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MEMORANDUM

To: Chairman Tim Hofferth and Members, SC Commission on Higher Education

From: Chair Terrye Seckinger, and Members, Committee on Academic Affairs and Licensing

Annual Report on Admission Standards for First-Time Entering Freshmen, Fall 2014

Background

In 1988, in response to Act 629, the Commission on Higher Education began to report data related to first time entering freshmen for each South Carolina public institution. The act, *The Cutting Edge*, required the Commission to monitor the admission standards at the public colleges and universities to comply as follows:

- In consultation and coordination with the public institutions of higher learning in this state, the State Commission on Higher Education shall ensure that minimal admission standards are maintained by the institutions.
- The Commission, with the institutions, shall monitor the effect of compliance with admission prerequisites that are effective in fall, 1988 (Section 59-104-10(A)).

In addition, in Act 359 of 1996, Section 59-103-45(3), the General Assembly reiterated the importance of the Commission reporting admission standards to include these categories: freshmen applications, acceptances, and enrollment; minimum admissions requirements set by individual institutions; mean SAT and ACT scores for freshmen classes; high school course prerequisite compliance; and, information on provisional students.

Findings

The following findings can be concluded from the data in the attached *Annual Report on Admissions Standards for First-Time Entering Freshman, FY 2014-15*. In Fall 2014, 85.4% of applicable first-time

freshmen met all the prerequisites compared to 85.3% in 2013, 91.7% in 2012 and 87.8% in 2011. Data indicates that among the four-year institutions from Fall 2013 to Fall 2014, the percentage of freshmen meeting high school course prerequisites has slightly decreased. Eight of 12 institutions (66.6%) demonstrated increases in freshmen meeting high school course prerequisites, while four institutions (33.3%) demonstrated decreases in freshmen meeting high school course prerequisites.

Retention rates among students who did not meet the high school course prerequisites are lower for the majority of the institutions. Three institutions showed an increase in freshmen-to-sophomore retention rates for students who did not meet the high school course prerequisites, while nine institutions showed a decrease in retention rates for the same category of students.

Institutions continue to adjust admission requirements for first-time entering freshmen. The required minimum SAT/ACT scores are lower for students with a higher GPA and high school class rank at most institutions.

Finally, six institutions (USC Columbia, Coastal Carolina, College of Charleston, Francis Marion, USC Upstate, and Winthrop) require the new writing component of the SAT. Four institutions continue to analyze the data to determine whether the writing component should become part of the admission requirements and/or be used for supplemental information as part of a holistic review of the student's application.

Attachments

Attached is the annual report on 2014 admission standards compliance for first-time entering freshmen at South Carolina public senior colleges and universities. The Report is presented in five parts:

- [Part I: Fall 2014 Applications, Acceptances, and Enrollments](#)
- [Part II: Fall 2014 Data Related to High School Course Prerequisites](#)
- [Part III: Fall 2014 SAT and ACT Scores](#)
- [Part IV: Fall 2014 Provisionally Admitted Students](#)
- [Part V: Fall 2015 Minimum Admission Standards](#)

The data for Parts II-IV and the enrollment data included in Part I were electronically supplied by the institutions via the Commission on Higher Education Management Information System (CHEMIS).

Recommendation

The Committee on Academic Affairs and Licensing recommends the Commission endorse this report for transmittal to the South Carolina Department of Education and the chairs of the House and Senate Education Committees.

**ANNUAL REPORT ON ADMISSION STANDARDS FOR
FIRST-TIME ENTERING FRESHMEN, FALL 2014
SOUTH CAROLINA PUBLIC SENIOR COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES**

- [Part I: Fall 2014 Applications, Acceptances, and Enrollments](#)
- [Part II: Fall 2014 Data Related to High School Course Prerequisites](#)
- [Part III: Fall 2014 SAT and ACT Scores](#)
- [Part IV: Fall 2014 Provisionally Admitted Students](#)
- [Part V: Fall 2015 Minimum Admission Standards](#)

Part I: Applications, Acceptances, and Enrollments

In Fall 2014, the state's public senior colleges and universities received 94,735 applications from applicants seeking admissions as first-time freshmen. Of these, 60,373 (63.7%) met the minimum admission standards at one or more of the public senior institutions and were offered admission. Of those who were offered admission, 18,432 (30.5%) applicants enrolled.

Table 1 shows the number and percentage of students who applied, were accepted, and enrolled at each public senior institution.

Table 1 Applications, Acceptances, and Enrollments S.C. Public Senior Institutions, Fall 2014					
Institutions	Number of Applications ¹	Number of Applicants Offered Admission ¹	Percent of Applicants Offered Admission	Number Accepted and Enrolled	Percent Accepted and Enrolled
Research Institutions					
Clemson	20,757	10,692	51.5%	3,475	32.5%
USC Columbia	23,341	15,455	66.2%	4,980	32.2%
Total	44,098	26,147	59.3%	8,455	32.3%
Comprehensive Teaching Colleges & Universities					
The Citadel	2,625	1,983	75.5%	618	31.2%
Coastal Carolina	14,799	9,412	63.6%	2,375	25.2%
College Of Charleston	11,179	8,722	78.0%	2,166	24.8%
Francis Marion	3,759	2,222	59.1%	758	34.1%
Lander	2,963	1,712	57.8%	554	32.4%
S.C. State	2,911	2,461	84.5%	641	26.0%
USC Aiken	2,101	1,463	69.6%	643	44.0%
USC Beaufort	1,685	1,110	65.9%	402	36.2%
USC Upstate	4,069	1,905	46.8%	801	42.0%
Winthrop	4,546	3,236	71.2%	1,019	31.5%
Total	50,637	34,226	67.6%	9,977	29.2%
Grand Total Senior Institutions	94,735	60,373	63.7%	18,432	30.5%

¹ Reported by the institutions.

