and Wellness, and the Executive Director, Associate Director, and Assistant Directors in University Housing.

#### *Judicial Officers*

##### **Academic Judicial Officer**

The Executive Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs designates the Assistant Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs as the Judicial Officer for violations of the Academic Code of Conduct. The Office of Academic Affairs implements policies and procedures related to violations of the Academic Code and the imposition of sanctions in an efficient, consistent, fair, legal, and educationally meaningful manner.

##### **Non-Academic Judicial Officer**

The Vice Chancellor of Student Affairs designates the Dean of Students as the Judicial Officer for violations of the Non-Academic Code of Conduct. In cooperation with other appropriate bodies, the Non-Academic Judicial Officer implements policies and procedures related to conduct violations and the imposition of sanctions in an efficient, consistent, fair, legal, and educationally meaningful manner.

##### **Judicial Procedures Advisor**

A Judicial Procedures Advisor is a faculty member who serves as an advisor to an accused student or student organization. The Judicial Procedures Advisor is an ex-officio participant in any student disciplinary procedure. The Judicial Procedures Advisor will maintain an objective position in advising the student or student organization. The Judicial Procedures Advisor is not an advocate who sides with either principal party involved in the disciplinary procedure but rather an advisor to guide the student in the procedures and in the unbiased collection of evidence to be used at a hearing, if such is necessary.

#### *Preponderance of the Evidence*



The preponderance of the evidence is a standard of proof that indicates that the evidence provided shows that “more likely than not” a violation occurred. (This is often referred to as the 50% plus 1 rule.)

#### Presenting Party

The presenting party is/are the individual(s) who brings forth charges of alleged violations of the USCA Student Code of Conduct. For the Academic Code of Conduct, this will generally be the faculty member teaching the course in which the alleged violation occurred. For the Non-Academic Code of Conduct, the presenting party will generally be the non-academic judicial officer; however, depending on the nature of the alleged violation, another faculty or staff member may be designated.

#### Student

For the purpose of this policy, a “student” is defined as any person who is admitted, enrolled, or registered as a student at USCA for any academic period. In addition, persons who are not officially enrolled for a particular term but who have a continuing student relationship with, or an education interest in, USCA are considered “student.” A person shall also be considered a student during any period following the end of either a spring or fall semester that the student has completed until the last day of registration for the next succeeding semester. A person shall also be considered a student during any period while the student is under suspension from the institution or when the person is attending or participating in any activity preparatory to the beginning of school including, but not limited to, orientation, placement testing, and residence hall check-in.

#### University Judicial Board

The University Judicial Board is a group of students and faculty who review cases in which there are alleged violations of the Academic or Non-Academic Code of Conduct in an effort to determine if a violation(s) took place and, if so, the appropriate sanction(s) that should be assigned.

### **Disciplinary Procedures for Violations of Academic Integrity (Code of Conduct)**

#### Academic Integrity

Academic integrity is the guiding principle of all aspects of the educational process. It is defined as respect for one’s own work and for the work of others. By becoming a member of the University of South Carolina Aiken community, each individual agrees to abide by this principle. The principle of academic integrity and all procedures supporting it shall be referred to as the “Academic Code of Conduct.” It is the responsibility of every student at USCA to be familiar with the “Code” to adhere steadfastly to truthfulness and to avoid dishonesty, fraud, or deceit of any type in connection with any academic requirements. Academic requirements are defined as works submitted for academic progression or graduation or any graduate or undergraduate course work. Any student who violates this principle, attempts to violate it, or who knowingly assists another in violating it shall be subject to discipline.

As members of the USCA community, it is also the responsibility of every student, faculty, and staff member to report violations of academic integrity to the faculty member in whose course these violations took place or to another person of authority such as a department chair/school head. The principle of academic integrity prohibits all forms of academic dishonesty—including cheating, lying, bribery, and plagiarism. The following examples illustrate conduct that violates academic integrity, but this list is not exhaustive.

- Giving or receiving unauthorized assistance, or attempting to give or receive such assistance in connection with the performance of any academic work.
- Unauthorized use of materials or information of any type or the unauthorized use of any electronic or mechanical device in connection with the completion of any academic work.
- Unauthorized use of any portable electronic device unless required for the course during a test period without consent of the instructor.
- Access to the contents of any test or examination of the purchase, sale, or theft of any test or examination prior to its administration.
- Use of another person's work without proper acknowledgement of source; i.e. plagiarism.
- Intentional misleading of any person in connection with any academic work including the scheduling, completion, performance, or submission of any such work.
- Offering or giving any favor or thing of value for the purpose of influencing improperly a grade or other evaluation of a student in an academic program.
- Conduct intended to interfere with an instructor's ability to evaluate accurately a student's competency or performance in an academic program.

Only the appropriate faculty member can “authorize” assistance, use of materials, etc.

Whenever a student is uncertain as to whether conduct would violate academic integrity, it is the responsibility of the student to seek clarification from the appropriate faculty member prior to engaging in such conduct.

### **Honor Pledge**

As a commitment to maintain academic integrity and accept academic responsibility, the following statement should appear on all major examinations and assignments:

“On my honor as a University of South Carolina Aiken student, I have completed my work according to the principle of academic integrity. I have neither given nor received any unauthorized aid on this assignment/examination.”

Signed and Dated \_\_\_\_\_

### **Student Responsibility**

- To conduct all academic work within the letter and the spirit of academic integrity, which prohibits giving or receiving unauthorized aid in all academic endeavors.
- To sign the Honor Pledge on all graded academic work certifying that no unauthorized assistance has been received or given in the completion of the work.

- To consult with faculty and other sources to clarify the meaning of plagiarism and to learn the recognized techniques of proper attribution of sources used to prepare assignments.
- To consult with faculty to identify allowable resource materials or aids to be used during examinations or completion of any graded work.
- To maintain the confidentiality of examinations by divulging no information, directly or indirectly, to another student who has not yet taken that same examination.
- To report observed academic integrity violations in a timely manner. When possible, violations should be reported to the faculty member in whose course these violations took place.

### *Classroom Behavior*

It is the instructor's right to remove from the classroom any student who disrupts or disturbs the proceedings of the class. Disruption of the class includes, but is not limited to, the use of any portable electronic devices, including cell phones, MP3 players, iPods, etc. unless prior approval has been given to a student or unless required for the course. In extreme cases the faculty member can request assistance from University Police. If the student who has been ejected causes similar disturbances in subsequent meetings of the class, he/she may be denied admittance to the class for the remainder of the semester and assigned a grade of F.

### *Consequences for the Violation of Academic Integrity*

- If the violation pertains to an assignment in a course, the faculty member teaching the course in which the violation occurred may assign a "0" on the assignment or an "F" in the course.
- If the violation pertains to a non-course degree requirement (Junior Writing Portfolio, Praxis Exam, etc.), the student may fail to receive credit for the degree requirement for which the violation occurred. The consequence for the violation of a non-course degree requirement may be imposed by the appropriate department chair/dean.
- In addition to the consequences listed above, the faculty member or department chair/dean has the right to refer the violation to the University Judicial Board for possible disciplinary penalties.

These penalties include:

- Expulsion – Dismissal from the university without the possibility of re-admittance.
- Suspension for a period of time – Denial of enrollment, attendance, and other privileges at the university for a specified period of time. Permission to reapply for readmission upon termination of the period may be granted with or without qualifications.
- Sanction – Sanctions may include, but are not limited to, attendance at or participation in a program or community service, program development, and researching and writing a paper on a topic related to the violation.

The three consequences listed above may be imposed by the University Judicial Board or at higher levels in the judicial process. Nothing in these procedures, including the imposition of any disciplinary penalty, shall be interpreted to limit the academic authority of an instructor to

determine an appropriate grade for a student who has violated the academic code of conduct. If an instructor determines that because of academic dishonesty a student's performance in an academic program merits a grade reduction or a failing grade, the instructor's authority to award an appropriate grade is not limited by the imposition of any penalty under this section.

#### Record of Violations

Violations are recorded as follows:

When a faculty member assigns a student an "O" or "F" for a violation as the final grade of record on an exam, assignment, or requirement of an "F" in the course, the faculty member must notify the student within ten (10) class days of assigning the grade through a letter delivered as specified under the definition of delivery of written notice. The letter must state the violation, the sanction imposed and the student's right to appeal. A copy of said letter, including documentation of the violation (e.g. copies or tests, papers, etc.) will be sent to the Assistant Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs (AVCAA). The AVCAA will, in turn, send a copy of the incident letter to the alleged student's academic advisor. The AVCAA will request a meeting with the alleged student via formal letter, which is sent to the student via email.

#### Recurring Violations of Academic Integrity

To ensure that students do not continue to violate academic integrity, confidential files for violations shall be maintained by the office of Academic Affairs and a University Judicial Board hearing shall be held upon the accumulation of three violations. The purpose of the University Judicial Board hearing is to consider the pattern of a student's behavior. When three violation letters have been received, the Academic Judicial Officer shall:

- Request a hearing by the University Judicial Board. The request must be made within ten (10) class days from receipt of the third letter;
- Notify the student in writing of the request and deliver letter as specified under the definition of delivery of written notice; and
- Forward these letters to the chair of the University Judicial Board for use during the hearing.
- The receipt of any subsequent letter charging the student with a violation of academic integrity would prompt another hearing by the University Judicial Board.

#### **Due Process for Cases of Alleged Violations of Academic Integrity**

##### Faculty Options

After imposing one of the "consequences for the violation of academic integrity," the faculty member or department chair/dean may also seek further sanctions within ten (10) days by requesting a hearing by the chair of the University Judicial Board and by informing the student by delivering the letter as specified under the definition of delivery of written notice, with a copy to the unit head of the request for a hearing.

If the request is made by the faculty member, a copy of the letter will be sent to the faculty member's department chair/dean and to the department chair/dean for the student's major.

### Student Options

A student may accept the penalty imposed by the faculty member for violating academic integrity or he/she may appeal the penalty to the University Judicial Board. The student must request a hearing by the University Judicial Board in writing. The student's written request for a hearing should be sent by certified mail or hand-delivered to the academic judicial officer. Such a request must be submitted within ten (10) class days of being made aware of a penalty for violating academic integrity.

### Judicial Board Hearing

Any of the following actions will initiate a University Judicial Board hearing:

- Request by faculty member
- Appeal by student
- Request by Academic Judicial Officer upon the receipt of the third and of any subsequent violation letter.

The University Judicial Board may impose disciplinary penalties, confirm previously imposed penalties, or dismiss all allegations regarding academic dishonesty. The University Judicial Board cannot alter or reverse a faculty member's imposed penalty (i.e. grade). In the case of a student appeal of a faculty imposed penalty, the University Judicial Board may not impose a penalty stronger than the initial one.

### Procedures

(See information regarding Administrative Hearings and Hearings of the University Judicial Board.)

### Appeal Options following University Judicial Board Decision

- The faculty member or student may accept the decision of the University Judicial Board (case closed) or disagree and appeal the case to the Executive Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs. The faculty member or student must file a written request with the Executive Vice Chancellor and deliver the letter as specified under the definition of delivery of written notice within ten (10) class days after receiving the decision of the University Judicial Board.
- The Executive Vice Chancellor's decision to uphold or overturn the University Judicial Board's decision, based upon a review of the evidence, must be returned within ten (10) days. The Executive Vice Chancellor may or may not summon any principal in the case. The Executive Vice Chancellor may either confirm or reverse the decision of the University Judicial Board, or may alter the sanctions specified by the University Judicial Board. In the case of a student appeal, the Executive Vice Chancellor may not impose a penalty stronger than the sanction specified by the University Judicial Board. A written report of the Executive Vice Chancellor's decision will be delivered as specified under the definition of delivery of written notice to the

student, and to the faculty member and unit head directly involved in the appeal. Copies of the report will also be sent to the department chair/dean.

- If the faculty member or student is not satisfied with the decision, he/she may take the case to the Chancellor of University of South Carolina Aiken. The faculty member or student must file a written request with the Chancellor and deliver it as specified under the definition of delivery of written notice within ten (10) class days after receiving the decision of the Executive Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs.

The Chancellor will review all materials pertaining to the hearing and arrive at a decision within ten (10) class days. The Chancellor may or may not summon any principal in the case. The Chancellor may either confirm or reverse the decision of the Executive Vice Chancellor, or may alter the sanctions. In the case of a student appeal, the Chancellor may not impose a penalty stronger than the sanction specified by the Executive Vice Chancellor. A written report of the Chancellor's decision will be sent to the Executive Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs, the faculty member, the unit head, and the student (delivered as specified under the definition of delivery of written notice) directly involved in the appeal.

#### Academic Penalty

At the conclusion of a case, after all appeal options have been exhausted by both parties, if the student is found not responsible for violating academic integrity, the Executive Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs will advise the faculty member to reassess the academic penalty (i.e. grade) within ten (10) class days and will notify the faculty member that he/she may be in an untenable legal position if he/she elects not to do so. The faculty member's reassessment of the academic penalty may or may not result in a different grade, depending on the quality of the student's performance on the assignment in question.

#### Final Disposition

The Executive Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs will be responsible for implementing sanctions imposed by the University Judicial Board or any level higher in the appeals process. The Executive Vice Chancellor will also inform the Registrar's office if the sanctions require any restrictions on the student's future enrollment. The Executive Vice Chancellor will keep records of all foregoing procedures in a confidential file.

### **Disciplinary Procedures for Non-Academic Violations (Code of Conduct)**

#### Introduction

- The discipline system extends and applies the general principles of the Statement of Student Rights and Freedoms within the academic community to specific actions and responsibilities of students and student organizations at the University of South Carolina Aiken. It accepts the proposition that "academic institutions exist for the transmission of knowledge, the pursuit of truth, the development of students, and the general well-being of society, and that free inquiry and free expression are indispensable to the attainment of these goals."

- As such the University strives to maintain an educational community which fosters the development of students who are ethically sensitive and responsible persons.
- The University of South Carolina Aiken strives to protect this educational community and to maintain social discipline among its students. Consistent with its purposes, reasonable efforts will be made to foster the personal and social development of those students who are held accountable for violations of university social regulations.
- The purpose of this document is to set forth the specific authority and responsibility of the university in maintaining social discipline, the educational process of determining student and student organization accountability for violating the regulations, and the proper procedural safeguards to be followed in this process to ensure fundamental fairness and protect the students and student organizations from unfair imposition of serious penalties and sanctions.

### **Application of Laws and Regulations**

- Students should be aware that educational institutions are not sanctuaries beyond the reach of the criminal laws of the communities and states where such institutions exist. While the rules and regulations of the University of South Carolina Aiken are not meant to duplicate general laws, there are some aspects in which the lawful interest of the institution as an academic community coincide with the broader public interests treated in general laws. Students who commit offenses against the laws of municipalities, states, or the United States, are subject to prosecution by those authorities and may be subject to disciplinary action under university rules when their conduct violates institutional standards.
- Students, no less than other citizens, are entitled to be secure in their persons, lodgings, papers, and effects against unreasonable searches and seizures. Searches and seizures by law enforcement personnel incident to investigations or arrests and conducted only under proper warrant. This does not prohibit normal inspections of facilities for maintenance, health, or safety purposes. Note: University Housing policies allow for the entrance and inspection of student housing units if there is reason to believe that a violation of law or university policy exists, or for life safety and/or emergency circumstances.
- Students enjoy the same freedoms of speech and peaceable assembly as all citizens, but they are under certain legal obligations in the exercise of these freedoms by virtue of their membership in the university community. Expression may be subjected to reasonable regulations of time, place, number of persons, and form under established regulations. Expression in the form of action that materially interferes with the normal activities of the institution or invades the rights of others is prohibited. The university is pledged to protect lawful exercise of the rights of free speech and assembly and will invoke appropriate legal and disciplinary sanctions when necessary in the pursuit of this goal.
- Students who are apprehended and charged by law enforcement agencies with felony criminal conduct on or off campus are required to inform the Dean of Students within five days.
- The standard of proof required in university judicial processes differs from that required in criminal judicial processes. In university judicial processes, the standard of proof required to

find a person responsible for a violation is that of the **preponderance of the evidence**. That is, if the evidence provided indicates that “more likely than not” the violation occurred, the student will be held accountable for that violation.

### **Authority and Responsibility**

- Responsibility for good conduct rests with students as individuals. All members of the university community are to use reasonable judgment in their daily campus life and to show concern for the welfare and rights of others.
- The Board of Trustees is the governing body of the university and the power of the President, the Chancellor, and the faculty are delegated by the Board in accordance with policies. The faculty, subject to review by the Chancellor, the President, and the Board of Trustees, has legislative powers in all matters pertaining to the discipline of students and student organizations.
- The Vice Chancellor of Student Affairs is responsible for the judicial system that adjudicates violations of the Non-Academic Code of Conduct. The Vice Chancellor of Student Affairs delegates responsibility for the day-to-day operation of the Non-Academic Code of Conduct to the Dean of Students, who serves as the Non-Academic Judicial Officer. The Non-Academic Judicial Officer has designees, referred to as Hearing Officers, for specific cases. These Hearing Officers include, but are not limited to the Director, Associate Director, and Assistant Directors in University Housing, the Director of Student Leadership and Engagement, and the Assistant Director of Campus Recreation and Wellness.
- Student Government, as an elected and representative voice of the student body, has the right to comment on any proposed changes pertaining to the discipline of students.
- The Campus Life Committee has the right to propose changes to the Non-Academic Code of Conduct, when appropriate. Upon request, a report will be submitted to the Campus Life Committee in the fall of each year detailing, without student names, the following: the behaviors which led to disciplinary action, the type of hearing, the decision of the hearing authority including any sanctions, and general demographic data and student status for the student(s) charges.

### **General Student Conduct Regulations**

- This section establishes the rules and regulations all students of the University of South Carolina Aiken are expected to follow under the duty and corollary powers inherent in educational institutions to protect their educational purposes through the setting of standards of student conduct and scholarship and through the regulation of the use of university facilities.
- Students have a right to expect enforcement of these rules and regulations. The university also has the right to expect students to abide by them as befits the responsibilities of students as members of the university community. Knowledge of these rules and regulations can prove beneficial to students in utilizing and protecting their guarded rights. It is important to add,



however, that unfamiliarity with institutional regulations or rules is no ground for excusing infractions.

- Scope of Application—The University may take disciplinary action for a violation of the Non-Academic Code of Conduct when the offense takes place on university premises or at university sponsored, endorsed, supported or related events which occur off campus. The university may also take disciplinary action for off-campus offenses that are not related to the university when failure to do so is likely to interfere with the educational processes or orderly operation of the university, or endanger the health, safety, or welfare of the university community.
- Conduct Regulations of the Non-Academic Code – The following statements constitute the official record of all general conduct rules and regulations at the University of South Carolina Aiken. Students are expected to abide by these regulations and administrators are expected to enforce them. These regulations should be read broadly and are not designed to define prohibited conduct in exhaustive terms. Additional rules and regulations may be promulgated during the year; announcements will be made upon adoption of the changes or additions.

Note: Attempting, abetting, or being an accessory to any act prohibited by the General Student Conduct Regulations shall be considered a violation of the Non-Academic Student Code of Conduct.

- Mental Health Disturbances – Instances of student behavior that may be the result of a mental health disturbance require specific consideration and action. The Vice Chancellor of Student Student Affairs, in consultation with the Behavioral Intervention Team (BIT), the Chancellor and others deemed appropriate, will assess and treat as unique to each student's behavior and determine if administrative action is warranted. The university may take the following actions in response to instances of student behavior where there is reason to believe the conduct is the result of a mental disturbance or the behavior poses a threat of physical harm to the individual or others; counseling, referral for evaluation, remediation, therapeutic treatment, disciplinary action, voluntary or involuntary withdrawal, or other action deemed appropriate. Please reference the website for more information about BIT (<http://www.usca.edu/behavioral-intervention-team>).

### **Conduct Regulations of the Non-Academic Code of Conduct**

The following statements constitute the official record of all general conduct rules and regulations at the University of South Carolina Aiken. Students are expected to abide by these regulations and administrators are expected to enforce them. These regulations should be read broadly and are not designed to define prohibited conduct in exhaustive terms. Additional rules and regulations may be promulgated during the year; announcements will be made upon adoption of the changes or additions.

Note: Attempting, abetting, or being an accessory to any act prohibited by the General Student Conduct Regulations shall be considered a violation of the Non-Academic Student Code of Conduct.

### **1. Non-Compliance with General Laws**

Students involved in violations of any federal, state, or local laws may be subject to disciplinary action. Any disciplinary action imposed by the university may precede and be in addition to any penalty imposed by an off-campus authority. Students who are apprehended and charged by law enforcement agencies with felony criminal conduct on or off campus are required to inform the Director of Student Leadership and Engagement.

### **2. University Policies and Procedures**

Failure to abide by any published university policy or procedure is prohibited, including, but not limited to the following policies, <https://www.usca.edu/about/university-policies/>.

### **3. Harassment/Bullying**

Conduct that creates or attempts to create an intimidating, hostile, or offensive environment for another person or group is prohibited. Conduct that is directed against a student or group of students based on their race, color, national origin, religion, sex, gender, age, disability, sexual orientation, genetics, or veteran status that is sufficiently severe, pervasive, or persistent so as to interfere with or limit the ability of an individual or group to participate in or benefit from the programs, services, and activities provided by the university, is prohibited. Such conduct includes, but is not limited to, action(s) or statement(s) that threaten harm or intimidate a person, or any other form of unwanted contact either in person or through technology.

### **4. Disorderly Conduct**

Individual or group behavior which unnecessarily disturbs individuals or groups is prohibited. Such conduct includes, but is not limited to, physical assault or threat of assault, hazing, and boisterous conduct which is unreasonable in the area, time, or manner in which it occurs.

### **5. Disruptive Activity**

No person may interfere with or disrupt the normal activity and operations of students, faculty, administration, or staff of this institution or its buildings or facilities. Any form of expression that materially interferes with such activities and operations or invades the rights of persons may be proscribed or prohibited.

Note: To remain in the vicinity of activity which threatens to disrupt or is disrupting normal university functions may have serious legal and disciplinary implications. Bystanders as well as more active participants in the disruptive activity may be charged with jointly engaging in an enterprise which is prohibited by law. Students should accordingly avoid the scene of any disruptive or potentially disruptive action. In any case, failure to leave when asked to disperse by university or law enforcement officials will result in disciplinary and/or legal action.

Note: In any case where students of the University of South Carolina Aiken are involved in action which is disruptive of the normal activities of the institution or its personnel, or which

exceeds the bounds of normal internal discipline in its impact, the Board of Trustees may exercise its right to name a special hearing board, committee, or officer to investigate the questioned action and to initiate appropriate disciplinary or other measures.

#### **6. Inappropriate Use of Social Media**

Posting language that is illegal, threatening, or harassing to any person or group on social media sites that belong to the university is prohibited.

#### **7. Damage to Property**

Damage to or destruction of property owned or operated by the university, its students, faculty, administration and staff, or of another institution is prohibited. Conduct which threatens to damage, or creates hazardous conditions such as dropping, throwing, or causing objects or substances to fall from windows, doors, balconies, or roofs is also prohibited. This includes, but is not limited to, unauthorized application of graffiti, painting, etc.

#### **8. Firearms and Other Deadly Weapons**

The unauthorized possession or use of firearms or weapons of any other kind such as knives, slingshots, metal knuckles, razors, or any other dangerous instrument is prohibited.

#### **9. Flammable Materials and Fireworks**

The ignition or detonation of anything that could cause damage by fire, explosion, or similar means to persons or property, or possession of anything in the nature of fireworks or explosives, is prohibited on any property owned or operated by the university without prior university authorization.

#### **10. Arson**

No person shall start a fire on university property without university authorization, and willful damage to property (as described above) shall be prosecuted as arson when appropriate.

#### **11. Emergency Alarms and Emergency Equipment**

No person shall make, or cause to be made, false fire alarm, bomb threat or emergency report of any kind. No person shall tamper with, damage, disable or misuse fire or other safety equipment. Note to resident students: Students found in violation of tampering with, damaging, and/or disabling fire safety equipment in campus housing are also subject to fines.

#### **12. Gambling**

Gambling is not permitted on campus.

#### **13. Theft or Misappropriation**

Theft of any kind, including seizing, receiving, or concealing property with knowledge that it has been stolen, is forbidden. Sale, possession, or misappropriation of any property, including USCA property, without the owner's permission is also prohibited. Property that is found shall be turned in to the University Police Office.

**14. Unauthorized Sale of Textbooks**

The sale of a textbook by any student who does not own the book is prohibited without prior written authorization from the owner of the book. Books that are found shall be turned in to the University Police Office.

**15. Misuse of University Documents**

Forgery, alteration, or misuse of any university document(s) or record(s), including providing false information or withholding material information from the university, is forbidden.

**16. Fraud or Lying**

Lying or fraudulent misrepresentation in, or with regard to, any transaction with the university, whether oral or written, is prohibited, including misrepresenting the truth before a hearing of the university or making a false statement to a university official.

**17. University Identification Cards**

Lending a university ID card to anyone, failing to present an ID card when requested by a university official, or altering an ID card may subject the owner and/or the holder to disciplinary action.

**18. Failure to Respond to Official Requests**

Students must comply with the reasonable and lawful requests of university employees acting in the performance of their duties. Students are expected to appear at disciplinary hearings to respond to allegations or testify as a witness when reasonably notified to do so. Failure to properly comply with or complete a sanction or obligation resulting from a disciplinary hearing or adjudication may be considered a violation of an official request. A registration hold may be placed on a student's record until such time as the student complies with the request.

