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USC Connect:

Integrating Learning Within and Beyond the Classroom

University of South Carolina

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I.   Executive Summary

The University of South Carolina's (USC) Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP), *USC Connect: Integrative Learning Within and Beyond the Classroom*, focuses on students intentionally selecting and engaging in a broad array of within and beyond the classroom experiences and making productive **connections** between theory and practice to ultimately synthesize and apply learning to new, complex situations. We believe that integrative learning is critically important to enhancing education for *all* students and that USC is in a particularly advantageous position to develop and demonstrate how this can be accomplished at a comprehensive, research university. USC possesses combined strengths of a wealth of beyond the classroom (BTC) learning experiences (delivered through both academic and student affairs), highly successful first-year programs, strong academic majors and a new general education core, a well established Center for Teaching Excellence, a history of staff professional development, and emerging technology that will support students' in selecting, recording, and assessing their experiences. We view this work as significant both in consideration of the future of higher education and in equipping our students for the 21st century as life-long learners who are prepared to meet the challenges of the world's ever changing landscape.

The vision of *USC Connect* begins with students *intentionally* selecting experiences which will enrich their lives and academic work. For example, a student interested in the Mediterranean joins a living-learning community language house, contacts faculty members with connections to the region, enrolls in relevant course work, attends special events (e.g., seminar on Greek cooking), and studies abroad. USC within and beyond the classroom experiences are framed by academic majors and USC's high impact activities (Research, Community Engagement, International Studies, and Leadership). Experiences include (1) a broad array of brief or one-time experiences (e.g., attending a lecture or participating in a one day service activity) that provide breadth of exposure and introduce students to possible paths of greater involvement, and (2) extensive experiences (e.g., Living and Learning Community, Study Abroad, Undergraduate Research) that systematically integrate student reflection with academic learning and assess student ability to make in-depth connections. Innovative technology plays a key role in selecting, tracking, and assessing within and beyond the classroom experiences in *USC Connect.* For example, a technology platform will draw from databases of experiences, academic resources, user interests, and other information to provide access and make recommendations regarding opportunities that meet students' needs.

In-depth learning occurs as students construct meaning *across* experiences *over time.* Interaction with peers and the creation of unique products (e.g., e-portfolios, action research, performances, seminar presentations, poster sessions) challenge students to re-visit and re-assess what they know, value, and can do. Providing opportunities, incentives, and systems that support faculty and staff in investigating how they can best help students build connections and deepen learning in ways integral with their course or programs' goals (whether in students' first year or last) is a critical component of *USC Connect.* Ultimately, our goal is for USC students and graduates to be lifelong learners who effectively and creatively integrate and apply their knowledge, skills, and dispositions to new contexts in ways that result in personal and professional decisions that make a positive difference in their lives and communities (i.e., local, state, national, and international).

II.   Process Used to Develop the QEP

The development of the USC QEP has taken place over time and with the involvement of a broad range of constituencies including faculty, staff, and students at USC Columbia, Lancaster, Salkehatchie, Sumter, and Union. Although the size of USC campuses varies from an enrollment of almost 30,000 students at the flagship campus in Columbia to 300-1400 at each of the regional campuses, USC has made system-wide involvement of all parties a high priority throughout the QEP process. In total, over 300 faculty, staff, and students served directly on committees that contributed to the development of QEP:
- over 100 on initial General Education committees,
- 30 Carolina Core members and USC internal content consultants,
- 81 Focus Carolina committee members,
- 48 faculty members participating as QEP proposers,
- 7 QEP selection committee members, and
- 38 QEP Proposal Committee and Subcommittee members.

Hundreds more provided feedback through forums, meetings, and presentation sessions including Student Government, Faculty Senate, and other university, college, and department meetings.

General Education Reform (*Carolina Core*) and Strategic Planning (*Focus Carolina*)

Development of the QEP is rooted in two major reform efforts undertaken by USC in the last five years. First in fall 2005, revision of the General Education Curriculum began when a task force of more than 100 faculty system-wide addressed the question "What do our students need to know to thrive as well-educated citizens in the twenty-first century?" In December 2007, the task force concluded its work and proposed new learning goals for a revised General Education curriculum. In early 2008, a General Education Task Force, which evolved into the Carolina Core Committee, was established to oversee the General Education program and revise the curriculum based on the recommendations that had been developed. The 20 members of the Carolina Core Committee were advised by 10 internal content consultants from the areas of the Core's nine learning outcomes (i.e., English; mathematics; philosophy; natural, social, and behavioral sciences; and fine arts). Three representatives of the regional campuses have been members of the Carolina Core Committee (Robert Castleberry, Sumter; Teresa Smith, Sumter; Mary Hjelm, Extended University) and ensured that any concerns or questions from regional campuses were addressed.

Revised general education learning outcomes for the newly named *Carolina Core* were approved by Faculty Senate in April 2009 and related course distribution requirements were approved in December 2010 (see http://www.sc.edu/generaleducation/ for detailed information). Development of the *Carolina Core* continues with the development of courses that meet each of the approved learning outcomes. Anticipated implementation date of the new core requirements is fall 2012. One of the guiding principles of the development of core courses is that all sections of a course, whether taught at Columbia or a regional campus, must share a consistent syllabus which clearly includes one or more *Carolina Core* learning outcomes and the description of how that outcome is assessed. As described later, assessment of student performance on *Carolina Core*

learning outcomes will be an important measure of the effectiveness of *USC* Connect in improving student learning in a broad and integrated way.

In August 2008, USC also began a comprehensive, system-wide strategic planning initiative, *Focus Carolina*, which involved hundreds of faculty, staff, students, and alumni over the course of 2008-2009 with a core group of 81 committee members (See Appendix A for the members of each *Focus Carolina* Committee which included Chris Plyler, Vice Provost and Executive Dean for Extended University.) *Focus Carolina* committee work resulted in proposed goal statements and initiatives related to teaching and learning; research, scholarship, and creative achievement; service excellence; university quality of life; and recognition and visibility. Selected initiatives of *Focus Carolina* included recommendations to

- Foster interdisciplinary teaching
- Create a culture of student centered learning
- Enhance student academic and social support service beyond the classroom
- Establish a center that coordinates community service
- Expand community outreach

Focus Carolina recommendations were presented at two university forums in April 2009 to receive further comment of faculty, staff, and students and were presented to the USC Board of Trustees in June 2009. President Pastides described the transition from *Focus Carolina* (planning) to *Advance Carolina* (implementation) to the Board of Trustees (June 26, 2009):

> I am particularly optimistic about our future, knowing that our strategic planning process called *Focus Carolina* will light the path to our future and we can now already see the future more clearly. And today I announce the launch of the next phase of our system-wide strategic planning effort. It is called *Advance Carolina*. . . . [our goals] are system-wide and . . .incorporate wide ranging input from individuals who have submitted over 1,000 emails through our Carolina's Ideas program. . . [W]e will select initiatives from our *Focus Carolina* "Teaching and Learning" Committee that will ensure that we are educating for the future. This involves nothing less than a redesign of our core curriculum for undergraduates. . . Our exciting proposed curriculum, the Carolina Core as we call it, will be discussed with Chairman Jones and the Academic Affairs Committee at a future meeting. Other initiatives center on learning beyond the classroom. We will be pioneering and extending programs such as those found in the Honors College and our Magellan Scholars program . . . we will improve the technology in our classrooms and enhance distance education to better reach our student population. . . .