As shown in **Table 1**, South Carolina State University offered admission to the largest percentage (84.5%) of students who applied, but only enrolled 26% of students offered admission. Three institutions, The Citadel, College of Charleston, and Winthrop, offered admission to 70-80% of applicants. Four institutions, USC Columbia, Coastal Carolina, USC Aiken, and USC Beaufort, offered admission to 60-69% of applicants. Three institutions, Clemson, Francis Marion, and Lander, offered admission to 50-59% of applicants. USC Upstate offered admission to the lowest percentage of applicants (42%). USC Aiken enrolled the largest percentage (44%) of students offered admission.

A comparison of data from Fall 2013 to Fall 2014 shows the percentage of students accepted and enrolled decreased for seven institutions: USC Columbia, College of Charleston, Lander, South Carolina State, USC Aiken, USC Beaufort, and Winthrop. Lander University experienced the largest decrease in the percent accepted and enrolled (-4.8%).

Table 2 provides a five-year overview of applications, acceptances, and enrollments. The number of applicants has increased by 14,446 over the last five years, and the number enrolled has increased by 1,150 students. However, the percentage of applicants who were accepted and enrolled **has decreased** by 1.87% from 2010-2014.

TABLE 2 Applications, Acceptances, and Enrollments S.C. Public Senior Institutions Five Year Comparison					
Year	Number of Applications	Number of Applicants Offered Admission	Percent of Applicants Offered Admission	Number Accepted and Enrolled	Percent Accepted and Enrolled
2010	80,289	53,333	66.4%	17,282	32.4%
2011	84,366	55,419	65.7%	17,671	31.9%
2012	88,322	57,118	64.7%	18,040	31.6%
2013	87,745	57,492	65.5%	17,938	31.2%
2014	94,735	60,373	63.7%	18,432	30.5%

Part II: Data Related to High School Course Prerequisites

Since Fall 1988, public four-year colleges and universities in South Carolina require that applicants have completed certain high school courses before being admitted. The table below shows the high school course prerequisites that were implemented in 2011.

<i>High School Course Prerequisites 2011</i>
Four units of English: At least two units must have strong grammar and composition components, at least one must be in English literature, and at least one must be in American literature. Completion of College Preparatory English I, II, III, and IV will meet this criterion.
Four units of Mathematics: These include Algebra I (for which Applied Mathematics I and II may count together as a substitute, if a student successfully completes Algebra II), Algebra II, and Geometry. A fourth higher-level mathematics course should be selected from among Algebra III/trigonometry, pre-calculus, calculus, statistics, discrete mathematics, or a capstone mathematics course and should be taken during the senior year.
Three units of Laboratory Science: Two units must be taken in two different fields of the physical or life sciences and selected from among biology, chemistry, or physics. The third unit may be from the same field as one of the first two units (biology, chemistry, or physics) or from any laboratory science for which biology and/or chemistry is a prerequisite. Courses in earth science, general physical science, or introductory or general environmental science for which biology and/or chemistry is not a prerequisite will not meet this requirement. It is strongly recommended that students take physical science (taught as a laboratory science) as a prerequisite to the three required units of laboratory science outlined in this section. It is also strongly recommended that students desiring to pursue careers in science, mathematics, engineering or technology take one course in all three fields.
Two units of the same Foreign Language.
Three units of Social Science: One unit of U.S. History is required; a half unit of Economics and a half unit in Government are strongly recommended.
One unit of Elective: One unit must be taken as an elective. A college preparatory course in Computer Science (i.e., one involving significant programming content, not simply keyboarding) is strongly recommended for this elective. Other acceptable electives include college preparatory courses in English; fine arts; foreign languages; social science; humanities; laboratory science (excluding earth science, general physical science, general environmental science, and other introductory science courses for which biology and/or chemistry is not a prerequisite); or mathematics above the level of Algebra II.
One unit of Physical Education or ROTC.
One unit of Fine Arts: One unit in Appreciation of, History of, or Performance in one of the fine arts.

Each institution may make admissions exceptions to include the following: 1) students who do not meet all of the prerequisites in cases where the failure to meet one or more prerequisites is due to circumstances beyond the reasonable control of the student; or 2) students who have taken the Tech Prep (Applied Academics) courses rather than the required college preparatory curriculum described above and who meet all other institutional admission criteria.

Table 3 shows the number and percentage of applicable first-time freshmen meeting all of the high school course prerequisites. As shown in **Table 3, Grand Total**, the proportion of all applicable first-time freshmen meeting all of the prerequisites **increased** from 87.8% in 2011 to 91.7% in 2012. There was a **decrease** from 91.7% in 2012 to 85.3% in 2013 while there was a slight **increase** from 85.3% in 2013 to 87.4% in 2014. The percentage of students meeting all of the prerequisites continues to be below the 1999 average of 98.15%. Of the four-year institutions, there were no institutions in Fall 2014 that met or exceeded the 1999 average.

Table 3
Percent of Applicable¹ First-Time Freshmen Meeting High School Course Prerequisites