**19. Unauthorized Presence In and Use of University Facilities**

Unauthorized entry into, presence in, or use of university facilities or property is prohibited. Unauthorized entry into any faculty or administrative office, unauthorized entry into a faculty member's or administrator's automobile, or unauthorized access to student records will be considered a violation of the Academic Code of Conduct of the Student Judicial Policy.

**20. Misuse of Keys**

No person may use or possess any university key without proper authorization. No student is allowed under any condition to have a university key duplicated.

Note to resident students: Loaning residence hall keys to a person not assigned to that room/apartment is considered a violation of this regulation.

**21. Misuse of Telephones and other Communication Equipment**

No student shall misuse, abuse, or assist in the misuse or abuse of communication equipment at the university. Such activity includes, but is not limited to, using any form of communication equipment to harass or threaten any person or persons, making unauthorized calls on university telephones, or using any form of communication equipment to disrupt the normal operations or activities of any person, organization, or the university. Communication

equipment includes, but is not limited to, telephones, electronic mail, computers, printers, etc. The viewing of pornography on university computers is forbidden. The viewing of child pornography is ILLEGAL and is subject to prosecution by local, state, or federal authorities.

## **22. Alcoholic Beverages**

It is unlawful, and therefore a violation of the Non-Academic Code of Conduct, for a student to violate any provision of the USCA policy on the use of alcohol on campus, which is included in the Student Handbook.

Note to resident students: The Office of University Housing has developed and published specific regulations in the [Community Guide for Housing](#) concerning alcohol use, including where it may be consumed, who may consume, and who may be present when alcohol is being served/consumed.

## **23. Drugs**

The possession, use, manufacture, sale, or distribution of any counterfeit, illegal, dangerous, or controlled drug without a prescription or the possession of drug paraphernalia, such as pipes, bongs, or any items modified or adapted so that they can be used to consume drugs are not permitted on university premises or at any university sponsored activity.

Note to resident students: The office of University Housing has developed and published an explanation of sanctions in the [Community Guide for Housing](#) related to students who use, purchase, possess, or sell drugs, which includes the possible termination of the Housing Contract by the university.

## **24. Student Housing**

Violation of any student housing regulation is prohibited. These regulations may be found in the [Community Guide for Housing](#). These policies extend to residents, as well as guests and visitors, although students living in campus housing will be held responsible for the actions of their guests.

## **25. Harm to Persons/Relationship Violence**

Actions which result in physical harm, have the potential for physically harming another person, which create conditions that pose a risk of physical harm to another, or which cause reasonable apprehension of physical harm are prohibited.

## **26. Tobacco Use**

USCA is a tobacco-free campus. Tobacco use is prohibited in all USCA owned or leased buildings as well as property owned by the university (athletic/intramural fields, green space, parking lots, etc.) Refer to the [USCA Tobacco Policy](#) for further information (<https://www.usca.edu/about/university-policies/afcmn-facilities-management/#d.en.53318>)

## **27. Stalking**

A pattern of conduct that is intended to cause or causes a person fear is prohibited.

### **Procedures for Responding to Violations of the Non-Academic Code of Conduct**

### Jurisdiction

The Dean of Students (or designee) will determine whether a potential violation is “major” or “minor” as well as whether it is a “housing” violation. The Dean of Students (or designee) will assign the appropriate hearing officer to investigate and, if needed, adjudicate all violations.

#### A. Major Violations

- 1) Major violations that are serious or repeated violations of the Non-Academic Code of Conduct. Determination of “major violation” status is made by the non-academic judicial officer.
- 2) Major violations may include, but are not limited to, sexual assault, use or sale of drugs, arson, and theft. Repeated minor violations may also be classified as “major violation.”
- 3) Major violations are adjudicated via formal administrative or University Judicial Board Hearings or Administrative or University Judicial Board Sanctioning meetings, depending on the circumstances.

#### B. Minor Violations

- 1) Minor violations that are less serious or first-time violations of the Non-Academic Code of Conduct. Determination of “minor violation” status is made by the Non-Academic Judicial Officer or appropriate hearing officer.
- 2) Minor violations may include, but are not limited to, violations of the tobacco/smoking policy, minor alcohol violations, and general conduct violations.
- 3) Minor violations may be adjudicated via informal administrative or administrative sanctioning meetings, depending on the circumstances.
- 4) Minor violations that occur within Housing, Greek Life, Intramurals, or student organizations may be adjudicated by the appropriate hearing officer, as referred to under the definition of “hearing officer.”

#### C. Housing Violations

Housing violations are less serious first-time violations of the Non-Academic Code of Conduct or housing policies that occurred in University Housing or on University Housing grounds or parking lots.

### Reporting of Violations

- A. Any member of the university community may initiate non-academic disciplinary proceedings concerning an alleged violation of the Non-Academic Student Code of Conduct.
- B. The complaint must be made in writing and submitted to the Non-Academic Judicial Officer or the appropriate hearing officer.

### Determination of Charges

- A. Upon receiving a complaint of misconduct, or upon his or her own initiative, the Non-Academic Judicial Officer or Hearing Officer will review relevant facts and consult with relevant parties through investigative meetings regarding the incident in question, including the student who is believed to be directly involved.
- B. If the evidence warrants disciplinary action, written notification (according to the definition of written notice) will be sent to the accused student indicating the nature of the activity in question and the specific charge being made against him or her.
- C. The Non-Academic Judicial Officer or Hearing Officer may at any time during the disciplinary proceedings make additional charges or withdraw charges against the student. In either case, the officer will send written notification (according to the definition of written notice) to the student.

### Procedures

- A. After investigating relevant facts and meeting with relevant parties, including the student involved, the Non-Academic Judicial Officer may opt to file charges of the Non-Academic Code of Conduct. The student will be sent a letter as specified under the definition of delivery of written notice indicating the charges that have been filed.

Note: If the student fails to meet with the Non-Academic Judicial Officer or Hearing Officer during the investigation, a hold may be placed on the student's registration preventing him/her from registering for future classes until the matter is resolved. Additionally, the student may be charged with a violation of the "failure to comply" provision of the Non-Academic Student Code of Conduct (Section IV.D.14).

- B. If, in the course of the investigation, the student accepts responsibility for the violation, charges will be filed immediately, and the case will proceed as outlined below:
  - 1) When a student accepts responsibility for a minor violation, an administrative sanctioning meeting will be held.
  - 2) When a student accepts responsibility for a major violation, he/she will:
    - Meet with a judicial procedures advisor to review the options, and
    - Choose either an administrative sanctioning meeting or a university judicial board sanctioning meeting.

Note: The Non-Academic Judicial Officer may decline to serve as the sanctioning authority and require that sanctioning be provided by the University Judicial Board.

- C. If the student denies responsibility for the violation and is charged by the Non-Academic Judicial Officer, the charged student will be required to do the following:
  - 1) Meet with a Judicial Procedures Advisor to review the options
  - 2) Choose one of the following options to resolve the charges:
    - Read "not responsible" to the charge(s) and have a hearing before the University Judicial Board where a decision of responsible or not responsible will be made by the Board. If the student is found responsible by the University Judicial Board, an appropriate sanction will be determined by the Board.

- Read “not responsible” to the charge(s) and request an informal administrative hearing before the Non-Academic Judicial Officer or Hearing Officer. If found responsible by the Non-Academic Judicial Officer or Hearing Officer, an appropriate sanction will be determined by the officer. An informal hearing allows the charged party to present evidence for consideration and suggest witnesses that the Non-Academic Judicial Officer or Hearing Officer may consider interviewing before the decision is rendered. The Non-Academic Judicial Officer or Hearing Officer may contact other parties who have knowledge/information regarding the incident in question. The charged student waives the right to question such parties or otherwise participate in the hearing.

Note: The Non-Academic Judicial Officer or Hearing Officer may decline to hear the case because of conflict of interest or severity of the case and require either a formal administrative or University Judicial Board Hearing be held, where a determination of “responsible” or “not responsible” will be made.

- Plead “not responsible” to the charge(s) and request a formal administrative hearing before the Non-Academic Judicial Officer or Hearing Officer. If found responsible by the Non-Academic Judicial Officer or Hearing Officer, an appropriate sanction will be determined by the officer. A formal hearing allows the charged party to respond to charges, present witnesses, and present questions for the witnesses to answer.

Note: If at any time during the proceeding a student admits responsibility for the violation, the procedures outlined in Section D.2. will take effect.

- If an accused student fails to respond to the charge(s) and/or fails to respond to the Non-Academic Judicial Officer’s request for an investigative meeting to discuss the alleged violations, he/she forfeits the above options and will be sent a letter as specified under the definition of delivery of written notice at least ten (10) days before the upcoming University Judicial Board hearing. At this hearing a decision of “responsible” or “not responsible” will be made, based on the available information, with or without the accused student being present. When appropriate, a sanction will also be determined, and the student will be notified in writing.
- If disciplinary charges are brought against a student during summer sessions, the student will have the option of an Administrative Hearing before the Non-Academic Judicial Officer or Hearing Officer during the summer or hearing before the University Judicial Board in the fall.

#### Following the Hearing or Sanctioning Meeting

- A. The Non-Academic Judicial Officer or University Judicial Board Chair shall be responsible for forwarding the written decision of the hearing or sanctioning authority to the charged party as specified under the definition of delivery of written notice. The letter will consist of:
  - 1) Statement of charges



- 2) Findings of the hearing authority and the rationale for the findings, if appropriate
  - 3) Sanction(s) and the rationale for the sanction(s), if appropriate
  - 4) Statement regarding the right to appeal and the appeal procedures, if appropriate
- B. A student found responsible will have ten (10) class days from the date of documented receipt of the decision letter to submit a written request for an appeal to the Vice Chancellor of Student Affairs (see “Appeals Procedures”). The appeal request must state the reason(s) for believing the decision of the original hearing authority to be improper. If there is no appeal within this time limit, the Non-Academic Judicial Officer will implement the sanction.

### Appeal Process

#### A. Appeal Process for Housing/Minor Violations

- 1) Housing violations: In the event the charged student disagrees with the finding of responsibility or sanction of any Housing violations case, the charged student may request an appeal in writing to the Dean of Students within ten (10) class days from the date the original decision was issued. In the case of an appeal, original sanctions are normally postponed until the Dean of Students makes a decision on the appeal. The Dean of Students is the final step in the appeal process for Housing violations.
- 2) Minor violations: In the event the charged student disagrees with the findings of responsibility or sanction(s) of any minor violations case, the charged student may request an appeal in writing to the Dean of Students within ten (10) days from the date the original decision was issued. In the case of an appeal, original sanctions are normally postponed until the Dean of Students makes a decision on the appeal. If the Dean of Students is the hearing officer for the case, the appeal will be made to the Vice Chancellor of Student Affairs. The Dean of Students (or Vice Chancellor of Student Affairs) is the final step in the appeal process for minor violations.
- 3) Process: The request for appeal will be by written correspondence addressed to either the Dean of Students or the Vice Chancellor of Student Affairs as appropriate. The request for appeal will state the reasons for believing the decision of the original hearing or sanctioning authority to be improper. The appeal must be based on and limited to one or more of the following:
  - The finding of responsibility was not supported by reliable and substantial evidence presented at the original hearing
  - The disciplinary sanction was too severe
  - A procedural error was committed which prejudiced the outcome of the case
  - The original hearing authority misinterpreted the rule or regulation under which the student was charged to the prejudice of that student.

The appeals officer (either the Dean of Students or the Vice Chancellor of Student Affairs) will review all materials pertaining to the case and arrive at a decision within ten (10) class

days. The appeals officer may or may not summon any principals in the case. The appeals officer may either confirm or reverse the decision of the hearing officer or may reduce the sanctions. If the appeals officer determines that new information is available that was not available at the time of the original hearing or sanctioning meeting and that this information may have altered the outcome of the original hearing, the case may be remanded to the original hearing officer. The appeals officer will notify the student in writing of the decision and deliver the letter as specified under the definition of delivery of written notice.

#### B. Appeal Process for Major Violations

- 1) In the event the charged student disagrees with the findings of responsibility or sanction(s) of any major violations case, the charged student may request an appeal in writing to the Vice Chancellor of Student Affairs within ten (10) class days from the date the original decision was issued. In the case of an appeal, original sanctions are normally postponed until the Vice Chancellor of Student Affairs makes a decision on the appeal.
- 2) The request for appeal will be by written correspondence addressed to the Vice Chancellor of Student Affairs. The request for appeal will state the reasons for believing the decision of the original hearing or sanctioning authority to be improper. The appeal must be based on and limited to one or more of the following:
  - The finding of responsibility was not supported by reliable and substantial evidence presented at the original hearing
  - The disciplinary sanction was too severe
  - A procedural error was committed which prejudiced the outcome of the case
  - The original hearing authority misinterpreted the rule or regulation under which the student was charged to the prejudice of that student
- 3) The Vice Chancellor of Student Affairs will review all materials pertaining to the case and arrive at a decision within ten (10) class days. The Vice Chancellor of Student Affairs may or may not summon any principals in the case. The Vice Chancellor of Student Affairs may either confirm or reverse the decision of the hearing officer or may reduce the sanctions. The Vice Chancellor of Student Affairs may not impose a penalty stronger than that already imposed. If the Vice Chancellor of Student Affairs determines that new information is available that was not available at the time of the original hearing or sanctioning meeting and that this information may have altered the outcome of the original hearing, the case may be remanded to the original hearing officer.

Note: The Vice Chancellor of Student Affairs may decline to serve as an appeal authority if he/she has had extensive involvement in the case (such as in the case of summary suspension).

- 4) The Vice Chancellor of Student Affairs will notify the student in writing of the decision and deliver the letter as specified under the definition of delivery of written notice. The Non-Academic Judicial Officer will implement the decision.
- 5) Decisions of the Vice Chancellor of Student Affairs may be appealed to the Chancellor of the University of South Carolina Aiken within ten (10) class days of the date of documented receipt of the written decision of the Vice Chancellor of Student Affairs.
- 6) The Chancellor will review all materials pertaining to the case and arrive at a decision within ten (10) class days. The Chancellor may or may not summon any principal in the case. The Chancellor may either confirm or reverse the decision of the Vice Chancellor of Student Affairs or may alter the sanctions. The Chancellor may not impose a penalty stronger than that imposed or confirmed by the Vice Chancellor of Student Affairs. The decision of the Chancellor in an appellate matter is the final decision for the university. Written notification of the Chancellor's decision will be delivered as specified under the definition of delivery of written notice to the student who has made an appeal, and copies will be sent to the Vice Chancellor of Student Affairs, the Non-Academic Judicial Officer, and any other hearing officers involved in the case.

### Sanctions

The following disciplinary sanctions may be imposed upon students found in violation of the Non-Academic Code of Conduct. Sanctions may be imposed either singularly or in combination. The purposes of imposing sanctions are two-fold: one, to protect the university community from behavior which is detrimental to the community; and two, to educate students about acceptable parameters and the consequences of their behavior. The severity of the sanction imposed is intended to correspond with the severity or frequency of violations as well as the student's willingness to recommit himself or herself to good citizenship through behaviors that fall within the conduct regulations of the university.

Failure to comply with a disciplinary sanction or condition will result in a "hold" being placed on the student's official university record or transcript and will result in further disciplinary charges.

#### A. Expulsion

Dismissal from the university without the possibility of re-admittance. The Non-Academic Judicial Officer shall automatically refer this sanction to the Vice Chancellor of Student Affairs for review prior to implementation. In the case of suspension, immediate steps will also be taken to remove the student from the USCA campus.

#### B. Suspension for a period of time

- 1) Denial of enrollment, attendance, and other privileges at the university for specified period of time. Permission to reapply for readmission upon termination of the period may be granted with or without qualifications.
- 2) Any student suspended for a period of time must vacate the campus within forty-eight (48) hours from the date the notice of suspension is delivered as specified under the

definition of delivery of written notice and may not return to campus or university property during the term of the suspension without prior admission of the Non-Academic Judicial Officer.

C. Suspension Held in Abeyance

- 1) A sanction given for a period of time, which indicates that the serious nature of the conduct violation would normally result in a student's suspension from the university, but given the extenuating circumstances, this suspension is not immediately put into effect. Any serious violation of rules, regulations, or laws while the suspension is held in abeyance may result in suspension from the university.
- 2) In the event a student is accused of violating the conditions of a suspension held in abeyance, the student will be notified to appear before the original hearing authority or other appropriate authority. This hearing authority will determine whether or not there is sufficient information to determine that the terms of the suspension held in abeyance were violated. If the terms of the suspension held in abeyance were violated, the student will be given an opportunity to show cause why he or she should not be suspended. The original hearing authority will make a decision as to whether the student should be suspended immediately or the initial sanction should remain in effect.

D. Disciplinary Probation

Disciplinary probation is a period of review and observation during which a student is under an official warning that his or her misconduct was very serious. While on disciplinary probation, a student may be considered to be "not in good standing" and may face specific limitations on his or her behavior and/or university privileges (see Conditions). Subsequent violations of university rules, regulations, or policies are likely to result in a more severe sanction including suspension from the university.

E. Conditions

Conditions include limitations upon a student's behavior and/or university privileges for a period of time, or a stipulation in conjunction with another sanction. This sanction may include, but is not limited to: denial of the right to represent the university in any way, restrictions on participation in co-curricular activities, denial of parking privileges, or access to campus facilities including computer labs or the Wellness Center.

F. Reprimand

A reprimand is an official rebuke making conduct a matter of record in university files. Any further misconduct could result in further disciplinary action.

G. Restitution

An order to make restitution is issued when a student has engaged in conduct injurious to property (individual, group, or the university) for which monetary damages may be ascertained. For example, this sanction may be assessed in cases of property damage, theft, fraud, deception, or misappropriation.

#### H. Educational Sanction

Educational sanctions may include, but are not limited to, attendance at or participation in a program or community service, program development, and researching and writing a paper on a topic related to the violation.

#### I. Fines

Fines may be levied when appropriate or dictated by policy.

### Summary Suspension

1. Summary suspension is an action which requires a student to immediately leave university property, not returning during the suspension period, and comply with other stated conditions for a specified period. Suspension may be imposed upon a student by the Vice Chancellor of Student Affairs or designee when there is reason to believe, based on available facts, that the student represents an immediate threat to the safety, health, or welfare of himself/herself, other persons, or property.
2. This action is warranted by potential or threatened danger or disruption, but is indicated only when the serious nature or immediacy of the threat makes it impractical to follow normal disciplinary procedures. Summary actions authorized by this policy include:
  - 1) Temporary suspension of a student's eligibility for enrollment or attendance, as well as denial of the student's access to university facilities or property. A student may be summarily suspended for a specified period of time or the suspension may be scheduled contingent upon certain events or conditions.
  - 2) Temporary suspension or limitation of a student's eligibility to enjoy certain kinds of events without the suspension of enrollment status. This summary action may prohibit a student's presence on university property or certain facilities or impose conditions which must be met in order for that student to enjoy certain privileges, participate in activities, or attend events.
3. When a student is summarily suspended, he or she is given a copy of this policy and notice explaining the reason for and duration of the suspension, as well as any conditions that may apply. A student notified of such summary action shall, upon written request, be given an opportunity to meet with the Vice Chancellor of Student Affairs or designee within ten (10) class days from the date of receipt of the request. This meeting will be held to consider only the following issues related to the summary action:
  - 1) The reliability of information alleging a student's misconduct; and,
  - 2) Whether the conduct or surrounding circumstances reasonably indicate the student's presence on campus or continued unrestricted participation in campus affairs would pose an immediate threat to the safety, health, or welfare of persons or property. It is not the purpose of the meeting to hear evidence concerning guilt or innocence of pending or possible charges against the student.
4. Following the imposition of summary suspension, standard university disciplinary procedures will be provided as expeditiously as possible. Unless circumstances render the

implementation of standard disciplinary procedures impossible or unreasonably difficult, these procedures will be initiated when ten (10) class days from the effective date of the summary action.

5. Any student who is summarily suspended and returns to the campus or university property and/or violates other stated conditions during the specified period will be subject to further separate action and may be treated as a trespasser. Permission to be on campus for a specific purpose (e.g., to take an exam, to consult with the Vice Chancellor of Student Affairs, or to participate in disciplinary procedures) must be requested and obtained in writing or by telephoning prior to any conduct contrary to the suspension or conditions and may be granted by the Vice Chancellor of Student Affairs.

### Records

- A. Records of major violation cases which have been resolved with a sanction less than suspension will be maintained by the Non-Academic Judicial Officer for a period of seven years from the date of the last offense. Students graduating before that time may petition the Non-Academic Judicial Officer in writing to request that their records be destroyed upon graduation. Records may be retained by the university beyond the normal seven year period in special circumstances, including, but not limited to, situations when legal action is taken by any party involved.

When a date for purging records has been reached, records in all formats are to be destroyed. Note: Statistical data may be retained but all information that would identify an individual will be removed.

- B. Records where the discipline sanction was suspension will be maintained for a period of at least ten (10) years from the date of the last incident.
- C. Persons who are not directly involved with a discipline case, an appellate review of a decision or the enforcement of a sanction will not have access to the record or results of a hearing or sanctioning meeting without a legitimate educational need to know or the authorization of the charged party.
- D. Notices of minor violations will be kept for a period of seven years from the date of the last offense. However, they will not be classified as official university disciplinary records or provided for authorized inquiry (i.e., background checks for employment, military service, or graduate school).

### Student Arrests

- A. Students at the University of South Carolina Aiken are to abide by university regulations as well as local, state, and federal laws. While university regulations are not meant to duplicate general laws, there are some ways in which the lawful interest of the university community coincides with the broader public interests of general laws (see section "Application of Laws and Regulations"). Therefore, students involved in the commission of offenses against local, state, or federal laws are subject to prosecution by those authorities

and, in addition, may be subject to university disciplinary action when their conduct violates university standards.

- B. Students who are apprehended and charged by law enforcement agencies with a felony on or off campus are required to inform the Non-Academic Judicial Officer.
- C. If disciplinary charges are brought against a student as the result of a felony arrest or conviction, an administrative hearing is not a student option and the charges will be heard by the University Judicial Board.

## **Student Organization Non-Academic Discipline System**

### Procedures

While students act as individuals and are held accountable for these actions under the Non-Academic Code of Conduct, student organizations or groups may be held responsible if there is an appearance that the student's behavior was condoned or can be tied to the group or organization. The system for responding to alleged misconduct by student organizations parallels the system outlined in the Non-Academic Code of Conduct and operate according to the rules and procedures of that system. **Areas where the process for adjudication of student organization violations differs from the process outlined in the Non-Academic Code of Conduct are delineated below.**

### Jurisdiction

The Dean of Students will serve as the Non-Academic Judicial Officer for major violations involving student organizations.

An official representative(s) of the organization will be provided the opportunity to talk with a judicial procedures advisor in all cases except where the organization accepts responsibility for a minor violation.

### Appeal Procedures

- A. In the event the charged student organization disagrees with finding of responsibility or sanction of any original hearing, the charged student organization may request an appeal in writing to the Vice Chancellor of Student Affairs within ten (10) class days from the date the decision is issued.
- B. The request for appeal will be by letter addressed to the Vice Chancellor of Student Affairs and shall state the reasons for believing the decision of the original hearing authority to be improper. The appeal must be based on and limited to one or more of the following aspects of the original hearing.
  - 1) The finding of responsibility was not supported by reliable and substantial evidence presented at the original hearing
  - 2) The disciplinary sanction was too severe
  - 3) A procedural error was committed which prejudiced the outcome of the case

- 4) The original hearing authority misinterpreted the rule or regulation under which the student was charged to the prejudice of that student.
- C. Under normal circumstances, if a student organization files for an appeal, the original sanction, except Summary Suspension, will be postponed until the appeal has been considered and a decision is rendered by the Vice Chancellor of Student Affairs. Exceptions to the postponement of original sanctions may be implemented by the Dean of Students when he or she has determined that the continued activities of the organization and its membership may cause an immediate threat and/or undue concern within the university community.
- D. The Vice Chancellor of Student Affairs will review all materials pertaining to the hearing and arrive at a decision within twenty (20) class days. The Vice Chancellor of Student Affairs may or may not summon any principal in the case. The Vice Chancellor of Student Affairs may either confirm or reverse the decision of the Dean of Students or University Judicial Board, or may alter the sanctions. If the Vice Chancellor of Student Affairs determines that new information is available that was not available at the time of the original hearing and that this information may have altered the outcome of the original hearing, the case may be remanded to the original hearing authority.
- E. The Vice Chancellor of Student Affairs will notify the student organization in writing of the decision and deliver as specified under the definition of delivery of written notice. The Vice Chancellor of Student Affairs.
- F. Student Engagement and Belonging will implement the decision.
- G. Decisions of the Chancellor in all appellate matters is the final decision for the university.

### Sanctions

The following disciplinary sanctions may be imposed upon student organizations when they have been found responsible for violating conduct regulations. All sanctions may be imposed either individually or in combination. Disciplinary sanctions are imposed for the purpose of holding student organizations and their membership accountable for their actions and the actions of their guest(s), whether on campus or at any organization-sponsored function.