Step One in the Formal QEP Process: Broad Call for and Selection of Proposals

With the significant, university-wide foundation built through development of the *Carolina Core* and *Focus Carolina*, the formal QEP process began in fall 2009 when the Provost called for proposals to improve students' learning from faculty, staff, and students. Papers of up to five pages (excluding references) were solicited. Twenty-two proposals were received and reviewed by a committee comprised of three faculty members (one from a regional campus), two administrators, and two students (See Appendix A). The proposals were rated on the following criteria:

- Description of a significant issue at USC directly related to student learning
- Goals and how they relate to student learning
- Benefits to students and to USC
- Relationship to the University mission, vision, and the Focus Carolina reports
- Empirical data/needs assessment supporting the need for the QEP
- References on best practices relating to the QEP topic

The QEP Selection Committee chose four proposals for subsequent development and blending by the QEP Proposal Committee. The primary topics of the four identified proposals were integrative learning, global engagement, service learning, and advisement. Full proposals can be seen at http://www.sc.edu/provost/qep/updates.shtml (see January 10 update). A brief summary of each proposal follows:

- *The Tenth Dimension: An Integrative Learning Environment* (9 co-authors including one from USC Sumter). Built on the nine learning outcomes of the new *Carolina Core* to add a 10th dimension of integrative learning across learning outcomes and including beyond the classroom experiences. The proposal focused on innovative technology to help students intentionally select learning opportunities and create meaningful links between their experiences.

- *Fostering Global Engagement* (8 co-authors): Focused on strengthening the international curriculum, expanding access to international experiences, and strengthening the recognition, coordination and communication of USC's international efforts.

- *Knowledge for Social Change: A Faculty, Student, Community Collaborative* (one author listing 28 faculty expressing support/interest/endorsement of the proposal): Built around intentionally selected service learning opportunities including interdisciplinary collaboration and scholarly discussions that bring faculty, students, and community together to focus on significant issues (e.g., equality, sustainability, global citizenship).

- *Using Course and Student Profiles to Improve Student Success* (one author in consultation with faculty colleagues): Focused on an advisement system of matching student strengths with course designs so that students and their advisors could select courses/programs in which students would be most likely to succeed.

The four "winning" QEP Proposals were announced in January and recognized at Faculty Senate. Each proposal team received an award of $2,000 and publicity in the *USC Times* and on multiple university websites.

Step Two in the Formal QEP Process: Development of a Single Proposal

In February 2010, the QEP Proposal Committee was formed and charged with developing a QEP proposal in consideration of the four selected proposals, university mission and goals, baseline data on performance indicators, and theory and research in higher education. The 15 committee members include

- Four faculty members from arts and sciences (one from a regional campus)
- Three faculty members from professional schools (two with administrative responsibilities)
- Three university staff administrators (one who is also a graduate student)
- One undergraduate student
- Four ex-officio members (Vice Provost and Dean of Undergraduate Studies, Vice Provost and Vice President for Student Affairs, Director of the Office of Institutional Assessment and Compliance, and an External Consultant [USC Distinguished Professor Emeritus/President for Institute for Excellence in Undergraduate Education])

Many QEP committee members had been involved in one or more aspects of the development of the *Carolina Core* and/or the committees of *Focus Carolina*. Their experience in these earlier initiatives provided continuity in the development of the Quality Enhancement Plan. See Appendix A for the list of committee members. (Note: The QEP Proposal Committee is chaired by a faculty member released 40% of her time to lead the development of the QEP Proposal under the direction of the Vice Provost and Dean of Undergraduate Studies.)

Beginning in March 2010, the QEP Proposal Committee studied the four selected QEP proposals and interviewed the lead writers. The Committee agreed that integrative learning was the overarching focus of the proposals and proceeded to review current literature in higher education such as the *Statement on Integrative Learning* by the Carnegie Foundation and the Association of American Colleges and Universities (AAC&U) and *Integrative Learning: Mapping the Terrain* by Huber and Hutchings (See Literature Review and Reference List). The Committee carefully considered the context of USC including strengths, mission, and areas of concern to guide the development of the proposal (See section on Identification of Topic). By August 2010, the Committee produced the core elements of a Draft QEP Proposal, *USC Connect,* to share with the broader university community. The draft summary provided an overview, student learning outcomes, student performance assessments, institutional objectives, criteria for success, and processes for evaluation. The proposal was presented in the fall through such venues as

- *The Provost's Opening Meeting for 2009-2010* (attended by deans, department chairs, directors, and faculty leaders) on August 13th
- The QEP website (http://www.sc.edu/provost/qep/index.shtml) open to all with a solicitation for comment.
- A QEP Forum on October 5th widely advertised to faculty, staff, and students at all campuses and attended by approximately 100 university community members (See http://www.sc.edu/provost/forms/QEP_Handout_Oct2010.pdf for the Forum handout.)
- Focus groups of students held on November 17th and 18th (See Appendix B for the questions and QEP Summary used with student groups)
- Meetings of various administrators such as collegiate associate and assistant deans and academic program liaisons

Meanwhile, continued development of the proposal continued through the establishment of five QEP Proposal Subcommittees comprised of existing QEP Proposal Committee members and an expanded group of faculty, staff, and students with interest and/or expertise related to specific aspects of the QEP Proposal. The Subcommittees were

- Engagements (10 members)
- Technology (9 members)
- Orientation and Assessment of Students (9 members plus an advisement group on USC's first-year seminar [University 101] of 6 additional members)
- Professional Development of Faculty and Staff (5 members)
- Pilot Projects (4 members)

(See Appendix A for membership lists.) After a joint kickoff meeting on September 9th, subcommittees met every other week to develop further recommendations including budget proposals related to their areas of the QEP. Subcommittee chairs/co-chairs met as a group twice during the fall to coordinate and share information across committees. The QEP Proposal Committee Chair and the Vice Provost and Dean for Undergraduate Studies regularly joined sub-committee meetings, met and communicated with subcommittee chairs/co-chairs, and shared information across groups. Subcommittees submitted final written recommendations to the QEP Chair on December 3rd.

The QEP Chair completed a draft of the QEP Proposal in consultation with a leadership team comprised of the Vice Provost and Dean for Undergraduate Studies; the Vice President for Student Affairs; the Director of Institutional Assessment and Compliance; the Associate Vice President for Planning, Assessment, and Innovation; and the External Consultant in December. The draft was reviewed by the full QEP Proposal Committee who made further recommendations for change. Two additional groups that were consulted on final drafts of the QEP were

- a high level technology team comprised of the Vice President for Technology; Associate Vice President for Information Technology; and the Director, Enterprise Academic Technology Initiatives in consultation with the Vice Provost, QEP Proposal Committee Chair, and co-chairs of *USC Connect* Technology Committee.
- Associate Deans for Academic and Student Affairs of the regional campuses (Note: Each regional campus has an associate dean that serves as the chief academic officer for that campus.)

Consultation with the additional technology team was required due to the significant role of advanced technology in the full implementation of *USC Connect*. It was imperative that recommendations from the *USC Connect* Technology team were approved at the highest and most informed levels so that technology-related plans for *USC Connect* are both realistic and completely interwoven with USC's overall technology development plan. Associate deans of the regional campuses were consulted to ensure that plans for USC Connect are realistic and doable throughout the USC system and to investigate further ways in which the regional campus faculty, staff, and students could be involved in *USC Connect* development.

III.   Identification of the Topic

University of South Carolina (USC) Mission and Strengths

Founded in 1801, the University of South Carolina system is the largest university in the state, serving more than 30,000 students at its flagship Columbia campus and over 3,000 students at its four regional campuses (Lancaster, Salkehatchie, Sumter, and Union). (Note: Three senior campuses—Aiken, Beaufort, and Upstate—are accredited separately.) The mission of the University of South Carolina is the education of the state's diverse citizens through teaching, research, creative activity, and service.