	2011			2012			2013			2014			Percentage Change from 2011 to 2014
	Applicable Freshman	Number Meeting Prerequisites	Percent Meeting Prerequisites	Applicable Freshman	Number Meeting Prerequisites	Percent Meeting Prerequisites	Applicable Freshman	Number Meeting Prerequisites	Percent Meeting Prerequisites	Applicable Freshman	Number Meeting Prerequisites	Percent Meeting Prerequisites	
Institutions													
Research Institutions													
Clemson	2932	2457	83.8%	3463	3,396	98.1%	3289	2,786	84.7%	3475	2,966	85.4%	1.6%
USC Columbia	4542	3782	83.3%	4549	3,861	84.9%	5009	4,076	81.4%	4927	3,963	80.4%	-2.9%
Total	7,475	6,239	83.5%	8,012	7,257	90.6%	8,298	6,862	82.7%	8,402	6,929	82.5%	-1.0%
Comprehensive Teaching Colleges & Universities													0.0%
The Citadel	630	559	88.7%	676	615	91.0%	645	568	88.1%	539	479	88.9%	0.2%
Coastal Carolina	2128	1966	92.3%	2176	2,039	93.7%	2064	2,014	97.6%	2348	2,280	97.1%	4.8%
College of Charleston	2330	2309	99.0%	2135	2,097	98.2%	2107	2,072	98.3%	2164	2,120	98.0%	-1.0%
Francis Marion	743	667	89.8%	814	732	89.9%	744	682	91.7%	758	723	95.4%	5.6%
Lander	588	520	88.4%	559	495	88.6%	505	449	88.9%	533	497	93.2%	4.8%
SC State	829	809	97.6%	664	622	93.7%	566	526	92.9%	641	570	88.9%	-8.7%
USC Aiken	593	481	81.1%	512	453	88.5%	634	532	83.9%	605	528	87.3%	6.2%
USC Beaufort	416	305	73.3%	399	329	82.5%	397	288	72.5%	388	275	70.9%	-2.4%
USC Upstate	785	646	82.3%	767	699	91.1%	766	640	83.6%	784	655	83.5%	1.2%
Winthrop	963	872	90.6%	1120	1,023	91.3%	1077	1,010	93.8%	1011	955	94.5%	3.9%
Total	10,007	9,134	91.3%	9,822	9,104	92.7%	9,505	8,781	92.4%	9,771	9,082	92.9%	1.6%
Total Senior Institutions	17,482	15,371	87.9%	17,834	16,361	91.7%	17,803	15,643	87.9%	18,173	16,011	88.1%	0.2%
Two-Year Regional Campuses of USC²													0.0%
USC Lancaster	105	89	84.8%	98	83	84.7%	363	188	51.8%	319	145	45.5%	-39.3%
USC Salkehatchie	17	1	5.9%	20	17	85.0%	287	13	4.5%	256	3	1.2%	-4.7%
USC Sumter	94	93	98.9%	82	81	98.8%	226	169	74.8%	216	151	69.9%	-29.0%
USC-Union	14	3	21.4%	4	4	100.0%	100	3	3.0%	134	0	0.0%	-21.4%
Total USC Two-Year	230	186	80.9%	204	185	90.7%	976	373	38.2%	925	299	32.3%	-48.6%
Grand Total	17,712	15,559	87.8%	18,038	16,546	91.7%	18,779	16,016	85.3%	19,098	16,310	85.4%	-2.4%

¹ Not applicable to foreign students, GED students, and students who graduated prior to 1988.

² At the USC two-year campuses, the prerequisites are applicable to those students classified by the institution as baccalaureate-ready and accepted as such.

Institutional Findings

As shown in **Table 3**, for Fall 2014, five senior institutions, Coastal Carolina, College of Charleston, Francis Marion, Lander, and Winthrop show a compliance rate between 90%-100%; five senior institutions, Clemson, South Carolina State, The Citadel, USC Columbia, USC Aiken, and USC Upstate, show a compliance rate between 80%-90%; and one senior institution, USC Beaufort, shows a compliance rate of less than 80%. Five four-year institutions, The Citadel, Coastal Carolina, College of Charleston, South Carolina State, and USC Columbia, showed a decrease in compliance rates from Fall 2013 to Fall 2014. All five of these institutions reported Foreign Language and Fine Arts as areas where prerequisites were not met. In addition, two institutions, The Citadel and USC Beaufort, indicated Lab Science as an area in which prerequisites are not met.

Staff has begun to ask institutions if new admissions requirements or other developments in institutional mission or student recruiting can help explain the most recent trends in increases or decreases in compliance rates. For example, in 2006, institutional representatives communicated to CHE staff that a reason for a lower compliance rate was because of “out-of-state” students. As a result, the percent of applicable first-time freshmen meeting high school course prerequisites was divided into “In-State Only” (**Table 3A**) and “Out-of-State Only” (**Table 3B**) to determine if admission of out-of-state students produced a decrease in the percentage of first-time freshmen meeting the high school course prerequisites. A comparison between the last column of both **Table 3A** and **Table 3B** indicates that in Fall 2014 the percentage of first-time in-state freshmen meeting high school course prerequisites was higher for all but one of the institutions than for out-of-state freshmen, South Carolina State University. Eleven institutions (Clemson, USC Columbia, The Citadel, Coastal Carolina, College of Charleston, Francis Marion, Lander, USC Aiken, USC Beaufort, USC Upstate, and Winthrop) show a decrease of 2.5% - 42% between in-state, first-time freshmen meeting high school course prerequisites, compared to out-of-state, first-time freshmen. Therefore, the decrease in compliance reported in **Table 3** may be attributed to out-of-state students because of a larger percentage decrease from the previous years as compared to “In-State Only” students.

As **Table 3A** and **Table 3B** show, the decrease in compliance reported in **Table 3** for four of the institutions, USC Columbia, College of Charleston, South Carolina State University, and USC Beaufort can be attributed to admission of out-of-state students.

As **Table 3B** shows, five institutions, The Citadel, Francis Marion, Lander, USC Aiken, and USC Upstate, improved their compliance rate for out-of-state students in 2014. However, six senior institutions report a compliance rate for out-of-state students below the average of 82.7% for all institutions, ranging from 36.1% to 79.8%.

USC Beaufort’s compliance rate increased since becoming a four-year institution in Fall 2004. While there was a 3.2% decrease in compliance from Fall 2009 to Fall 2010, and a 10.6% decrease from Fall 2010 to Fall 2011, the institution experienced an increase of 9.2% from Fall 2011 to Fall 2012 with the revised requirements. However, USC Beaufort demonstrates the lowest compliance for the last four years. The 9.2% increase in compliance rate between 2011 and 2012 (73.3%-82.5%) was followed by a 10% decrease in compliance rate between 2012 and 2013 (82.5%-72.5%), then a 1.7% decrease in compliance rate between 2013 and 2014 (72.5%-70.9%), resulting in an overall 2.4% decrease in compliance from Fall 2011 to Fall 2014. The data received from USC Beaufort indicated freshmen did not meet the prerequisites in English (5.4%), Mathematics (6.4%), Lab Science (12.2%), and Fine Arts (5.4%).

