

CS 3.4.9 - Academic Support Services

The institution provides appropriate academic support services.

Compliance Finding: In Compliance

Narrative:

The University of South Carolina Beaufort (USC Beaufort) provides a broad range of academic services in support of its student population. Services range from those that are directly tied to specific classes (faculty office hours, course laboratory, and recitation sections) to broader services designed to help students in general academic preparation and planning (Center for Instructional Technology and Academic Resources, Academic Advising, Career Counseling, Opportunity Scholars Program (OSP), Disability Services, and University Libraries). These programs are assessed on an annual basis using a variety of institutional benchmarks including usage statistics, consumer evaluations, staff evaluations, and overall student success in academic programs. These findings are synthesized into annual reports which are submitted to the appropriate Vice Chancellor.

Office Hours

USC Beaufort's policy, as stated in the Faculty Manual [\[i\]](#), requires that all faculty members hold weekly office hours in support of their classes. During this time students can visit with faculty regarding difficulties they are facing in a particular class as well as consult with their professor on their academic degree progress and their professional future. A wide range of classes, mostly in science and technology disciplines, provide recitation sections, problem sections, and workshops supplemental to instructional sections in academic support of enrolled students.

Center for Instructional Technology and Academic Resources [\[ii\]](#)

The Center assists USC Beaufort in its mission by supporting the instructional technology and academic resource needs of the entire USC Beaufort community through instructional design, training, consulting, tutoring, testing, and other services. The Center connects USC Beaufort faculty, instructors and staff to the latest advancements in instructional technology and supplemental instruction opportunities. The Center connects students with the technologies they will need in a technology rich environment in both work and life, and helps them master effective ways of learning in the different disciplines. The academic support services under the supervision of the Center are listed below.

Technology Workshops: The Center conducts workshops on a variety of technology topics to help students become more effective and efficient learners. Workshops are free and are scheduled throughout each semester. Each student taking a class with an online component is required to take the TECHSHOP. This standardized online tutorial provides students with basic information regarding the access and use of online technologies at USC Beaufort.

Tutoring Services: Tutoring services are available to all current USC Beaufort students in the different disciplines. The purpose of the tutoring program is to help students become independent and successful learners by assisting them to develop good study skills, to increase

their understanding of course content, and to develop a positive attitude toward learning. Scheduled and drop-in tutoring are available to all currently enrolled USC Beaufort students.

Writing Center: The Writing Center offers USC Beaufort students support in any aspect of the research and writing process. Writing Fellows work with students to find specific strategies to improve their writing. Students can schedule meetings with writing fellows at any stage of the writing process.

Testing Services: Testing services are provided from the beginning of the prospective students' admission requirements, and continue as an integral part of each student's academic progress through graduation, including graduate admissions and professional certification/licensure requirements. Placement tests in English, Foreign Language and Mathematics are required of all incoming USC Beaufort students. New students are tested in conjunction with New Student Orientation programs.

Academic Skills Workshops: In an effort to provide students with academic support and guidance beyond the classroom experience the Center offers workshops that address Study Skills, Learning Styles, Note-Taking Strategies, Test-Taking Strategies, Finals Prep and other topics as requested.

The Director of the Center for Instructional Technology and Academic Resources performs statistical analyses for the Spring, Summer and Fall semesters. All students who receive service from the Center are surveyed for their evaluation of the services provided. The entire student body will be surveyed once a year regarding technology training and access. During the fall of 2007 [iii], 251 students requested service from the Center. Of those requests, 135 were technology related and 116 were academic specific. In addition, there were 354 one-on-one tutoring sessions held during the fall of 2007, and 113 different students requested and received tutoring at the Center. An average of eight students attended each of five final exam review sessions.

University 101

The University 101 course provides an introduction to the nature and importance of university education and a general orientation to the functions and resources of USC Beaufort. The course helps new students adjust to USC Beaufort, develop a better understanding of the learning process and acquire essential academic success skills.

It also provides students with a support group in a critical year by examining problems common to the new student experience. The sample syllabus for University 101 provides documentation regarding the learning goals and objectives [iv].

Academic Advising [v]

In an effort to provide academic guidance, students are assigned to either a faculty or staff academic advisor upon acceptance to USC Beaufort. Students who have declared an intended major are assigned a faculty academic advisor within that department [vi]. Students who are undeclared are assigned a freshman advisor. The student and his/her advisor must meet at least once a semester to plan a course of study for the following semester.