#### A. Permanent Revocation

Permanent revocation of the organization's registration means revocation without leave to apply for new registration. Any organization whose registration is permanently revoked must cease all organizational activities upon receipt of the notice of permanent revocation. Any member of an organization whose registration has been permanently revoked will relinquish any appointed or elected office held with that organization's governing body. Balances of all organizational funds granted by the Student Government Finance Committee are to be surrendered to the custody of the Student Government Finance Committee. An office or other space assigned by the university will be vacated immediately. Space vacated due to suspension may be reassigned to other eligible university organizations.



#### B. Suspension

Suspension means denial of rights and privileges of a registered organization for a period not to exceed two calendar years. Any organization whose registration is suspended or revoked must cease all organizational activities upon receipt of the notice of revocation or suspension. Any member of a suspended organization may not hold an appointed or elected office with that organization's governing body for the duration of the organization's period of suspension. Balances of all organizational funds granted by the Finance Committee of Student Government are to be surrendered to the custody of the Student Government Association. Suspended organizations will automatically be placed on probationary status for a minimum of one academic year following their renewed registration.

#### C. Disciplinary Probation

Limitations upon an organization's privileges for a period not to exceed one calendar year are classed as disciplinary probation. Subsequent violations of university rules, regulations, or policies could result in a more severe sanction including suspension. During the probationary period, a student organization is deemed "not in good standing" with the university and may be subject to one or any combination of the following conditions and/or restrictions:

- 1) Denial of the right to represent the university
- 2) Denial of the right to maintain an office or other assigned space on university property
- 3) Denial of the privileges of:
  - a) Receiving or retaining funding
  - b) Participating in intramurals
  - c) Sponsoring any social event
  - d) Sponsoring any speaker or guest on campus
  - e) Participating in any social event
  - f) Co-sponsoring any social event or other activity
  - g) Rush or membership recruitment

#### D. Conditions

Conditions may include limitations upon a student organization's privileges for a period of time or a stipulation in conjunction with another sanction. This sanction may include, for example, denial of social privileges, etc.

#### E. Reprimand

Reprimand is an official rebuke making the misconduct matter of record in university files for a specified period of time. Any further misconduct could result in further disciplinary action.

#### F. Restitution or Fines

An organization may be ordered to make restitution when the organization has engaged in conduct injurious to property (individuals, group, or university) for which monetary

damages may be ascertained. Restitution may be in the form of financial payment, community service, or other special activities designated by the hearing authority. Additional fines may be assessed as a punitive measure.

G. Educational Sanction

Educational sanctions may include, but are not limited to, attendance at or participation in a program, community service, or program development.

**Summary Suspension**

- A. The Vice Chancellor of Student Affairs may suspend or restrict a student organization for an interim period pending disciplinary proceedings when there is reasonable cause to believe that the continued activities of the organization and its members may pose an immediate threat to the safety, health, or welfare of individuals or interrupt the normal functions of the university community. During the interim suspension or restriction period, the organization may be required to cease all organizational activities and vacate any assigned university space immediately upon written notice from the Vice Chancellor of Student Affairs.
- B. When a student organization is suspended or restricted, on a summary basis, the organization's acting president will be given notice of the reasons for the suspension or restriction, the duration, and any special conditions that apply. A representative of the suspended or restricted organization shall be given an opportunity to meet with the Vice Chancellor of Student Affairs within ten class days from the effective date of the temporary suspension or restriction. The meeting will be held to consider only the following issues relating to the temporary suspension or restriction:
  - 1) The reliability of the information alleging the organization's misconduct
  - 2) Whether the conduct and surrounding circumstances reasonably indicate that the continued activities of the organization would pose an immediate threat to the safety, health, or welfare, or interrupt the normal functions of the university community.
- C. It is not the purpose of the meeting with the Vice Chancellor of Student Affairs to hear evidence concerning guilt on the pending charges against the organization. A Judicial Board or Administrative Hearing will be conducted to determine responsibility or non-responsibility of the student organization within a reasonable time period and upon notification of all parties involved.

**Administrative and University Judicial Board Hearings**

**Judicial Procedures Advisor**

- A. The Judicial Procedures Advisor will be chosen from a pool of ten faculty members by the Non-Academic Judicial Officer (for violations of the Non-Academic Code of Conduct) or by

the Academic Judicial Officer (for violations of the Academic Code of Conduct), depending upon the nature of the case.

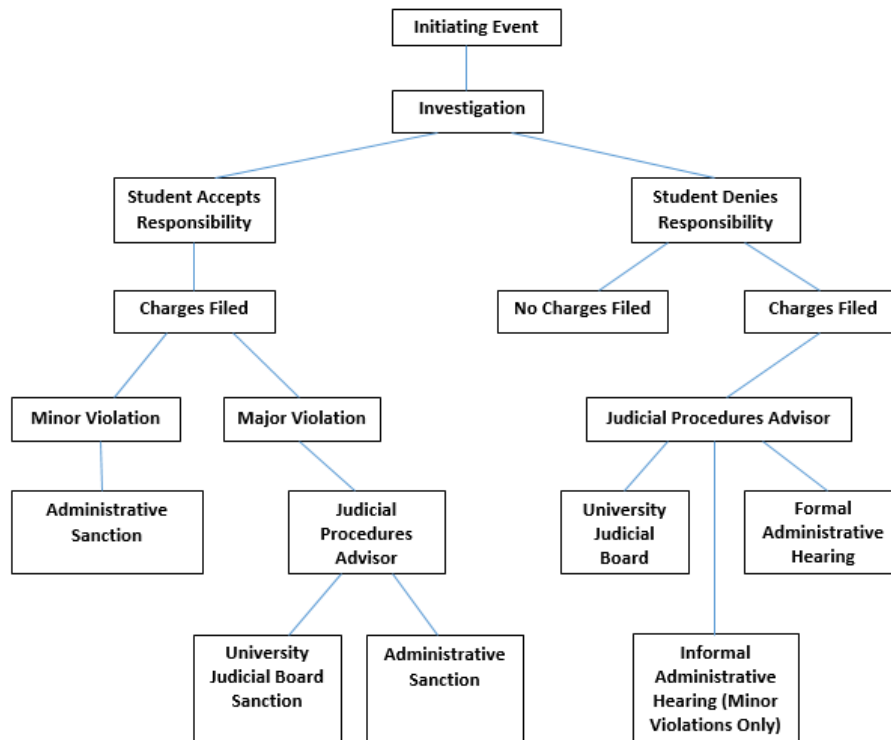
- B. The Faculty Assembly will elect (during its regular faculty elections in the spring semester) one faculty member from each college and each school to serve staggered two-year terms in the Judicial Procedures Advisor pool.
- C. The Student Government Association will choose by April 30 one faculty member from each college and each school to serve in the pool for the following academic year. If the five members of the pool are not selected by April 30 by the Student Government, the Campus Life Committee has the authority to make those appointments.
- D. The Judicial Procedures Advisor must not be a faculty member from the same department or school as the department or school in which the student is enrolled and must not have any conflicts of interest in regard to principal parties involved in the disciplinary or grievance procedure.
- E. The Non-Academic Judicial Officer will maintain the list of members of the Judicial Procedures Advisor pool. Except in instances of conflicts of interest or long-term absence from campus, advisors should be available to consult with students on short notice.
- F. If the Non-Academic Judicial Officer or the Chair of the University Judicial Board cannot appoint any of the ten faculty members in the pool for reasons cited above, the Executive Vice Chancellor or Vice Chancellor of Student Affairs will appoint someone from the general faculty after consultation with the Chair of the Faculty Assembly and the President of the Student Government Association.
- G. Judicial Procedures Advisors may not speak on behalf of the student(s) during the proceedings.

#### *Student Rights in a Formal Administrative or University Judicial Board Hearing*

- A. Prior to a confidential, closed hearing, accused parties are entitled to:
  - 1) A written notice of the charge(s) from the Non-Academic Judicial Officer or the Chair of the University Judicial Board, an outline of their rights, and the name of the Judicial Procedures Advisor assigned to the case. In the event that additional charges are brought, a further written notice must be forwarded to the student. The charged student may waive the right to separate written notice of additional charges in order to reach a timely resolution of the matter.
  - 2) A meeting with the Judicial Procedures Advisor where the charged student shall have all the disciplinary procedures fully explained. In non-academic cases, the charged student shall be informed at this time (or when it is known) if the administration intends to seek suspension or expulsion.

- 3) Review all available information, documents, exhibits, and a list of witnesses that may be asked to present information at the hearing. This is a continuing obligation of the presenting party and the Non-Academic Judicial Officer or Chair of the University Judicial Board.

#### Disciplinary Procedures for Non-Academic Violations



- 4) Be assisted by an advisor or counsel of choice in addition to the Judicial Procedures Advisor. The advisor or counsel of choice, with the written permission of the charged student(s) may:
- Advise the parties about the preparation and presentation of the case;
  - Accompany the accused parties to all judicial proceedings
  - Have access to evidence, witness list, documents, and exhibits relating to the case
  - Further, the advisor or the counsel of choice may not speak on behalf of the student(s) during the proceedings.
- 5) A written notice of time, place, format of the hearing, and the name of the University Judicial Board members (if appropriate) at least five class days prior to the hearing unless the student(s) or student organization(s) waives all or part of the notice period. The formal hearing will not be held less than five class days from the date that the original charge letter was issued, unless the charged party waives this limit.

- 6) Challenge University Judicial Board members for cause. Cause is defined as personal bias, prior involvement, or inappropriate access to information concerning the incident.
  - 7) File a request to have additional observers from the University community present during the hearing. The request must be filed with the hearing authority at least three days prior to the hearing. The request shall be granted unless the hearing authority feels that the presence of these observers will detract from a fair and orderly hearing.
- B. During a hearing (original or appellate), the charged party is entitled to:
- 1) Appear in person, hear all testimony, present any relevant information, call witnesses, and ask questions of witnesses present at the hearing.
  - 2) Elect not to appear at the hearing, in which case the hearing shall be conducted in the charged party's absence.
  - 3) Refuse to answer any questions or make a statement; however, the hearing authority shall make its decision solely on the basis of information introduced at the hearing.
  - 4) Be found responsible only upon finding that, based upon the preponderance of the evidence, that the evidence provided shows that "more likely than not" a violation occurred.
  - 5) If found responsible, the charged student may elect to call no more than three character witnesses to speak on his/her behalf prior to the sanctioning portion of the hearing. This is the only time when character witnesses (those witnesses that are not providing direct evidence related to the case) will be allowed.
  - 6) Confidentiality in all matters related to the case. All statements, information, or comments given during disciplinary hearings will be held in strictest confidence by the Academic and Non-Academic Judicial Officers, members of the University Judicial Board, university staff, and witnesses before, during, and after deliberation. Only duly authorized persons or faculty and staff with an educational need to know will be informed of the proceedings and outcome. All Academic and Non-Academic Judiciary hearings will be recorded by the University Judicial Board chair or the Non-Academic Judicial Officer. Deliberations will not be recorded. All recordings and all documents will be kept securely by the Non-Academic Judicial Officer in non-academic cases or the Office of Academic Affairs in academic cases.
- C. Following the hearing, the charged party is entitled to:
- 1) Appeal the decision of the University Judicial Board or Non-Academic Judicial Officer.
  - 2) Request a duplicate copy of the recording at his/her/its own expense within a period of six months from the date of the hearing.
- D. Charged students are prohibited from contacting, or having someone contact on their behalf, members of the University Judicial Board or the hearing officer to discuss matters related to the case before or after the hearing. Questions regarding procedures may be addressed to the Judicial Procedures Advisor or the appropriate judicial officer.

## **University Judicial Board**

### **Membership of the University Judicial Board**

- A. The University Judicial Board is composed of the University Judicial Board chair, two faculty members, and one alternate selected from a pool of faculty chosen by the Campus Life Committee, and three students plus one alternate from a pool of students selected as described below.
- B. Students interested in serving on the University Judicial Board should fill out an application available in the Student Life office. Out of all the applicants, an appropriate pool of students will be selected to serve by the Academic and Non-Academic Judicial officers and designees.
- C. The University Judicial Board chair will be appointed to a two year term by the Campus Life Committee by April 30 each year from among the faculty members on the University Judicial Board.
- D. All board members will serve for one year, and they may be re-selected to serve consecutive terms.
- E. A quorum will consist of the University Judicial Board chair, two faculty members, and two students.
- F. Alternates should attend all proceedings until the UJB Chair feels that their service is no longer needed, but do not have voting status unless called upon to replace one of the members of the board during a hearing.

### **Board Members Excluded from Deliberations**

- A. A board member associated with any of the principals involved.
- B. A board member with a conflict of interest in a particular situation.

### **Procedures**

- A. The University Judicial Board chair will:
  - 1) Ensure the confidentiality of the proceedings
  - 2) Request the appropriate judicial officer to appoint a judicial procedures advisor
  - 3) Schedule a hearing within ten class days of receipt of a request for a hearing and hold the hearing within twenty class days of the original receipt of the request
  - 4) Locate space for the hearing
  - 5) Notify, in writing, all of the participants, including the presenting party and University Judicial Board members.
  - 6) Provide for the recording of the hearing.
  - 7) Resolve all questions of scheduling and deadline.

- 8) Ensure that all parties, including members of the University Judicial Board, the charged student(s), and the presenting party have access to any evidence to be presented in the hearing.
  - 9) Moderate the hearing and closed deliberations to ensure fairness to all parties, to prevent the harassment or intimidation of participants, and to conduct an efficient hearing.
  - 10) Send a letter to the student stating the decision of the University Judicial Board, the sanction (if any was imposed), and the student's right to appeal, and
  - 11) Forward the file to the Non-Academic Judicial Officer for violations of the Non-Academic Code and to the office of Academic Affairs for violations of the Academic Code.
- B. Any member of the University Judicial Board may require the Board to go into private session to discuss and decide a matter by majority vote.
- 1) The Chair can recess the hearing at any time.
  - 2) The Chair shall insure that all procedures are appropriately followed.
- C. All hearings shall be conducted in an informal manner and technical rules of evidence will not be applied. The involved parties and/or the Board may call witnesses. In addition to the University Judicial Board, the charged student(s) and presenting party have the right to ask questions of these witnesses; however, all questions must be directed to the University Judicial Board chair. Only University Judicial Board members and the accused party(ies) will have the right to question witnesses. Counsel may not speak on behalf of the student. The taking of statements of witnesses may be done by discussion, though the testimony of each witness may be subject to question and rebuttal. Witnesses shall be present only during the time they are testifying. While written statements are admissible, both the charged party and the presenting party shall have the opportunity to question and rebut this testimony, unless extenuating circumstances preclude this option.
- 1) Recordings of the hearings and all other evidence will be kept secure by the Non-Academic Judicial Officer in hearings involving violations of the Non-Academic Code of Conduct and by the Office of Academic Affairs in hearings involving violations of the Academic Code of Conduct.
  - 2) The charged student may request a duplicate copy of the recording at his/her own expense within a period of six months from the date of the hearing.
- D. After all information has been presented, the University Judicial Board shall meet in private to discuss the case, reach its decision, and if appropriate, determine a sanction. On rare occasions, the Board may deem it necessary to seek more information and hold an additional session. The final decision must be rendered within seven class days of the initial hearing. Determination of responsibility must be agreed upon by at least two-thirds of the members of the University Judicial Board. If the University Judicial Board determines

the student has violated the Non-Academic Code of Conduct or the Academic Code of Conduct, the student's past record of violations will be presented to the University Judicial Board in the presence of the charged student, who may comment on the past record. This information will be presented to the University Judicial Board by the Non-Academic Judicial Officer for violations of the Non-Academic Code of Conduct, or by the Academic Judicial Officer for violations of the Academic Code of Conduct. The University Judicial Board will consider this record in determining an appropriate sanction. The University Judicial Board may impose sanctions or it may confirm, alter, or reverse previously imposed penalties. Only University Judicial Board members will be present during deliberations and any determination of sanctions.

- E. Once the University Judicial Board has reached a decision, the principal parties will be informed in writing by certified mail within two class days. The records of the hearing will be forwarded to the Non-Academic Judicial Officer in hearings involving violations of the Non-Academic Code of Conduct, or to the Office of Academic Affairs in hearings involving violations of the Academic Code of Conduct. In hearings for academic violations, the Office of Academic Affairs will inform the Department Chair/School Head and the faculty member of the University Judicial Board decision.

All records of hearings for violations of the Non-Academic Code shall be kept in a confidential file maintained and preserved by the Non-Academic Judicial Officer. All records of hearings for violations of the Academic Code of Conduct shall be kept in a confidential file maintained and preserved by the Office of Academic Affairs.

## **Student Grievance Procedure**

### **Purpose**

The purpose of the student grievance procedure is to provide each student enrolled at USC Aiken with a standardized, formal process for seeking a resolution when, in the student's judgment, he/she has been treated unfairly or improperly. Students seeking redress for grievances may do so without fear of reprisal.

### **Definitions**

- **Class Day** – A class day is any weekday in which the university is in session according to the academic calendar. If the student is unable to meet stated deadlines due to the end of the semester or due to the summer school schedule, the student must, within ten days of receipt of notification of being charged with a violation of the academic or non-academic code of conduct, notify the appropriate judicial officer or chair of the University Judicial Board that he/she intends to file a formal response to the charge when classes resume at the beginning of the next full semester. If a student wishes to file a complaint/grievance regarding a faculty/staff member and the student and/or faculty is not able to resolve the complaint/grievance by the stated deadlines due to the end of the semester, the student must file the complaint within 10 days of the next full semester.



- **Delivery of Written Notice** – All written communication with the student in the grievance procedure must be delivered either by certified mail or delivered in person, with a signed and dated acknowledgement of receipt.
- **Judicial Officer** – The Assistant Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs will serve as the judicial officer for grievances against faculty or staff members in the offices of Academic Affairs, Center for Student Achievement, Institutional Effectiveness, Instructional Services, or any academic department or school. The Dean of Students will serve as the judicial officer for grievances against any other staff member. If the grievance is against the Assistant Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs or the Dean of Students, the immediate supervisor will serve as the judicial officer.
- **Judicial Procedures Advisor** – A judicial procedures advisor is a faculty member who serves as an advisor to a student or student organization. The judicial procedures advisor is an ex-officio participant in any student grievance procedure. The judicial procedures advisor will maintain an objective position in advising the student or student organization. The judicial procedures advisor is not an advocate who sides with either principal party involved in the grievance procedure, but is an advisor to guide the student in the procedures and in the unbiased collection of evidence to be used at a hearing, if such is necessary.
- **Senior Administrator** – Senior administrators are university administrators who report directly to the Chancellor of USC Aiken and include the Executive Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs, the Vice Chancellor of Student Affairs, the Vice Chancellor for Marketing and Communications, the Vice Chancellor for Enrollment Management, the Vice Chancellor for Finance and Administration, the Vice Chancellor for Development and Alumni Affairs, and the Vice Chancellor for Information Technology.
- **Student Grievance Committee** – The Student Grievance Committee is comprised of the chair (a faculty member who also serves as the chair of the University Judicial Board), three faculty members and three students appointed by the chair from the University Judicial Board pool, and two staff members or administrators who are chosen by the chair from a pool of five staff members appointed by the Chancellor by April 30 of each academic year. The chair, three students, three faculty members, and the two staff persons or administrators constitute a quorum of the committee. If any member of the Student Grievance Committee is involved in the grievance, that member will be excluded from all deliberations concerning the grievance. Temporary replacement members of the committee will be appointed by the chair of the Student Grievance Committee.

## **Student Grievances**

### *Academic Grievance*

The basis for a student academic grievance shall be limited to a violation of Instructional Responsibilities set forth in the Faculty Manual or a violation of the University policy on Student

## Rights and Freedoms.

- An instructor's prejudiced or capricious evaluation practices which result in grades being assigned in the course based on factors other than the student's performance on coursework.
- The procedures herein shall not extend to matters of grading student work where the substance of a complaint is based on the student's disagreement with the mark or grade placed on the student's work in partial or complete fulfillment of the course. Such matters shall be discussed by the student and the faculty member; however, the final decision regarding grade assignment rests solely with the faculty member.

### Final Course Grade Grievance

The basis for a final course grade grievance involves a complaint regarding an academic action taken by a faculty/staff member in assigning a final grade for a course, qualifying, or comprehensive exam. Complaints about a final course grade or other academic evaluation must be based on one or more of the following grounds and upon allegation that the ground(s) cited influenced the grade assignment to the student's detriment. Students may not file a grade grievance until a final grade is received in a course. This procedure may not be used to complain about an instructor's grading policy, assignments, the difficulty of a course, or other comparable matters. Students may not file a grievance about a final course grade that was assigned as the result of an academic misconduct procedure.

- Arithmetical or clerical error
- Arbitrary or capricious evaluation of final product (exam, paper, etc.) on the part of the instructor
- Substantial failure on the part of an instructor to follow the course syllabus or announced grading policies
- Extraordinary mitigating circumstances beyond the student's control.

### Non-Academic Grievance

The basis of a non-academic grievance includes the following:

- An instructor's or staff member's failure to abide by stated university policies (including policies related to the adverse effects on a student's academic standing due to problems in the instructor's ability to write or speak English) or state law; or an instructor's failure to abide by written or stated course requirements.
- Discrimination against students by faculty or staff in academic or non-academic matters for reasons of race, color, national origin, religion, sex, age, disability, or veteran's status.
- Improper personal or professional behavior involving faculty, staff, or administrators, excluding charges of sexual misconduct which are addressed by the USC System Sexual Harassment Policy. In addition to sexual harassment, the following issues cannot be addressed using this grievance procedure: disciplinary decisions, housing appeals decisions, residency classification decisions, traffic appeals decisions or any other type of

decision where a clearly defined appeal process exists.

### Grievance Procedures

All student grievances must follow the applicable steps outlined below and meet all time requirements. If at any point during the grievance process someone fails to act within the requisite number of days, the principal parties in the grievance may appeal to the next step. Changes in the time requirements may be made if both parties involved in the grievance agree. The student may request the appropriate judicial officer to appoint a judicial procedures advisor to assist with the process at any time during the grievance process.

### Procedures for Academic Grievances

Step 1: If a student believes that he or she has been treated unfairly or improperly by a faculty or staff member, the student must schedule a conference with the faculty/staff member to discuss the matter within ten class days of the incident/situation in question. The faculty/staff member must agree to meet with the student within five class days of the request. The student must explain his or her position to the faculty/staff member and attempt to understand the justification for the faculty/staff member's actions. The purpose of this meeting is to attempt to reach a mutual understanding and to resolve all differences in an informal, cooperative manner.

Step 2: If the student is not satisfied with the result of this informal meeting, the student must submit a written request for a formal meeting to the faculty/staff member's immediate supervisor to discuss the student's complaint within five class days of the meeting. The written request should include the name of the individual whom the student is submitting a complaint against, a brief explanation of the complaint, and the action taken thus far (in Step 1). The supervisor must meet with the student, interview the individual against whom the complaint is being made, and deliver a written response as specified under the definition of delivery of written notice to both parties within ten class days of receipt of the student's request. In cases where there are intermediate supervisors between the immediate supervisor and the senior administrator, this step will be repeated for each intermediate supervisor.

Step 3: If the student is not satisfied with the results of the meeting with the immediate supervisor (and intermediate supervisor, if applicable), the student must submit a written request to the appropriate judicial officer within five class days for a formal meeting with a judicial procedures advisor. The judicial officer will appoint a judicial procedures advisor and inform the student of the appointment within five class days of receiving the written request. The student will meet with the judicial procedures advisor within five class days of the appointment. Within five class days of student meeting with the judicial procedures advisor, the judicial procedures officer will convene the student grievance committee. The committee will hold a hearing within ten class days of the appointment with the judicial procedures advisor.

Step 4: If the student is not satisfied with the result of the student grievance committee, the student can file a written appeal to the Executive Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs within

ten days of the decision. The written appeal should specifically state the student grievance and provide an outline of the infractions and dates/times of pertinent events, including the action taken thus far. Within five class days, the Executive Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs will schedule a grievance hearing that must include all parties directly involved with the grievance. The hearing will be recorded by the senior administrator and these recordings will be maintained by the USC Aiken Director of Human Resources. The Executive Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs will render a final decision and notify the parties involved and the immediate supervisor as specified under the definition of delivery of written notice within ten class days of the hearing. In cases where there are intermediate supervisors between the immediate supervisor and the senior administrator, the grievance will follow the chain of command. If the complaint is against a senior administrator or someone who reports to a senior administrator, Step 2 is skipped.

- \* The student may request a judicial procedures advisor at any time during the grievance procedure. A judicial procedures advisor is required prior to meeting with the senior administrator.

#### *Procedures for Final Course Grade Grievance*

Step 1: If a student believes that he or she has been graded unfairly or improperly by a faculty or staff member related to graded assessments, the student must schedule a conference with the faculty/staff member to discuss the matter within ten class days of the incident/situation in question. The faculty/staff member must agree to meet with the student within five class days of receiving the request. The student must explain his or her position to the faculty/staff member and attempt to understand the justification for the faculty/staff member's actions. The purpose of this meeting is to attempt to reach a mutual understanding and to resolve all differences in an informal, cooperative manner.