Table 3A
Percent of Applicable¹ First-Time Freshmen Meeting High School Course Prerequisites
In-State Only

Institutions	2011			2012			2013			2014			Percentage Change from 2011 to 2014
	Applicable Freshman	Number Meeting Prerequisites	Percent Meeting Prerequisites	Applicable Freshman	Number Meeting Prerequisites	Percent Meeting Prerequisites	Applicable Freshman	Number Meeting Prerequisites	Percent Meeting Prerequisites	Applicable Freshman	Number Meeting Prerequisites	Percent Meeting Prerequisites	
Research Institutions													
Clemson	1,841	1,585	86.1%	2,114	2,073	98.1%	2,000	1,756	87.8%	2,104	1,895	90.1%	4.0%
USC Columbia	2,598	2,300	88.5%	2,458	2,255	91.7%	2,569	2,289	89.1%	2,460	2,165	88.0%	-0.5%
Total	4,439	3,885	87.5%	4,572	4,328	94.7%	4,569	4,045	88.5%	4,564	4,060	89.0%	1.5%
Comprehensive Teaching Colleges & Universities													0.0%
The Citadel	283	265	93.6%	347	337	97.1%	339	316	93.2%	275	259	94.2%	0.6%
Coastal Carolina	967	920	95.1%	1,015	983	96.8%	952	936	98.3%	966	952	98.6%	3.5%
College of Charleston	1,166	1,158	99.3%	1,068	1,059	99.2%	1,113	1,104	99.2%	1,195	1,185	99.2%	-0.1%
Francis Marion	702	632	90.0%	782	705	90.2%	710	658	92.7%	715	683	95.5%	5.5%
Lander	563	498	88.5%	522	467	89.5%	473	429	90.7%	508	476	93.7%	5.2%
SC State	566	551	97.3%	509	483	94.9%	439	405	92.3%	445	388	87.2%	-10.1%
USC Aiken	522	443	84.9%	470	423	90.0%	549	478	87.1%	537	481	89.6%	4.7%
USC Beaufort	332	250	75.3%	322	281	87.3%	313	251	80.2%	324	253	78.1%	2.8%
USC Upstate	729	609	83.5%	703	653	92.9%	697	601	86.2%	712	610	85.7%	2.2%
Winthrop	863	791	91.7%	1,014	940	92.7%	1,002	949	94.7%	917	880	96.0%	4.3%
Total	6,693	6,117	91.4%	6,752	6,331	93.8%	6,587	6,127	93.0%	6,594	6,167	93.5%	2.1%
Total Senior Institutions	11,132	10,002	89.8%	11,324	10,659	94.1%	11,156	10,172	91.2%	11,158	10,227	91.7%	1.9%
Two-Year Regional Campuses of USC²													0.0%
USC Lancaster	103	88	85.4%	97	83	85.6%	340	181	53.2%	308	143	46.4%	-39.0%
USC Salkehatchie	17	1	5.9%	20	17	85.0%	37	13	35.1%	4	3	75.0%	69.1%
USC Sumter	92	91	98.9%	81	80	98.8%	214	166	77.6%	198	149	75.3%	-23.6%
USC-Union	13	3	23.1%	4	4	100.0%	13	3	23.1%	0			-23.1%
Total USC Two-Year	225	183	81.3%	202	184	91.1%	604	363	60.1%	510	295	57.8%	-23.5%
Grand Total	11,357	10,185	89.7%	11,526	10,843	94.1%	11,760	10,535	89.6%	11,668	10,522	90.2%	0.5%

¹ Not applicable to foreign students, GED students, and students who graduated prior to 1988.

² At the USC two-year campuses, the prerequisites are applicable to those students classified by the institution as baccalaureate-ready and accepted as such.

Table 3B
Percent of Applicable¹ First-Time Freshmen Meeting High School Course Prerequisites
Out-of-State Only