The University has a profound relevance, reach, and impact on the people of the state. Although it is one of ten public higher education institutions in South Carolina granting bachelor's and/or graduate degrees, USC confers nearly 40% of all bachelor's and graduate degrees awarded by state public institutions. USC provides all students with the highest-quality education, including the knowledge, skills, and values necessary for success and responsible citizenship in a complex and changing world through engagement in nationally and internationally ranked research, scholarship, service, and artistic creation.

<u>USC Mission and Strengths: Beyond the Classroom Experiences</u>

USC is one of only 23 public universities in the nation to receive the Carnegie Foundation's highest research designation <u>and</u> to be named by Carnegie as a leader in community engagement. USC facilitates student involvement in beyond the classroom experiences through four highlighted pathways and their associated university-level offices including
- Office of Student Engagement
- Office of Undergraduate Research
- Office of International Programs and Study Abroad
- Office of Leadership

Student Affairs offices facilitate additional beyond the classroom experiences for students through such venues internship opportunities facilitated by the Career Center and as Living and Learning Communities sponsored by University Housing (explained in greater detail later in this section).

Academic units have numerous offices that facilitate student experiences beyond the classroom that are interwoven with their course work (e.g., Field Education Office in Social Work, Office of School-University Partnerships in Education, Office of Public Health Practice in Public Health). Over 100 programs/offices that facilitate community outreach and student involvement in the local, state, and national communities throughout the USC system are listed at www.sc.edu/outreach. A few examples include:
- Baruch Institute for Marine and Coastal Services (Arts and Sciences)
- Center for Child and Family Studies (Social Work)
- Children's Music Development Center (Music)
- Speech and Hearing Center (Public Health)
- Student Center After-School Program for Increasing Physical Activity (Sumter)
- Team Gamecocks (Athletics—Community outreach by student athletes)
- Walker Institute of International and Area Studies (Arts and Sciences)

- USC Salkehatchie Leadership Center

Other USC honors related to beyond the classroom experiences include being recognized by US News and World report as a program to look for in the areas of undergraduate research and learning communities, receiving the 2010 Award for Exemplary Professional Development School Achievement from the National Association for Professional Development Schools, and being named to the President's Higher Education Community Service Honor Roll four consecutive years (2006-2009) (the highest federal recognition a university can receive for its commitment to volunteering, service-learning, and civic engagement).

USC students are already engaged in a broad range of beyond the classroom experiences. Sample data related to student engagement include the following:

- Thousands of USC faculty, staff, and students are engaged in the community (see Table 1).

Table 1: Faculty, Staff, and Student Engagement over Two Years

	Faculty, Students, and Staff Participating	**Hours Donated**	**Economic Impact**	**Philanthropic Donations**
2008-09	18,829	302,921	$4,804,327	$1,047,661
2009-10	23,436	346,678	$5,619,456*	$1,403,460

* Estimate based on 2008 value of volunteer time in South Carolina at $16.26 per hour as determined by the Independent Sector http://www.independentsector.org/volunteer_time
** Report statistics based on voluntary submissions from USC partners as of August 2010. For more information on how to contribute to future reports, contact Community Service Programs at (803) 777-3197.

A fall 2010 internal survey of beyond the classroom experiences found community engagement on all campuses. For example, USC Lancaster reported 15 categories of student engagement including community service by student organizations, American Cancer Society Relay for Life, partnership with the American Red Cross, course-based service learning projects, and a student athletes' volunteer program.

- Data from the National Survey for Student Engagement (NSSE) demonstrates that USC has been relatively successful in promoting service and service-learning. South Carolina first-year students had significantly higher involvement in community service and community based projects than did their national peers (see Table 2).
- Course work is an effective delivery mechanism for service learning and internship experiences at USC. A draft inventory of service learning courses at USC in Fall 2010 found 43 courses that involve service learning. An example of a significant course involving community engagement on the regional campuses is the required immersion/internship course in the Palmetto Programs (the two baccalaureate degrees available without leaving regional campuses).

Table 2: USC First-Year Student Self-reports of Participation and Intentions to Participate in Comparison with Other Institutions*

Question Topic	Response Options	USC		Six (Peer Inst.)		Carnegie Class		NSSE 2009	
		Count	%	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%
Participated in a community project *as part of a regular course*	Never	182	34%	2,436	61%	12,265	65%	89,323	62%
	Sometimes	230	43%	1,067	26%	4,220	23%	40,134	25%
	Often	79	15%	369	9%	1,552	8%	14,817	9%
	Very often	46	8%	154	4%	716	4%	6,511	4%
	Total	537	100%	4,026	100%	18,753	100%	150,785	100%
Have or plan to participate in community service or volunteer work	Have not decided	29	7%	345	10%	1,783	11%	17,316	13%
	Do not plan to do	24	5%	191	6%	863	6%	7,975	7%
	Plan to do	144	30%	1,603	43%	7,659	41%	58,347	41%
	Done	310	58%	1,663	41%	7,663	42%	60,008	39%
	Total	507	100%	3,802	100%	17,968	100%	143,646	100%

*Source: National Survey for Student Engagement http://nsse.iub.edu/index.cfm

- NSSE data indicates that currently 27% of students (more than 5500) participate in undergraduate research with a faculty member by graduation. Since its inception in 2005, the Office of Undergraduate Research has granted approximately $1.3M to 465 students to conduct mentored research experiences. In 2009-10, 11% of participants were from non-Columbia campuses including Lancaster, Salkehatchie, and Sumter.

- Study abroad and international learning are well established and growing at USC. On the Columbia campus in 2009-2010, approximately 800 students studied abroad and 100 more participated in internationally-themed living and learning communities. Hundreds of students participated in one or more international activities during International Education Week (held annually). At USC Salkehatchie, an annual international festival draws approximately 100 participants per year and approximately 10 students participate in a study abroad experience in Maymester every other year. (See Appendix C for a sample regional campus report on BTC experiences.)

- Thousands of students are involved in leadership activities throughout USC's campuses including student government; peer leaders, ambassadors, tutors, health educators, and mentors; and Greek Life and student organization leaders. A survey of peer leaders administered annually 2008-2010 showed consistently positive results (see Table 3).

Table 3: Percentage of Peer Leaders Agreeing with Statements on the Influence of Peer Leadership Experience

Outcome	2008 Survey	2009 Survey	2010 Survey
▸ Positive overall experience at USC	99.40	97.01	98.57
▸ Would recommend peer leadership to others	97.60	97.60	97.86
▸ Improved time management skills	91.80	86.31	88.48
▸ Motivated them to model appropriate behavior	95.90	94.32	96.62
▸ Increased knowledge of University services	97.10	96.81	97.86
▸ Increased interaction with faculty	90.69	90.53	85.45
▸ More comfortable speaking in front of groups	94.12	91.48	93.92
▸ Feel comfortable guiding others in their decision making	94.71	95.45	97.65
▸ Feel comfortable guiding others in times of difficulty	90.69	96.02	98.65
▸ Feel more comfortable taking leadership role in group	91.28	92.62	94.59
▸ Allowed to interact with diverse group of students	91.81	91.82	97.18
Questions added in 2009			
▸ Improved oral communication skills	-	95.46	97.30
▸ Hold self more accountable for own behaviors	-	91.48	94.60
▸ Have matured	-	93.57	92.25
▸ Increased confidence for facing future challenges	-	95.21	94.28
▸ Increased confidence interacting with faculty	-	91.58	89.70
▸ Better able to conduct self in professional manner	-	92.05	97.98

Note: In the 2008 survey, affirmative responses included agree and strongly agree, whereas in the 2009 and 2010 surveys the affirmative responses included moderately agree and strongly agree. The N's for each outcome in the 2008 survey ranged from 122 to 172, the N's for each outcome in the 2009 survey ranged from 167 to 190, and the N's for each outcome in the 2010 survey ranged from 139 to 165. Percentages are calculated from the N for each specific item.

