Dear USC Aiken Colleagues,

USC Aiken has had a terrific week in the area of regional and national rankings. This is a GREAT place to learn, live, and work! We were recognized in the following categories:

- Ranked as one of the most diverse comprehensive campuses in the nation
- Ranked as #1 for Veteran students

In the press release, I recognized that the reason we are consistently ranked #1 is because of our exceptional faculty and staff who consistently provide a high quality and transformative education to our students. I sincerely believe that this is a well-earned recognition, and that YOU are largely responsible for the fact that USC Aiken is highly ranked, held in high regard, and flourishing.

Here are the facts surrounding these new recognitions:

**#1 Public Regional Comprehensive College in the South**


According to the Carnegie Classification of Institutions of Higher Education, comprehensive universities focus primarily on the undergraduate experience and offer a broad range of programs in the liberal arts and sciences, in professional fields (such as business, nursing, and education), and offer a select number of graduate programs. The category that includes USC Aiken and most of the comprehensives in this state, includes 386 universities across a 12 state region. Thus, ranking consistently among the top three institutions in this cohort is a significant accomplishment.

**#1 Public Regional College in the South for Veterans**

U.S. News and World Report ranked USC Aiken the #1 Public Regional College in the South in their 2016 Best Colleges for Veterans rankings. There were 721 schools ranked among the Best Colleges for Veterans across 10 separate ranking categories: National Universities, National Liberal Arts Colleges, Regional Universities (North, South, Midwest and West) and Regional Colleges (North, South, Midwest and West). USC Aiken was ranked the #1 among the public regional colleges for the second year in a row. Good news travels fast. Following the 2014 national ranking, Veteran and Military student enrollment at USC Aiken increased by 100 students.
Ranked Among the Top 2% for Racial Diversity

This year, *U.S. News and World Report* has created a Campus Ethnic Diversity ranking using a probabilistic model that produces a diversity index that ranges from 0 to 1: The closer a school’s number is to 1, the more diverse the student population is.

While the diversity index score does not represent the proportion of the student body from a racial/ethnic minority, it does represent the chance that any two randomly students chosen on a given campus will differ in terms of race or ethnicity. Schools that have mostly one ethnic or racial group tend to have very low diversity indices, and as a result, most historically black colleges have been found to score low on this measure because their student bodies are predominantly made up of one racial group.

Although the formula is somewhat complex, it is a very useful metric that indicates actual campus diversity. Among Public Regional Colleges in the 12 states that constitute the South, USC Aiken ranked as #4 for racial diversity, and nationally we were ranked #12. This places USC Aiken in the two percentile, both regionally and nationally among Public Regional Colleges in terms of student diversity.

Once again, I’m proud of the work we are doing at USC Aiken to offer a high quality, transformative educational experience. We place students first, and we value the richness of perspectives, views, experiences, and ideas that a diverse student body and faculty bring to the learning endeavor.

Have a wonderful weekend!

*Sandra J. Jordan*
Chancellor