



The Office of the Chancellor
UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH CAROLINA AIKEN

January 13, 2017

Dear Faculty and Staff,

Yesterday, a number of our faculty and staff met with Mr. Juan Johnson, President of Diversity Leadership in Action. Juan enjoyed a 21-year career with Coca-Cola, and in 2001, Juan partnered with the late Dr. R. Roosevelt Thomas, a pioneer in diversity consulting, to create the Diversity Leadership Academy. Juan shared the day with us to expand our horizons on a comprehensive framework for diversity management and mission-driven decision making. Juan commented that, “I enjoyed spending the day with USC Aiken leaders and am impressed that the university has a student diversity ratio of 40%. After meeting with several faculty and staff, I realize there are good strategies and programs already in place which focus on highlighting your diverse university and increasing understanding among the campus community. I encourage USC Aiken to continue exploring future opportunities.”

USC Aiken is a close-knit academic community that values the distinctive contributions of individuals, encourages civil discourse, intellectual inquiry, and inclusion of all of our diverse learners. At the end of the day, our mission is to graduate highly capable students who are ready to work, live, and engage productively in the civic life of our diverse communities and nations. For many students, we must find ways to help them persist, and help them to understand what it means to a part of an academic community, to live in a diverse community, and to embrace academic values. This begins with a student’s and family’s very first impression of USC Aiken, continues through their journey and experience as a student, and ultimately as they participate in the processional at commencement and become a USC Aiken alumnus.

USC Aiken has many excellent programs in place to support students, explore diversity topics, and engage in academic discourse. What seems to be absent is a purposeful and strategic approach to make certain that we are promoting understanding and appreciation of diverse learners by enhancing the campus climate. To accomplish this, we will need to initiate a comprehensive initiative that collects and reviews current programs and practices, and determines where the gaps are and what is needed to increase competency around diversity topics. We have a core team in place to help launch this initiative, but I hope you will be willing to assist in this effort as well.

As always, USC Aiken will continue to work to align policies and practices with our mission and values. I look forward to working with all of you to address the needs of our diverse community of learners, and supporting the professional growth of our employees.

Sincerely,

Sandra J. Jordan
Chancellor



Dr. Jordan



Mr. Johnson