USC Mission and Strengths: First-Year Experiences

USC has received numerous recognitions for its first-year programs including
- US News and World Report citation for nine consecutive years as a "program to look for" in first-year programs that lead to student success,
- Recognition by the National Association of Student Personnel Administrators (NASPA), who awarded University 101 with the Gold Award in Excellence in 2011 for the category of "Administrative, Assessment, Information Technology, Fundraising, Professional Development and related." The submission, "101 Program Instructor Development Process" was selected from among the 10 category gold honorees as Grand Silver in the 2011 NASPA Excellence Awards program.

- 2008 Special Merit Award from the National Resource Center for the First-Year Experience, and
- Named as an Institution of Excellence in the First College Year by the Policy Center on the First-Year of College (selected as one of 13 awardees from a field of 130, only flagship institution selected)

Criteria for first-year program awards include an intentional, comprehensive approach to first-year student education; continuous improvement driven by meaningful assessments; broad impact on significant numbers of first-year students; strong enduring institutional support and leadership for first-year initiatives; an involvement of a broad range of faculty, student affairs professionals, administrators and others in first-year programs. However, perhaps the greatest recognition of our first-year programs has been the replication of our first-year seminar (UNIV 101) at hundreds of other institutions. (Further information on UNIV 101 is available at http://www.sc.edu/univ101/.)

Following the first-year, USC continues to support students through The Sophomore Initiative (TSI). TSI focuses on both academic support and encouragement and guidance for beyond the classroom experiences.

USC Mission and Strengths: Living and Learning Communities

USC's Living and Learning Communities support students in integrating their academic and daily lives through increased interactions and opportunities for collaboration with others choosing to focus on similar goals. Living and Learning Communities are an integral part of the university experience, providing students with the opportunity to live in an environment that promotes diversity, embraces excellence, encourages insightful faculty-student interaction and works to develop a strong sense of community. These academically themed communities also emphasize active service-learning experiences, study-abroad opportunities, and undergraduate research.

Examples of USC's *Living and Learning Communities* include the Journalism Community, Healthy Carolina Wellness Community, Spanish Language House, Music Community, and the Carolina Global Community. Preston Residential College (235 students) was established in 1995 as a place for students to live and learn in an environment that promotes community, diversity and faculty interaction (40 faculty associates interact with students). Although students are expected to maintain a 2.5 GPA, Preston's is not an honors college but rather provides an integrated learning experience for a broad range of students. Capstone House, initiated in 2005 and housing over 500 students, provides a residential community for USC's first and second year Capstone Scholars. Students are encouraged to live by the program's motto "Dream Big! Impact the Community. Leave a Legacy." In USC's Green Quad, approximately 500 students participate in programs that promote sustainability and green lifestyles with a smaller group of students participating intensely in the Green Learning Community. Students who are exploring professional careers in medicine, law, or engineering and computing can live in pre-professional communities that provide interaction with practicing professionals and outreach opportunities related to their field. For example, engineering students support state-wide competitions in robotics for elementary, middle, and high school students.

USC Mission and Strengths: Academic Programs

USC has strong academic programs as evidenced through national program and unit accreditations from 25 accrediting bodies (e.g., American Assembly of Collegiate Schools of Business, American Psychological Association, Accreditation Board for Engineering and Technology, National Council for the Accreditation of Teacher Education, National Association of Schools of Music). National accreditations require programs to meet stringent standards for high quality faculty and resources, curricula that thoroughly prepare students, and evidence of student performance and success. USC programs are led by nationally and internationally recognized faculty as can be clearly seen in records of faculty research and service. Best teaching practices are reflected in strong course evaluations in which students assess their instructors and peer reviews conducted by faculty colleagues. Programs have a strong history of academic and career success of students and graduates (e.g., since 1994 students nearly 500 students have won almost $14 million for advanced academic study; USC graduates are leaders throughout the state, nation, and world).

The revision to the Carolina Core (noted earlier) is an example of USC's work to continuously improve academic programs through an increased focus on student learning outcomes and assessment of student performance that is even more clearly aligned with specific academic standards. This focus is replicated at the department and program level with increased emphasis on assessment of student learning related to program specific learning outcomes to inform program improvement.

USC's academic excellence is also reflected in high quality programs to support student academic success. The USC Student Success Center won a gold excellence award from the National Association of Student Personnel Administrators (NASPA) for coordinating programs and services that include supplemental instruction, a student-led academic assistance program; tutoring; academic recovery programs; and programs for transfer, out-of-state and minority students. USC also provides academic support for students through Academic Centers for Excellence in residence halls and the Supplemental Instruction program for core courses.

USC Mission and Strengths: Faculty and Staff Professional Development

Support for faculty and staff professional development is also clearly established at USC. The Center for Teaching Excellence was created in 2006 and regularly organizes and implements a wide variety of programs available to faculty on all campuses such as establishing communities of practice; presenting workshops, lectures, and seminars; providing on-line resources; and supporting faculty initiatives to utilize instructional technology and investigate innovative teaching strategies (see http://www.sc.edu/cte/ for further information). The Division of Student Affairs has an established system for professional development including leadership through the Professional Development Team; systematic meetings throughout the year including local, state, and national speakers and discussion of current issues; and an annual retreat ("IdeaPOP").

USC Mission and Strengths: Technology

A major initiative to upgrade USC technology systems has been in process over the last four years. The transition to new integrated systems will provide a solid base for future technological innovations. See Appendix D for further information on the recent history and timeline for the university's substantial technology developments. Besides the university's Office of Information Technology which leads general university technology upgrades and initiatives, USC is also home to the Center for Digital Humanities (CDH). CDH was founded in 2008 by a group of scholars committed to the belief that the future of research and teaching in the humanities is bound to digital methodologies, pedagogies, and media. The center supports faculty and students in developing innovative technologies by providing server space, monetary support, consultation on projects, and connections with others developing innovative technology projects.

Meaningful Connections and Lifelong Learning

Consistent with USC's mission to equip students with the "knowledge, skills, and values necessary for success and responsible citizenship in a complex and changing world through *engagement in nationally and internationally ranked research, scholarship, service, and artistic creation*", faculty, staff, and students' discussions during *Focus Carolina* (i.e., strategic planning) repeatedly revisited the importance of the connections between classroom learning and applications to the "real world". The Teaching and Learning Committee included in its overarching goal to "enhance the richness of the student experience in and beyond the classroom" and the Service Excellence Committee focused on recommendations to more effectively integrate a wide variety of local, state, national, and international engagements into student life and learning.

However, while engagement in a wide variety of experiences clearly enriches a student's educational experience, if the engagement does not include support in analyzing and learning from that experience, it is, at the very least, a missed opportunity. More strongly stated, if an institution of higher education consistently fails to support students in integrating their experiences, they are not fully preparing their students "for success and responsible citizenship in a complex and changing world" (i.e., USC's mission).