Institutions	2011			2012			2013			2014			Percentage Change from 2011 to 2014
	Applicable Freshman	Number Meeting Prerequisites	Percent Meeting Prerequisites	Applicable Freshman	Number Meeting Prerequisites	Percent Meeting Prerequisites	Applicable Freshman	Number Meeting Prerequisites	Percent Meeting Prerequisites	Applicable Freshman	Number Meeting Prerequisites	Percent Meeting Prerequisites	
Research Institutions													
Clemson	1,091	872	79.9%	1349	1323	98.1%	1289	1030	79.9%	1371	1071	78.1%	-1.8%
USC Columbia	1,944	1,482	76.2%	2091	1606	76.8%	2388	1787	74.8%	2455	1798	73.2%	-3.0%
Total	3,036	2,354	77.5%	3,440	2,929	85.1%	3,677	2,817	76.6%	3,826	2,869	75.0%	-2.5%
Comprehensive Teaching Colleges & Universities													0.0%
The Citadel	347	294	84.7%	329	278	84.5%	306	252	82.4%	264	220	83.3%	-1.4%
Coastal Carolina	1,161	1,046	90.1%	1161	1056	91.0%	1112	1078	96.9%	1382	1328	96.1%	6.0%
College of Charleston	1,166	1,151	98.7%	1067	1038	97.3%	994	968	97.4%	969	935	96.5%	-2.2%
Francis Marion	41	35	85.4%	32	27	84.4%	34	24	70.6%	43	40	93.0%	7.6%
Lander	25	22	88.0%	37	28	75.7%	32	20	62.5%	25	21	84.0%	-4.0%
SC State	263	258	98.1%	155	139	89.7%	127	121	95.3%	196	182	92.9%	-5.2%
USC Aiken	71	38	53.5%	42	30	71.4%	82	54	65.9%	66	47	71.2%	17.7%
USC Beaufort	84	55	65.5%	77	48	62.3%	79	37	46.8%	61	22	36.1%	-29.4%
USC Upstate	56	37	66.1%	64	46	71.9%	58	39	67.2%	62	45	72.6%	6.5%
Winthrop	100	81	81.0%	106	83	78.3%	75	61	81.3%	94	75	79.8%	-1.2%
Total	3,314	3,017	91.0%	3,070	2,773	90.3%	2,899	2,654	91.5%	3,162	2,915	92.2%	1.2%
Total Senior Institutions	6,350	5,371	84.6%	6,510	5,702	87.6%	6,576	5,471	83.2%	6,988	5,784	82.8%	-1.8%
Two-Year Regional Campuses of USC²													0.0%
USC Lancaster	2	1	50.0%	1	0	0.0%	13	7	53.8%	6	2	33.3%	-16.7%
USC Salkehatchie	0			0			1	0	0.0%	0			0.0%
USC Sumter	2	2	100.0%	1	1	100.0%	6	3	50.0%	5	2	40.0%	-60.0%
USC-Union	1	0	0.0%	0			0			0			0.0%
Total USC Two-Year	5	3	60.0%	2	1	50.0%	20	10	50.0%	11	4	36.4%	-23.6%
Grand Total	6,355	5,374	84.6%	6,512	5,703	87.6%	6,596	5,481	83.1%	6,999	5,788	82.7%	-1.9%

¹ Not applicable to foreign students, GED students, and students who graduated prior to 1988

² At the USC two-year campuses, the prerequisites are applicable to those students classified by the institution as baccalaureate-ready and accepted as such.

For the fourth time, this report examines the freshman-to-sophomore retention rate of first-time freshmen in relationship to the prerequisite compliance data. **Table 3C** shows the retention rate of first-time freshmen who did not meet the recommended high school course prerequisites. Nine of the 12 senior institutions showed a **lower** retention rate for students who did not meet the high school course requirements (Clemson, USC Columbia, Coastal Carolina, Francis Marion, Lander, South Carolina State, USC Beaufort, USC Upstate, and Winthrop), while three of the senior institutions showed a **higher** retention rate for students who did not meet the high school course requirements (The Citadel, College of Charleston, and USC Aiken). These three institutions will be asked to suggest reasons for this development with the anticipation of inviting them to describe this success to the other institutions. Francis Marion, USC Beaufort, and USC Upstate showed the largest differences in retention rates between students who met the requirements compared to those who did not meet them, with USC Aiken showing the smallest difference.

Table 3C Fall 2013 First-Time Freshmen Not Meeting High School Prerequisites Retained at Same Institution in Fall 2014 S.C. Public Senior Institutions							
Institution		Applicable Freshmen Meeting Prerequisites			Applicable Freshmen Not Meeting Prerequisites		
Research Institutions	Applicable Freshmen	Number	Retained	Percentage	Number	Retained	Percentage
Clemson	3,289	2,786	2,595	93.10%	503	439	87.30%
USC Columbia	5,009	4,076	3,580	87.80%	933	803	86.10%
Comprehensive Teaching Colleges & Universities							
The Citadel	645	568	480	84.50%	77	71	92.20%
Coastal Carolina	2,064	2,014	1,346	66.80%	50	30	60.00%
College of Charleston	2,107	2,072	1,631	78.70%	35	28	80.00%
Francis Marion	744	682	474	69.50%	62	34	54.80%
Lander University	505	449	310	69.00%	56	36	64.30%
South Carolina State	566	526	329	62.50%	40	23	57.50%
USC Aiken	634	532	336	63.20%	102	65	63.70%
USC Beaufort	397	288	148	51.40%	109	42	38.50%
USC Upstate	766	640	471	73.60%	126	78	61.90%
Winthrop	1,077	1,010	777	76.90%	67	49	73.10%

On average, there was a 4.8% decrease in retention rates for students who did not meet the prerequisites compared to those who did. Based on the data, students who met the high school course prerequisites were more likely to remain in college and transition to their sophomore year.

Part III: SAT and ACT Scores as Indicators of Academic Preparation, Fall 2014

This report includes the average SAT/ACT scores for all first-time entering freshmen. As of this report, the majority of students attending South Carolina institutions took the SAT rather than the ACT as a college entrance examination. The scores of students who report only ACT scores have been converted to SAT equivalencies using the ACT-SAT concordance tables developed by the Educational Testing Service (ETS). The converted scores are then averaged with the SAT scores to arrive at an SAT/ACT combined mean.

When ACT scores are converted into SAT equivalents and combined into the mean, the SAT/ACT combined mean is slightly lower than the SAT combined mean excluding ACT scores (except for the research institutions). In general, this lowered mean is because more than one SAT combined score (verbal and math) converts into the same ACT score, whereas only one ACT composite score converts to an SAT combined score except at the lowest end of the range. Depending on where students' scores fall within a range (including ACT/SAT equivalencies in the calculation of the mean), they could either increase or decrease the combined mean at that institution. **Table 4** shows the following: 1) institutions by sector; 2) the SAT/ACT combined mean; 3) the combined mean for SAT scores only; and 4) the percentage of students reporting ACT scores only.

