

University of South Carolina Union

Act 629 – Summary Reports on Institutional Effectiveness
Fiscal Year 2005 – 2006

Introduction

This report includes: General Education, Success of Transfer Students, and Policies and procedures to ensure that academic programs support the economic development needs in the State by providing a technologically skilled workforce.

Success of Transfer Students

Transfer reports for the USC Regional Campuses can be found at <http://kudzu.ipr.sc.edu/effectiveness/assessment/IEReports/transfers/>.

Assessment of General Education

The primary mission of USC Union is to provide students with the first two years of a liberal arts university education, preparing them to go on to a baccalaureate degree granting institution. In the process of earning a baccalaureate degree, many students earn an associate degree, and USCU offers the Associate in Arts and the Associate in Science. Within these two degrees, we help our students acquire skills and knowledge in the following areas: communication (written and verbal), computer technology, mathematics, natural science, society and the individual, history, global cultures, critical thinking, and lifelong learning. We define general education as the content of these two degree programs. Specific goals and competencies can be found at <http://www.sc.edu/bulletin/Union/university.html>.

General Education Competencies

From the academic goals outlined in the USC Union Academic Bulletin, a list of general education competencies was devised.

Competency 1: Students will communicate clearly in written English, demonstrating their comprehension, analysis and critical interrogation of a variety of written texts.

Competency 2: Students will communicate orally in a manner that unites theory, criticism, and practice to produce an effective communicator.

Competency 3: Students will be able to use computers and other technologies to perform tasks appropriate to their major fields.

Competency 4: Students will perform basic mathematical manipulations, display facility with the use of mathematics in framing concepts for mathematical analysis, and interpret data intelligently.

Competency 5: Students will demonstrate an understanding of physical and/or life science concepts and understand the uses of scientific methods and theories.

Competency 6: Students will demonstrate an understanding of the processes of human behavioral, social and cultural interaction, and the use of social and behavioral science perspectives to interpret them.

Competency 7: Students will demonstrate an understanding of the historical development of culture over time and its relation to the present.

Competency 8: Students will become familiar with the diversity of a global culture marked by racial, ethnic, gender, and regional differences.

Competency 9: Students will demonstrate an understanding of the contribution of the literary, visual or performing arts and their cultural context, and express informed personal responses to artistic creations.

Competency 10: Students will integrate insights from several disciplines and apply them to value choices and ethical decisions.

The descriptions of the courses listed in the USC Union Academic Bulletin were analyzed for their connection to the competencies. The course descriptions may be found at <http://www.sc.edu/bulletin/Union/courses.html>. The courses that have been offered by USC Union connected with each competency on a regular basis are:

Competency 1: ENGL 101, 102

Competency 2: SPCH 140

Competency 3: CSCE 101, 102

Competency 4: MATH 111, 111I, 115, 122, 141, 142, 221; STAT 201

Competency 5: BIOL 101, 110, 120, 232, 242, 330; CHEM 101, 102, 111, 112; GEOL 101; PHYS 151

Competency 6: PSYC 101, 103, 301, 420, 440; SOCY 101

Competency 7: HIST 101, 102, 111, 112, 385, 409, 410, 451

Competency 8: ARTH 346; FREN 109, 110; HIST 106; RELG 203; SPAN 109, 110

Competency 9: ARTH 105, 106; CPLT 270; ENGL 282, 287, 288, 289; MUSC 110

Competency 10: No specific courses. Each course offered at USC Union is considered to be a part of this competency.

In 2003 the USC Union Faculty Organization adopted a policy consistent with that of USC Columbia and USC Upstate requiring all graduates of USC Union to achieve a grade of C or better in ENGL 101. Every mathematics course with a prerequisite of MATH 111/111I, 115 or 141 requires a grade of C or better for enrollment. BIOL 102 requires a grade of C or better in BIOL 101. CHEM 112 requires a grade of C or better in CHEM 111.

USC Union graduates are considered to have mastered Competency 1 – 9 if they have achieved a grade of C or better in the first course they enroll in of the competency. If the student had taken a course in the competency at another institution (whether they achieved mastery of the competency or not), they were not considered for this analysis. Graduates who had transferred in with developmental coursework in a competency (primarily English, reading and math) at another institution were also not considered. The percentages in Competency 10 are the grand mean of the percentages of Competency 1 – 9.