The importance of integrative learning has received increased attention in higher education (Huber & Hutching, 2005) including the publication of a statement on integrative learning from the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching and the Association of American Colleges and Universities (AAC&U) in 2004. As noted in the Carnegie/AAC&U position statement:

> Fostering students' abilities to integrate learning—across courses, over time, and between campus and community life—is one of the most important goals and challenges of higher education. The undergraduate experience can be a fragmented landscape of general education courses, preparation for the major, co-curricular activities, and "the real world" beyond the campus. But an emphasis on integrative learning can help undergraduates put the pieces together and develop habits of mind that prepare them to make informed judgments in the conduct of personal, professional, and civic life. (AAC&U/Carnegie Foundation, 2004)

AAC&U's rubric to assess students' success in integrative learning focuses on students' ability to demonstrate specific skills such as connecting relevant experiences and academic knowledge, thoughtfully connecting elements from one experience to another, and applying experiences to new situations to solve problems. (Rhodes, 2010) This focus on a student's internal ability to make sense of his/her experiences is critical to helping students truly learn from their experiences in ways that will sustain them in the future (i.e., making them both highly skilled contributors to society and lifelong learners).

Gardner's work (2007) demonstrates employers' increased expectations for graduates to take initiative, network effectively (receive and share expertise), coordinate efforts, work toward shared goals, think analytically, evaluate alternatives, and create solutions. Dr. Gardner further articulated these findings first-hand at USC when he visited the campus in Fall 2010. These same traits serve graduates well in other aspects of their lives (e.g., citizenship, home life). A question for institutions of higher education is how to help students develop these skills in addition to an appropriate knowledge base in their field of interest. Integrative learning seems a natural solution, but how an institution defines integrative learning is key.

While employers value internships and other beyond the classroom experiences, research has shown that if students cannot articulate how their beyond the classroom experiences transfer to lessons learned that are applicable in a broad range of situations, the value of the experience is greatly diminished. Gardner, Gross, and Steglitz (2008) note how students engaging in study abroad can move from describing their experience in terms of a general "travel log" with little relevant substance to clearly articulating their experiences in terms of their personal growth in interacting people with different, interests, values, and perspectives; understanding cultural differences; adapting to situations of change; and gaining new knowledge from experience.

As noted by Gale (2006), "in thinking about integrative learning, the student belongs at the center: it is the student's development, capacity for meaning making, and skills and abilities to make coherent connections that matter most". This point was well taken by the *Focus Carolina* committee on Teaching and Learning which recommended that Carolina create a "culture of student centered learning". Student centered learning focuses not on what information is "covered" in a course, but what meaning the student makes of his/her experiences in the course. That meaning is tied to all other knowledge and skills the student has constructed through other experiences. It is these internal connections that ultimately matter most in a student's capacity to make a difference in the future. Those internal connections are integrative learning.

Transforming Student Learning through *USC Connect*: Meeting Challenges by Building on Strengths to Focus on Integrative Learning

As the QEP Proposal Committee focused on the need for students to synthesize their within and beyond the classroom experiences in order to accomplish deeper, longer lasting, and more meaningful learning, we considered how we could build on our already considerable strengths in student engagement, first-year experiences, academics, and other areas to support our students in moving to even higher levels of achievement, dispositions, and commitment to lifelong learning. *USC Connect* was built from this analysis.

In considering how to transform student educational experiences at USC through integrative learning, the QEP Proposal Committee identified two major areas of concern concerning all parties (i.e., students, faculty, and staff):

- Limited awareness of the potential for enhanced educational experiences through <u>integrative learning</u> including the meaningful connections of within and beyond the classroom experiences.
- Limited intentional, system-wide coordination and communication of within and beyond the classroom learning opportunities (e.g., courses involving research, mentorship programs, service learning, study abroad) resulting in limited awareness of <u>existing within and beyond the classroom opportunities</u>.

Each of these concerns is described in further detail in the following paragraphs.

<u>Limited awareness and expertise related to integrative learning</u>

While integrative learning is receiving increased attention in higher education, particularly in liberal arts colleges, as is typical of other Research I institutions, integrative learning is not consistently recognized by faculty, staff, and students at USC as a critical component of student learning. In order for within and beyond the classroom experiences to be as effective as possible, USC must significantly increase the number of faculty and staff who are attuned to and engaged in facilitating students' integrative learning. Assessment of integrative learning is a particularly complex task that requires in-depth training and support of faculty and professional staff.

Similarly, although many students seek beyond the classroom experiences, the degree to which students reflect on and learn from those experiences in the broader context of their educational experience could be greatly enhanced. Students need to recognize the potential for connections between experiential and classroom-based learning and have multiple opportunities to develop skills in making connections between within and beyond the classroom experiences.

***USC Connect* invests in faculty and staff development to lead the enhancement of integrative learning at USC and includes a strong orientation for students that will provide a foundation from which they can build on integrative learning throughout their USC experience.** USC's existing administrative and academic structures will serve us well in this area. The Center for Teaching Excellence and the systematic professional development already established in the Division of Student Affairs provide ready mechanisms to deliver extended professional development on the integration of within and beyond the classroom experiences and integrative learning. Similarly, our well-established, award winning systems to support first-year students provide structures that can be used to deliver a consistent message and orientation to students regarding the opportunities at USC in within and beyond the classroom experiences and integrative learning.

<u>Limited system-wide coordination and communication regarding within and beyond the classroom experiences</u>

USC faces the challenges of a large research university where strong academic programs and opportunities to enrich classroom learning abound, but where connections between units are not especially well developed as part of any intentional coordinated

institutional efforts or structure. These limited connections between units result in minimal coordination of within and beyond the classroom experiences. Difficulties include coordination across student affairs offices supporting beyond the classroom experiences (e.g., Student Engagement, Study Abroad, Undergraduate Research), coordination between colleges and schools, and coordination between academic and student affairs.

The context of the problem was clearly stated in *The Tenth Dimension,* one of USC's four winning QEP proposals:

> Colleges and universities nationwide have recognized that advanced learning too often leads to curricular fragmentation, leaving students unable to synthesize, let alone identify, the outcomes of related courses and correlated learning experiences. The Association of American Colleges and Universities puts the case bluntly: " . . . [A] college degree more frequently certifies completion of disconnected fragments than of a coherent plan for student accomplishment." (AAC&U, 2002).

> Too often students experience the university as a bewildering array of choices. Opportunity, where it occurs, is based on serendipity: a chance encounter along a pathway, an idle moment near an elevator, an overheard rumor. This experience both results from and reinforces a fragmented and incoherent campus life of narrow attention to a single domain. (Baird, et.al., 2009).

USC Connect takes a multi-faceted approach to solving this problem with the goal of giving students the tools "to forge meaningful links among learning experiences in disparate environments [which] will enhance the University's educational effectiveness by integrating our exceptional but isolated disciplines, courses, and beyond the classroom learning activities into an experiential model of interconnectedness and engagement". (Baird, et.al., 2009)

USC Connect builds on one of the recommendations of The *Focus Carolina* Committee on Service Excellence. The Service Excellence Committee noted that "the university currently has a loosely knit group of formal and informal offices and committees – with overlapping missions and membership – that address various aspects of service learning and community engagement." They recommended that "USC needs a centralized mechanism to facilitate interdisciplinary service learning and community engagement." We have expanded this concept in the QEP*: **USC Connect** **will be led by a central office and governance structure which integrates efforts between academic and student affairs including coordination of <u>all</u> beyond the classroom experiences and the enhancement of integrative learning and assessment.** The Director of the *USC Connect* Office will report to the Provost, but also have a direct link to the Vice President for Student Affairs.