Step 2: If the student is not satisfied with the result of this informal meeting, the student must submit a written request for a formal meeting to the faculty/staff member's immediate supervisor to discuss the student's complaint within five class days of the meeting. The written request should include the name of the individual whom the student is submitting a complaint against, a brief explanation of the complaint, and the action taken thus far (in Step 1). The supervisor must meet with the student, interview the individual against whom the complaint is being made, and deliver a written response as specified under the definition of delivery of written notice to both parties within ten class days of receipt of the student's request. In cases where there are intermediate supervisors between the immediate supervisor and the senior administrator, this step will be repeated for each intermediate supervisor. If the complaint is lodged against a senior administrator or the immediate supervisor is a senior administrator, the student should skip Step Two and proceed to Step Three.

Step 3: If the student is not satisfied with the results of the meeting with the immediate supervisor (and intermediate supervisor, if applicable), the student must submit a written

request to the appropriate judicial officer within five class days for a formal meeting with a judicial procedures advisor. The judicial officer will appoint a judicial procedures advisor and inform the student of the appointment within five class days of receiving the written request. The student will meet with the judicial procedures advisor within five class days of the appointment. Within five class days of student meeting with the judicial procedures advisor, the judicial procedures officer will convene the student grievance committee. The committee will hold a hearing within ten class days of the appointment with the judicial procedures advisor.

Step 4: If the student is not satisfied with the result of the student grievance committee, the student can file a written appeal to the Executive Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs within ten days of the decision. The written appeal should specifically state the student grievance and provide an outline of the infractions and dates/times of pertinent events, including the action taken thus far. Within five class days, the Executive Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs will schedule a grievance hearing that must include all parties directly involved with the grievance. The hearing will be recorded by the senior administrator and these recordings will be maintained by the USC Aiken Director of Human Resources. The Executive Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs will render a final decision and notify the parties involved and the immediate supervisor as specified under the definition of delivery of written notice within ten class days of the hearing.

\*In cases where there are intermediate supervisors between the immediate supervisor and the senior administrator, the grievance will follow the chain of command. If the complaint is against a senior administrator or someone who reports to a senior administrator, Step 2 is skipped.

\*\* The student may request a judicial procedures advisor at any time during the grievance procedure. A judicial procedures advisor is required prior to meeting with the senior administrator.

### Procedures for Non-Academic Grievances

Step 1: If a student believes that he or she has been treated unfairly or improperly by a faculty or staff member for an issue other than those mentioned under Academic Grievances or Final Grade Grievances, the student must schedule a conference with the faculty/staff member to discuss the matter within ten class days of the incident/situation in question. The faculty/staff member must agree to meet with the student within five class days of the request. The student must explain his or her position to the faculty/staff member and attempt to understand the justification for the faculty/staff member's actions. The purpose of this meeting is to attempt to reach a mutual understanding and to resolve all differences in an informal, cooperative manner.

Step 2: If the student is not satisfied with the result of this informal meeting, the student must submit a written request for a formal meeting to the faculty/staff member's immediate supervisor to discuss the student's complaint within five class days of the meeting. The written

request should include the name of the individual whom the student is submitting a complaint against, a brief explanation of the complaint, and the action taken thus far. The supervisor must meet with the student, interview the individual against whom the complaint is being made, and deliver a written response as specified under the definition of delivery of written notice to both parties within ten class days of receipt of the student's request. In cases where there are intermediate supervisors between the immediate supervisor and the senior administrator, this step will be repeated for each intermediate supervisor. If the complaint is lodged against a senior administrator or the immediate supervisor is a senior administrator, the student should skip Step Two and proceed to Step Three.

Step 3: If the student is not satisfied with the results of the meeting with the immediate supervisor (and intermediate supervisor, if applicable), the student must submit a written request to the appropriate judicial officer within five class days for a formal meeting with a judicial procedures advisor. The judicial officer will appoint a judicial procedures advisor and inform the student of the appointment within five class days of receiving the written request. The student will meet with the judicial procedures advisor within five class days of the appointment. Within five class days of student meeting with the judicial procedures advisor, the judicial procedures officer will convene the student grievance committee. The committee will hold a hearing within ten class days of the appointment with the judicial procedures advisor.

Step 4: If the student is not satisfied with the result of the student grievance committee, the student can file a written appeal within ten days of the decision. Non-academic grievances against administrators reporting directly to the Chancellor will be sent to the Chancellor, who will assign another senior administrator to conduct the grievance hearing and make a recommendation to the Chancellor. Non-academic grievances against all other faculty or staff should be sent to the Executive Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs. The written appeal should specifically state the student grievance and provide an outline of the infractions and dates/times of pertinent events, including the action taken thus far. Within five class days, the Executive Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs or other appropriate senior administrator will schedule a grievance committee hearing that must include all parties directly involved with the grievance. The hearing will be recorded by the senior administrator and these recordings will be maintained by the USC Aiken Director of Human Resources. The Executive Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs or other appropriate senior administrator must render a final decision and notify the parties involved and the immediate supervisor as specified under the definition of delivery of written notice within ten class days of the hearing.

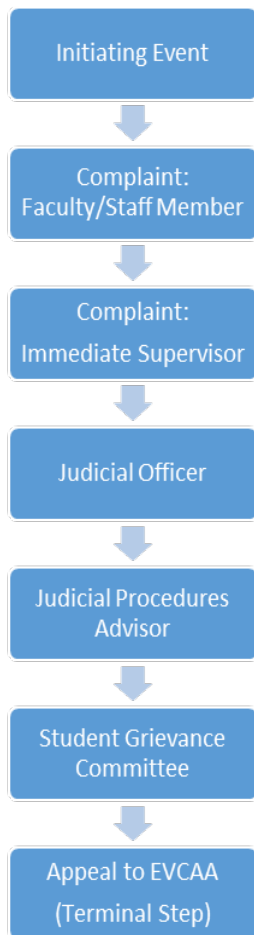
Step 5: If student is not satisfied with the decision of the Executive Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs or other appropriate senior administrator, they may appeal the decision to the Chancellor as specified under the definition of delivery of written notice within ten class days of the grievance hearing.

\*In cases where there are intermediate supervisors between the immediate supervisor and the senior administrator, the grievance will follow the chain of command. If the complaint is

against a senior administrator or someone who reports to a senior administrator, Step 2 is skipped.

\*\* The student may request a judicial procedures advisor at any time during the grievance procedure. A judicial procedures advisor is required prior to meeting with the senior administrator.

### **Academic/Final Grade Grievances**



### **Non-Academic Grievances**



## STUDENT COMPLAINT PROCEDURES AND FORM

The University of South Carolina Aiken is committed to providing students with outstanding academic and co-curricular programs. USCA shows this commitment through encouraging high levels of student achievement, providing outstanding support services, complying with local, state, and federal laws, and our own policies and procedures.

USCA has designated faculty and staff to help maintain this commitment across campus and to provide appropriate responses to our students' complaints and concerns. By selecting a category below, you can access specific reporting tools, which will bring your complaint or concern to the appropriate individual(s) or office(s) for resolution.

These reporting resources are not intended to replace normal "chain of command" communications and students must first approach appropriate administrators, faculty, and staff regarding their concern before submitting a formal written complaint. Except for cases involving discrimination, harassment or retaliation, **students are required to attempt resolution of the issue informally before they may submit a Written Student Complaint.** For complaints about course grades, students must first seek resolution with the instructor who issued the grade for the course at issue. For all other complaints, students should first seek resolution of the dispute with the person about whom the student is complaining or his/her supervisor.

Informal resolution is not required for cases involving discrimination, harassment, or retaliation. The University of South Carolina Aiken encourages all members of our community to report incidents of discrimination or harassment to the [USCA Title IX Coordinator](#) or through the [Title IX incident report form](#). More information about reporting harassment and discrimination can be found on the [University's Title IX website](#).

If you are not able to resolve your concern through informal channels, USCA will address your written complaint in a fair, professional and timely manner and in accordance with established procedures. The procedures for written complaints are outlined below.

### [VIEW COMPLAINT FORM](#)

#### *Guidelines for Filing a Student Complaint*

In absence of mitigating circumstances, students must submit a complaint to the Commission within two calendar years of exhausting the appeals process at the institution.

**Step 1:** If a student has concerns related to classroom situations or administrative actions, he/she should contact the faculty or staff member(s) with whom he/she has a conflict. It may be possible to resolve the concerns without the need for formal institutional action. However, if the student's complaint is not resolved satisfactorily, or if the complaint cannot be resolved by contacting the faculty or staff member(s), the student should proceed to Step 2.



**Step 2:** The student should file a written complaint through the University of South Carolina Aiken’s grievance procedure. Information about the process can be found in the [USCA Student Handbook](#), and the written complaint form can be [found here](#). If the student is still unable to resolve the complaint through the University’s procedures, the student should proceed to Step 3.

**Step 3:** Investigate to where assistance may be available from other entities:

<i>Program Type</i>	<i>Available Resource</i>
<b>Nursing</b>	Students enrolled in nursing licensure programs should contact the <a href="#">SC Department of Labor, Licensing, and Regulation, Board of Nursing</a> .
<b>Distance Learning</b>	Students enrolled in distance learning programs should contact the <a href="#">state authorization agency in the home state of the institution</a> . Each institution includes state authorization information on its website.
<b>Discrimination</b>	If a student believes that an institution has acted in a discriminatory manner, he or she may wish to contact the <a href="#">South Carolina Human Affairs Commission</a> or the <a href="#">U.S. Department of Education’s Office for Civil Rights</a> .
<b>Disabilities Accommodation</b>	If a student believes that an institution has not complied with the requirements of Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 or Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, which prohibit discrimination on the basis of disability, contact the <a href="#">U.S. Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights</a> .
<b>‘SC Financial Aid</b>	If a student has been denied South Carolina state-based financial aid, he or she may file an appeal with the <a href="#">South Carolina Commission on Higher Education, Division of Student Affairs</a> .
<b>Federal Financial Aid</b>	For student issues related to federal financial aid, contact the <a href="#">Ombudsman Group of the U.S. Department of Education</a> for disputes related to Direct Loans, Federal Family Education Loan (FFEL) Program loans, Guaranteed Student Loans, and Perkins Loans.
<b>The Office of the Inspector General</b>	<a href="#">The Office of the Inspector General (OIG)</a> is charged with investigating and detecting fraud, waste, abuse, mismanagement, misconduct, or violations of state or federal law, and wrongdoing in the Executive Branch. OIG only has investigative authority over the Executive Branch of South Carolina State Government, which includes state-supported colleges and universities.

**Step 4:** If the complaint cannot be resolved through the above channels, the student may file a complaint with the Commission. Complete and submit the [Commission’s complaint form](#).  
**Commission Procedures for Reviewing a Student Complaint**

- After receiving a complaint, Commission staff will review the submitted materials, and contact the complainant for any required additional information or clarifications.
- The Commission staff will then send a copy of the complaint to the institution against which the complaint has been filed and request a response, due within 30 calendar days.
- After receiving the response, Commission staff will determine whether the institution's complaint process has been followed and exhausted and what additional steps or follow-up may be taken. The Commission may outsource the investigation to another government agency.
- If it is concluded that the allegations do not establish a violation of standards or any serious deviation of educational standards imposed by the Commission, a letter is sent to the complainant confirming this, along with a copy of the institution's response.
- If it appears that a standard has been violated or that the institution has not complied with the institution's established policies, staff will attempt a settlement through mediation.
- If there is evidence that the institution may no longer be maintaining minimum standards, an investigation may be made to determine other actions.
- Results of the investigation are sent to both the complainant and institution.

Mail the complaint and required documentation to:

SC Commission on Higher Education  
Academic Affairs  
Attn: Student Complaint  
1122 Lady Street, Suite 300  
Columbia, SC 29201

You may also e-mail your complaint and documentation to [submitcomplaint@che.sc.gov](mailto:submitcomplaint@che.sc.gov).

### **VIEW COMPLAINT FORM**

If all of the above steps have been followed and your complaint is still not resolved, you have the option to submit a complaint to the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges using their complaint policy and complaint form (located in their policy documents).

### **Procedures for Written Complaints**

The following provides guidance and information on the written complaint process for students.

A Written Student Complaint is any complaint which:

- Is submitted electronically through <https://www.usca.edu/departments/academic-affairs/complaint-procedure-and-form/> ;
- Is submitted by a student who attends the University of South Carolina Aiken
- Is submitted in accordance with any of the linked processes on this website

- Documents the student's concern that the University has either violated the student's rights under federal, state or local law or has misapplied or misinterpreted any University policy, regulation or rule
- Is submitted before the expiration of any applicable deadlines

Written Student Complaints may be academic or non-academic in nature. The person asserting the complaint must be the alleged recipient of the unfair treatment; written student complaints may not be asserted on behalf of another person.

The following information should be included in your Written Student Complaint:

- Your name and contact information
- Confirmation that you are a student of the University of South Carolina Aiken
- The name of the person and/or University unit about which you are complaining
- The date of the incident
- The nature of your complaint (e.g., academic or non-academic complaint, FERPA complaint)
- A concise summary of your complaint
- The solution you are seeking for your complaint
- A certification that you have attempted to resolve the complaint through an informal resolution with the person about whom you are complaining, or if appropriate, his/her supervisor
- The federal, state, local law or USC Aiken policy, regulation or rule you are asserting that the person/department violated
- Any relevant documents supporting your complaint

Once a complaint is received, the complaint will be contacted by the appropriate USCA official within ten (10) class days. Because the University recognizes that is sometimes confusing as to which of the routes listed should be followed, students may contact the Office of Student Affairs at 803-641-3588 or email [USCAStudentLife@usca.edu](mailto:USCAStudentLife@usca.edu) for additional information about the process.

### *Complaint/Grievance Categories*

If you would like to submit a written student complaint/grievance, please choose the category below which best describes your complaint/grievance and follow the referenced procedures.

### *Academic Complaints/Grievances*

Use the **Written Student Complaint Form** to appeal a final course grade and/or submit a complaint/grievance about any course or academic matter. The procedures for resolving academic complaints/grievances are contained in the USCA **Student Handbook**.

### *Complaints Regarding Discrimination or Harassment*

Use the **USCA Incident Report** to report concerns regarding discrimination, harassment,

retaliation, sexual harassment, sexual violence, interpersonal violence including domestic violence, dating violence, stalking, and concerns related to pregnancy discrimination.

#### FERPA Complaints

Students who believe their rights under the Family Educational Rights and Privacy, may use the **Written Student Complaint Form** to submit a complaint.

#### SARA Complaints

Use the **Written Student Complaint Form** to submit a complaint about any consumer protection issues arising under the State Authorization and Reciprocity Agreement (SARA). South Carolina participates in the State Authorization Reciprocity Agreement (SARA). The South Carolina Commission on Higher Education serves as the state's portal agency for SARA and is the final authority for SARA-related complaints. If an out-of-state student enrolled in an SC institution via distance education wishes to file a complaint, he or she may complete and submit the Commission's complaint form.

#### Appeals of Student Conduct Findings and Sanctions

The procedure for appealing findings or sanctions stemming from a student conduct matter can be found in the USCA Student Handbook.

#### Non-Academic or Other Miscellaneous Complaints

For complaints that do not fall into the above-listed categories, the following procedure, should be followed:

- First, please attempt to resolve the matter directly with the person against whom the complaint is directed or that person's direct supervisor
- If a resolution is not reached, please submit a **Written Student Complaint Form**.

<b>Harassment, Discrimination, &amp; Sexual Misconduct Prevention</b>
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Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 is a federal law states that *"No person in the United States shall, on the basis of sex, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any education program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance."* Students, faculty and staff are required by Title IX, and specifically 34 C.F.R. Part 106.9, not to discriminate in such a manner. This extends to employees of and applicants for employment or admission to the University.

The USC Aiken Policy Against Discrimination, Harassment & Sexual Misconduct can be found at [www.usca.edu/title-ix](http://www.usca.edu/title-ix).

Links to information about University policies related to sex discrimination (which includes sexual harassment and sexual assault) are included below.

To ensure compliance with Title IX, the Chancellor of the University has designated the Coordinator of Title IX and Civil Rights to serve as the Title IX Coordinator for USC Aiken employees and students.

The Coordinator of Title IX and Civil Rights is responsible for coordinating the university's compliance with Title IX, including overseeing all complaints of sex discrimination and identifying and addressing any problems that arise during the review of such complaints.

Questions or concerns may be directed to Jamel Hodges, Coordinator of Title IX and Civil Rights, Student Activities Center, Room 164 (803) 641-3442.

Employees of the university are considered **Responsible Employees**, except the confidential resources. This means they are required to report any disclosures of sexual misconduct to the Title IX Coordinator. Upon receipt of the report, the Title IX Coordinator will reach out to the Complainant to provide resources, reporting options, and offer support. Confidential resources include the USCA Student Health Center and the USCA Counseling Center.

While a reporting party may request confidentiality or anonymity with the Title IX Coordinator, the university may be obligated to pursue an investigation depending on the circumstances. In addition, the decision to remain anonymous may limit the university's ability to respond to any allegations of sexual misconduct.

Additional Resources

[U.S. Department of Education Title IX Information](#)

[EOP Policies](#)

[USCA Policy Against Discrimination, Harassment and Sexual Misconduct](#)

[What To Do If Someone Reports Sexual Assault or Harassment To You](#)

## Policies and Procedures

### **Good Samaritan/Medical Amnesty Policy**

#### Summary of Policy

This Policy provides that any student who needs medical care during an alcohol-related emergency (as defined in Section 3.2), and who receives or actively seeks out such care in a timely fashion, may do so without fear of being subjected to Student Disciplinary action.

#### Purpose

Unfortunately, when alcohol-related emergencies arise many students hesitate to contact law enforcement officials or healthcare professionals out of fear that disciplinary consequences may follow. The Good Samaritan/Medical Amnesty Policy will grant conditional amnesty from Student Disciplinary action for those students in need of medical attention, as well as those students who call for assistance to aid another student, because of alcohol abuse.

The purpose of the Good Samaritan/Medical Amnesty Policy is to encourage students to seek assistance when that student is in need of medical attention or when that student knows of another student in need of medical care due to alcohol abuse or alcohol poisoning (an “Alcohol Related Medical Emergency”). Those who receive medical attention for their abuse of alcohol will also receive education concerning their own habits so that they may make healthy decisions in the future.

#### Definitions

*Conditional Amnesty* – Students who report an Alcohol-Related Medical Emergency in accordance with this Policy will not be subjected to formal student disciplinary action. As a condition for this courtesy, however, the student or students involved will be required to undertake a series of affirmative measures to redress any damages they may have caused and to receive one or more interventions to assist them correct unacceptable behavior.

Conditional amnesty granted under this policy does not negate the laws and ordinances enforced by local, state, and federal law enforcement authorities. Nor will it excuse violations of other University policies. If any policy or law violation beyond alcohol abuse and possession are committed, conditional amnesty will not apply. Such other violations may include, but are not limited to, threats of harm to self/others, hazing, property damage, sexual harassment/abuse, illegal use of other drugs, and assault.

- Include alcohol violations
- Does not waive the parental notification

Students who have been charged with such other violations in direct relation to the incidence in which they pursue amnesty will not qualify for amnesty. Moreover, any organization providing alcohol to students during an event or gathering at which multiple students become ill will not qualify for amnesty.

This Policy will only apply in cases under the jurisdiction of University Housing, the Office

of the Vice Chancellor of Student Affairs and/or the University Police.

*Alcohol-Related Medical Emergency* - Alcohol-Related Medical Emergencies include an alcohol overdose and alcohol poisoning that warrants immediate medical attention to protect the health of the student or others. Signs of alcohol overdose and poisoning may include one or more of the following:

- Unresponsiveness to shouting and vigorous shaking;
- Skin that is pale, clammy, bluish, or blotchy;
- Depressed respiration, lapses in breathing;
- Mental confusion, stupor, or coma;
- Seizures, convulsions, or rigid spasms; or
- Vomiting while asleep or unconscious coupled with failure to awake.

*Medical Attention* - In order for a student to qualify for conditional amnesty, he/she must receive or actively seek out medical attention. This may include a range of efforts evidencing an unequivocal intention to receive medical help such as a voluntary examination by University of South Carolina Aiken First Responders/EMS, contacting local EMS, or seeking transportation to or visiting a hospital for more intensive care. It also includes asking for the assistance of Student Health Services. A student will qualify for conditional amnesty only if the student makes no effort to resist the help of the College, local emergency staff, or healthcare clinicians. Medical intervention must be sought at the time of the observed condition that gives rise to a reasonable suspicion of alcohol abuse.

*Helper* - A helper is any student or student organization who seeks help for a student suffering from an alcohol overdose or poisoning. Although helpers are appreciated and encouraged to take action if they see a student in need, their amnesty is also conditional. Helpers that are found to have committed other violations of law or University policies such as hazing (see Section 3.1 above) or providing alcohol to minors will be held accountable for their actions. They will not be eligible for amnesty and will receive disciplinary sanctioning as a result of their infractions.

### Procedures

*Assignment of a Conduct Officer* – In the event that an Alcohol-Related Medical Emergency should arise, the Office of Student Life and Services (the “Office”) will be notified. Thereafter, the Office will assign a Conduct Officer to the parties involved. The Conduct Officer may be a Residence Life and Housing Official or a Student Life and Services official. Each student will be sent a written notice that he/she must meet with the assigned Conduct Officer for an interview.

*Decision* – The assigned Conduct Officer(s) will make the decision of whether or not each concerned student qualifies for conditional amnesty under this Policy after giving full consideration to the circumstances of the case.

Assignment of Amnesty Conditions – Should the student(s) qualify for conditional amnesty, the Conduct Officer(s) will evaluate the case and surrounding circumstances in order to assign appropriate conditions as alternatives to judicial sanctioning. These conditions will be educational or therapeutic in nature, designed to benefit the student and improve his/her future decision-making. These conditions will most likely include mandatory sessions with a professional in the Counseling Center. All service fees for assigned substance abuse counseling will be waived if the student qualifies for conditional amnesty.

Failure to Complete Conditions – If the student fails to agree to the amnesty conditions or fails to satisfactorily complete the assigned conditions deemed necessary by his/her Conduct Officer, conditional amnesty will not be given, and any amnesty previously given shall be revoked. Student disciplinary charges will be filed. Thereafter, the case will be turned over to the Assistant Vice Chancellor of Student Affairs or designee where it will be subject to conduct processes. This will most likely result in the creation of a formal disciplinary record of the incident in question and, if culpability is found, may require the imposition of disciplinary sanctions.

Documentation and Record Keeping – If a student qualifies for conditional amnesty, documentation or evaluation of the case will not be placed in any disciplinary record. A record, however, will exist in the Judicial Affairs database that the incident transpired, but this record is not normally reportable to outside employers, agencies or other higher education institutions without the permission of the student. However, some background checks for local, state and/or Federal employment may require full disclosure and release of student records, in which case, the record of the incident may be reported. In addition, the University may be served with a subpoena or other legal process that requires that the University produce the record. In such cases, the University will comply with all applicable provisions of law. In addition to the foregoing, the record will exist in the Judicial Affairs database to track the student's behavior should there be another incident of a similar nature.

#### Amnesty for Multiple Alcohol-Related Medical Emergencies

For those needing assistance – This policy is intended for one-time use only by any individual student. It is intended to serve as a wake-up call and a way for students to improve their decision-making skills as well as to learn healthy habits of living. Amnesty under this policy is granted as a matter of comity and not of right. It should be viewed as an opportunity and is not to be abused by those who break rules of conduct on repeated occasions. Accordingly, any student needing medical attention for an alcohol related emergency on more than one occasion may not receive amnesty even if all other terms and conditions of this policy are met. The granting of any form of amnesty remains a matter of discretion with the Dean of Students or designee.

For helpers – Helpers, or those who seek help for the endangered student, are not limited to only one use of the Good Samaritan/Medical Amnesty Policy. It is expected that members of the University of South Carolina Aiken community will always make an effort



to help a fellow student that is in need even if they have been using alcohol themselves.

Notwithstanding the foregoing, if a Judicial Officer has reasonable suspicions that the Good Samaritan/Medical Amnesty Policy is being abused in any way, he/she may hold in abeyance the amnesty to a helper until an investigation of the incident is completed.

This policy allows students to seek medical help during an alcohol or other drug-related emergency without fear of student conduct action, provided they act in a timely manner. It applies only to university policies and not to legal or judicial proceedings. This policy is intended for one-time use per student and does not cover repeat AOD policy violations.

### **Use of Alcoholic Beverages on Campus**

Purpose: This policy outlines the guidelines regarding the consumption, possession, distribution, and sale of alcoholic beverages, encompassing beer, wine, and distilled spirits, on the University of South Carolina Aiken (USCA) campus. It aims to prioritize the well-being of all members of the university community and ensure compliance with state, local, and university regulations, promoting responsible alcohol consumption or abstinence.

Compliance: All members of the USCA community are required to adhere to the laws and policies detailed herein. Failure to comply may result in state and/or university penalties. South Carolina Law: USCA prohibits the following actions in accordance with South Carolina law:

- Consumption, possession, or purchase of alcoholic beverages by individuals under the age of twenty-one.
- Provision of alcohol to individuals under twenty-one through transfer, gift, or sale.
- Misrepresentation of age for the procurement of alcohol.
- Driving under the influence of alcohol.
- Operating a vehicle with a blood alcohol level of .02 or higher for individuals under twenty-one (zero tolerance).
- Transporting open containers of alcohol in a moving vehicle.
- Public intoxication. For more information on South Carolina alcoholic beverage laws, please refer to [<https://www.scstatehouse.gov/code/title61.php>].

