I. Executive Summary

The Office of Institutional Planning and Assessment (IPA) reports to the Associate Provost and Dean of the Graduate School. The mission of IPA is to provide support to the University in the areas of planning, institutional research, and assessment of institutional effectiveness. The Office has a staff of nine full-time positions.

Strategic goals for the coming five years are (A) to promote the achievement of the University’s mission by providing the best possible data and data analysis to the University community and to external constituents, and (B) to foster a climate of collaboration and collegiality among higher education professionals working in the area of higher education planning, institutional research, and assessment of institutional effectiveness, to promote sharing of ideas and information.

In this plan there are seven (7) objectives under the first strategic goal, and five (5) under the second goal.

II. Annual Report

The Office of Institutional Planning and Assessment listed the following goals and objectives for the 2000-01 year. Provided here is a brief statement on each objective that describes the condition of progress toward achievement. Assessment results are in italics.

Strategic Goal: Promote the achievement of the University’s mission by providing the best possible data and data analysis to the University community and to external constituents.

Objectives

- Provide all data modules to be submitted to the Commission on Higher Education Management Information System (CHEMIS). All data modules were submitted to the CHE.

- Refine the operation of the IPA web site to include more data that are easily accessible by University offices and the public; examples will include planning data for academic departments, enrollment reports by semester, an assessment warehouse, a data warehouse, and information on accountability reports. Departmental and college level planning data (five-year trends) were posted on the web in
late December and early January. Materials cited in the SA CS self study document and pertinent to IPA were also added to the web site. Other added data include retention data, summary data from the National Study of Instructional Costs and Productivity (the Delaware Study) comparing USC departments with Carnegie Research I institutions, and annual program review information. Fall enrollment reports were posted. Data was entered for the Data Warehouse by December. Institutional Effectiveness reports were posted by August.

- Publish a printed mini USC Fact Book, with distribution by January or February. Distributed in print during the week of January 8-12. Printed a total of 1,000 copies with emphasis on additional copies available to Alumni Affairs and the Development Office.

- Participate in national and regional data exchanges that produce peer group comparative data for the University on a variety of topics; examples may include faculty salary data, instructional costs and teaching load data, and certain financial data. Provided all promised annual data to all data exchange groups including the University of Delaware as part of the National Study of Instructional Costs and Productivity, average faculty salaries to AAUP and the Oklahoma State University survey, tuition and fees and enrollment to the Southern University Group.

- Monitor the development of performance funding at the CHE and collect the data necessary to measure or forecast performance on various indicators. Participated in all performance funding meetings and collected data on research university peers for purposes of measuring performance. Worked with CHE staff to revise performance-funding system for 2001-02.

- Pending approval by the Provost and President, IPA will serve as a clearinghouse for most data that are released to parties outside the University. This decision did not materialize, so IPA has taken no further steps to implement. IPA will delete this objective for the new planning cycle.

- IPA will assist the Provost in establishing a Data Steering Committee to oversee the work of the existing Data Administration Committee. The Data Steering Committee is to address concerns about conflicting definitions of data and the availability of needed data. The Provost has not decided to establish such a committee. IPA will delete this objective for the new planning cycle.

- Encourage campus units to use the web-based informational resources of IPA as a means of conducting much of their own research. Provide training sessions for both academic and administrative departments in the use of these resources. During the current planning year, most efforts on this objective have been informal. When members of the university community or the public call for information that can be obtained electronically, the staff instructs them over the phone step-by-step how to access the various pages of our web site and obtain the information. There has been limited success in getting high-frequency users of our data to attend training sessions either at our office or in their office.
• Monitor new program proposals submitted for CHE approval. Notifications from CHE of new program approvals are forwarded to IPA, where data needs for the implementation of each program are evaluated. IPA staff then coordinate with other appropriate offices the addition of such data to the university databases.

**Strategic Goal:** foster a climate of collaboration and collegiality among higher education professionals working in the area of higher education planning, institutional research, and assessment of institutional effectiveness, to promote sharing of ideas and information.

**Objectives**

• Continue to arrange quarterly meetings for the exchange of data and other information among personnel from all USC campuses, with emphasis upon Regional Campuses. Quarterly meetings were held in collaboration with the Division of Regional Campuses and Continuing Education. These meetings included agenda items on performance funding data, CHEMIS reporting issues, and any other matters requiring cooperation between staff at Columbia and the Regional Campuses and the Senior Campuses.

• Provide assistance to departments undergoing academic program reviews. IPA assisted academic departments in meeting the requirements of program reviews in the areas of Engineering, Mathematics and Statistics, and Foreign Languages—a total of 38 programs. Assistance included not only data provision but also scheduling and coordinating reviews with the CHE staff and visitors. 100% of programs reviewed were assisted.