In addition, USC will take advantage of and build on the transformation that is underway in USC's technology systems to provide a unified, readily available system which students, faculty, and staff can interact with to find information and coordinate within and beyond the classroom opportunities with one another. University Technology Systems are currently phasing in new platforms that will create the infrastructure needed to coordinate university information including providing access to information and tracking participation in within and beyond the classroom learning opportunities. Additional

innovations are being explored through the University's Center for Digital Humanities. The analysis of our capabilities for *USC Connect* also highlighted the need for more efficient technologies to facilitate assessment of student work in an on-line environment that automatically collates and summarizes data. ***USC Connect* makes a significant investment in the coordination and development of technologies that will provide ready access to and interaction with information on within and beyond the classroom learning opportunities and mechanisms to track and assess student learning.**

Communicating USC Connect to Broader Community

USC (including Columbia, Lancaster, Salkehatchie, Sumter, and Union campuses) is a large and complex institution. While *USC Connect* has been developed collaboratively throughout the QEP process, communication with and input from the broader university community will continue to be sought and considered as the process continues. An updated summary of *USC Connect was* provided at the Provost's Retreat for Academic Leadership [Deans, Department Chairs, Faculty Leaders] in January and meetings are planned throughout the spring semester with a broad range of faculty, staff, and students (e.g., USC Columbia Faculty Senate, Regional Campuses Faculty Senate, Division of Student Affairs and Academic Support, Student Government, college and departmental meetings). In addition, distribution of public relations materials continues including a poster and video campaign featuring students who have been positively impacted by beyond the classroom experiences and integrative learning, technology enhancements (e.g., addition of student videos to the website), and additional print-based publications. Invitations to comment on *USC Connect* will be widely distributed. All feedback will be considered in future revisions of the proposal.

Conclusion

As noted in our Executive Summary, we believe that integrative learning can enhance education for all students and that USC is in a particularly advantageous position to develop and demonstrate how this can be done. USC has the combined strengths of a wealth of beyond the classroom learning experiences delivered through both academic and student affairs, highly successful first-year programs, strong academic majors and a new general education core, a well established Center for Teaching Excellence, a history of staff professional development, and emerging technology that will support students' in selecting, recording, and assessing their experiences. Although we recognize that successful implementation will be challenging, such a comprehensive plan is appropriate given our history of achievement in relation to academic and student affairs and the current office, programs, and systems in place.

As noted by Mentkowski (2000):

> At the institutional level, *transformation* is intentional, institution wide, deep, dynamic and pervasive; it changes and is changed by institutional culture; and is a process requiring time . . . (T)ransformation, in contrast to surface or partial changes (capstone courses, a new building, course reorganization, integration of the library and information technology systems) is deep, dynamic, and pervasive. (p.361-362)

It is this level of transformational change which we seek through *USC Connect.*

IV.   **Desired Learning Outcomes**

The overarching goal of *USC Connect* is for students to intentionally select within and beyond the classroom experiences relevant to their learning goals and interests and integrate and apply knowledge and skills from these experiences. A critical aspect of the proposal is to increase student participation in beyond the classroom experiences in ways that support students in analyzing their experiences in consideration of personal and societal contexts, integrating knowledge and skills over time and across disciplines and learning contexts (e.g., academic, experiential), and applying integrative learning to decision-making.

Specifically, *USC Connect* learning outcomes are that <u>students will</u>:

1. Provide examples of beyond the classroom experiences in which they have engaged and describe how one or more beyond the classroom experiences has contributed to their learning.

2. Articulate examples of beyond the classroom experiences that illuminate concepts/theories/frameworks presented in their coursework including a clear description of elements of the beyond the classroom experience that are consistent with or contradictory to the identified concept

3. Thoughtfully connect examples, facts, and/or theories from more than one experience, field of study, and/or perspective such as describing the similarities and differences across experiences, fields of study, or perspectives.

4. Pose solutions to problems (i.e., make recommendations) that incorporate learning from both beyond the classroom and within the classroom experiences, articulate how their decisions are supported by what they have learned through their experiences and content preparation, and implement those solutions (if appropriate).

V.   Literature Review

As noted previously, in 2004 a statement on integrative learning was published jointly by the Association of American Colleges and Universities (AAC&U) and the Carnegie Foundation which proposed that "fostering students' abilities to integrate learning—across courses, over time, and between campus and community life—is one of the most important goals and challenges of higher education". The statement continues:

> The undergraduate experience can be a fragmented landscape of general education courses, preparation for the major, co-curricular activities, and "the real world" beyond the campus. But an emphasis on integrative learning can help undergraduates put the pieces together and develop habits of mind that prepare them to make informed judgments in the conduct of personal, professional, and civic life. (AAC&U/Carnegie Foundation, 2004)

Since then, integrative learning has continued to gain attention as a critical component of higher education. AAC&U and Carnegie sponsored *The Integrative Learning Project: Opportunities to Connect* (Huber, et. al., 2007) from 2004-2006. In this initiative, ten campuses developed and assessed integrative learning strategies. Most projects focused on fairly specific aspects of the curriculum such as developing first-year experiences, capstone courses, integrative learning credits for study abroad experiences, e-portfolios, or integrated learning assignments. *USC Connect* builds on this previous work by moving toward a comprehensive approach to integrative learning at a major research university of over 30,000 students.

The Future of Higher Education

Flynn and Vredevoogd (2010) summarized 12 emerging trends in higher education that were identified through a series of leadership roundtables in 2005 and updated in 2009. Four of the noted trends are directly related to integrative learning. The authors predict that over the next 10 years, colleges and universities will experience
- A need for more varied and holistic approaches to inclusive learning,
- A demand for more experiential, outside learning opportunities,
- An increase in student interest in interdisciplinary learning, and
- Increased interdependence of campus and community.

These trends reflect the ever blurring lines between classroom learning and real world experience. Evidence is clear that students will increasingly ask how their work on campus applies to other aspects of their lives and seek ways to make those connections. Demands for meaningful connections between education and the community will continue to come not only from students, but from the greater "contextual surround that invariably shapes the educational process" (Goodlad, p. 23). Expectations of the community (local, state, national, international) for the evermore effective use and integration of resources to best prepare workers, citizens, and leaders will continue to rise.

Three additional future trends noted by Flynn and Vredevoogd are strongly related to one another and to *USC Connect*:
- Technology as a driver of change,
- The role of students in managing their own learning, and

- The significance of accountability and assessment in defining institutional effectiveness.

Students' competence with technology continues to expand beyond that of any previous generation which not only provides students with access to a wealth of information, but provides a level of independence to control their own learning that is unprecedented. USC students have consistently noted that the technology innovations of *USC Connect* are an exciting component of the proposal and will encourage student participation. *USC Connect* technology innovations are intended to meet student expectations for greater access to information and allow them to select and plan for an overall learning experience that integrates their interests (i.e., be managers of their own learning). Technology will also continue to be a key factor in efficient and systematic collection of data that will help assess student performance and overall institutional effectiveness.

Integrative Learning

> *I had all these discrete bits of knowledge, because that's what they teach you in school. They teach you history over here, and they teach you math over here, and they teach you science over here, and they have nothing to do with each other. And so, the flaw in my intellectual process, if you will, was in not synthesizing these things in some way that related them to anything, to life? And all of a sudden, there were all of these things that meshed in my brain. I mean I could almost hear the gears grinding as they came together. And it was marvelous!*
> (Quote from a student engaged in integrative learning experiences, Mentkowski, 2000, 191 &194)

This student is describing how integrating learning across disciplines became apparent to her as she worked on solving an architectural problem with a small group of peers. Integrative learning can encompass integration across many spectrums including integrating across disciplines, as in this example, or in applying theory to practice (as in internships or other beyond the classroom experiences) or even in utilizing diverse points of view to consider an issue or understand a situation (AACU, 2004).