Local Ordinance: USCA prohibits the consumption of alcohol in public within city limits. As such, consuming alcohol on apartment balconies or outside of buildings located within the city limits, such as Pacer Downs, Pacer Crossings, and Pacer Commons, is strictly prohibited.

### **General Guidelines**

- On-campus consumption, possession, distribution, or sale of alcohol is permitted only at approved events and locations authorized by the Dean of Students or designee. Greek organizations must also get initial approval by their staff representative of the Fraternity and Sorority Life Committee.

- On-campus events where students are present must have alcoholic beverages provided/sold by a licensed third-party vendor, typically the university's contracted food service provider unless granted permission by said provider.
- Individuals are accountable for their conduct while under the influence of alcohol and must comply with South Carolina state law and university policy.
- Transported alcohol containers must be sealed and covered while on university premises.
- Common source containers of alcohol (e.g., kegs) are prohibited on campus.
- Activities such as chugging, drinking games, and initiations involving alcohol are prohibited.
- No student activity fee or university collected fee will be utilized for alcohol purchases.
- This policy may be amended to align with new local, state, or federal laws or changes in operating procedures pertaining to alcohol possession and consumption.

#### Additional Guidelines for Students

- Students must adhere to the General Guidelines in this policy as well as all federal, state, and local laws and ordinances. They are also subject to the Student Code of Conduct and can be held accountable under multiple systems, whether or not a civil or criminal conviction is made.
- Alcohol abuse resulting in impaired behavior constitutes a violation of the alcohol policy.
- Being under the influence of alcohol does not constitute a defense for bad behavior.
- Sanctions for policy violations vary based on severity and frequency, encompassing educational programs, fines, community service, probation, and parental notification.
- Refusal to complete a sobriety test upon request by a University Police Officer constitutes admission of alcohol consumption.
- Students charged with off-campus alcohol-related offenses must inform the Dean of Students or designee.

*\*Parental Notification:* The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) allows educational institutions to notify parents/guardians of students under the age of 21 when the student violates the university's alcohol or drug policies. Because we believe that parents can assist us in educating and empowering students to make responsible decisions regarding alcohol, we typically exercise our right to notify parents in the following situations:

- Drug Violations
- Repeat or serious alcohol violations

The university also reserves the right to notify parents for first alcohol violations if deemed appropriate.

#### **Use of Alcohol by Students**

The University of South Carolina Aiken recognizes that alcohol abuse is one of the major problems confronting our students. The effect alcohol can have on a person and can be found at <https://www.usca.edu/departments/counseling-center/topics-and-issues/alcohol/>. Within

the university community, services are available to reduce the problems associated with alcohol abuse. Students with alcohol problems may seek confidential counseling and advice through the USCA Counseling Center and the USCA Student Health Center. Additional Aiken resources include Aiken Center at <https://www.aikencenter.org/>.

#### Additional Guidelines for Student Organizations

- Student organizations hosting an event must adhere to the General Guidelines in this policy as well as all federal, state, and local laws and ordinances. They are also subject to the Student Code of Conduct and the Student Organization Social Events Policy and can be held accountable under multiple systems, whether or not a civil or criminal conviction is made.
- The decisions made or behavior exhibited by individual members of an organization may result in disciplinary action against the organization as well as the individuals involved.
- No funds of an officially recognized student organization deposited or administered through the university may be used to purchase alcohol.
- Student organizations may not provide alcohol for free or in exchange for a cover charge or ticket to an event.
- Only beer and wine will be permitted at on-campus student events.
- Sanctions for the violation of university policies are based on the severity and frequency of the violation. Sanctions may include but are not limited to, completion of educational and risk reduction programs, fines, community service, probation, suspension of student organization status, and suspension from use of university facilities for a designated period of time.

#### **Approval for Events with Alcohol**

##### On Campus

- Submit [Social Event Agreement form](#), with appropriate signatures, within 3 weeks of event (Police, Aramark, advisor, president)- outline location of forms
  - Must submit a [Third Party Vendor Agreement](#) with appropriate signatures along with the general required event approval forms.
- Request for alcohol at an event - contact Aramark no less than 3 weeks before the event via [catering@usca.edu](mailto:catering@usca.edu).

Note: All On-Campus events where alcohol is present must follow the [Use of Alcoholic Beverages on Campus](#) Policy

##### Off Campus

- Submit [Social Event Agreement form](#), with appropriate signatures, within 3 weeks of event (Police, Aramark, advisor, president)

#### Additional Guidelines for University Departments

- University departments and employees within those departments must adhere to the General Guidelines in this policy, all federal, state, and local laws and ordinances as well as the Drug-Free Workplace Policy <http://www.sc.edu/policies/ppm/hr101.pdf>
- University departments that wish to host an on-campus event with alcohol that is not primarily an event for students must secure permission from the Chancellor or designee.
- University departments that wish to host an on-campus event with alcohol that is primarily for students must secure approval from the Vice Chancellor of Student Affairs or designee. If permission is granted for the event, all of the procedures stipulated in this policy must be followed.
- At on-campus events that are primarily for students, only beer and wine will be permitted.
- Guests or renters of USCA facilities are subject to the guidelines delineated in this policy.

Note: Students, faculty, staff, or student organizations who serve or sell alcohol to students at off-campus events assume liability for enforcing the law and assuring appropriate behavior. In such instances, USCA assumes no responsibility or liability.

Note: Student organizations that wish to host off-campus events with alcohol must complete a [Social Event Agreement](#) and [Third Party Vendor Agreement](#) forms and meet with the Director of Student Leadership and Engagement or designee prior to the event.

## **Student Tailgate Policy**

### **Purpose**

In an effort to continue to develop student life at the University of South Carolina Aiken and promote an increased sense of institutional pride and school spirit, this policy has been created for use of the space and facilities adjacent to the Convocation Center, Satcher Field, and Roberto Hernandez Stadium for student tailgates and events held prior to athletic contests. The purpose of the Student Tailgate Policy is to assist student organizations and/or on-campus departments in the coordination of tailgates and activities and ensure that existing institutional policies related to event planning and risk management are appropriately applied.

### **Procedures**

1. Limitations of use - tailgates and pre-game activities must be limited to the parking lot/grass area adjacent to the front of the Convocation Center, the 3rd base area by the home dugout of the Roberto Hernandez Stadium, and beyond the outfield fence on the home side of Satcher Field. Reservation of the space is limited to recognized student organizations and on-campus departments for student-only events. For students that are not affiliated in a recognized student organization, they must register their tailgate spot with the Student Life office.
2. Reservation/ Preparation of Space – sponsoring organizations must reserve the facilities no less than one week prior to the date of the proposed event. Reservations will be coordinated through 25Live software program.
3. Responsibilities of Sponsoring Organizations – student organizations or on-campus departments hosting the event are responsible for providing all staffing and equipment for the proposed activity (this includes security personnel, sound equipment, tables, trash cans, recycling bins, etc.) as well as set-up and clean-up related to the activity.
4. Use of Alcohol – The University of South Carolina Aiken’s alcohol policy shall regulate any use of alcohol at pre-game activities within the facilities. The appropriate forms must be completed and submitted to the Office of Student Life for review no less than two weeks (fourteen business days) prior to the date of the proposed event. Individuals determined to be inebriated or unable to care for themselves will be denied entry to the activity and/or to the athletic contest.
5. Duration of Tailgates/Activities – Pre-game activities will be limited to two (2) hours. Activities must end 15 minutes prior to the start of the scheduled athletic contest.
6. Use of Amplified Sound – Due to the proximity of the tailgating areas to Satcher Field and Roberto Hernandez Stadium, permission to use amplified sound must be granted by the Director of Athletics or designee.
7. Open Flames/Personal Grills – Personal grills may be used.
8. Damages – Sponsoring organizations are responsible for all costs associated with any damage and/or repairs that result from the scheduled activity.

### **Use of Drugs by Students**

The University of South Carolina Aiken recognizes that drug abuse is one of the major problems confronting our society. The most common drugs used by college students and their effect on a

person and can be found at [here](#). Within the university community, services are available to reduce the problems associated with drug abuse. Students with drug problems may seek confidential counseling and advice through the USCA Counseling Center and the USCA Student Health Center. Additional Aiken resources include Aiken Center <https://www.aikencenter.org/>. Although the university recognizes the need for providing remedial services, it does not intend to shelter persons who violate state or federal drug or narcotics laws.

University officials will assist and cooperate with law enforcement personnel as they perform their duties in controlling drug abuse. Students charged with violating state and federal laws are subject to further disciplinary action by the university.

Link to Federal Drug Laws: <https://www.dea.gov/drug-information/csa>

Link to S.C. Drugs Laws: <https://www.scstatehouse.gov/code/t44c053.php> 

### Statement of Policy

The possession, use, manufacture, sale, or distribution of any counterfeit, illegal, or controlled drug without a prescription or the possession of drug paraphernalia, such as pipes, bongs, or items that have been modified or adapted so that they can be used to consume drugs are not permitted on university premises or at any university-sponsored event.

Specific prohibited actions include:

- The unlawful manufacture, distribution, dispensation, possession, or use of illegal drugs or controlled substances\*
- Being in the presence of illegal drugs or controlled substances
- The possession or sale of drug paraphernalia (such as roach clips, bongs, water pipes, cocaine spoons, etc.)
- The distribution or delivery of an imitation (“look alike”), non-controlled substance which is represented as a controlled substance.

\*The term “controlled substances” refers to those drugs and substances whose possession, sale, or delivery results in criminal sanctions under South Carolina law.

### Sanctions

- Legal
  - As citizens, students have the responsibility for knowing and complying with the provisions of state and federal law related to drugs. A student who violates any of these laws is subject to prosecution and punishment through the legal system. Information on federal and state drug laws and penalties is provided here <https://www.scstatehouse.gov/code/t44c053.php> and <https://www.dea.gov/drug-information/csa>. (Students who are apprehended and charged by law enforcement agencies with drug-related criminal conduct off-campus are required to inform the Chief Judicial Officer.
- University Disciplinary

- In addition to any federal and state charges, a student is subject to disciplinary action through the university judicial process. This process may precede criminal or civil proceedings. It is not “double jeopardy” for both the civil authorities and the university to proceed against and sanction a person for the same specific conduct. The university considers any violation of the drug policy to be a serious offense. The university will respond to all reported violations of this policy in accordance with disciplinary procedures included in the Student Handbook. Although violations will be handled on a case-by-case basis, any violation that is deemed to be a threat to the safety and health of the campus community will result in summary suspension prior to a formal hearing. Sanctions that may be imposed by the university include, but are not limited to, the following:
  - Suspension
  - Summary Suspension
  - Suspension Held in Abeyance with Conditions
  - Expulsion
  - Counseling
  - Educational Programs
  - Conditions and Restrictions
  - Probation
- University Housing
  - A student who is suspected of violating the drug policy while living in on-campus housing will be subject to immediate removal from housing as a response to violating the terms of the housing contract.

#### Eligibility for Federal and State Financial Assistance

Students found in violation of the drug policy jeopardize their ability to receive federal and state financial assistance for which they might otherwise be eligible.

#### Parental Notification Policy

In 1998 changes in the law that governs the privacy of student records, the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), permitted colleges and universities to inform the parents/guardians of students under the age of 21 when they determined the student violated university alcohol and drug policies. At the University of South Carolina Aiken, we believe such notification can help us in educating our students. While we constantly strive to educate and empower students to make more responsible decisions about drug and alcohol usage, we know that the support of parents in this process is critical. The University of South Carolina Aiken typically exercises its right to notify parents of students under the age of 21 in the following situations:

- Cases involving drug violations
- Repeat or serious alcohol violations

The university also reserves the right to notify parents for first alcohol violations if deemed appropriate.

### **Health Risks Alcohol and Drugs Risks**

Faculty, staff and students should be aware of health risks associated with the use of alcohol, particularly high-risk use, the use of illicit drugs, the misuse of over-the-counter and prescription medications, and the combination of two or more drugs.

The likelihood of negative physical and/or psychological effects is increased by the following: the type, amount and strength of the drug or drugs used, interactions of two or more drugs, physical and emotional state physical differences in body size and condition, gender, age and family history, and activities engaged in while under the influence.

Problems endangering ones health also occurs if the use of mood-altering substances is combined with activities involving coordination and judgment skills, such as driving. The use of some drugs, particularly cocaine, pose health risks if used during strenuous physical activity. The following sections more clearly define the major health risks associated with the use of the most reported drugs of choice.

Link to the Drugs of Abuse and health risks: [https://www.dea.gov/sites/default/files/2022-12/2022\\_DOA\\_eBook\\_File\\_Final.pdf](https://www.dea.gov/sites/default/files/2022-12/2022_DOA_eBook_File_Final.pdf) <https://www.getsmartaboutdrugs.gov/publication/drugs-abuse>

### **Alcohol**

Alcoholic beverages, in the form of beer, wine, wine coolers or distilled spirits, require no digestion and are absorbed directly into the bloodstream from the digestive tract. Within approximately three minutes after drinking, alcohol may be found in the brain and all other tissues, organs and body fluids. Alcohol depresses the central nervous system. At low levels, vision, judgment and complex motor skills and behaviors are impaired, making it dangerous to drink and drive. Not only are persons under the influence of alcohol less able to perform the many complex tasks involved in safe driving, they cannot judge their own levels of impairment. Motor coordination can be affected for up to 10 hours after consumption of the last drink. Because alcohol decreases inhibitions, users may do things they normally would not do. Long-term consumption of moderate to large quantities of alcohol can cause cirrhosis of the liver. Heavy drinking may cause serious nervous and mental disorders, including permanent brain damage. Ulcers, heart disease, gastritis, pancreatitis, diabetes, malnutrition and some cancers are also more common among chronic heavy drinkers than among the general population. Heavier users may also experience periods of amnesia called blackouts. During these periods, the person functions, but later cannot remember what he or she has done during this time. Physical addiction to alcohol can occur after many years of heavy drinking or, for some individuals, soon after the first drink. Addicted persons feel that they need alcohol for their brains to function normally, and they experience withdrawal when alcohol use stops. Moderate withdrawal symptoms include craving alcohol, anxiety, weakness, tremors, and perspiration. More severe withdrawal symptoms include nausea, vomiting, seizures, convulsions,



hallucinations, and delirium tremors. Severe alcohol withdrawal can be fatal. Other serious hazards associated with the use of alcohol beverages are Fetal Alcohol Syndrome (FAS) and other alcohol-related birth defects. Drinking by the mother during pregnancy places the unborn child at risk, affecting the child's development. Conditions seen in FAS children include: the following: mental retardation; a pattern of abnormal facial and body features and central nervous system abnormalities. Not all infants born to women who drink exhibit abnormal development. "Safe" levels of alcohol use during pregnancy have not been established, and it is currently recommended that pregnant women abstain.

#### Marijuana (pot. weed, herb)

The effects of marijuana use depend upon the percentage of delta-9- tetrahydrocannabinol (THC) present, the method in which the marijuana is ingested and the expectations of the user. Researchers now know marijuana has a strong carcinogenic effect, greater even than smoking tobacco. Users may experience a rapid heart rate and rising blood pressure. Additional undesirable effects include drowsiness, dry mouth, bloodshot eyes and an increase in appetite. High doses can cause confusion and double vision, and some users experience rapid mood changes and panic, although the latter is rare. Heavy smokers of marijuana risk lung damage and cancer as well as damage to the breathing tubes. Lesser doses may cause irritation of the throat and lungs. The influence of marijuana, just as with any other mind-altering drug, makes it doubly dangerous for those who choose to drive while "under the influence." Marijuana causes a lack of coordination and a distortion of sensory perceptions, sometimes lasting more than 24 hours. The presence of any mind-altering drug tends to impair judgment so that the individual may not notice these deficits as they occur. Most users who stop marijuana use note a greatly improved memory within three months.

Marijuana is not currently known to be physically addictive, but individuals report that continuous use leads to a reliance on the drug to deal with stress and discomfort. If marijuana or any other drug is used to avoid dealing with difficult situations, the problem has become severe. Research has demonstrated that more than 90% of users of heroin, cocaine and other drugs began with the use of marijuana as their first illicit substance. This should not be interpreted to mean that marijuana directly leads individuals to those drugs. Rather, the use of one illicit substance removes barriers which may then lead individuals to try other illicit drugs.

#### Marijuana Concentrates (edibles, dabs, honey oil)

A marijuana concentrate is a highly potent concentrated form of THC that is most similar in appearance to either honey or butter. Marijuana concentrates can be mixed with various food or drink products to be consumed orally. However, smoking remains the most popular route of administration by use of water or oil pipes.

Edible cannabis products (edibles for short) are infused with both THC (which is a cannabinoid that makes an individual euphoric and intoxicated) and CBD (cannabidiol; which is a non-intoxicating cannabinoid that has anxiolytic and antipsychotic properties). There is a wide range of edible cannabis products and the amount of THC and CBD in these products varies. Although

some products might look like normal food items (such as baked goods, candies, gummies and chocolates), they are not food and are not intended to provide any nutritional value.

Marijuana concentrates have a much higher level of THC. The effects of marijuana edibles lasts much longer than smoking (usually up to several hours) and depends on the amount of THC consumed, the amount and types of the last food eaten, and other drugs or alcohol used at the same time. The amount of THC is difficult to measure and is often unknown in many edibles. Regulations and quality assurance regarding the determination of THC content and product labeling are generally lacking, and as a result the dosage estimation for many edibles is often inaccurate. Consequently, many products contain significantly more THC than labeled and people who consume these edibles can be caught off-guard by their strength and long-lasting effects.

The biggest difference between smoking marijuana and eating edibles is the delayed onset of effects associated with edibles. The effects of edibles can take between 30 minutes to 2 hours to experience versus within minutes from smoking marijuana. This delay can result in possible greater than intended consumption. Research has shown that edibles are the form of marijuana consumption most likely to lead to emergency room visits for marijuana overdose (also referred to as marijuana intoxication).

The effect of using can be more severe, both psychologically and physically than plant marijuana use. Effects can include drowsiness, confusion, vomiting, anxiety, panic attacks, agitation, psychotic episodes, hallucinations, paranoia, impaired motor ability, respiratory depression and heart problems (ranging from irregular heartbeat to heart attack). Furthermore, taking in too much of the drug too quickly can create situations where the person is engaging in unusual and risky behaviors which can put themselves or others in danger, becoming violent or unaware of their actions or exhibiting self-harm behaviors.

(Sources: Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA), Just Think Twice, National Institute on Drug Abuse, Get Smart About Drugs, American Addiction Centers, and the Canadian Centre on Substance Use and Addiction.)

### Cocaine (coke, blow)

Cocaine occurs in several different forms. Cocaine powder usually inhaled through the nose, while “crack,” a form of freebase cocaine, is usually smoked. Effects of cocaine use on the body include dilated pupils, constricted blood vessels and increases in blood pressure, heart rate, breathing and body temperature. When cocaine is snorted over a period of time, the constrictive effect on blood vessels in the nose can cause cells of its mucus membrane lining to die, resulting in ulceration of the tissue, breathing difficulties, and possible perforation of the septum, the wall dividing the two halves of the nose. Smoking cocaine is the more rapid, dangerous, and potentially fatal way of use. It can cause lung irritation, swollen glands, and soreness in the neck, chest and cheeks. Smoking the drug may also produce confusion, slurred speech, anxiety and serious psychological problems.

Cocaine use has both short term and long-term effects. Use stimulates the brain’s pleasure centers and the user will often prefer the drug to food, sex, family and friends. When the drug-

induced euphoria wears off, depression results, causing the user to crave more cocaine. Use can produce strong psychological and a limited degree of physiological addiction.

#### Amphetamines (speed, uppers, bennies)\*

Amphetamines are classified as a stimulant and are taken in tablet or pill form. They lead to an increase in heart rate, blood pressure and temperature and can cause visual and auditory hallucinations. Users can become addicted, and over the long term, use of amphetamines can result in paranoid psychosis.

#### Methamphetamine (Crystal meth, crank, glass, ice)\*

Crystal meth is an addictive stimulant that can be injected, snorted, smoked or swallowed. In the short term, use can lead to an increased activity level, a “rush” or feeling of wellbeing or a “high.” Tolerance (needing more and more of the drug to have the same effect) to the drug can build quickly. Long term users can experience depression, anxiety, paranoia, aggression, insomnia, hallucinations (e.g., “bugs crawling under the skin”), and sometimes suicidal or homicidal thoughts.

#### Ritalin\*

You may hear about students buying Ritalin or other drugs from individuals who were prescribed them. Using someone else’s prescription drugs is dangerous and illegal. Ritalin is increasingly being abused among individuals who do not have Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD). By crushing the pills into a powder and snorting, users may experience a cocaine-like high. However, long term abuse can result in paranoia, anxiety, irregular heartbeat, headaches and hallucinations.

### **Reducing Your Alcohol and Drugs Risks**

#### Alcohol

Impairment in any situation can lead to poor judgment. If you choose to drink alcoholic beverages or if you are with people who do, making low-risk, healthy choices can lower your risks of encountering serious problems, such as accidents, injuries, property damage, legal action, broken relationships and more. Alcohol is involved in over 50% of motor vehicle accidents and fatalities. The greatest cause of death for persons aged 16 to 24 is alcohol and drug related accidents. Did you know that about 1,400 college students die each year due to alcohol-related incidents? Remember that choosing not to drink is always acceptable. One in two college students don’t drink at all.

If you do choose to drink:

- Resist attempts by others to pressure you into drinking alcoholic beverages or drinking more than you want to drink. Carry an alcohol-free beverage if it helps.
- Do not take any medications with acetaminophen - this can cause serious liver damage.
- Put some food in your system. Having something to eat while you are drinking slows down the absorption of alcohol. Eat less fatty foods - fat doesn’t absorb alcohol. Remember, carbonated beverages speed up the absorption of alcohol - so you are affected faster. Use carbonated beverages or juices as mixers. Alternate alcohol-free

beverages with alcoholic drinks.

- Don't binge drink. A "binge" is a pattern of drinking alcohol that brings blood alcohol concentration (BAC) to 0.08 gram-percent or above. For a typical adult, this pattern corresponds to consuming 5 or more drinks (male), or 4 or more drinks (female) in about 2 hours.
- Drink in moderation if you choose to drink. Set personal limits on how much you will drink during a night out or at a party and stick to them. Pace yourself at no more than one drink per hour and do not drink more than 3 drinks in one day. Remember that "one drink" is equal to approximately one 12-ounce beer, a 4 ounce glass of wine, or 1 ounce of 80 proof liquor.
- Be the designated driver. Plan to ride with someone else or find a place to stay if you do choose to drink alcohol. Do not ride with someone who is under the influence. Do not let friends who are impaired from the use of alcohol (or drugs) drive.
- Body size is an important factor in considering the effects of alcohol on individuals. Alcohol has a greater effect on people of lower body weight. Don't try to keep up with people who are larger than you. Women are typically affected by alcohol more quickly than men.
- Watch your drink at all times. Date rape drugs, some of which are odorless, colorless, and tasteless, can be easily slipped into unattended drinks.
- Do not accept an open drink from a stranger. Rohypnol is a common date rape drug that has no taste or odor and can easily be slipped into an individual's drink. When used in combination with alcohol, it can cause severe problems with memory and judgment. Feelings of intense sleepiness, black outs and impaired motor skills can make a person unable to resist a sexual assault.
- If you are under the age of 21, be aware of drinking age laws. In South Carolina, you must be 21 to legally consume alcoholic beverages, except as a part of a religious ceremony. Consider your relationship with the legal system and be aware of the penalties for underage possession and for the use of false ID cards.
- Be aware that stress can influence the effects of alcohol. Abstain or reduce your personal limit during an emotional time.
- Avoid drinking games. Many promote high risk drinking behavior.
- Stop drinking alcoholic beverages 45 minutes to one hour before the end of an event.
- Do not drink out of "community" punch bowls or tubs of alcohol.
- Be careful during the heat! Consuming alcohol when you are exposed to heat for an extended amount of time can be risky. The use of alcohol combined with high temperatures can place you at higher risk of having a heat stroke.
- Avoid drinking alcohol when using other drugs - even cold medicines. The effects can be greatly increased, even dangerous. For example, the use of marijuana suppresses the gag reflex. Your body may not "expel" an excess of alcohol that could prevent an alcohol overdose. Some drugs combined with alcohol can also result in overdose because the synergistic effect is much greater than the sum of the two.
- Remember that the effects of alcohol are greater if you are tired or run down.
- For women ... remember that alcohol affects women more than men. Consider size, fat to lean ratios and hormonal cycles which can influence the effects of alcohol on your

body. Avoid drinking during pregnancy and be careful if you are nursing a baby.

- Look at your family history. This is an important part of understanding the role of alcohol in your life. Children of alcoholics are four times more likely to become alcoholic than the general population. If one or both of your parents or grandparents have or had a chemical addiction, you are at a greatly increased risk of addiction.
- Plan wisely when hosting social events. If alcohol is served at all, plan it as an addition to social activities rather than as the primary focus of the event. Never advertise alcohol as the focus. Limit amounts and restrict access for underage persons. Plan for alternative ways home. Learn the facts about good planning and legal liability.
- If you are ever concerned about the medical safety of another person, call for medical assistance. Never place an intoxicated person laying face up or face down. Always place the person on his or her side and monitor breathing.

