Dear Campus Colleagues,

We are in the midst of reintroducing colleges into our academic structure. In addition to the School of Nursing, the School of Business Administration, and the School of Education, as of July 1st our university will also include the College of Arts, Humanities, and Social Sciences and the College of Sciences and Engineering.

The presence of colleges, and even the collegiate names are important marketing tools for the university, for they suggest at a glance the breadth of programs and majors available at our university and our strategic reasons for this name.

1. Engineering is a high-demand, high-profile program and most individuals outside of our immediate region may not think of USC Aiken as a destination for engineering. As a program with high growth potential, placing the name in the College name will help with student recruitment both in the southeast and internationally.

2. During the Forward Together future visioning sessions, engineering was the only program requested by name by the business community, the campus, and the alumni. Since engineering graduates are in high demand in our region, and given the historic importance of the Savannah River Site, the proximity of the Savannah River National Laboratory and SR site-support companies, the industry around Aiken, the 2-year program at Aiken Technical College, and the engineering focus in local high schools...I feel it is important to highlight engineering at USC Aiken as well.

3. Given the interest in engineering in our region, having the name included in the title of the college will assist with fund-raising. We’ve already raised over half a million dollars in support of engineering before we completed the process of securing permission to offer the bachelor’s program.

4. It is important for USC Aiken to be seen as a comprehensive university instead of a ‘branch’ of the University of South Carolina Columbia. Being mistaken as a “branch” of a “main campus” in Columbia has hurt us in the area of funding, brand loyalty, and institutional recognition. We are proud to be part of the USC consortium of Universities that we call the USC System, but we do not want to perpetuate any misconceptions that we are somehow lesser than any of the other public comprehensive universities in this state. Having colleges helps us to look more like the other universities in South Carolina and differentiates us from those colleges that are satellites of larger institutions.
As an Art Historian; a former dean of colleges that included the Arts, Humanities, Communication, TESOL/ESL, Public Administration & Legal Studies, Social Sciences, and Behavioral Sciences; and as a former provost that was responsible for the health of all academic and professional programs... no one can question my commitment to the success of all of our programs. But, I also know that the successes of all of our high-demand programs floats the entire institutional enterprise higher.

Adding a college structure model is an outcome of our Forward Together process, but I believe it is also a smart strategic decision that will positively position the institution well into the future.

Best,

Sandra J. Jordan
Chancellor