As stated by Lee Shulman (Huber, Hutchings, and Gale, 2005), all learning is in some sense integrative. Any and all new material or experiences must be considered and categorized in the context of one's previous experiences and understandings. However, we can all improve our ability to make internal connections and apply them to new situations. We can learn to think more carefully when making comparisons (or even to recognize what kinds of comparisons might be made), seek and explore different perspectives, ask relevant questions, try out possible solutions. This is learning how to learn, how to think, how to solve problems, how to create. These are the skills that are needed to effectively utilize the ever changing information in today's world.

Some scholars make a distinction between what could be called "interdisciplinary learning", as seen in the opening example of this section, and "integrative learning" which they define as considering information from "real world" experiences as one grapples with a problem or develops an understanding. Newell (2010) suggests that "interdisciplinary learning" can be thought of as examining a complex situation from the perspective of multiple disciplines (i.e., the perspective of each separate "silo") which he contrasts with integrative learning that actually brings "students into contact with people

who are *inside* the complex situation" so that students experience the problem from an even broader array of angles. (p.8)

However, no matter exactly what type of experiences a student is considering as s/he constructs new understandings, it is the habits of the mind that are built through integrative learning that is ultimately important. As has been widely recognized, many of the ideas related to integrative learning are not really new. Concepts related to integrative learning harken back to Dewey's focus on the experiential learning (McDermott, 1981) and Piaget's research on construction of knowledge (Piaget, 1985). Constructivism describes such concepts as the need for teachers to create mental "disequilibrium" for their students (introducing them to situations which challenge their ideas) and the significance of peer interaction as an impetus for students to rethink what they know (with the ensuing reflection resulting in deeper understanding). Kolb and Fry's (1975) Experiential Learning Model emphasizing concrete experience, reflection, and application is well known in higher education and is based on the same concepts. Today's focus on integrative learning further explores these ideas and their ramifications for the collegiate experience.

Huber and Hutchings' 2005 publication *Mapping the Terrain* does an eloquent job of bringing together key concepts and challenges related to integrative learning in the context of today's issues in higher education. Key points include:

- **Teaching the conflicts**: Building new insights comes from "wrestling" with the conflict within and between curricula, perspectives, or experiences rather than compartmentalizing learning from each situation. A focus on integrative learning means intentionally planning experiences in which students are asked to synthesize information across experiences. The authors recognize that the tendency of disciplines to be focused on the depth of their own area can make it challenging to provide space and opportunities for students to think in integrative ways.

- **Habits of reflection and intentionality**: Integrative learning recognizes the centrality of the learner! The vision is for *students* to be empowered to think through what is important to them, what connections make sense, what information they need, what questions they might ask or experiences they might need to advance their knowledge and skills. Challenging students to reflect on how they think and learn (i.e., metacognition) is part of the process.

- **Reflection as dialectical**: As noted by Huber and Hutchings, a quote from Yancey (1998) illustrates many of the ideas of intentional, integrative learning:

  Reflection is dialectical, putting multiple perspectives into play with each other in order to produce insight. Procedurally, reflection entails a looking forward to goals we might attain, as well as a casting backward to see where we have been. When we reflect, we thus project and review, often putting the projections and the reviews in dialogue with each other, working dialectically as we seek to discover what we know, what we have learned, and what we might understand (p.6).

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- **Self-assessment:** Assessment of integrative learning initiatives requires attention to students engaging in self-assessment—an institution's responsibility is to provide a structured framework for that self assessment which could incorporate a range of methods from e-portfolios to questionnaires to all kinds of student "products".

- **Teaching as a complex process:** The issue is not only that we need to support students in the complexity of learning, but that teaching for integration is also a complex process. Faculty must be intentional about their teaching practices and systematically reflect on their teaching to effectively support students in integrative learning.

USC Connect recognizes the centrality of providing opportunities for students to control their own learning (i.e., intentionality) and the critical role of reflection (both as an individual and in collaboration with others) to providing truly meaningful experiences in integrative learning. The proposal further recognizes the complexity of addressing both of these aspects of integrative learning in a comprehensive way and plans accordingly.

Students and Technology

As noted by Guess (2007), today's students are "'digital natives' who have grown up immersed in technology in some form". Statistics published by Educause Center for Applied Research (ECAR) include
- Nearly all college students own a computer (98%) with laptops (including netbooks) being the increasingly popular choice with some students having both desktop and laptops (46% desktop, 84% laptop).
- Those who own and use handheld devices that connect to the internet increased from 33% in 2009 to 49% in 2010.
- Students report heavy use of technology in their studies including 94% using library websites, 90% using presentation software or course management systems (e.g., Blackboard) and 85% using spreadsheets.
- 94% of students use social networking sites.
  (Smith & Caruso, 2010)

Those exploring the impact of the pervasiveness of technology on students reach conclusions consistent with those cited in the future trends noted previously. That is,

> students [of the future] will grow up with different expectations and preferences for acquiring knowledge and skills. The implication is less of an emphasis on the "sage on the stage" and a linear acquisition process focusing on a "single best source", focusing instead on "active learning" that comes from synthesizing information from multiple types of media. (Guess, 2007).

USC Connect recognizes the central role of technology in student learning today and in the future. Thus, effective and innovative use of technology is infused throughout *USC Connect* from helping students, faculty, and staff identify beyond the classroom experiences relevant to the students' learning needs and career paths, recording participation in experiences, utilizing technology to as a means for student reflection

(individual and collaborative), and assessing student knowledge, skills, and dispositions related to integrative learning.

Conclusions

Our investigations have reinforced that integrative learning within and beyond the classroom is an approach that is critical to the education of our students, consistent with our mission to prepare students for the 21st century, and continues to move USC forward in ways that will position us to meet the educational needs of students in the future. *USC Connect* combines the depth of what we know about learning (e.g., the significance of experience and learning in context, the importance of reflection and synthesis) in context of today's students (e.g., a complex, information- and technology-rich world). The actions for implementation of *USC Connect* are designed to enhance students' opportunities for experiential learning combined with opportunities to reflect on and analyze those experiences in the context of their academic experience and in ways that will enable them to apply what they have learned to solve complex problems, make insightful decisions, and lead creative initiatives in the future.

VI. Actions to be Implemented

Successful implementation of *USC Connect* relies on a coordinated university effort centered on the principles of integrated learning and including consideration of the current institutional context. A summary of USC's two broad institutional goals for *USC Connect* with a list of the action steps to realize each goal is presented first, followed by a section providing detailed explanations of each goal and its related action steps.

Summary of Goals and Action Steps

Goal A: Develop a university culture that supports students' integrative learning.

    Action steps:
1. Create an administrative structure to support students' integrative learning and *USC Connect*
    a. Establish a *USC Connect* Office with a focus on uniting the work of academic and student affairs.
    b. Implement a *USC Connect* governance structure that connects the office to all constituencies.

2. Assess faculty and staff needs related to integrative learning and provide and facilitate faculty and staff participation in professional development opportunities resulting from the analysis.
    a. Assess current faculty and staff knowledge, skills and dispositions related to beyond the classroom experiences, integrative learning, and assessment of student learning.
    b. Increase faculty and staff knowledge, skills and dispositions related to beyond the classroom experiences, integrative learning, and assessment of student learning.
    c. Evaluate the effects of professional development activities for faculty and staff that are related to beyond the classroom experiences, integrative learning, and assessment of student learning.

3. Assess student knowledge, skills, and dispositions in relation to integrative learning and orient students to the benefits and opportunities of integrative learning.
    a. Introduce potential students and parents to *USC Connect,* including beyond the classroom experiences and integrative learning, in pre-matriculation materials and activities.
    b. Introduce and assess students in relation to *USC Connect* through Orientation, the First-Year Reading Experience, and the first-year seminar (i.e., UNIV 101).