• Seek new avenues to disseminate assessment results and to encourage the use of such results to improve programs by working with the Provost’s office to identify an appropriate faculty member to coordinate such activities. The University Assessment Committee was reconstituted, but no chair has been named. IPA continues to work with this committee to disseminate assessment results. IPA has established an Assessment Data Warehouse on its web site and regularly posts USC and national data.

• Use web-based forms to collect University data from administrative and academic units. IPA has expanded its array of web-based forms and has continued its liaison with various units to improve both the timeliness and the quality of data. This method of data collection enables IPA to meet the requirements for reports such as college guide surveys, the national Common Data Set, and general inquiries from university personnel and the public.

• Participate in professional associations and professional development opportunities. All staff participated in at least one professional meeting or professional development activity. Staff were particularly involved in hosting the Southern Association for
Institutional Research in Myrtle Beach and in the planning and organization of the annual meeting of the South Carolina Association for Institutional Research held in Greenville.
III. Strategic Plan for 2001-2006

In this new five-year rolling plan, the Office of Institutional Planning and Assessment will again organize its work around two strategic goals:

(A) promote the achievement of the University’s mission by providing the best possible data and data analysis to the University community and to external constituents; and

(B) foster a climate of collaboration and collegiality among higher education professionals working in the areas of planning, institutional research, and assessment of institutional effectiveness, to promote sharing of ideas and information.

To achieve the mission of the Office of Institutional Planning and Assessment and to achieve these two strategic goals, some objectives and actions must continue each year.

For the five-year period covered by this plan, it is anticipated that IPA will concentrate on the following objectives and actions in pursuit of each of these strategic goals.

**Strategic Goal:** Promote the achievement of the University’s mission by providing the best possible data and data analysis to the University community and to external constituents.

**Objectives**

- Provide all data modules to be submitted to the Commission on Higher Education Management Information System (CHEMIS).

- Refine the operation of the IPA web site to include more data that are easily accessible by University offices and the public.

- Publish a printed mini USC Fact Book, with distribution by January or February.

- Participate in national and regional data exchanges that produce peer group comparative data for the University on a variety of topics; examples may include faculty salary data, instructional costs and teaching load data, and certain financial data.
Monitor the development of performance funding at the CHE and collect the data necessary to measure or forecast performance on various indicators.

Encourage campus units to use the web-based informational resources of IPA as a means of conducting much of their own research. Provide training sessions and/or individualized assistance for both academic and administrative departments in the use of these resources.

Monitor new program proposals submitted for CHE approval.

Provide assistance as needed for any university responses emanating from the re-accreditation process of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS).

**Strategic Goal:** foster a climate of collaboration and collegiality among higher education professionals working in the area of higher education planning, institutional research, and assessment of institutional effectiveness, to promote sharing of ideas and information.

**Objectives**

- Maintain quarterly meetings for the exchange of data and other information among personnel from all USC campuses, with emphasis upon Regional Campuses.
- Provide assistance to departments undergoing academic program reviews.
- Use web-based forms to collect University data from administrative and academic units.
- Participate in professional associations and professional development opportunities.
- Meet regularly with Clemson University and the Medical University of South Carolina to collaborate on research sector interests in performance-based funding and other statewide issues of higher education.

**IV. Resource Requirements**

For the past two years, IPA has applied the talents of its staff to make a wealth of data available electronically to the public and to the University community. It is our belief that as the production of our routine reports becomes more automated, and as proposed changes to South Carolina’s system of performance-based funding are implemented, staff
assignments can be re-configured to absorb new and different duties. Annual operational costs are adequately funded.

IV. Contingency Plans for Budget Reductions

If it becomes necessary to reduce the IPA budget by 5% for FY 2001-02, we propose the following reductions: eliminate all graduate and undergraduate payroll items and the allocation for temporary non-student help.

If it becomes necessary to reduce the IPA budget by 10% for FY 2001-02, we propose the following reductions: the above plus reduce travel by 30%; eliminate the allocation for building repairs; reduce supplies by 25%; reduce rents and fixed charges by 30%; cut equipment costs by 25%; and reduce data processing supplies by 30%.
Institutional Planning and Assessment
Administrative Unit Assessment Plan
Assessment Results and Use of Assessment Results
FY 2000

Expected Impact: Promote the achievement of the University’s mission by providing the best possible data and data analysis to the University community and to external constituents.

Measure #1:
Provide all data modules to be submitted to the Commission on Higher Education Management Information System (CHEMIS).