Table 5 compares the SAT/ACT combined mean for each institution for the most recent five years. Eight senior institutions (Clemson, USC Columbia, The Citadel, Francis Marion, Lander, South Carolina State, USC Aiken, and Winthrop) showed an **increase** in the average combined SAT/ACT mean between 2013 and 2014 while four

Table 4
SAT/ACT Scores of First-Time Entering Freshmen, Fall 2014
(Including Foreign and Provisional Students and Students Age 22 and Above)
S.C. Public Senior Institutions

Institutions	SAT & ACT Combined Mean ¹	SAT (Only) Combined Mean	% Reporting ACT Score
Research Institutions			
Clemson	1264	1252	45.1%
USC Columbia	1218	1210	41.3%
Average Research Institutions	1237	1227	42.9%
Comprehensive Teaching Colleges & Universities			
The Citadel	1083	1091	42.2%
Coastal Carolina	1001	1001	36.3%
College of Charleston	1141	1130	45.5%
Francis Marion	942	960	49.5%
Lander	985	982	42.1%
S.C. State	828	826	62.3%
USC Aiken	988	986	34.1%
USC Beaufort	948	947	39.3%
USC Upstate	971	959	38.6%
Winthrop	1056	1055	41.7%
Average Comprehensive Teaching Institutions	1021	1017	42.4%
Average Senior Institutions	1120	1111	42.6%
Two-Year Regional Campuses of USC			
USC Lancaster	882	899	41.7%
USC Salkehatchie	802	836	53.9%
USC Sumter	944	951	49.1%
USC Union	799	814	35.5%
Average Two-Year Regional Campuses of USC	863	823	45.8%

¹ ACT scores converted to SAT equivalencies using the ACT/SAT Concordance Tables.

senior institutions (Coastal Carolina, College of Charleston, USC Beaufort, and USC Upstate) showed a **decrease**. The College of Charleston showed the largest decrease (-12 points). When comparing the change in combined mean for 2010-2014, seven senior institutions showed an **increase** in the average combined SAT/ACT mean while

five institutions showed a **decrease**. Also, while both Coastal Carolina and USC Beaufort showed decreases from 2013-2014, the combined mean increased from 2010-2014 whereas South Carolina State showed an increase from 2013-2014, but a decrease from 2010-2014. Francis Marion, which showed no change from 2013-2014, also showed a decrease from 2010-2014. Despite these decreases, the average combined SAT/ACT mean for the senior institutions increased from 2010-2014. At present, reasons for the decreases shown in **Table 5** are unknown.

Table 5
SAT/ACT Scores of First-Time Entering Freshmen¹
(Including Foreign, Provisional, and Students Age 22 and Above)

Institutions	2010 SAT/ACT Combined Mean	2011 SAT/ACT Combined Mean	2012 SAT/ACT Combined Mean	2013 SAT/ACT Combined Mean	2014 SAT/ACT Combined Mean	2013-2014 Change Combined Mean	2011-2014 Change Combined Mean
Research Institutions							
Clemson	1236	1236	1253	1254	1264	10	28
USC Columbia	1190	1200	1202	1212	1218	6	28
Average Research Institutions	1209	1214	1224	1229	1237	8	28
Comprehensive Teaching Colleges & Universities							
The Citadel	1059	1085	1083	1079	1083	4	24
Coastal Carolina	991	999	998	1004	1001	-3	10
College of Charleston	1160	1147	1159	1153	1141	-12	-19
Francis Marion	973	945	944	942	942	0	-31
Lander	981	966	976	979	985	6	4
S.C. State	879	866	835	799	828	29	-51
USC Aiken	991	988	982	986	988	2	-3
USC Beaufort	940	943	942	951	948	-3	8
USC Upstate	983	984	984	972	971	-1	-12
Winthrop	1054	1059	1049	1037	1056	19	2
Average Comprehensive Teaching Institutions	1022	1023	1023	1021	1021	0	-1
Average Senior Institutions	1103	1105	1113	1118	1120	2	17
Two-Year Regional Campuses of USC							
USC Lancaster	870	870	870	873	882	9	12
USC Salkehatchie	805	807	798	798	802	4	-3
USC Sumter	931	934	931	931	944	13	13
USC Union	802	820	834	834	799	-35	-3
Average Two-Year Regional Campuses of USC	866	866	859	859	863	4	-3

¹ ACT scores converted to SAT equivalencies using the ACT/SAT Concordance Tables.

Part IV: Provisionally Admitted Students

An institution may offer two types of admission to a degree-seeking student. Applicants who meet the institution's minimum admission criteria and who are offered admission are classified as regular students. Applicants who do not meet the institution's regular admission requirements but who are offered admission using alternative criteria are classified as provisional students.

Table 6 shows provisional freshmen as a percent of total first-time entering freshmen for Fall 2014 for each institution and overall. South Carolina State University admitted the largest percentage of provisional freshmen (11.1%).

Table 6 Provisional Freshmen as a Percent of Total First-Time Freshmen Fall 2014			
Institutions	Total First-Time Freshmen	Provisional Freshmen	Percent Provisional
Research Institutions			
Clemson	3475	0	0.0%
USC Columbia	4981	0	0.0%
Total	8,456	0	0.0%
Comprehensive Teaching Colleges & Universities			
The Citadel	618	0	0.0%
Coastal Carolina	2,375	0	0.0%
College of Charleston	2,166	225	10.4%
Francis Marion	758	1	0.1%
Lander	554	30	5.4%
S.C. State	641	71	11.1%
USC Aiken	643	0	0.0%
USC Beaufort	402	10	2.5%
USC Upstate	801	47	5.9%
Winthrop	1,019	93	9.1%
Total Comprehensive Teaching Institutions	9,977	477	4.8%
Total	18,433	477	2.6%
Two-Year Regional Campuses of USC			
USC Lancaster	336	0	0.0%
USC Salkehatchie	269	0	0.0%
USC Sumter	216	0	0.0%
USC Union	141	0	0.0%
Total	962	0	0.0%
Grand Total	19,395	477	2.5%

At its meeting on August 25, 1997, the Commission approved several recommendations for the institutions to consider regarding provisional students. Among these recommendations were two that relate to the data presented in **Table 6**:

- Research universities should limit provisional admissions to no more than 10% of the first-time entering freshman class.
- Four-year teaching universities should limit provisional admissions to no more than 15% of the first-time entering freshman class.