(Sources: South Carolina Commission on Alcohol & Drug Abuse, National Institute on Alcohol Abuse & Alcoholism, Prevention Research Institute, Inc. and the National Clearinghouse for Alcohol Information.)

### Stop Alcohol Poisoning

#### Symptoms of Alcohol Poisoning

- Person is unconscious or semi-conscious and cannot be awakened.
- Cold, clammy, pale or bluish skin.
- Check to see if breathing is slow, less than eight times per minute, or irregular, with ten seconds or more between breaths.
- Vomiting while “sleeping” or passed out, and not waking up after vomiting. If a person has any of these symptoms, he or she is suffering from acute alcohol intoxication.

#### What To Do If Someone Has Alcohol Poisoning

- Get help. Call someone, a staff member, an ambulance, University Police or local enforcement agency or, someone who can help.
- Do not leave the person alone. Turn the victim on his/her side to prevent choking in case of vomiting.
- Always be “better safe than sorry” if you are not sure what to do. How can your friend be angry about you caring for him or her?

\*Information gathered from Bacchus and Gamma Peer Educators Network, Inc.

### **Alcohol and Drugs Resources**

#### USCA Counseling Center

The Center offers free individual and group counseling in a confidential environment. USCA students can access services by visiting the Counseling Center in Suite 107 of the Student Education and Support Building or by calling 641-3609. Website:

<https://www.usca.edu/departments/counseling-center/>.

AA (Alcoholics Anonymous)

A 12-step program for those who have a desire to stop drinking. Regular meetings are held in various locations in the community; call the Aiken Center at 649-1900 for schedule and locations. Website: <https://www.aa.org>

Al-Anon/Alateen

12-step programs for families and friends of addicted individuals. Regular meetings are held in various locations in the community; test 803-270--0853 for information about local Al-Anon groups or call 1-888-4AL-ANON. Website: <https://al-anon.org/>

USCA University Police

For assistance with information, emergencies, safety and law enforcement on the Aiken campus, call 6111 from a campus telephone or 648-4011 from an off-campus telephone. Website: <https://www.usca.edu/departments/campus-safety/>.

Employee Assistance Program (EAP)

A resource for faculty and staff of the university. Mygroup is the current EAP service provider. Contact the Human Resources Department by visiting The Business and Education Building in Suite 257 or calling 641-3317. Website: <http://mygroup.com/>

Directory of Alcohol and Drug Abuse Programs in Aiken County and the Surrounding Counties:

**Aiken**

The Aiken Center  
1105 Gregg Highway  
Aiken, SC 29801  
(803) 649-1900  
<http://www.aikencenter.org>

Aurora Pavilion Behavioral Health Services  
(Aiken Regional Medical Centers)  
655 Medical Park Drive  
Aiken, SC 29801  
(803) 641-5900 or (800) 273-7911  
<https://www.aikenregional.com/services/behavioral-health-services>

**Allendale**

New Life Center  
571 Memorial Avenue  
Allendale, SC 29810  
(803) 584-4238  
<http://newlifecenteradc.org/>

**Bamberg**

The Dawn Center  
608 North Main Street  
Bamberg, SC 29003  
(803) 245-4360  
  
Michael C. Watson Treatment Facility  
2549 Main Highway

Bamberg, SC 29003  
Phone: 803-245-4360  
<http://www.tccada.com/>

### **Barnwell**

Axis I Center of Barnwell  
1644 Jackson Street  
Barnwell, SC 29812  
(803) 541-1245  
<http://axis1.org/>

### **Edgefield**

Cornerstone  
603 Augusta Road  
Edgefield, SC 29824  
(803) 637-9336  
<https://www.cornerstonecares.org/>

### **Hampton**

New Life Center  
102 Ginn Altman Avenue  
Suite C  
Hampton, SC 29924  
(803) 943-2800  
<http://newlifecenteradc.org/index.php/contact-us/>

### **Lexington**

LRADAC  
1068 South Lake Drive  
Lexington, SC 29073

(803) 726-9400  
<http://www.lradac.org/>

### **McCormick**

Cornerstone  
504 North Mine Street  
McCormick, SC 29835  
(864) 852-3306  
[www.cornerstonecares.org](http://www.cornerstonecares.org)

### **Orangeburg**

The Dawn Center  
910 Cook Road  
Orangeburg, SC 29118  
(803) 536-4900  
<https://www.tccada.com/>

### **Richland**

LRADAC  
2711 Colonial Drive  
Columbia, SC 29203  
(803) 73726-9300  
<http://www.lradac.org/>

### **Saluda**

Saluda Behavioral Health System  
204 Ramage Street  
Saluda, SC 29138  
(864) 445-2968

## **Racial Harassment**

It is the policy of the University of South Carolina Aiken to conduct and provide programs, activities, and services to students, faculty, and staff in an atmosphere free from racial harassment. Racial harassment is any behavior that would verbally or physically threaten, torment, badger, heckle, or persecute an individual because of his/her race.

Racial harassment of university faculty, staff, students, or visitors is prohibited and shall subject the offender to appropriate disciplinary action. This administration has an open door policy for any student who feels he or she has been subjected to racial harassment or discrimination. In the event that a student needs to file a grievance, contact the Title IX and Civil Rights

Coordinator. Unclassified faculty can seek advice from the Executive Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs; unclassified administrators and classified staff may seek advice from the Human Resources office. The full text of the Policy Against Discrimination, Harassment and Sexual Misconduct can be found at

[https://www.usca.edu/media/usca/departments/institutional-culture-amp-belonging/title-ix/AHR\\_105\\_Policy\\_Against\\_Discrimination\\_Harassment\\_Sexual\\_Misconduct\\_REV2.pdf](https://www.usca.edu/media/usca/departments/institutional-culture-amp-belonging/title-ix/AHR_105_Policy_Against_Discrimination_Harassment_Sexual_Misconduct_REV2.pdf).

### **Sexual Harassment**

It is the policy of the University of South Carolina Aiken, in order to maintain an environment in which the dignity and worth of all members of the institutional system are respected, that sexual harassment of employees or students is prohibited. Such conduct is a form of behavior which seriously undermines the atmosphere of trust essential to the academic environment. This policy is consistent with federal and state laws prohibiting sex discrimination. It is also a policy of the university that willful false accusation of sexual harassment shall not be condoned. The full text of the Policy Against Discrimination, Harassment and Sexual Misconduct can be found at [https://www.usca.edu/media/usca/departments/institutional-culture-amp-belonging/title-ix/AHR\\_105\\_Policy\\_Against\\_Discrimination\\_Harassment\\_Sexual\\_Misconduct\\_REV2.pdf](https://www.usca.edu/media/usca/departments/institutional-culture-amp-belonging/title-ix/AHR_105_Policy_Against_Discrimination_Harassment_Sexual_Misconduct_REV2.pdf).

### **Sexual Assault**

It is the policy of the University of South Carolina Aiken, in order to maintain an environment in which the dignity and worth of all members of the institutional system are respected, that sexual harassment of employees or students is prohibited. Such conduct is a form of behavior which seriously undermines the atmosphere of trust essential to the academic environment. This policy is consistent with federal and state laws prohibiting sex discrimination. It is also a policy of the university that willful false accusation of sexual harassment shall not be condoned. The full text of the Policy Against Discrimination, Harassment and Sexual Misconduct can be found at [https://www.usca.edu/media/usca/departments/institutional-culture-amp-belonging/title-ix/AHR\\_105\\_Policy\\_Against\\_Discrimination\\_Harassment\\_Sexual\\_Misconduct\\_REV2.pdf](https://www.usca.edu/media/usca/departments/institutional-culture-amp-belonging/title-ix/AHR_105_Policy_Against_Discrimination_Harassment_Sexual_Misconduct_REV2.pdf).

### **Rationale**

The University of South Carolina Aiken is an educational institution bound by common standards of conduct and a commitment to its educational mission. Sexual assault is considered particularly abhorrent because it interferes with our educational mission:

- By endangering the physical and emotional safety
- By damaging trust
- By offending the dignity and violating autonomy
- By disrupting the academic progress of victims during their recovery

The purpose of this policy statement is to describe the university's efforts to provide:



- Resources aimed at reducing the risk of sexual assault, including educational programs for men and women
- A statement of expectations for behavior with regard to sexual conduct, procedural interventions to offer support and information following a sexual assault, and campus judicial procedures that provide for the needs of victims and protect the rights of alleged assailants.

Statistically, members of college communities are at great risk of being assaulted or exploited sexually and most probably by someone known or trusted by the victim. Studies have shown that sexual assaults occur with disturbing frequency among college age men and women but are very often unreported. In order to provide for the needs and care of victims, as well as to enforce the behavior standards critical to our mission, it is important that all violations of this policy are reported to appropriate authorities, including the law enforcement officials or agencies with jurisdiction in the location of the incident. Portions of this policy may parallel published laws but are in no way intended to substitute or supplant those laws. USCA students are expected to comply with and abide by university policies and the laws of the State of South Carolina.

Because research has shown that alcohol and other drug use is typically associated with sexual assault, especially date and acquaintance rape, it is important to be aware of and manage health and safety risks while complying with all university policies, and state and federal laws related to alcohol and drug use. The use of these substances, in conjunction with an incident of sexual assault, does not mitigate responsibility or diminish the seriousness of the crime. This policy is subject to change to comply with changes in relevant laws or university operating procedures or regulations.

### *Victim's Bill of Rights*

Victims of sexual assault who report their experience to university officials can anticipate that:

- All sexual assaults will be treated seriously.
- Victims will be treated with dignity and respect and in a non-judgmental manner.
- Campus organizations and services which can assist victims will be identified.
- When a crime is reported to university officials, those officials will offer assistance in notifying proper authorities.
- When victims report and choose to pursue action against alleged assailants, assaults will be investigated and adjudicated by appropriate criminal and/or university officials.
- University personnel will not discourage victims from reporting, nor encourage them to under-report the incident as a lesser time.
- Victims may invite an advisor they choose to accompany them through university disciplinary proceedings.
- A victim will be notified of the outcome of related university discipline proceedings and has the rights to appeal the outcome. The victim and charged student must respect the privacy rights of all involved.

- University personnel will cooperate in obtaining, securing, and maintaining evidence (including a medical examination) necessary in legal proceedings.
- Victims will be made aware of any state or federal laws regarding mandatory testing of sexual assault suspects for communicable disease and whether these professionals can notify a victim of the results of these tests.
- Victims will be informed of mental health services available.
- Victims will be afforded the opportunity to request immediate on-campus housing relocation, transfer of classes, or other steps to prevent unnecessary or unwanted contact or proximity to an alleged assailant when reasonably available.
- All students have the right to an environment free from sexual or physical intimidation, or any continuing disruptive behavior, by persons sharing rooms or their guests, that would prevent a reasonable person from attaining their educational goals. Disruptive behavior of this nature should be reported to appropriate university staff, so it can be addressed.
- The sexual history of the victim is not considered relevant to the truth of the allegation; therefore, information regarding sexual history external to the relationship between the victim and the alleged assailant will not be considered in discipline hearings.

#### University Definitions

For the purpose of this policy and related procedures, the term sexual assault is defined as “unwilling or non-consenting sexual intercourse or penetration of any bodily opening with any object; the touching of an unwilling person’s intimate parts (such as genitalia, groin, breast, buttocks, mouth, and/or clothing covering them); touching an unwilling person with one’s own intimate parts; or forcing an unwilling person to touch another’s intimate parts.”

Behavior contemplated in this definition includes acts that are unwanted and/or may be committed either by force, threat, intimidation, or deceit, or through exploitation of another’s mental or physical condition of which the assailant was aware or should have been aware.

USCA student conduct regulations incorporate this definition by obliging students to comply with all published policies and procedures of the university (see USCA Student Handbook). Behaviors prohibited by this policy may also be prohibited by the general student conduct regulations obliging students to comply with all published state, local, and federal (see “Compliance with General Laws” under “Student Discipline System” in the USCA Student Handbook.)

Such behaviors may also be simultaneously covered by the general regulations prohibiting “disruptive activity” and “disorderly conduct.” Attempting, abetting, or being an accessory to any prohibited act is considered a violation of the Non-Academic Student Code of Conduct.

#### Criminal Definition

By publishing this policy, USCA does not intend to substitute or supersede related civil and criminal law. It is the policy of this institution to strongly encourage victims to report all

incident and violations to the law enforcement agencies or officials with appropriate jurisdiction and to avail themselves of all the services and rights to which they are entitled by law.

It should be clearly understood that there is a fundamental difference between the nature and purpose of student discipline and criminal law. Regardless of the charge(s) issued or procedures employed, sanctions issued by the university can be expected to be consistent with the educational mission of the institution. According to USCA's Student Handbook, Student Discipline section, students who are apprehended and charged by law enforcement agencies with felony criminal charges off campus are required to inform university officials. The university may bring disciplinary action against the student for the same incident if the alleged conduct is prohibited by the institution and/or if it is judged to be averse to the recognized mission of the institution. University disciplinary procedures should be considered distinct and independent of all criminal procedures. Discipline procedures may precede, occur simultaneously, or follow and consider the results of any relevant court action. When necessary, temporary action may be taken in the form of summary suspension, summary restrictions or officially requesting no contact between the victim and accused assailant. Any of these measures may result in a student's restricted participation in university events outside attendance of classes and appointments related to the resolution of discipline matters.

The South Carolina State Code of Laws (SC Code Ann. Sec. 16-3-651 to 16-3-656) defines criminal sexual conduct, including rape, with the respective penalties. Find the Code of Laws [here](#).

### *Procedures for Victim*

#### Immediate Care and Treatment:

Medical attention is crucial to assess possible internal injuries or sexually transmitted diseases, as well as to collect medical evidence should the victim choose to pursue prosecution. The police will be contacted by the hospital to take possession of the evidence collected while the victim makes a decision about whether to pursue charges. Any student who feels that he or she has been sexually assaulted and requires medical attention should immediately:

#### i. If an Assault Occurs on Campus

If an assault occurs on campus, contact University Police at 803-648-4011 or 6111 from a campus phone extension); or Rape Crisis Center at 803-641-4162 (after hours and weekends at 803-648-9900). The sooner a sexual assault is reported, the easier it is to collect valuable evidence. To facilitate evidence collection, the victim:

- Should not bathe or douche
- Should not urinate
- Should not drink any liquids
- If oral contact has occurred, the victim should not smoke, eat, or brush teeth

- If clothes are changed, soiled clothes should be placed in a paper bag (plastic destroys crucial evidence)

University Police may transport the victim to Aiken Regional Medical Center for medical attention and a rape protocol exam. If the victim does not want to contact the police, a friend or a relative may transport the student to the hospital. When the victim arrives at the emergency room, the hospital may call the Rape Crisis Center to arrange for a victim advocate to accompany the victim throughout the exam and any law enforcement procedures. The hospital staff may also contact University Police and/or the police where the incident occurred.

**ii. If an Assault Occurs Off Campus:**

Contact area police via 911 system (Aiken County) or if no 911 system is available, call your local police, or in Aiken call the Rape Crisis Center at 641- 4162 (after hours and weekends at 648-9900). The sooner a sexual assault is reported, the easier it is to collect valuable evidence. To facilitate evidence collection, the victim:

- Should not bathe or douche
- Should not urinate.
- Should not drink any liquids.
- If oral contact has occurred, the victim should not smoke, eat or brush teeth.
- If clothes are changed, soiled clothes should be placed in a paper bag (plastic destroys crucial evidence).
- The police department with jurisdiction in the area will most often direct the victim to an area hospital for medical attention and a rape protocol exam. If the victim does not want to contact police, a friend or relative may transport the student to the hospital. When the victim arrives at the emergency room, the hospital staff may call a Rape Crisis Center in that area and/or may contact the local police where the incident occurred. The hospital staff may also contact USC Aiken University Police. If a victim chooses not to go to the hospital, the victim is strongly urged to seek appropriate medical attention.

**Reporting**

All victims of sexual assault/battery are encouraged to report the incident to law enforcement agencies. Should the victim choose not to immediately involve law enforcement officials, the victim is strongly urged to go through the rape protocol exam for medical attention and for the purpose of preserving important physical evidence of the assault. This evidence may be used if the victim chooses to pursue legal prosecution at a later date. The rape protocol exam should be completed as soon as possible. Physical evidence can be obtained up to 72 hours after the assault, recognizing that as time passes, the quality of the evidence diminishes. A student victim may also choose to file a report with the Judicial Hearing Officer or the Director of the Counseling Center. An explanation of this procedure can be obtained in the Student Handbook. The disciplinary procedures are also described in a separate section below and published in the Student Handbook.

Whether or not legal or disciplinary action is desired, an anonymous report may be filed, at any time, with the Director of the Counseling Center. This report provides USCA staff with information about the crime that may be valuable in their efforts to prevent future crimes and educate other students about the high risk areas. The Director of the Counseling Center can be reached at 803-641-3609.

#### *Discipline Policies and Procedures for Victim and/or Witness*

Please see <https://www.usca.edu/media/usca/departments/institutional-culture-and-belonging/title-ix/USCA-Title-IX--Civil-Rights-Resolution-Procedures.pdf> for the procedures.

#### *Follow-up and Recovery Services for the Victim*

Research has shown that follow-up counseling is of significant benefit to a victim of sexual assault and/or related trauma. This counseling may be initiated at any time after an assault (from hours to years). On or off campus counseling and other services are available to a student victim whether or not the crime was reported or prosecuted.

The Rape Crisis Center (division of the Cumbee Center to Assist Abused Persons, “CAAP”) is an off-campus resource that provides short-term counseling, as well as crisis intervention. Services are provided for all victims, no matter when the assault occurred. Their 24-hour hotline number is 803-641-4162.

The Counseling Center is an on-campus resource that provides free counseling to students. The phone number is 803-641-3609. They also assist victims with filing a discipline complaint, notifying instructors of absences or other needs, and/or helping a student withdraw.

The Vice Chancellor of Student Affairs can assist a victim with filing a discipline complaint, notifying instructors of absences or other needs, and/or helping a student withdraw. The phone number is 803-641-3588.

#### *Procedures for Accused Party*

Please see <https://www.usca.edu/media/usca/departments/institutional-culture-and-belonging/title-ix/USCA-Title-IX--Civil-Rights-Resolution-Procedures.pdf> for the procedures.

#### *Procedures for Reporting to Campus Community*

Federal law requires that timely notice of assaults be made to the campus community if it is felt that a threat to any other person(s) exists. In these cases, the Chief of University Police, in consultation with the Vice Chancellor of Student Affairs, will notify the campus community through whatever means are appropriate for the particular case.

#### *Educational Resources*

The following offices within the University of South Carolina Aiken and the Aiken community provide a variety of educational offerings related to sexual assault, personal safety, appropriate

use of alcohol, healthy relationships, etc. For more information, the following offices should be contacted:

- USCA Counseling Center, Student and Educational Support Building, Suite 107, 803-641-3609.
- University Police, 803-648-4011 (from off-campus phone) or 6111 (from on-campus phone)
- Cumbee Center to Assist Abused Persons, Rape Crisis Center 803-641-4162
- Aiken Regional Medical Center, The Resource Center, 655 Medical Park Drive, Aiken, 803-641-5926
- Aiken-Barnwell Community Mental Health Center, 1135 Gregg Highway, Aiken, 803-641-7700

### **Hazing Policy**

The University of South Carolina Aiken prohibits any form of hazing. No organization registered or otherwise, officially or in fact, may participate in the activity of hazing. Hazing is defined as any action or situation created by individuals, clubs, and organizations, on or off campus, that could cause or has the potential to result in harassment, emotional or physical abuse of harm, embarrassment, anxiety, ridicule, or the violation of a university rule, no matter how good the end result or intent.

Example of hazing, include but are not limited to:

- Tests of endurance
- Submission of members or prospective members to potentially dangerous or hazardous circumstances
- Paddling
- Forced indulgence of alcohol or food
- Forced excessive exercise
- Indecent stunts or dress
- Deprivation of sleep, normal sleep patterns, or adequate study time
- Physical harassment such as pushing, shoving, tickling, yelling, etc.
- Deprivation of normal amounts of food and water
- Individual or group interrogations such as line-ups
- Personal servitude
- Assigning pranks
- Forced or coerced trips such as kidnaps, displacement, and “pledge” dumps

Registered organizations and groups shall be permitted certain initiation ceremonies and activities, which when examined by the ordinary university student, would seem reasonable under the circumstances and justified in view of the purpose for which they are conducted.

It shall not constitute a defense to the charge of hazing that the participants took part voluntarily, that they voluntarily assumed the risks or hardship of the activity, or that no injury in fact was suffered.

For information on the South Carolina Hazing Law, the USCA Hazing Policy, or to initiate a complaint for alleged hazing, contact the Director of Student Leadership and Engagement.

In accordance with the **Tucker Hipps Transparency Act**, the university publishes this report on actual findings of violations involving **alcohol**, **drugs**, **sexual assault**, physical assault and **hazing** by fraternity and sorority organizations formally affiliated with the institution. The report includes the name of the responsible organizations; the dates of the incident, report, charge, investigation and resolution; and a general description of the incident and the subsequent charges, findings and sanctions placed on the organization.

<https://www.usca.edu/departments/student-affairs/greek-life/>

## **Responsible Use of Data, Technology, and User Credentials**

### **Purpose**

All individuals and organizational units accessing or using university data, technology, and user credentials are required to adhere to all applicable state and federal laws, statutes, and regulations, as well as university policies, standards, and procedures. Access and use must be authorized based on job responsibilities or a demonstrated need, ensuring that the availability, confidentiality, integrity, privacy, and security of university assets are not compromised.

To fulfill its mission, the University of South Carolina (USC) is committed to safeguarding the confidentiality, integrity, and availability of its data, technology, and user credentials. USC upholds responsible use of these resources, strictly prohibiting unauthorized access or personal use unrelated to university purposes. Any misuse may lead to investigation and potential disciplinary actions according to human resources and student conduct policies.

### **Definitions and Acronyms**

*Artificial intelligence (AI)*: technology that increasingly enables computers and machines to simulate human learning, comprehension, problem solving, decision making, creativity and autonomy. Applications and devices equipped with AI often include, but are not limited to, the following capabilities: can see and identify objects; can understand and respond to human language; can learn from new information and experience; can make detailed recommendations to users; can sometimes act independently, potentially replacing or reducing the need for human intervention.

*Constituents*: persons and entities that have a relationship to any organizational unit of the university system, including but not limited to: students (prospective students, applicants for admission, enrolled students, campus residents, former students, and alumni), employees (faculty, staff, administrators, student employees, prospective employees, candidates for employment, former employees and retirees), and other affiliates (including but not limited to

board members, consultants, contractors, donors, invited guests, recipients of goods and services, research subjects, service providers and volunteers).

*Consumable Software and Devices:* items purchased by the university which would cost more to track, reclaim, or redistribute than the original purchase price.

*Data and Information:* refers to the individual or collective values, content, media (including audio, visual, and multimedia), intellectual property, official reports, and work products that the university and its units collect, process, transmit, store, or maintain. This encompasses all details about university constituents, business processes, events, operations, and 2 services. In the context of Artificial Intelligence, data also includes inputs used to train AI models and algorithms, which transform raw data into meaningful insights, predictions, and decision-making tools. These AI-driven processes enable the university to enhance its operations while ensuring the responsible and ethical handling of data in compliance with applicable laws and regulations (see policy UNIV 1.51 Data and Information Governance).

*Personal Matters:* individual or family concerns that are not related to the university, such as community activities and outside employment, including promotion, solicitation, services, or sales.

*Personal Technology Assets:* refer to devices, software, and services that are owned, purchased, or acquired by the User and are not classified as university property. These include smartphones, tablets, personal computers, home networks, third-party services such as email and cloud storage, and Artificial Intelligence (AI) tools or platforms that the User employs independently. AI tools, such as generative AI applications, voice assistants, or personal AI models, are considered part of Personal Technology Assets when used outside of university-authorized resources or environments.

*Principle of Least Privilege (POLP):* holds that every user of an asset should be authorized to and should use only the least set of privileges, rights, and permissions necessary to complete an assigned job or responsibility. In cases where assets, information systems, and services do not support strict controls, users are obligated to abide by POLP in their individual activities.

*University Business:* describes processes, transactions, communications, and records produced or received by a USC employee or a party acting on behalf of the university, regarding actions, operations, services, and Constituents of the university or its units, as well as official university reports, requests, policies, and procedures; any matter subject to Freedom of Information Act (see policy UNIV 2.00 Freedom of Information Policy) is considered University Business. Such data may include, but is not limited to, human resources, student records, alumni/development, and other administrative information; data classified as Restricted, Confidential, or Internal Use is most often included (see policy UNIV 1.15 Data and Information Governance). The term University Business excludes teaching and learning activities, as well as academic research data, personal property, items that are public record, and intellectual property (see policy ACAF 1.33 Intellectual Property Policy).



*University Technology Assets:* include all university-owned hardware, devices, equipment, virtual desktops, software, information systems and services (whether on-premises or cloud-based), databases, data stores, data centers, learning management systems, and network infrastructure (wired, wireless, Internet, and Virtual Private Network). This also encompasses audio, video, communications, and telephony systems that the university purchases, provides, or acquires. Additionally, these assets include any Artificial Intelligence (AI) technologies and services used to support university functions, enhancing data processing, decision-making, research, and operational efficiency.