Criterion Level: All data modules will be submitted to CHE by the posted CHEMIS Reporting Dates.
Assessment Results:
All modules were submitted to CHE by the required dates. We discovered the Project Manager deadline does not take into account sufficient time for responses to CHE error reports.
Use of Assessment Results:
Project Manager internal deadlines have been adjusted to allow more time to address errors.

Measure #2:
Refine and update the operation of the IPA web site to include more data that are easily accessible by University offices and the external public. Examples will include planning data for academic departments, enrollment reports by semester, an assessment warehouse, a data warehouse, the Common Data Set, online fact book, and information on accountability reports.

Criterion Level 1a:
Data entry for the data warehouse will be completed by December 2000.
Assessment Results: All forms were completed by December 2000.
Use of Assessment Results: All procedures are working as designed.

Criterion Level 1b:
Planning data for academic departments will be automated linked from the Institutional Planning page by December 2000.
Assessment Results: The first stage of the project has been completed. Staff needs to gain greater skills in SAS conversion techniques.
Use of Assessment Results: Additional training is required in SAS macros.

Criterion Level 1c:
Enrollment reports will be placed on the web using the schedule established for fall data freeze.
Assessment Results: Reports were posted using the established schedule.
Use of Assessment Results: The process is working as designed.
Criterion Level 2:
Institutional Effectiveness reports will be posted on the IPA web site on or before August 2000.
Assessment Results: Institutional Effectiveness reports were posted on the IR web site before August 2000.
Use of Assessment Results: The process is working as designed.

Measure #3:
Publish a printed mini USC Fact Book, with distribution by January or February.

Criterion Level: The mini USC Factbook will be distributed on campus in January or early February.
Assessment Results: Distributed in print during the week of January 8-12. Printed a total of 1,000 copies with emphasis on additional copies available to Alumni Affairs and the Development Office. A complete automation of the on-line factbook (which contributes data to the mini factbook) is unrealistic. Manual intervention will always be necessary. Our contingency plan for substituting for missing personnel worked well. The software used to create the mini factbook is no longer supported.
Use of Assessment Results:
A new software package will be evaluated and staff will receive training in the new software.

Measure #4:
Participate in national and regional data exchanges that produce peer group comparative data for the University on a variety of topics; examples may include faculty salary data, instructional costs and teaching load data, and certain financial data.

Criterion Level: 100% of agreed to complete surveys are completed.
Assessment Results: Provided all promised annual data to all data exchange groups including the University of Delaware as part of the National Study of Instructional Costs and Productivity, average faculty salaries to AAUP and the Oklahoma State University survey, tuition and fees and enrollment to the Southern University Group. Online surveys were not easy to update using the existing update screens.
Use of Assessment Results: Programs were written to facilitate the ease of updating on-line surveys managed by IPA staff.

Measure #5:
Monitor the development of performance funding at the CHE and collect the data necessary to measure and forecast performance on various indicators.
Assessment Result: Participated in all performance funding meetings and collected data on research university peers for purposes of measuring performance. Worked with CHE staff to revise performance-funding system for 2001-02.
Use of Assessment Results: We will continue to monitor performance funding and collect data necessary to forecast performance.
Measure #6: Pending approval by the Provost and President, IPA will serve as a clearinghouse for most data that are released to parties outside the University.

Assessment Result: This decision did not materialize, so IPA has taken no further steps to implement.

Use of Assessment Results: IPA will delete this objective for the new planning cycle.

Measure #7: IPA will assist the Provost in establishing a Data Steering Committee to oversee the work of the existing Data Administration Committee. The Data Steering Committee is to address concerns about conflicting definitions of data and the availability of needed data.

Assessment Results: The Provost has not decided to establish such a committee.

Use of Assessment Results: IPA will delete this objective for the new planning cycle.

Measure #8: Encourage campus units to use the web-based informational resources of IPA as a means of conducting much of their own research. Provide training sessions for both academic and administrative departments in the use of these resources.

Assessment Results: We did one formal training session for the College of Liberal Arts before it was deemed necessary by the Associate Director to change priorities within the office due to the pregnancy of the trainer. During the current planning year, most efforts on this objective have been informal. When members of the university community or the public call for information that can be obtained electronically, the staff instructs them over the phone step-by-step how to access the various pages of our web site and obtain the information. There has been limited success in getting high-frequency users of our data to attend training sessions either at our office or in their office.

Use of Assessment Results: This was an unrealistic goal. We will continue our efforts to train people as they need the data on a one-on-one basis. However, we will be happy to hold formal classes requested.

Criterion Level 2: Requests for data should decrease while requests for assistance in using IPA informational resources should increase.