**Percentage of USC Union Graduates Meeting
General Education Competencies, 2002 – 2006**

Competency	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006
1: Students will communicate clearly in written English, demonstrating their comprehension, analysis, and critical interrogation of a variety of written texts.	63.9%	65.7%	64.7%	80.4%	87.2%
2: Students will communicate orally in a manner that unites theory, criticism, and practice to produce an effective communicator.	69.4%	65.7%	68.6%	71.7%	82.1%
3: Students will be able to use computers and other technology to perform tasks appropriate to their major fields.	61.1%	71.4%	72.5%	71.7%	71.8%
4: Students will perform basic mathematical manipulations, display facility with the use of mathematics in framing concepts for mathematical analysis, and interpret data intelligently.	61.1%	62.9%	51.0%	80.4%	82.1%
5: Students will demonstrate an understanding of physical and/or life science concepts and understand the uses of scientific methods and theories.	86.1%	60.0%	70.6%	76.1%	74.4%
6: Students will demonstrate an understanding of the processes of human behavioral, social and cultural interaction, and the use of social and behavioral science perspectives to interpret them.	69.4%	57.1%	60.8%	84.9%	59.0%
7: Students will demonstrate an understanding of the historical development of culture over time and its relation to the present.	72.2%	54.3%	45.1%	71.7%	43.6%
8: Students will become familiar with the diversity of a global culture marked by racial, ethnic, gender, and regional differences.	50.0%	42.9%	51.0%	54.3%	66.7%
9: Students will demonstrate an understanding of the contribution of the literary, visual or performing arts and their cultural context, and express informed personal responses to artistic creations.	88.9%	82.9%	88.2%	89.1%	79.5%
10: Students will integrate insights from several disciplines and apply them to value choices and ethical decisions.	64.7%	55.2%	61.8%	71.5%	66.7%
Number of Graduates In Analysis	36	35	51	46	39

General Education Competencies Analysis Findings

Competency 1: With the exception of 2004, the percentage of students mastering this competency has been on the increase. The decrease in 2004 can be attributed to the graduation of an unusually large number of students who had transferred to USC Union having already taken ENGL 101 and/or 102 at other institutions. This competency is the only one whose courses are required for graduation from USC Union. Beginning with the fall 2006 semester, a program will be implemented that focuses on increasing the quality of ENGL 101 and 102. With the rigor of the courses to be increased, performance in this competency is expected to decrease.

Competency 2: Since 2003 the percentage of students mastering this competency has been on the increase. Enrollment in SPCH 140 has also been on the increase with two sections of the

course being offered in the fall semester and one section offered in the spring. The course is also being offered in the high school concurrent program as well as occasionally being offered at our campus in Laurens. Since most of the courses in this competency are taught by adjunct instructors, an assessment program has not been planned at this time. With more baccalaureate programs requiring oral communications courses, performance in this competency is expected to increase or remain constant.

Competency 3: Performance in this competency has remained fairly consistent over the last five years. A full-time instructor of business/computer science was hired in January 2005, and enrollment caps on CSCE 101 have been raised since the fall 2004 semester. The delivery of this course has gone from a lab-based to a lecture setting. An assessment program for this competency has not been planned at this time. With more baccalaureate programs requiring a basic computer science course, performance in this competency is expected to increase or remain constant.

Competency 4: With the exception of 2004, the percentage of students mastering this competency has been on the increase. The decrease in 2004 can be attributed to not only the graduation of an unusually large number of transfer students who had taken a mathematics course at another institution but also the graduation of a larger than normal group from the USC Union at Laurens campus. For the AA degree program, students are required to take one mathematics course or one computer science course. For the AS degree program, students are required to take two mathematics courses or two computer science courses or one of each. Due to both low enrollments and a dearth of qualified faculty to teach mathematics courses at the Laurens campus, most students completing a degree at the Laurens campus take CSCE 101 and/or 102 to fulfill the degree requirements, although more are taking STAT 201 when it is offered in the summer semester via distance learning. Beginning with the fall 2006 semester, an assessment program in the entry-level mathematics courses of MATH 111/1111 (college-level algebra designed for students majoring in non-science areas) and MATH 115 (college-level algebra and trigonometry designed for students majoring in the sciences and engineering) will be implemented. All students enrolling in MATH 111, 1111 and 115 will be given a pretest the first day of class. The same test will be given as the final exam (post-test) for comparison. Performance in this competency is expected to decrease or remain constant.