University Library [vii]

USC Beaufort maintains two full-service library facilities. In support of all courses, including those off-site, the library maintains its own web page and creates online tutorials for student use, including the "Bare Bones Tutorial," created in 2000, which has been accessed by individuals worldwide. Additional library pages have been created covering topics such as plagiarism, copyright, and citing sources, and subject specific resource guides. The library provides scanning services, and access to electronic reserves through Blackboard (the university's course management system), and maintains special print reserve items. Students and faculty may connect to library resources from homes and other off-campus locations via a secure proxy server. They may communicate with library staff and receive interactive support services through a "Live Library Chat," Skype, and Instant Messaging via AIM, Yahoo, and MSN. More information can be found under the Compliance Standard 3.8.1.

Office of Disabilities Services [viii]

The Office of Disabilities Services provides equal access to all programs at USC Beaufort for students with documented disabilities. All faculty members are required [ix] to include a statement about Disability Services in their syllabi, thus making each student aware of the services available to them. The number of students registered with Disability Services increased from 7 in the 2006-2007 school year to 40 in Fall 2007. Disability Services works in conjunction with the Center for Instruction Technology and Academic Resources to provide appropriate accommodations to all disabled students. Accommodations are decided on a case-by-case basis and may vary for each student based on their specific disability. The Disability Services Committee (consisting of faculty and staff) meets and jointly decides on accommodations for each student based on the documentation provided, a student questionnaire and intake form, and any other information provided by the student. Accommodations are renewed on a semester basis, which allows for changes in accommodations if needed. A variety of print resources can also be found in the Disability Services office.

Opportunity Scholars Program (OSP) [x]

The Opportunity Scholars Program (OSP) is a student support services initiative funded by the U. S. Department of Education, Office of TRIO Programs. Since 1997, the University of South Carolina Beaufort has received federal funds through TRIO to support and increase the college retention and graduation rates of first-generation, low-income students, and students with documented disabilities. OSP is funded to serve approximately 160 students each year distributed across the North and South Campuses. The program provides a myriad of services to enhance student academic development, motivate students toward completion of a four-year, post-secondary degree, and encourage students to consider graduate school or other professional education beyond college. Each OSP student is assigned to an Education Specialist who works one-on-one to monitor academic progress and address other issues that may interfere with student progress and well being. The program also provides tutoring, peer mentoring, advisement, cultural enrichment, computer assistance, and financial aid counseling. Annual Performance Reports are submitted to the U.S. Department of Education in the fall of each academic year. The data reported evaluates the program's success in achieving each of the objectives approved by the Department. During the 2006-2007 school year, the OSP offered six workshops with an average attendance of ten students per campus, two graduate school visits

with an average participation of 20 students, and six cultural activities with an average attendance of ten students per activity.

Career Services [xi]

The Office of Career Services offers career planning services to all students at USC Beaufort. The career planning process begins with students exploring a major and career path during their freshman year. Career Services provides assessments that evaluate a student's personality, interests, values, and skills in order to best match a student's skill set to a desired career field. After choosing a career path, students are then encouraged to gain experience within their chosen field. Career Services makes an effort to partner with each academic department to provide appropriate career-related and experiential learning opportunities within the local community for part-time jobs or summer internships. While researching possible job opportunities, students may use a variety of print resources available in the Career Services Library. Additionally, an online posting of available positions can be accessed through the Student Life website as a way to connect students with employers. To serve USC Beaufort's traditional and nontraditional students, both entry level positions and positions requiring prior experience are posted. Finally, as students enter their senior year and begin looking for permanent employment, individual appointments are available through Career Services to help students with resumes and cover letters, interviewing skills, and job search strategies. Career Services plans to administer a post graduation survey in order to evaluate the above services and the effectiveness. A full range of print materials can be found in Career Services office.

Effectiveness of Academic Support Services

As mentioned above all academic support service units conduct an annual assessment. To determine the specific areas for concern, a variety of survey instruments are administered, such as exit interviews with transferring students, UNIV 101 course evaluation, and the Information Technology Service and Support (ITSS) survey [xii]. A review of the past year of the National Survey of Student Engagement [xiii] (NSSE) data shows that 74% of USC Beaufort students feel that this institution has a substantial commitment to their academic success. Academic support service units reference these surveys in their annual reports and determine what actions to take for continuous improvement.

Supporting Documentation

- [i USC Beaufort Faculty Manual](#)
- [ii Center for Instructional Technology and Academic Resources](#)
- [iii Center for Instructional Technology and Academic Resources Fall 2007 Audit](#)
- [iv University 101 Syllabi](#)
- [v USC Beaufort Academic Advising](#)
- [vi USC Beaufort Faculty Academic Advising Statement](#)
- [vii USC Beaufort University Library](#)
- [viii USC Beaufort Office of Disabilities Services](#)
- [ix USC Beaufort Faculty Manual -- Disability Services Statement Syllabi](#)
- [x USC Beaufort Opportunity Scholars Program](#)
- [xi USC Beaufort Career Services](#)
- [xii Information Technology Service and Support Survey](#)
- [xiii National Survey of Student Engagement](#)