Assessment Results: Due to the impending SACS visit and the possible cuts in state appropriations, requests for data and assistance have both increased.

Use of Assessment Results: Although requests have increased, IPA staff have been able to respond in a timely manner for additional information not included in the data warehouse.

Measure #9: Monitor new program proposals submitted for CHE approval.

Assessment Results: IPA staff attended all CHE meetings that had program issues on the agenda. Notifications from CHE of new program approvals are forwarded to IPA, where data needs for the implementation of each program are evaluated. IPA staff then coordinates with other appropriate offices the addition of such data to the university databases.
**Use of Assessment Results:** It has become clear that IPA staff need to have access to the preliminary program proposals before proposals are transmitted to the CHE.

**Expected Impact:** IPA staff will foster a climate of collaboration and collegiality among higher education professionals working in the area of higher education planning, institutional research, and assessment of institutional effectiveness, to promote sharing of ideas and information.

**Measure #1:**
Continue to arrange quarterly meetings for the exchange of data and other information among personnel from all USC campuses, with emphasis upon Regional Campuses.

**Assessment Results:** Quarterly meetings were held in collaboration with the Division of Regional Campuses and Continuing Education. These meeting included agenda items on performance funding data, CHEMIS reporting issues, and any other matters requiring cooperation between staff at Columbia and the Regional Campuses and the Senior Campuses.

**Use of Assessment Results:** Quarterly meetings will be continued with an emphasis on assessment efforts.

**Measure #2:**
Provide assistance to departments undergoing academic program reviews.

**Assessment Results:** IPA assisted academic departments in meeting the requirements of program reviews in the areas of Engineering, Mathematics and Statistics, and Foreign Languages—a total of 38 programs. Assistance included not only data provision but also scheduling and coordinating reviews with the CHE staff and consultants. 100% of programs reviewed were assisted.

**Use of Assessment Results:** The process is working as designed.

**Measure #3:**
Seek new avenues to disseminate assessment results and to encourage the use of such results to improve programs by working with the Provost's office to identify an appropriate faculty member to coordinate such activities.

**Assessment Results:** The University Assessment Committee was re-constituted, but no chair has been named. IPA continues to work with this committee to disseminate assessment results. IPA has established an Assessment Data Warehouse on its web site and regularly posts USC and national data. The Assessment Warehouse Committee has expressed satisfaction with the warehouse as a way of disseminating assessment results. However, the committee wants to investigate using true longitudinal data rather than the cross-sectional data currently used.

**Use of Assessment Results:** We are pilot testing two new national surveys to determine which will provide the best longitudinal data for USC Columbia.

**Measure #4:**
Use web-based forms to collect University data from administrative and academic units.
Assessment Results: IPA has expanded its array of web-based forms and has continued its liaison with various units to improve both the timeliness and the quality of data. This method of data collection enables IPA to meet the requirements for reports such as college guide surveys, the national Common Data Set, and general inquiries from university personnel and the public. Out of over 100 forms there was only one complaint with an error in the form. For easier entry, the Sumter campus requested that the information from last year’s form be place in the new form to be altered.

Use of Assessment Results: The complaint about the form was resolved within 24 hours. An edit routine was written into the program to ensure that this problem will not happen again. We will attempt to honor Sumter’s request before the next survey season.

Measure #5:
Participate in professional associations and professional development opportunities.

Assessment Results: All staff participated in at least one professional meeting or professional development activity. Staff were particularly involved in hosting the Southern Association for Institutional Research in Myrtle Beach and in the planning and organization of the annual meeting of the South Carolina Association for Institutional Research held in Greenville.

Use of Assessment Results: We will continue to participate in professional associations and professional development opportunities pending sufficient resources.
Expanded Statement of Institutional Purpose

Institutional Mission Statement:

As a major teaching and research institution, USC Columbia has long offered a comprehensive range of undergraduate and graduate programs through the doctoral level. With a mission of teaching, research, and service, USC Columbia addresses the state's needs for master's level, professional, and doctoral education, for conducting and sharing research, and for responding to statewide and regional demands for educational resources and professional expertise.

USC Columbia aspires to national and international stature as it provides equitable access to its opportunities, resources, and activities.

Unit Statement of Purpose:

The Office of Institutional Planning and Assessment supports achievement of the University's mission by carrying out the following basic responsibilities:

• Coordination of the planning process for the institution;
• Coordination of the process of assessing institutional effectiveness for the University;
• Provision of institutional research support for the institution as a whole and for various academic and administrative units.