Competency 5: Since 2004 performance in this competency has remained above the 70% level. USC Union lost one of the science instructors due to death in fall 2002. Beginning that semester, USC Union did not have a full-time anatomy/physiology instructor until fall 2004 and a full-time chemistry instructor until spring 2006. These key courses were taught by local physicians. With the addition of full-time instructors in these areas popular with students wanting to pursue degrees in health science, enrollment has been increasing in the sciences. An assessment program in the sciences is scheduled to be implemented during the 2007 – 2008 academic year. Performance in this competency is expected to decrease or remain constant.

Competency 6: This competency has experienced dramatic increases and decreases in performance since 2004. Graduates who have not met this competency have been observed to be either those who took the first course in the competency in their first semester at USC Union (taking ENGL 101 at the same time) or those who did not meet Competency 1. As a result of such inconsistent performance in this competency and Competency 7, an assessment and improvement program for ENGL 101 and 102 is being implemented. An assessment program for this competency will be implemented during the 2007 – 2008 academic year. Performance in this competency is expected to increase.

Competency 7: This competency has experienced dramatic increases and decreases in performance since 2002. Graduates who have not met this competency have been observed to

be either those who took the first course in the competency in their first semester at USC Union (taking ENGL 101 at the same time) or those who did not meet Competency 1. As a result of such inconsistent performance in this competency and Competency 6, an assessment and improvement program for ENGL 101 and 102 is being implemented. An assessment program for this competency will be implemented during the 2007 – 2008 academic year. Performance in this competency is expected to increase.

Competency 8: Performance in this competency has increased since 2003. USC Union lost a full-time English/Spanish instructor due to death in fall 2004. Spanish courses were offered by an adjunct instructor in the evenings via distance learning during the 2005 – 2006 academic year. French courses have not been offered since 2004 due to low demand and the retirement of the English/French instructor in fall 2005. A full-time instructor of religion/philosophy was hired in fall 2005. This, coupled with the requirement at USC Upstate of all students to take a foreign cultures course, has led to a dramatic increase in the number of students enrolling in the RELG 203 (Comparative Religion) course. USC Union now offers two sections of this course each semester. ARTH 346 (African Art) has also been added with much success. Although most of the courses in this competency require a substantial amount of reading, the effects observed with Competencies 6 and 7 do not seem to be present. Since most of the courses in this competency are taught by adjunct instructors, an assessment program has not been planned at this time. Performance in this competency is expected to increase.

Competency 9: Performance in this competency has been at or near 80% or above since 2002. Most baccalaureate degree programs now require a course in the arts (music, art) and/or literature, and most USC Union graduates take at least one course in these areas. Decreases in performance in this competency can be attributed to a decrease in the number of courses USC Union offers toward meeting this competency. MUSC 110 (Music Appreciation) has not been taught in the last year due to no qualified instructor being available to teach the course. Literature courses in the fall have been taught in the evening leading to low enrollments. ARTH courses have been added at Laurens with strong enrollments, and these courses have robust enrollments at the Union campus. Some graduates do not take courses in this competency as they are not required for graduation. Although most of the courses in this competency require a substantial amount of reading, the effects observed with Competencies 6 and 7 do not seem to be present. Since most of the courses in this competency are taught by adjunct instructors, an assessment program has not been planned at this time. Performance in this competency is expected to increase or remain constant.

Competency 10: Performance in this competency has oscillated since 2002. Interestingly enough, as the number of graduates increases, so does the percentage for this competency. USC Union will begin implementing a program to better serve students in the areas of critical thinking and leadership beginning in fall 2006. Assessment of the outcomes is being considered as the program is developed. Performance in this competency is expected to increase.

Policies and Procedures to Ensure that Academic Programs Support the Economic Development Needs in the State by Providing a Technologically Skilled Workforce

As part of its mission, the University is resolved to enhance the industrial, economic, and cultural potential of the state so that South Carolina and the University can prosper together. All USC campuses play a vital role in the economy of South Carolina. A study by the Division of Research in the Moore School of Business that quantifies this economic impact can be found at <http://kudzu.ipr.sc.edu/effectiveness/uscimpact.pdf>

Since 1993, the University has included a technology and computer use goal in its *Eleven General Education Goals* that were established by the Provost's Assessment Advisory Committee. The

goal states that students will be able to use computers and other technology to perform tasks appropriate to their major fields. Each college is responsible for establishing minimum standards that students must meet before graduation, outlining the courses offered that help students learn these skills, and how the skills are assessed. This information is available at <http://kudzu.ipr.sc.edu/assessment/compskills>. To reach the goal, students are expected to use computers to create, edit, and revise written texts, analyze quantitative data, access information and databases, integrate graphical, visual, and statistical information into written presentations, and send and receive electronic communication.