*User Credentials:* accounts, email accounts, network username, other user names, identifiers and identity badges, digital identities (including those generated internally or under agreement with a third party or federated identity service), and the associated access rights, authorization, and services, which the university collects, requires, or issues in order to enable users to access data, information, communications, and/or technology, including for authentication.

*User (or End User):* any person or system that accesses university assets including data and information systems.

#### Policy Statement

A. The university retains all rights to its data, technology, and user credentials.

B. The university utilizes the State of South Carolina's statutory definition of Personal Identifying Information (PII) and affords protections to such information accordingly.

C. The university promotes the Principle of Least Privilege (POLP) by limiting access to its assets based on job duties or other demonstrated need, while recognizing that privilege and access are often necessary to provide value to University Constituents, achieve operational excellence, and gain competitive advantage.

D. All users have a direct personal responsibility for the appropriate use of data, including University Data (see policy UNIV 1.15 Data and Information Governance), technology, and user credentials; all users must comply with this policy and related standards and procedures, and must:

1. protect and properly use these assets regardless of their physical location;
2. adhere to applicable state and federal laws, statutes, and regulations;
3. abide by USC policies, procedures, guidelines, and privacy and security protections and controls;
4. accept responsibility for all activity they initiate or conduct through the use of their user credentials;
5. refrain from accessing or using University Data and Information for Personal Matters;
6. limit use of University Technology Assets such as hardware and network for Personal Matters; and

7. acknowledge their access to sensitive data and complete all required training for the data to which they are authorized.

8. AI technology must not be used to create content that is inappropriate, discriminatory, deceptive, or otherwise harmful to others or the University. All AI-generated content must be carefully reviewed for accuracy, appropriateness, and bias before relying on it for work purposes.

E. Users may not share or transfer university data, technology, or user credentials without prior authorization. Users must transfer possession or cease use when instructed by an appropriate manager.

F. Data and system users must uphold the confidentiality and privacy rights of individuals whose records they access; must adhere to controls based on Data Classification, including restrictions on access by Personal Technology Assets; must not disclose, share, or transmit data except as required by job duty or authorized in advance by the appropriate Data Steward and/or manager; and must accurately represent data, aggregations of data, or unit records when using, sharing, or transmitting data.

G. Users who access, utilize, and/or transport university data or technology away from university facilities must adhere to the Secure Remote Access Guidelines and applicable policies and procedures.

H. Individuals who use Personal Technology Assets to access or interface with university data, technology, or user credentials, are bound by this and other policies, related procedures, and guidelines.

I. Employees and organization units must use university-provided email accounts with a domain listed in Enterprise Data Standard 1.03, Email Domain Standard & Catalog and are prohibited from using personal or other external email accounts, for the conduct of University Business. Employee and organization unit email accounts must not be auto forwarded to personal or other external email accounts; this prohibits practices known as store-and-forward as well as forward-and-delete. This provision applies to student employees when receiving and sending University Business-related email.

J. Managers are responsible for informing, orienting, and training employees, students, and other Constituents in the acceptable and responsible use of data, technology, and user credentials. They:

1. must ensure that university data, technology and user credentials are appropriately authorized and issued based on job duties or other responsibility;
2. must maintain accurate and current records of authorized access and technology issued to their personnel;
3. must terminate or modify access in a timely manner for users who change job duties or responsibilities;

4. may restrict the use of Personal Technology Assets and/or may require exclusive use of University Technology Assets based on Data Classification, individual or organizational unit functions, job duty, and/or university procedures.
5. may impose additional restrictions on the use of University Technology Assets for Personal Matters, including use of Data and Information, hardware, and network.
6. must initiate and retain current and accurate documentation of User Agreements (see Appendix 1) as well as Data Sharing Agreements with internal and external entities (see Procedure below).

K. The Vice President for Information Technology and Chief Information Officer is responsible for administration, coordination, and clarification of this policy.

### Procedures

#### A. Procedures for All Campuses

1. Users must acknowledge they have received, read, and agree to follow this policy, related confidentiality and privacy provisions, standards, procedures, rules, and regulations pertinent to assets they are authorized to use. Users are required to complete a User Agreement for Responsible Use and Confidentiality of Data, Technology, and User Credentials prior to being authorized or granted access to data, technology, and user credentials.
2. Users are responsible for reporting known or suspected compromises of university data, technology, or user credentials to the University Information Security Office in a timely manner, in addition to other provisions of policy IT 3.00 Information Security and the Information Security program, standards, and incident response process.
3. University organizational units that require exchange, transmission, or other sharing of data and information, whether with other org units in the USC System or with an external entity, must establish and adhere to a Data Sharing Agreement prior to any sharing or transmission. Units should initiate a Data Governance Data Sharing Agreement Assistance request through Division of Information Technology Service portal.
4. University employees and units seeking to purchase or acquire data and/or technology, systems, software and/or services that use or produce University Data are responsible for adhering to all purchasing laws and procedures. This includes adherence to policy IT 1.00 Information Technology Procurement and related procedures.

Units should initiate a Data Governance Data Sharing Agreement Assistance request through Division of Information Technology Service portal at the same time that they initiate inquiries or activities with the Purchasing Department. Generally, provisions for a Data Sharing Agreement(s) should be established through solicitations (RFP, RFQ, Sole Source requests, or renewals) prior to finalizing awards, contracts, and/or initiating or renewing contracts and services. Data Sharing Agreements are needed when acquiring services from a third party for which data is not the focus, but which involves University Data. For systems acquired via RFP after January 2023, the contract's Special Terms and Conditions specifies the data handling requirements. For non-RFP acquisitions or RFPs before January 2023 a Data Sharing External Signature Agreement must also be established and signed prior to any sharing or transmission.

Since this agreement is between USC and an external entity, the Data Sharing External Signature Agreement must be signed by the Secretary of the Board of Trustees, or another authorized signatory as specified in policy BTRU 1.04 Authority to Sign Contracts.

Instructions for Obtaining an Agreement with an External Entity:

- Send the document to the vendor for signature
- Once returned, prepare a package for General Counsel, including:
  - Cover memo
  - Contract Approval Form
  - Signed Data Sharing External Signature Agreement ( Please note – The contract approval form has specific instructions for submission to General Counsel)

### Computer Lab Rules

- No food or drinks are allowed in any computer lab.
- Only currently enrolled USCA students are allowed in any computer room after hours. No spouses, children, parents, boyfriends, girlfriends, or friends are allowed in the computer rooms after hours unless they are a currently enrolled student or accompanied by a current student. Exceptions to this policy may be granted only by the Vice Chancellor for Information Technology and CIO (AIT 105 – USCA Policies and Procedures).
- Respect others.
- Keep the noise level down.
- If you encounter offensive behavior in the student computer areas, notify the student assistant or a TSD staff member. After hours, notify University Police at ext. 6111.
- Comply with copyright laws.
- Copying software is usually illegal.
- Copying images is usually illegal.
- Course work has precedence.
- Use only software loaded on the computers. Installing any software on the computers is prohibited. Making any modification to the computers, their operating system, or their software is prohibited.
- Please clean up any mess you make.

### Sanctions for Violation of Computer Facilities Policy

Infractions of computer room rules will be recorded and a warning issued by the Technology Services Division (TSD) staff. A second infraction will result in the loss of after-hours access privileges. A third infraction will result in a referral to the USC Aiken Student Judicial System. Serious infractions, including but not limited to such acts as deliberate damage to equipment, malicious attempt to alter other people's documents, and deliberate introduction of a virus, may result in immediate loss of after-hours privileges as well as action through the USC Aiken Student Judicial System. Repeated violations of less serious infractions would also be construed as serious. The USC Aiken Chief Information Officer or his/her designee is responsible for monitoring and administering this policy.

## **Student Email Policy**

Email is considered an official method for communication to students at the University of South Carolina Aiken because it delivers information in a convenient, timely, and cost effective manner.

To assure all students have access to this important form of communication, USCA provides a university email account to each enrolled student. The primary purpose of these accounts is to ensure a standardized channel for faculty and staff to communicate with students of the university as needed. Official university communications sent to all students will include reminders of important dates such as deadlines to pay tuition and fees, to withdraw from a course with a grade of "W," to apply for graduation, etc. Students are responsible for reading, in a timely fashion, university-related communications sent to their official student email accounts.

### **Assignment of Student Email**

The official university email accounts are created and maintained by the Technology Services Division (TSD) and are activated upon a student's acceptance to the university. Specific student email information is online at <http://www.usca.edu/help-desk/>. Additional assistance is available at the Computer Services Help Desk located in the Business & Education Building, Room 238. Official email addresses will be published as directory information unless students request otherwise.

### **Redirecting Email**

Students who redirect (auto-forward) messages sent to official USCA student email address to another address (such as gmail.com, outlook.com, etc.) do so at their own risk. Having email lost as a result of redirection does not absolve the student from responsibilities associated with communication sent to his/her official USCA email address. The university is not responsible for the handling of email by outside vendors or unofficial servers. The USCA assigned email address will be the address used by USCA staff/faculty to communicate to students. Forwarding of USCA email is not recommended and the university is not liable for messages or information missing due to such forwarding.

### **Expectations of Student Use of Email**

Students are expected to read and respond as appropriate to their USCA official email on a frequent and consistent basis. The university recommends checking email daily.

### **Faculty Expectations and Educational Uses of Email and Class Listservs**

Since faculty members determine how email is used in their classes, faculty may require students to check their email on a specific basis. Faculty may also require students to confirm their subscription to university-provided class distribution groups. For example, messages sent to university-provided class distribution groups (those established by the faculty member) are considered official communications for all students enrolled in the class designated by the class distribution groups address. USC Aiken Technology Services Division will not provide support

service for personal email accounts such as gmail.com, outlook.com, etc. in conjunction with university distribution groups.

#### *Appropriate Use of Student Email*

All use of email will be consistent with other university policies, including the “Responsible Use of Data, Technology, and User Credentials” (UNIV 1.52), which can be found at:

<http://www.sc.edu/policies/ppm/univ152.pdf>

#### *Procedures*

The Vice Chancellor for Information Technology and the Campus Technology Committee will review this policy as needed. Students with questions about the policy should contact the Technology Services Division.

(Portions of this policy are drawn from those developed by the University of Arizona, University of Colorado at Boulder, Virginia Commonwealth University, and Winthrop University)

#### **Immunization Policy**

After admission and prior to registration for classes, all students must furnish proof of receiving two doses of measles (rubeola), mumps and rubella, known as the MMR vaccine on or after their first birthday. Records may be obtained from a family doctor, county/state health department, previous high school or college, or family records from a medical professional.

Proof of Immunity requires documentation of one of the following:

- Receiving two MMR vaccines (shots) on or after first birthday (initial vaccination acceptable no earlier than four days before the first birthday)
- OR
- Positive serum titers (blood antibodies) to measles, mumps, and rubella. Positive serum titers must have been performed within the last five years and a copy of the lab results sent to confirm the results.

Freshmen living in university housing must receive a vaccination for meningitis.

The following vaccines are ***strongly recommended*** for all students but are not mandatory (with the exception of meningococcal for students living on campus): Meningococcal, Hepatitis B, Varicella (if no prior history of chicken pox), and TDAP (tetanus/diphtheria/acellular pertussis. Pertussis is also known as whooping cough.

#### **Meal Plan Policy**

USCA requires that all university housing residents participate in one of the available meal plans. We strongly encourage all incoming students, regardless of place of residence, to participate in one of the plans. As part of their housing information, all university housing residents will be provided with a list of the meal plan options available to them in meeting the mandatory requirement.

If a parent, legal guardian, or student (if legally independent) does not want the student to participate in the meal plan, they may appeal to be released from the meal plan. The appeal shall be in writing to the Executive Director of Campus Auxiliary and Support Services and clearly state the reason(s) with appropriate justification or documentation for the requested release. Appeals will be accepted through the end of the second week of classes in each major semester. The appeal may be based upon, but not limited to, the following situations: financial hardship, dietary restrictions, meals provided by an employer, or work schedule. Should the appeal be approved, a pro-rated refund will be granted effective with the date of the original appeal.

The appeal shall be acted upon and a written response forwarded to the appellant with copies to the appropriate USCA departments. Should the appellant not agree with the ruling, they may petition the Vice Chancellor for Finance and Administration for review and a final determination. Petitions shall be made within ten working days of the receipt of the written response by the Executive Director of Campus Auxiliary Support Services.

### **Parking and Traffic Safety Policies and Procedures**

Current parking decals are required by all students, faculty and staff and they must be obtained through the University Police. These decals should be displayed on the driver's side lower corner of the front windshield. Parking on campus without a permit will result in a ticket and subsequent fine. Fines must be paid in the Business Services office located in the Penland Building.

There are four parking lots on campus which students can use. Parking lots A and B are located in the front of campus and parking lots C and D are located on either side of the Etherredge Center. Other parking areas such as behind the softball field and adjacent to the Senior Net Learning Center are considered main lots and all parking rules apply. Students may park in any of the spaces marked with white lines. The yellow marked spaces are reserved for faculty and staff until 2:00 p.m.

Parking in any spaces other than those designed for students will result in a ticket and subsequent fine. Students who live in USCA student housing will be issued a special parking permit which will allow them to park in the campus housing parking lots. Students with this special decal can also park in Lots A through D, except from 8:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m., Monday through Friday. Students who do not live in campus housing and do not have a special parking decal are not permitted to park in the housing parking lots and are subject to fines, booting of their vehicle, and towing if they do so.

### **Parking and Traffic Regulations**

- A. Rules and regulations for parking and traffic control at the USCA campus are indicated by printed guides, campus maps, signs, and street curb markings.

- Yellow curb indicates no parking and/or limited parking (i.e. 15 minute parking). In addition, parking is prohibited at fire plugs, fire lands, sidewalks, walkways, grass, lawns, intersections, driveways, or alleyways unless indicated by signs. At no time should service drives and trash pickup areas be blocked.
  - Faculty/staff parking spaces are indicated by yellow lines; student parking spaces are indicated by white lines.
  - The campus speed limit is 14 miles per hour unless otherwise posted. However, everyone is expected to operate vehicles in a safe manner commensurate with road and weather conditions.
  - In the event a vehicle becomes inoperable on campus, University Police should be notified immediately. Steps should be taken to move the vehicle from the street or other hazardous position to a parking space. If the vehicle is not moved within a reasonable amount of time, the vehicle will be towed at the owner's expense. Jumper cables are supplied by University Police 24 hours a day.
  - All parking vehicles should be locked and valuables should not be left in unoccupied vehicles at any time. Report thefts or damage to University Police (ext. 6111) for investigation or other action.
- B. Booting, towing, and/or impounding vehicles - According to State law, the appropriate campus official responsible for law enforcement and public safety or designee shall have the power to have a vehicle impounded, towed, and stored at the owner's expense and risk under the following conditions:
- If the motor vehicle is parked in a fire lane.
  - If the motor vehicle is parked in a handicapped space without benefit of a handicapped permit or is parked in such a way as to block a curb cut for the handicapped.
  - If the motor vehicle is parked on a yellow curb or in such a way as to block a driveway, to block a service entrance, or to create a hazard to safety.
  - If the motor vehicle is parked in a permit-only area without the benefit of a permit; no parking after 12 a.m. midnight without a permit, towing enforced in all lots.
  - If three or more traffic violations in one academic year have been issued against said vehicle.
- C. Violations, penalties, and bonds
- The driver and/or owner or person in whose name a vehicle is registered shall be responsible for all violations incurred by the vehicle. Penalties and/or bonds are payable in person or by mail at the Business Services office during regular working hours Monday through Friday. Do not send cash.
- Schedule of Penalties: Fine
- Parking improperly - \$20.00
- Parking permit is improperly displayed - \$10.00
- Parking in a no parking area - \$50.00
- Parking in a service or loading zone - \$25.00



Block sidewalks and driveways - \$25.00

Parking in a reserved space - \$25.00

Parking in a no parking safety zone, fire land, or blocking a fire hydrant - \$50.00

Parking on grass - \$25.00

Parked on a yellow curb - \$50.00

Failure to register a vehicle - \$20.00

Parking in student housing lot by a non-resident - \$25.00

Housing residents improperly parking in main lots from 8:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m., Monday through Friday - \$25.00

Parking designated spots for people with disabilities or blocking a space/curb cut - \$75.00

Speeding on campus - \$50.00

Booting of a vehicle - \$50.00

First offense driving in an unsafe manner/obstructing campus operations - \$25.00

Second offense driving in an unsafe manner/obstructing campus operations - \$50.00

Failure to obey police officers' instructions - \$50.00

#### D. Appeals

Any person desiring to appeal any parking or traffic violation which he/she feels may have been given through error or without just cause must do so within 72 hours after the time of issuance (Saturdays, Sundays, and holidays excepted); otherwise, the right to appeal is forfeited. Appeal forms are available at the University Police office and on the University Police Department's webpage: <https://www.usca.edu/departments/campus-safety/>. Appeals are reviewed on a regular basis and a final determination is made. Notification is made by university email address.

#### **University Housing Policies**

Students residing on campus and their guests are bound by USCA policy, as well as University Housing policies and procedures as published in the "University Housing Community Guide." Residents and non-residents will be subject to judicial action for violations of USCA and/or University Housing policy.

#### University Housing Missing Student Policy and Protocol

The Higher Education Opportunity Act (P.L. 110-315) requires the university to maintain a missing notification policy and protocol for on-campus residents. A student shall be deemed missing when the student is absent from the university for more than 24 hours without any known reason. The information is posted on the University Housing website and provided at

check-in. Missing students should be reported missing by filing a missing person report with the University Police by calling 803-648-4011.

#### Residents 18 years and older

You may identify a confidential contact to be notified not later than 24 hours after the time that you are determined to be missing. You may register the confidential contact on a form during your housing check-in process and can make changes to this form in your area office.

#### Residents younger than 18 years old

The policy requires us to notify your custodial parent or guardian not later than 24 hours after the time that you are determined to be missing. You must provide parental emergency contact information on a form during your housing check-in process and can make changes to this form at your area office. Should a missing person report be filed on your behalf, University Police and Housing will:

- Gather information from the individual reporting the missing person and/or witnesses/roommates, to include details about the reason for the report and any information that can be gathered on the missing student, such as personal descriptors, clothing last worn, locations where the student may be, persons or witnesses who may have information, vehicle descriptions, information of the physical and mental well-being of the student, up-to-date photographs, class schedule, etc.
- Use of any or all of the following resources to assist in locating the student:
  - Go to the student's on-campus room
  - Talk to roommates
  - Secure a photo of the student
  - Call or text the student's cell phone and call any other number on record
  - Send the student an email
  - Check all possible campus locations the student may be
  - Check the campus card access log for the student
  - Review campus videos from cameras
  - Check for the student's vehicle
- Ensure that the USCA Police Department has filed a missing person report no later than 24 hours after a student is determined missing.
- Notify your confidential emergency contact (custodial parent or guardian) within 24 hours after the student is determined missing.

#### Parking and Security Gate Access at University Housing

Parking at University Housing is restricted to students who have a valid residential student's decal. Residents are required to park in between the white lines at University Housing. Yellow line parking spaces are reserved for faculty and staff. The security access gates to University Housing are restricted to residential students when closed. Card access gates by Pacer Crossings are for residential access only. They are open to residents from 7:00 am to 9:00 pm daily, the gates are locked from 9:00 pm to 7:00 am. The gates in front of Pacer Downs are

closed daily from 8:00 p.m. to 8:00 a.m. Tailgating behind another vehicle through any of the card access gates will result in receiving a driving in an unsafe manner traffic ticket.

### Noise Levels and Quiet Hours

- Since studying is an important aspect of life for the university student, it is expected that residents and their guests will respect the rights of others by maintaining a reasonable limit on noise at all times. The right to quiet always supersedes the right to make noise.
- Courtesy hours: At any time, a resident has the right to request that any other resident or group of residents cease any activity that is interfering with his/her ability to study, rest, or quietly enjoy the community.
- Residents and their guests must take corrective action when requested to decrease the noise level or cease any other disruptive activity by a fellow resident, a member of the University Housing staff, a University Police Officer, or other appropriate University official. Recurring requests to abate noise will constitute cause for disciplinary action.
- Quiet hours are established to ensure that residents are given the opportunity to study or sleep in a quiet atmosphere. Quiet hours are as follows:

Sunday – Thursday: 10:00 p.m. – 8:00 a.m.

Friday – Saturday: 12:00 a.m. midnight – 10:00 a.m.

- During exam periods, quiet hours are extended to 24 hours. During quiet hours, noise that can be heard in other rooms or outside of the apartment is considered to be too loud.
- Residents of University Housing are responsible for enforcing quiet hours within the community.

### Visitors and Overnight Guests

- Visitors and guests are bound by the same regulations as residents. The resident is responsible for any damage incurred by his/her visitors or guests. Guests and visitors should be escorted by the host resident. Guests are non-residents to the apartment who spend the night in University Housing. Visitors are non-residents to the apartment who are not spending the night.
- Visitation hours are Sunday through Thursday, 10:00 a.m. to 12:00 a.m., and Friday and Saturday from 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 a.m. Visitors and guests of the opposite sex are not allowed in an apartment/suite after visitation hours.
- Residents may only have same sex overnight guests. Residents must request advanced approval for an overnight guest from their roommates. Overnight guests must also be registered with the hall staff. Failure to obtain guest approval may result in revocation of guest privileges.

- Guests should be temporary and infrequent. Guest requests for more than occasional visits will be denied. Guests of residents will not be permitted to stay for more than two days without special permission from their roommates and University Housing.
- All visitors and guests, including USCA students who are non-residents, must park between two white lines in the USCA Parking Lot D. Guests who will be on campus overnight may obtain a temporary parking pass. Guests must have a valid driver's license. Residents may not obtain a temporary parking pass for a guest of the opposite sex.
- Visitors may park in Lot D until midnight on Sunday through Thursday or 1:00 a.m. on Fridays and Saturdays without a guest pass.
- All students, visitors, and guests must carry some type of photo identification.

#### Additional Alcohol Policies for University Housing

- Underage residents and their guests (regardless of their age) may not possess or consume alcohol.
- Individuals of legal drinking age may consume alcoholic beverages within the confines of their apartment or another resident's apartment who is of age. Underage residents whose roommate(s) are 21 years of age or over may be present when alcohol is possessed or being consumed in their apartment but are not permitted to consume alcoholic beverages. Alcohol is not allowed in apartments or suites where all residents are underage. (Note: It is the responsibility of the host resident to ensure all guests are at least 21 years of age.)
- The possession or use of an empty or full keg or party ball (or other common source container of alcoholic beverages) is strictly prohibited.
- The misuse of alcoholic beverages and/or inappropriate or illegal behavior will result in disciplinary and/or legal action.
- Abuse of alcohol by students, regardless of age, that results in the need for immediate medical attention is considered a violation of USCA's University Housing policy and will result in judicial follow-up and/or a mandatory counseling referral.
- Chugging, drinking games, initiations, funneling, or other potentially dangerous drinking activities are prohibited.
- The sale of alcohol is prohibited.
- Neon signs or other signs for alcohol-related products may not be hung in windows or anywhere outside of the apartment.
- If an emergency occurs, please contact University Police at ext.6111 or 803-648-4011.

#### Community Responsibility

- Each resident is responsible for cooperating with the other residents of their apartment in the care, maintenance, and usage of the common living areas. This includes, but is not

limited to, the cleaning of the apartment unit, restricting the noise level, and not using other residents' possessions without prior permission.

- Each resident is responsible for abiding by the rules and regulations set forth by the USCA University Housing office as long as those rules do not endanger the health, safety, or general welfare of the resident.

#### Occupancy

- Life safety regulations require that gatherings must not exceed the total of twelve people in any apartment in Pacer Downs and Pacer Commons or sixteen people in any suite in Pacer Crossings.

#### Harassment and Physical Abuse

- Racial, sexual, or any other form of harassment of any person and/or group is prohibited and will subject the offender to appropriate disciplinary action
- Causing physical harm and/or the fear of physical harm to any person and/or group is prohibited and will result in disciplinary and/or legal action
- In accordance with the USCA Code of Student Conduct, acts of sexual aggression will not be tolerated. Any sexual assault should be reported to a staff member or to USCA University Police (ext. 6111 or 803-648-4011) as soon as possible.

#### Public Passageways and Access Areas

- Each resident is responsible for keeping the grounds outside of his/her apartment in a clean and sanitary condition. All rubbish, garbage, cigarette butts, and refuse must be deposited in the proper receptacles and dumpsters. Items left unattended in common areas may be disposed of by management.
- If trash is left outside of an apartment, each resident will be assessed a fine of \$50.00 after the first warning and an additional \$50.00 fine for each incident thereafter.
- Persons responsible for damage to public areas will be billed for repair and replacement and may be referred for disciplinary or legal action. If a responsible individual cannot be determined, all persons present at the time of the damage will be billed equally.
- Public areas are for the use of the residents and their guests only.
- No one may sleep overnight in public areas.
- Public passageways are for the entering and exiting of the premises and are not to be obstructed or used for any other purpose.
- Students are prohibited from throwing objects or liquids from windows, doors, or patios of buildings into public areas of the buildings or grounds.
- Walking, scaling, and/or climbing on the exterior wall/roof area is prohibited.