Each of these broad responsibilities has a double-edged goal: the establishment of effective procedures for conducting planning, assessment or institutional research, and the reporting of official data based upon each procedure in a timely and accurate manner. Further, a fundamental value shared by the Office and the University is that a high degree of integration among planning, assessment and institutional research is essential for the University to maintain excellence in teaching, research and public service.
**Assessment Plan**

**Expected Impact:** Promote the achievement of the University’s mission by providing the best possible data and data analysis to the University community and to external constituents.

**Measure #1:** Provide all data modules to be submitted to the Commission on Higher Education Management Information System (CHEMIS).

**Assessment Procedure:** Project Manager software.

**Criterion Level:** 100% of data modules will be submitted to CHE by the posted CHEMIS Reporting Dates.

**Measure #2:** Refine and update the operation of the IPA web site to include more data that are easily accessible by University offices and the external public. Examples will include planning data for academic departments, enrollment reports by semester, an assessment warehouse, a data warehouse, the Common Data Set, online fact book, and information on accountability reports.

**Assessment Procedure 1:** Project Manager software.

**Criterion Level 1a:** Data entry for the data warehouse will be completed by December 2001.

**Criterion Level 1b:** Planning data for academic departments will be automated linked from the Institutional Planning page by December 2001.

**Criterion Level 1c:** Enrollment reports will be placed on the web using the schedule established for fall data freeze.

**Assessment Procedure 2:** IPA Calendar of Required Activities.

**Criterion Level 2:** Institutional Effectiveness reports will be posted on the IPA web site on or before August 2001.

**Measure #3:** Publish a printed mini USC Fact Book, with distribution by January or February.

**Assessment Procedure:** Receipt of mini USC Factbook from printers by IPA.

**Criterion Level:** The mini USC Factbook will be distributed on campus in January or early February.

**Measure #4:** Participate in national and regional data exchanges that produce peer group comparative data for the University on a variety of topics; examples may include faculty salary data, instructional costs and teaching load data, and certain financial data.

**Assessment Procedure:** IPA Calendar of Required Activities – number of surveys completed that IPA agreed to complete.

**Criterion Level:** 100% of agreed to complete surveys are completed.
Measure #5: Monitor the development of performance funding at the CHE and collect the data necessary to measure and forecast performance on various indicators.

Assessment Procedure: At least 1 IPA representative will attend CHE meetings that have performance funding issues on the agenda.

Criterion Level: 100% attendance at CHE meetings that have performance funding issues on the agenda.

Measure #6: Encourage campus units to use the web-based informational resources of IPA as a means of conducting much of their own research. Provide training sessions for both academic and administrative departments in the use of these resources.

Assessment Procedure 1: For any unit or individual making a request for assistance, provide a group training session or individualized assistance in the use of IPA electronic data.

Criterion Level 1: 100% of such requests will be responded to as described above.

Assessment Procedure 2: The administrative specialist will log requests for data and requests for assistance in using IPA informational resources to determine if the number of requests have increased or decreased.

Criterion Level 2: Requests for data should decrease while requests for assistance in using IPA informational resources should increase.

Measure #7: Monitor new program proposals submitted for CHE approval.

Assessment Procedure: At least 1 IPA representative will attend CHE meetings that have program issues on the agenda.

Criterion Level: 100% attendance at CHE meetings that have program issues on the agenda.

Expected Impact: IPA staff will foster a climate of collaboration and collegiality among higher education professionals working in the area of higher education planning, institutional research, and assessment of institutional effectiveness, to promote sharing of ideas and information.

Measure #1: Continue to arrange quarterly meetings for the exchange of data and other information among personnel from all USC campuses, with emphasis upon Regional Campuses.

Assessment Procedure: the Coordinator for Accountability Reporting will maintain Minutes from the quarterly meetings.

Criterion Level: Minimum of four meetings per year.

Measure #2: Provide assistance to departments undergoing academic program reviews.

Assessment Procedure: Program Review Calendar Checklist.

Criterion Level: 100% assisted.
Measure #3: Seek new avenues to disseminate assessment results and to encourage the use of such results to improve programs by working with the Provost’s office to identify an appropriate faculty member to coordinate such activities.

Assessment Procedure: Pending.
Criterion Level: Pending.

Measure #4: Use web-based forms to collect University data from administrative and academic units.
Assessment Procedure: Review setpass.
Criterion Level: 100% of the forms will be completed.

Measure #5: Participate in professional associations and professional development opportunities.
Assessment Procedure: Each staff member will attend at least one meeting of a professional association or will participate in a professional development session.
Criterion Level: 100% of the staff will attend at least one meeting of a professional association or will participate in a professional development session.

Measure #6: Meet regularly with Clemson and MUSC.
Assessment Procedure: At least an average of one meeting or conference call per month.