As evident by reviewing the data presented in **Table 6**, in 2014, all four-year institutions were in compliance with the recommendations. Trend data for provisional admissions for the last five years for the four-year comprehensive teaching institutions are shown in **Table 7** below:

Research Institutions	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Clemson	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
USC Columbia	0.0%	3.7%	16.0%	13.8%	0.0%	0.0%
Comprehensive Teaching Colleges & Universities						
The Citadel	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Coastal Carolina	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
College of Charleston	11.6%	13.8%	12.1%	9.5%	10.1%	10.4%
Francis Marion	0.0%	0.0%	0.8%	0.1%	0.3%	0.1%
Lander	0.0%	0.0%	4.5%	4.0%	3.5%	5.4%
S.C. State	0.0%	8.1%	2.4%	7.4%	7.1%	11.1%
USC Aiken	7.0%	7.3%	4.8%	6.5%	0.0%	0.0%
USC Beaufort*	2.9%	2.9%	6.7%	3.4%	2.0%	2.5%
USC Upstate	7.3%	7.8%	9.0%	6.5%	0.0%	5.9%
Winthrop	7.2%	9.6%	10.0%	12.0%	12.2%	9.1%

These data indicate that the percentage of provisional students admitted to the four-year comprehensive institutions has fluctuated at several institutions over the last five years. As of this report College of Charleston has had a higher percentage of provisional students, but remains below the recommended 15%. South Carolina State University admitted a larger number of provisional students in 2014 compared to the previous five years.

It is important to note that USC applies the same admissions standards used at its main campus to students who apply to a USC regional campus (two-year) and who are classified by the institution as baccalaureate-ready students. When students apply to a Regional Campus, their application is compared to USC Columbia’s admission standards. If the student could have been admitted to Columbia but desires admission to the local Regional Campus, that student is classified as a Columbia admit, using long-established USC-specific (that is, not state-wide, common) criteria. If the student does not meet Columbia criteria (which could be any combination of high school prerequisites, standardized test scores or predicted GPA), the student is classified as a branch campus admit (i.e., the original designation of all campuses outside of Columbia). These branch admit students must earn a minimum 2.0 GPA and at least 30 hours in order to be able to change campuses to Columbia. No remediation is offered at the Regional Campuses. Information in the chart below indicates that the USC two-year campuses have reduced the number of first time entering freshmen who are classified as provisional students over the past two years.

USC Two-Year Campuses Annual Percentage	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
	65.0%	63.8%	64.5%	68.8%	0.1%	0.0%

Part V: Fall 2015 Minimum Admission Standards

A component of Act 629 of 1988 requires the Commission to work with public institutions of higher learning in the state to ensure that minimal admission standards are maintained by the institutions. The publication and dissemination of minimal admission standards was recommended by external consultants who argued that unless students had a clear sense of what institutional expectations are, they could not rise to meet these expectations. In 1988, each institution was required to specify annually the minimum approximate SAT score (combined math and verbal) required of most applicants for admission as freshmen. In 1993, the Commission approved the collection of additional data to include minimum ACT scores if these were submitted in lieu of SAT scores.

It is important to note these minimum admissions standards are approximate. Some institutions use a predictive equation to determine which students to admit. At these institutions, the minimum required scores will vary somewhat depending on the value and weight of the other elements in the admissions formula. For this reason, the minimum SAT and ACT scores reported by the institutions as required for admission are to be used as guideposts for students aspiring to admission to any given institution.

Many institutions have reported that they no longer use class rank to set the approximate minimum SAT/ACT score, but instead use the Grade Point Average (GPA) of the core high school college prep curriculum. In order to report more accurately the approximate minimum SAT/ACT score for the institutions, the Commission requested information on which method an institution used to set the minimum score and to present this information in this report. These data are separated into two tables indicating institutions that use class rank (**Table 8**) and those that use core GPA (**Table 9**) to set the approximate minimum SAT/ACT score. Seven institutions, Clemson University, College of Charleston, Lander University, South Carolina State University, USC Aiken, USC Beaufort, and USC Upstate, report using both methods.

Table 8 shows the approximate SAT and ACT score requirements reported by each institution **using class rank for Fall 2015**.

Table 8 Admission Requirements Approximate Minimum SAT Score (Combined) and Minimum ACT Score Requirements for First-Time Entering Freshmen 2015								
Institutions	High School Class Rank						Predictive Equation	
	Top 20% of Class		Top 50% of Class		Top 80% of Class		Yes	No
	SAT	ACT	SAT	ACT	SAT	ACT		
Research Institutions								
Clemson	1060	23	1300	30	1580	36	X	
USC Columbia	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A		
Comprehensive Teaching Colleges & Universities								
The Citadel	950	20	950	20	950	20		X
Coastal Carolina	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A		X
College of Charleston	1095	24	1104	24	N/A	N/A		X
Francis Marion	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Lander	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A		X
S.C. State	830	17	830	17	830	17		X
USC Aiken	800	17	800	17	N/A	N/A	X	
USC Beaufort	800	17	800	17	800	17		X
USC Upstate	850	18	900	19	900	19	X	
Winthrop	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A		X
Two-Year Regional Campuses of USC								
USC Lancaster	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A		
USC Salkehatchie	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A		
USC Sumter	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A		
USC Union	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A		

¹Some institutions use predictive equations, a formula combining high school class rank, high school grade point ratio, and SAT or ACT score, to determine which students to admit. At these institutions, the minimum required score will vary depending on the value and weight of the other elements in the formula.

Table 9 shows the approximate SAT and ACT score requirements reported by each institution **using core GPA for Fall 2015**.