- Entering or exiting through a window is prohibited.
- For reasons of security, residents are advised not to leave their door unlocked at any time.
- Suspicious persons should be reported to a resident mentor, the University Housing Staff, and/or University police

## **Animal Policy**

### Purpose

The University of South Carolina Aiken is deeply committed to the well-being of our students, faculty, staff and visitors. While pets and other animals may be a source of enjoyment and companionship to their owners, they can also pose health and safety problems and introduce potential liability to the University and its members. The policy will designate what animals are allowed on campus and any restrictions.

### Definitions

**Service Animal:** A service animal is any animal, usually a dog, that is individually trained to do work or perform tasks for the benefit of an individual with a disability, including a physical, sensory, psychiatric, intellectual, or other mental disability.

**Emotional Support Animal (ESA):** An emotional support animal is an animal (usually a dog or a cat) that provides therapeutic emotional support to alleviate one or more symptoms that effects an individual diagnosed with a mental, physical, emotional or psychological health disability.

**Pet:** A domestic or tamed animal kept for companionship or pleasure.

### Policy

A. Dogs are the only pets that are allowed on campus in public outdoor areas. When attending an athletic or recreational event, dogs are only allowed in designated areas. Due to human health and safety concerns, animals are not permitted in buildings and student housing on the University of South Carolina Aiken campus. Exceptions to this rule are listed below. Any person found to have an unauthorized animal on campus will be asked to remove the animal promptly.

B. Dogs must be kept on a 6ft. leash and they have to be appropriately tethered or contained, at all times. Individuals who bring pets onto campus must clean up any waste the pet may leave and have to control their dog at all times. All dogs brought onto university grounds must be licensed and fully inoculated in accordance with South Carolina State and Aiken County regulations.

C. The University may remove or require the removal of any animal that poses a direct threat to the health or safety of others, is not housebroken, or otherwise disrupts the campus grounds or facilities.

D. Additionally, individuals are not permitted to lure animals to the campus through feeding stations or other means. Bird feeders and bird /bat houses may be permitted if approved by the Senior University Facilities Director.

F. Feral or Wild Animals that are a potential risk, represent a hazard, cause property damage, create a nuisance, or otherwise pose a potential threat to the health or safety of humans will be regulated, controlled, and/or humanely relocated in accordance with applicable laws and regulations. Those animals that are not a risk and do not represent a hazard, cause property damage, or create a public nuisance, and that do not require human intervention, may inhabit the campus grounds.

G. Owners of any animal on campus (including service animals, emotional support animals, or pets) are solely responsible for the behavior and actions of their animal and assume all liability for the animal. The University assumes no responsibility for the animal or owner. Also, the owner is responsible for any damage done by the animal as well as all waste caused by the animal.

H. The University reserves the right to involve local animal control authorities if any animal is suspected of being mistreated by its owner on university grounds.

### Exceptions

Outside the policy above, the animals listed below are permitted on campus. When required by governing ordinances, such animals must wear appropriate tags and be certified, licensed, and/or inoculated.

- Service animals, as defined above, that are specially trained to aid persons with disabilities.
- Emotional support animals (ESA) that are approved by the Office of Disability Services to live in University Housing. Emotional support animals are not permitted in any other University buildings. Refer to University Housing procedures for more specific details regarding ESA policies.
- On-duty police dogs.
- Laboratory and demonstration of animals (including reptiles, mammals, birds, and fish) used directly in support of the University's mission in teaching and/or research. Such animals are permitted only in those facilities and laboratories specifically *designed* to house that type of animal.
- Other Exceptions  
Additional exceptions may be granted on a limited basis if requested in writing and approved by the Provost or the Vice Chancellor of Student Affairs.

### Enforcement and Compliance with Policy

Enforcement of this policy is the responsibility of each member of the USCA community.

Faculty, staff, students and volunteers are encouraged to enforce the policy for their facilities and/or sponsored activities. The following is the progression of enforcement of this policy:

- A. Each individual should, in a consistent and civil way, bring any infractions of this policy to the attention of the person or persons observed violating the policy.

- B. If the person violating this policy does not immediately remove the animal from the premises, the individual should ask them to do so.
- C. In the event the person violating the policy does not respond to a request to remove the animal, the individual should contact Campus Police at 803-641-3319. Campus police will then issue a warning and/or a fine, and if needed will remove the offender in accordance with Campus Police procedures

## **USC Aiken Tobacco Free Policy**

### **Purpose**

The University of South Carolina Aiken is deeply committed to the well-being of our students, faculty, staff, and visitors. To provide a safe, healthy environment in which our community can flourish, and in accordance with the university's commitment to health, well-being, and sustainability, USCA will be a completely tobacco/smoke-free campus. The intent of this policy is to create an environment that is conducive to quitting tobacco, to promote the prevention of tobacco and smoke related use and to prevent the risks associated with second-hand exposure to second-hand smoke.

### **Policy**

#### **A. Covered Individuals**

The provisions of this policy apply 24 hours a day, seven days a week to all students, faculty, staff, visitors, volunteers, contractors, and vendors unless otherwise noted.

#### **B. Definitions**

- 1) Tobacco and smoking products include all tobacco-derived or containing products, including but not limited to cigarettes (i.e. clove, bidis, kreteks), electronic cigarettes, vaping base product, cigars and cigarillos, pipes, water pipes, smokeless tobacco products or substitutions (spit and spitless, chew, pouches, snuff) or any other device intended to simulate smoked tobacco. This does not apply to nicotine replacement therapy, which is designed to assist tobacco users to quit tobacco/smoking.
- 2) University property shall include all buildings, facilities, grounds, vehicles, and spaces leased/owned/controlled by the University of South Carolina Aiken whether or not signs reposted. This includes, but is not limited to, University-owned buildings, offices, classrooms, laboratories, elevators, stairwells, bridges and walkways, balconies, decks, restrooms, sidewalks, parking areas/lots, meeting rooms, hallways, outdoor passageways and entrances, lobbies, common areas and athletic venues (including those with outdoor fixed seating), university vehicles, golf carts, and any transportation owned, operated, or leased by USCA.

#### **C. Use of Tobacco/Smoke Products**

- 1) The use of any tobacco/smoke products are is prohibited on university property. No ashtrays, receptacles, or smoking shelters will be permitted.
- 2) The use of tobacco/smoke products is prohibited in university owned/operated/leased vehicles



#### D. Support of Tobacco/Smoke Products

- 1) All tobacco/smoke industry promotions and marketing activities are prohibited on university property.
- 2) The sale of tobacco/smoke products and tobacco-related merchandise (including logo items) is prohibited on all university property and at university sponsored event, regardless of the operating vendor.
- 3) The distribution or sampling of tobacco/smoke related devices and associated products is prohibited on all university property and at university sponsored events, regardless of the venue.
- 4) Tobacco/smoke industry and related company sponsorship of events is prohibited.
- 5) The university discourages solicitation or acceptance of any grant or gift from a manufacturer, distributor, or retailer whose principal business is tobacco/smoke products.

#### E. Communication of Policy

This policy will be communicated to the campus community as follows:

- 1) References to this policy will be added to student handbooks, orientation communication, and other publications as appropriate.
- 2) Appropriate staff will assist in informing all visitors of the policy and asking that they comply while on any university property. All community members are encouraged to assist with the education of visitors and volunteers regarding our policy.
- 3) A provision will be inserted in all contracts; e.g. dining, construction, and/or maintenance, to prohibit the employees of contractor/vendors from using tobacco/smoke products on USCA property.
- 4) "Tobacco/Smoke Free" Property signs will be posted throughout the university.

#### F. Tobacco Cessation Resources

The university will publicize resources to assist students, faculty, and staff who desire to quit or abstain from the use of tobacco/smoke devices.

#### G. Enforcement and Compliance Policy

- 1) Enforcement of the policy is the responsibility of each member of the USCA community. Faculty, staff, students, and volunteers are encouraged to enforce the policy for their facilities and/or sponsored activities. Each individual should, in a consistent and civil way, bring any infractions of this policy to the attention of the person or persons observed violating the policy.
- 2) Faculty, staff, and students are also expected to assume leadership roles by adhering to the policy provisions and by reminding others who are not in compliance of the policy provisions.

- 3) In the event a member of the USCA community does not respond to a reminder, USCA faculty, staff, students, and volunteers will assist in the enforcement of this policy by reporting repeated violations to University Police at 803-641-3319.
- 4) The university will provide Tobacco./Smoke-Free Campus Policy information to facilitate the education and enforcement of the policy.
  - a) Students – Complaints regarding students will be directed to and handled by the office of Judicial Affairs in accordance with the Non-Academic Student Code of Conduct. Further information on the conduct process and potential consequences is available at
  - b) Faculty – Complaints regarding faculty will be directed to the appropriate unit head.
  - c) Staff – Complaints regarding staff will be directed to and handled by the immediate supervisor or director, in accordance with Human Resources practices, HR 1.39 and outlined in “Disciplinary Procedures” at <http://www.sc.edu/policies/ppm/hr139.pdf>
  - d) Volunteers, Visitors, and Affiliates – Complaints about volunteers and visitors may be addressed by any university official. Repeated violations may be handled by the University Police. Complaints about affiliates will be directed to and addressed by their sponsoring departments, in accordance with appropriate policies and practices.
  - e) Contractors and Vendors – Complaints regarding contractors and vendors will be addressed by Campus Support Services. Failure by contractors/vendors or their employees to comply with the provisions of this policy could result in the termination of the contract.

#### H. Exceptions

- 1) Tobacco, tobacco products, or simulated tobacco products may be used for research purposes. Smoking of tobacco products for research purposes will be allowed only if smoke is controlled in a manner approved by the office of Environmental Health and Safety, as is necessary for all research that involves laboratory air contaminants.
- 2) A special exception may be made for cultural activities by American Indians that are in accordance with the American Indian Religious Freedom Act, 42 UofSC sections 1996 and 1996a, which allow for the use of ceremonial tobacco. All ceremonial use exceptions must be approved in advance by the Provost or designee and, in the case of smoking, by the University Fire Marshall.
- 3) Tobacco company participation in recruitment activities (i.e. job fairs, on-campus interviews, information sessions, etc.) must be approved by Career Services or appropriate university official from that area to ensure compliance with university policy to ensure signage, postings, and use of company logo is appropriate.

#### Future Revisions

The University of South Carolina Aiken reserves the right to update all policies. Students are responsible for being aware of changes as they are disseminated to the campus community.

## **Solicitation Policy**

### Policy

The University of South Carolina Aiken has the duty and responsibility to maintain a safe and healthy environment conducive to its principal mission of education. At the same time, the university recognizes and respects the constitutional protection of free speech as well as the individual student's right to privacy. Accordingly, the University hereby adopts this solicitation policy for the purpose of establishing reasonable time, place and manner restrictions for campus solicitation.

### Procedure

- A. Solicitation is defined as contact for the purpose of:
  - 1. soliciting funds or sales or demonstrations that result in sales;
  - 2. distributing advertising or other materials;
  - 3. compiling data for surveys, programs, or other purposes;
  - 4. recruiting members or support for an organization or cause;
  - 5. providing educational information sessions (exclusive of formal University of South Carolina Aiken academic classes).

“Non-commercial solicitation,” means any distribution by students individually or as member of student organizations of leaflets, brochures or other written materials, or oral speech by them to a passerby, conducted without intent to obtain commercial or private pecuniary gain.

- B. Solicitation activities may not substantially disrupt or materially (or significantly) interfere with the educational, administrative, or operational activities of the university. Commercial speech which is false, fraudulent, or misrepresentative is not permitted. Events which are in violation of local, state, or federal law, Board of Trustees policy, or rules, regulations, and guidelines of the university, are prohibited.
- C. An event that places an undue burden on campus facilities; interferes with the use of campus facilities by other persons; disrupts normal operations; infringes on the protected rights of others, and/or has as a principle goal to incite a riot or to disrupt other activities, may be denied the privilege to use University facilities (or grounds) for solicitation.
- D. Distribution of Literature
  - 1. Distribution of literature by University or non-University individuals or organizations for purposes of commercial solicitation is subject to this solicitation policy to prevent harassment of students and to maintain the campus environment. The person-to-person distribution of literature by University or non-University individuals or organizations is restricted to the areas available for solicitation and must be

- registered and reserved in advance through the Vice Chancellor of Student Affairs (or designee).
2. The posting of literature by University or non-University individuals or organizations is restricted to appropriate reserved areas of bulletin boards in all University buildings subject to the documented approval and instruction of the Director of Student Life (or designee). Some bulletin board spaces are designated for University activities only.
  3. The posting or attachment of flyers, posters, advertisements, or announcements of any type on the exterior of buildings, trees, sidewalks, light posts, parked cars, outside free-standing information board, or other similar structures is prohibited.
- E. Direct Mail Solicitation
1. The University of South Carolina Aiken mailroom is responsible for providing services for faculty, staff, and students for official University business only. Mail determined to be of a personal nature (such as checks, bank statements, utility bills, personal packages) will be returned to the sender. The only exception to the policy is mail service to on campus resident students whose mail is delivered to their residence.
  2. University Intra-Campus Mail Service cannot be used by faculty, staff, students, or outside businesses or organizations for advertising, campaign notices, solicitation, or for any purpose that is not determined official University business. No USC Aiken mailing list will be available for use other than for official University of South Carolina business. Student organizations may be contacted through the Office of Student Life.
- F. Approval to solicit on the University of South Carolina Aiken campus shall not be granted in an arbitrary or capricious manner based upon the basis of the content of the proposed speech related activity. Any constitutionally protected speech will be permitted within the reasonable time, place, and manner restrictions of this policy.
- G. Eligibility
1. University Organizations and Departments- Registered student organizations, academic units, or university departments may solicit in designated areas and under prescribed conditions as listed under Guidelines and Procedures later in this section.
  2. Non-University Organizations and Individuals wishing to come on campus for the purpose of solicitation must be sponsored by a registered student organization, academic unity, or university department.
  3. Employee Solicitation- Employees of the University may not solicit for non-University sponsored activities during working time regardless of whether they are in their working area or not. (See System Policy A1.07, Personnel, 08/85.)
  4. Solicitors and Tradesmen- Solicitors and tradesmen, including students, faculty, or other University personnel, are prohibited from entering University grounds or buildings of the University of South Carolina Aiken for the purpose of transacting business with students, faculty, or other University personnel, unless they have been

issued a letter of permit for this purpose by the Office of the Vice Chancellor of Student Affairs (or designee). A fee to solicit may be imposed (see H3d in this policy) by the Office of the Vice Chancellor of Student Affairs (or designee).

#### H. Guidelines

1. University Organizations and Departments
  - a. For solicitations other than non-commercial solicitations, the organization or department must contact the Office of Student Life.
  - b. Outside speakers and/or performers being sponsored on campus must be approved in advance by the Vice chancellor of **Student Affairs** (or designee). Sufficient biographical information to identify the proposed speaker, including the address, email address and telephone number of the speaker or that of the agency representing the speaker shall be provided. This information is placed in an open public records and maybe posted at the reservation location.
  - c. The Vice Chancellor of Student Affairs (or designee) must approve student funding raising activities.
  - d. Lotteries, raffles, and games of chance must be in accordance with South Carolina state law.
2. Designated Areas- . Public access to some portions of the campus must be limited to achieve the institution's educational mission, to retain student privacy, and to meet safety and health requirements. However, some areas are open for solicitation within the guidelines established by this policy. Prior approval through established registration and reservation procedures (available at the Student Life Office) and the approval of the Vice Chancellor of Student Affairs (or designee) are necessary in order to utilize these areas. These areas are:
  - a. designated areas in the front and back patios of the Student Activities Center;
  - b. a designated area within the Student Activities Center, **the Humanities and Social Science Building, Administration Building, the Business and Education Building and the Quad;**
  - c. other specifically designated areas formally contracted through the University for the purpose of advertising goods and services to the USCA community upon the approval of the Chancellor, Vice Chancellor of **Student Affairs**, or designee.
3. Non-University Organizations and Individuals who are promoting or selling products or services.
  - a. Space must be reserved at least 72 hours prior to rental, and the Office of Student Life must be contacted at 803-641-3436 to reserve space.
  - b. All University policies and procedures must be followed, including publicity policies.
  - c. The Office of Student Life must approve all solicitation requests.
  - d. Cost: \$100 a day for table space or \$300 for 5 days of table space over a semester.

- e. Religious Groups: Provided free table space in the Student Activities or other designated space as listed above as long as the group is not trying to sell something or fundraising.
- f. Political Groups/Candidates: Provided free table space to pass out literature or information. For political rallies or events, space must be reserved through the Office of External Programs, Continuing Education, and Conferences.

### Disclaimer

The Solicitation Policy of the University of South Carolina Aiken must undergo constant revision to reflect prevailing community standards and the most recent case law which constitutionally defends the rights of students as citizens as well as protecting the individual privacy of students on the University campus. Contact the Student Life Office in the Student Activities Center for the most recent revisions of this policy.

### **Bonfire Policy**

#### Policy

It is the policy of USCA to provide a safe workplace and campus that is in compliance with all State and Federal guidelines. While beneficial to student morale and school spirit, bonfires pose a significant hazard and risk to campus facilities, grounds and the general campus populace. This policy should be observed to ensure the safety of bonfire participants and the campus community.

Failure of a bonfire organizer to adhere to this policy in its entirety may result in a fine up to \$200 or revocation of privileges to organize a bonfire for the individual organizer or organization.

- a. Authorization to hold events that include a free-burning bonfire.  
(The following applies to all bonfires on property belonging to the University of South Carolina Aiken). Bonfires are to only be held in locations designated for bonfire use. The current designated location is the southeast overflow parking area at the USCA Convocation Center.
- b. Participants and organizers are to not burn pallets, construction debris, explosives, fireworks, hazardous or other wastes and any other material that can pose a hazard when burned.
- c. Events hosting a bonfire may be canceled any time by the EHS Office, University Police Department, or local fire department based upon changing weather conditions or other factors impacting safety.
- d. Bonfires must be coordinated with the EHS Office two weeks prior to the event.  
Bonfire debris must be cleaned up the next business day following an event.
- e. Weather conditions required to hold a bonfire.
  - Temperatures between 30-80 degrees Fahrenheit
  - Wind speeds between 4-15 miles per hour sustained

- Humidity of at least 40 percent

## II. Procedures

### 1. Responsibility

- The bonfire organizer will:
  - Coordinate with the EHS Office two weeks prior to a bonfire event.
  - Obtain the materials for the bonfire (no pallets, construction debris, explosives, fireworks, hazardous or other wastes and any other material that can pose a hazard when burned).
  - Follow the direction of the EHS Office, University Police Department, and local fire department concerning the bonfire.
  - Stay with and attend to the bonfire until the local fire department has declared the fire to be out and it is safe to leave the area unattended.
  - Ensure that all consumed material and debris is collected and cleaned up by the end of the next business day following the event.
- The EHS Office will:
  - Review this policy with the organizer and ensure the organizer understands the policy.
  - Notify the University Police Department with the date and time of the bonfire.
  - Notify the local fire department (GVW Volunteer Fire Department (803) 663-3795) of the bonfire and ensure a fire truck is on scene during the event.
  - Call the SC Burn Hotline (1-800-895-7057) the day of the bonfire and provide: name, phone number and location of the bonfire.
  - If the Burn Hotline recommends against having a bonfire notify the organizer, police department and fire department that the bonfire must be canceled.

<h3>Student Consumer Information</h3>
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The Student Right-to-Know and Campus Security Act of 1990 (P.L. 101-542) and the Higher Education Technical Amendment of 1991 (P.L. 102-26), and the Higher Education Opportunity Act of 2008 (P.L. 110-315) require that all institutions of higher education collect and make certain information available to students/prospective students and employees/prospective employees upon request. Title I of this act is known as the Student Right-to-Know Act and Title II is known as the Crime Awareness and Campus Security Act. Information requirements are separated into three categories: graduation or completion rates, athletically-related financial aid, and campus security policies, crime statistics and campus housing fire safety. Graduation or completion rates are prepared and published by the Office of Institutional Effectiveness, Research, and Compliance and are readily available to current and prospective students upon request. Athletically-related aid reports are prepared for the NCAA and are also available. The Annual Campus Security Policies, Crime Statistics, and Fire Safety Report are published by the USCA University Police Department and are available to current and prospective students and

employees via the USCA website. For information about disclosures concerning information involving disclosures, please go to <https://ie.usca.edu/Disclosures/index.htm>.

The University of South Carolina Aiken is accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC) to award associate, baccalaureate, and master's degrees. The University of South Carolina Aiken also may offer credentials such as certificates and diplomas at approved degree levels. Questions about the accreditation of the University of South Carolina Aiken may be directed in writing to the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges at 1866 Southern Lane, Decatur, GA 30033-4097, by calling (404) 679-4500, or by using information available on SACSCOC's website ([www.sacscoc.org](http://www.sacscoc.org)).

The University of South Carolina does not discriminate in educational or employment opportunities on the basis of age, ancestry, citizenship status, color, disability, ethnicity, familial status, gender (including transgender), gender identity or expression, genetic information, HIV/AIDs status, military status, national origin, pregnancy (false pregnancy, termination of pregnancy, childbirth, recovery therefrom or related medical conditions, breastfeeding), race, religion (including religious dress and grooming practices), sex, sexual orientation, veteran status, or any other bases under federal, state, local law, or regulations.

The University of South Carolina Aiken has designated the Coordinator for Disability Services, located in the Student and Educational Support Building as the University's Section 504 Coordinator. The University of South Carolina Aiken has hereby designated as the Section 504 coordinator, the Disability Services Program Coordinator in the USC Aiken Office of Disability Services.

Any person who feels they qualify for special accommodations due to physical, learning, or psychological disability should contact the Office of Disability Services at 803-643-6815 for a free, confidential interview.

If you need this handbook in an alternative format, please contact the Coordinator of Disability Services at 803-643-6815.

### **Equal Opportunity in Programs and Activities**

Federal laws prohibit discrimination under programs and activities receiving federal financial assistance. The statutes listed below are applicable to the University of South Carolina Aiken and provide in part:

#### **Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964:**

"No person in the United States shall, on the grounds of race, color, or national origin, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any educational program or activity receiving federal financial assistance."

#### **Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972:**



“No person in the United States shall, on the basis of sex, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subject to discrimination under any educational program or activity receiving federal financial assistance.”

**Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973:**

“No otherwise qualified handicapped individual in the United States shall, solely by reason of his handicap, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity receiving federal financial assistance.”

**Section 303 of the Age Discrimination Act of 1975:**

“No person in the United States shall, on the basis of age, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity receiving federal financial assistance.”

**The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA):**

Public Law 101-336 of 1990 provides anti-discrimination (civil rights) protection and access to equal employment opportunities for persons with disabilities.

Accessibility requirements are similar to those imposed under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 which addresses non-discrimination in employment and program services by recipients of any federal assistance. The ADA complements Section 504 and expands its coverage as well as changes to some of the application and accommodation processes. USCA is committed to the letter and the intent of both the ADA and Section 504.

The University of South Carolina Aiken does not discriminate in educational or employment opportunities on the basis of age, ancestry, citizenship status, color, disability, ethnicity, familial status, gender (including transgender), gender identity or expression, genetic information, HIV/AIDs status, military status, national origin, pregnancy (false pregnancy, termination of pregnancy, childbirth, recovery therefrom or related medical conditions, breastfeeding), race, religion (including religious dress and grooming practices), sex, sexual orientation, veteran status, or any other bases under federal, state, local law, or regulations. The University of South Carolina Aiken conducts its programs and activities involving admission and treatment of students, employment, teaching, research, and public service in a non-discriminating manner as prescribed by federal law and regulation. Inquiries concerning the above may be sent to: Chancellor, University of South Carolina Aiken, 471 University Parkway, Aiken, South Carolina 29801.

<b>Confidentiality of Student Records</b>
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In accordance with the Family Education Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) of 1974, the University of South Carolina Aiken students have the right to review, inspect, and challenge the accuracy of information kept in a cumulative file by the institution unless the student waives this right. It also ensures that records cannot be released in other than emergency situations except\*:

1. To other school officials, including faculty, within the educational agency who have legitimate educational interests;
2. To officials of other schools or school systems in which the student intends to enroll, upon condition that the student be notified of the transfer, receive a copy of the record desired, and have an opportunity for a hearing to challenge the content of the record;
3. To authorized representatives of the Comptroller General of the United States, the Secretary of Health, Education, and Welfare, and administrative head of an education agency, or state educational authorities;
4. In connection with a student's application for, and receipt of, financial aid;
5. To parents of an eligible student who claim the student as a dependent for income tax purposes. Upon receipt of the parents' most recent federal income tax return listing the student as a dependent, the student's records will be given. The student will be notified in writing and certified mail that this access has been given.
6. Where the information is classified as "directory information." The following categories of information have been designated by the University as directory information: student's name, local and permanent mailing addresses and telephone numbers, email address, semesters of attendance, enrollment status (full- or part-time), date of admission, date of expected or actual graduation, school, major and minor fields of study, whether or not currently enrolled, classification (freshman, etc.), type of degree being pursued, degrees, honors, and awards received (including scholarships and fellowships), weight and height of members of athletic teams, and whether the student has participated in officially recognized activities and sports sponsored by the University.

If you do not wish such information to be released without your consent, you should notify the Registrar's office prior to the first day of classes. Questions concerning this law and the University's policy concerning release of academic information may be directed to the Registrar's office.

\*In 1998, changes were made to the FERPA law. Higher education institutions are now permitted to inform parents about alcohol and drug violations. Please see the Alcohol and Drug Policies in this handbook for further information.