Table 9 Admission Requirements Approximate Minimum SAT Score (Combined) and Minimum ACT Score Requirements for First-Time Entering Freshmen 2015								
Institutions	High School Core GPA and Minimum SAT/ACT score						Use Predictive Equation ¹	
	Core GPA 2.0		Core GPA 3.0		Core GPA 4.0		Yes	No
	SAT	ACT	SAT	ACT	SAT	ACT		
Research Institutions								
Clemson	1580	36	1280	29	970	22	X	
USC Columbia	1250	28	950	20	700	15	X	
Comprehensive Teaching Colleges & Universities								
The Citadel	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A		X
Coastal Carolina	960	20	900	19	860	18		X
College of Charleston	N/A	N/A	1154	25	1097	24		X
Francis Marion ²	*	*	780	16	780	16		X
Lander	1050	23	900	19	820	17		X
S.C. State	830	17	830	17	830	17		X
USC Aiken	910	19	800	17	800	17	X	
USC Beaufort	800	17	800	17	800	17		X
USC Upstate	900	19	900	19	850	18	X	
Winthrop University	N/A	N/A	900	19	850	18		X
Two-Year Regional Campuses of USC								
USC Lancaster	1250	28	950	20	700	15	X	
USC Salkehatchie	1250	28	950	20	700	15	X	
USC Sumter	1250	28	950	20	700	15	X	
USC Union	1250	28	950	20	700	15	X	

¹ Some institutions use predictive equations, a formula combining high school class rank, high school grade point ratio, and SAT or ACT score, to determine which students to admit. At these institutions, the minimum required score will vary depending on the value and weight of the other elements in the formula.

² At Francis Marion, a new freshman applicant who has a high school GPA 2.3 or below may be presented to the Admissions, Advising, and Retention Committee for possible admittance if they have an SAT of at least 1000 or an ACT of at least 22.

In 2005, the SAT added a mandatory writing section. **Table 10** shows that USC Columbia, Coastal Carolina, College of Charleston, Francis Marion, USC Upstate, and Winthrop began to require the writing section for admission. Clemson and Francis Marion use the writing section for research or for planning services and placements.

Table 10		
Requirement of SAT Writing Component for Admissions in Fall 2015		
Institutions	Yes/No	Additional Information
Research Institutions		
Clemson	No	Supplemental information in a student's application. They are not part of the predictive formula.
USC Columbia	Yes	Currently required for study & possible use in holistic review.
Comprehensive Teaching Colleges & Universities		
The Citadel	No	
Coastal Carolina	Yes	Assessment of new student success.
College of Charleston	Yes	Requires the freshmen to submit the writing section of either the SAT or ACT. Using it separately from the Critical Reasoning and Math sections. The writing score is considered as another source of information in evaluating the academic readiness of the student. It is considered in the admissions decision in combination with other qualitative and quantitative factors.
Francis Marion	Yes	Students who score 500+ on it are exempt from taking in house English Placement Test.
Lander	No	
S.C. State	No	
USC Aiken	No	
USC Beaufort	No	
USC Upstate	Yes	Uses for appropriate placement in freshman English courses.
Winthrop	Yes	Not used for an admission decision. The scores are being reviewed for a possible correlation between our freshmen students' performance in their first writing course.

Table 11 shows the number of first-time freshmen aged 25 or older in the South Carolina public colleges and universities for the past five years. In Fall 2014, there was a decrease in first-time entering freshmen aged 25 and older from 2013 (105 to 64). This decrease appears to be due largely to the Two-Year Regional Campuses of USC.

Table 11						
Number of First-time Freshmen Aged 25 and Older by Year						
South Carolina Public Colleges and Universities						
Five-Year Comparison						
Institutions	Fall 2010	Fall 2011	Fall 2012	Fall 2013	Fall 2014	Grand Total
Research Institutions						
Clemson	0	1	1	0	0	2
USC Columbia	5	3	4	2	0	14
Medical Univ. of S.C.	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	5	4	5	2	0	16
Comprehensive Teaching Colleges & Universities						
The Citadel	1	1	0	1	0	3
Coastal Carolina	4	4	1	4	3	16
College of Charleston	0	3	0	0	1	4
Francis Marion	5	3	0	0	4	12
Lander	1	0	1	0	0	2
South Carolina State	6	1	4	2	4	17
USC Aiken	2	0	1	4	0	7
USC Beaufort	5	4	2	4	2	17
USC Upstate	4	6	5	1	2	18
Winthrop	0	1	2	0	0	3
Total Comprehensive Teaching Institutions	28	23	16	16	16	99
Total Senior Institutions	33	27	21	18	16	115
Two-Year Regional Campuses of USC						
USC Lancaster	26	16	17	19	11	89
USC Salkehatchie	59	81	52	45	10	247
USC Sumter	8	3	4	3	11	29
USC Union	13	15	15	20	16	79
Total	106	115	88	87	48	444
Grand Total	139	142	109	105	64	559

Conclusion

In Fall 2014, more applicable first-time freshmen met all the high school course prerequisites compared to Fall 2013 (85.4% to 85.3%) but less than the 91.7% in 2012 and 87.8% in 2011. Data indicates that among the four-year institutions from Fall 2013 to Fall 2014, the percentage of freshmen meeting high school course prerequisites has improved. Eight institutions demonstrated increases in freshmen meeting high school course prerequisites while four institutions demonstrated decreases in freshmen meeting high school course prerequisites.

Retention rates among students who did not meet the high school course prerequisites are lower for the majority of the institutions. Three institutions showed an increase in freshmen-to-sophomore retention rates for students who did not meet the high school course prerequisites, while nine institutions showed a decrease in retention rates for the same category of students.

Institutions continue to adjust admission requirements for first-time entering freshmen and the required minimum SAT/ACT scores are lower for students with a higher GPA and high school class rank at most institutions. Finally, six institutions now require the new writing component of the SAT. Four institutions continue to analyze the data to determine whether the writing component should become part of the admission requirements and/or be used for supplemental information as part of a holistic review of the student's application.