Goal B: Develop the infrastructure to support, facilitate, and enhance students' integrative learning opportunities.

    Action steps:

1. Develop innovative technologies to provide students, faculty, and staff with access to and interaction with information on within and beyond the

classroom experiences and efficient systems to track and assess student learning.
   a. Establish an on-going Technology Committee to work with the Director of USC Connect to coordinate, plan, and implement *USC Connect* technologies.
   b. Plan, develop, and implement the *USC Connect* technology system through the leadership of the Technology Committee.

2. Enhance and coordinate university policies, procedures, structures, and offerings to provide a clear path of support, encouragement, and resources for students from intentional selection of within and beyond the classroom experiences to in-depth reflection, synthesis, and application of experiences.
   a. Create and maintain an accurate inventory of beyond the classroom experiences in academic and student affairs
   b. Develop systems that encourage and facilitate students' selection, reflection, synthesis and application of experiences

Explanation of Goals and Action Steps

Goal A: Develop a university <u>culture</u> that supports students' integrative learning and increases integrative learning opportunities.

As noted in the section of this report on Identification of the Topic, the culture of a research university focuses primarily on discipline specific research and expertise. Learning across disciplines and through beyond the classroom experiences traditionally receives much less recognition and attention from faculty, staff, and students. In order to help students make more meaningful connections across their experiences, USC must significantly increase the number of administrators, faculty, and staff who are attuned to and engaged in facilitating integrative learning.

In addition, students' academic focus is often primarily on their major. Connections and relevance of other coursework and beyond the classroom opportunities to their learning and future goals tends to be more limited. *USC Connect* will create a campus culture that helps focus students on learning as an integrated process that unites their academic work, beyond the classroom experiences, and daily lives with an emphasis on how learning and experiences in one domain impacts another.

1. **Create an administrative structure to support students' integrative learning and *USC Connect.***

   a. ***USC Connect* Office: Establish a *USC Connect* Office with a focus on uniting the work of academic and student affairs.**
      The ongoing support and success of *USC Connect* requires a central office dedicated to leading the initiative and soliciting ongoing feedback and guidance from the broader university community. The *USC Connect* Office will be associated with the Provost's Office and will be staffed by a full-time administrator, the *USC Connect* Director, an administrative assistant, and a part-time (.4) assessment coordinator. The ideal director will have a strong background in academics including integrative learning and beyond the classroom experiences as well as expertise in higher education and student affairs. Major responsibilities of the office will include oversight for on-going

planning and implementation, marketing and communication, and evaluation of *USC Connect.*

The *USC Connect* Office will provide leadership in connecting and coordinating the efforts of all units that support within and beyond the classroom experiences and integrative learning including Student Affairs, Academic Affairs, Regional Campuses, Research and Graduate Studies, University Technology Services, and the Center for Teaching Excellence. A *USC Connect* Council and five committees will serve as regular points of contact and advisement for the office (see 1b—Governance Structure).

In addition, the *USC Connect* Director or other *USC Connect* representatives will seek input in relation to specific issues from representatives of other groups such as the Division of Student Affairs and Academic Support, the Council of Academic Deans, the Academic Program Liaisons (i.e., Associate/Assistant Deans), the Student Government Executive Council and Faculty Senate, the Peer Leader Advisor Network, the Columbia and Regional Campuses Faculty Senates.

The *USC Connect* Office will give constituencies a point of contact including a clear website to help faculty, staff, students, and community members locate services; timely communications promoting beyond the classroom and integrative learning opportunities; and a vehicle for others' to communicate suggestions, questions, or comments related to *USC Connect*.

i.   USC Connect Office: Marketing and communication

The USC Connect Office will oversee a communications and marketing plan that will consistently and effectively promote integrative learning and beyond the classroom initiatives, including such features as
- Schedule of publications/articles about *USC Connect*
- Regularly updated website including resources on integrative learning
- Presentations to targeted and interested groups
- Videos of students or faculty/staff members involved in beyond the classroom experiences and/or integrative learning.
- On-line and hard copy flyers to inform faculty and staff about evolving research and best practices with integrative learning.

Constituents will be surveyed to determine the usefulness of communications to help evolve them over time.

ii.   USC Connect Office: Planning and implementation

The *USC Connect* office will work with a broad constituency including key university representatives and offices (e.g, university administrators, pathways offices [research, community engagement, leadership, international], Center for Teaching Excellence, University Technology Services, and the Center for Digital Humanities; regional campus representatives); a *USC Connect Council* that will make recommendations and guide *USC Connect* development; and a range of advisory groups. See organization structure for further information.

iii.   USC Connect Office: Evaluation

The *USC Connect* Office will have primary responsibility for leading systematic evaluation of *USC Connect* including an annual report as a part of the University's Blueprint for Academic Excellence (USC's strategic planning process) to be presented to the Provost and the Office of Institutional Assessment and Compliance. The assessment coordinator will assist the director and other *USC Connect* related offices in gathering appropriate data.

b. Governance Structure: Implement a *USC Connect* governance structure that connects the office to all constituencies.

It is critical that governance structure and activities of the *USC Connect o*ffice involve broad representation of the university community (including regional campuses). University administrators and leadership (i.e., vice presidents, provosts, deans, division heads) must be informed and part of the ongoing process so that *USC Connect* is supported at the highest levels.

The governance structure for *USC Connect* includes the *USC Connect* Council comprised of
- faculty and professional staff chairs/co-chairs of five standing committees on key elements of USC Connect (i.e., Assessment, Engagements, First-Year Experiences, Professional Development, and Technology),
- a regional campus representative,
- two students,
- three high level administrators (ex-officio) (i.e., Vice Provost and Dean of Undergraduate Studies, Vice President for Student Affairs, Director or Institutional Assessment and Compliance), and
- one external consultant with expertise related to *USC Connect* (ex-officio)

Each committee represented on the Council is comprised of faculty, staff, and student representatives appropriate to that area.

The *USC Connect* Council will be chaired by a tri-partite team comprised of a faculty, staff, and student representative. The Council will meet with the USC Connect Director at least once per month to coordinate development and assessment of activities across *USC Connect* components. The Council will also advise the director regarding broader issues such as communication with faculty, staff, and students; planning and priorities; and issues and concerns regarding successful implementation.

The *USC Connect* Office and governance structure are described in further detail in the Organizational Structure section of this report.

2. Assess faculty and staff needs related to integrative learning and provide and facilitate faculty and staff participation in professional development opportunities resulting from the analysis.

a. Faculty/Staff Needs: Assess current levels of faculty and staff knowledge, skills and dispositions related to beyond the classroom experiences, integrative learning, and assessment of student learning.

    i.   Faculty/Staff Needs: Needs Assessment Survey

In 2011, an electronic survey will be distributed to faculty and staff. The survey will assess self-perceptions of current levels of knowledge, skills and dispositions related to beyond the classroom experiences, integrative learning, and assessment of student learning. This survey will be designed and analyzed by the Associate Director for Integrative Learning in the Center for Teaching Excellence with input from the Division of Student Affairs and Academic Support and the Chair of the USC QEP Proposal Committee.

    ii.   Faculty/Staff Needs: Event and Program Evaluation Surveys

On an ongoing basis, the Center for Teaching Excellence and the Division of Student Affairs and Academic Support will conduct exit surveys of participants of events and programs related to integrative learning. Event surveys will use a consistently worded questionnaire that is reviewed and revised (if necessary) at the beginning of each fiscal year. Surveys of cohort programs and other activities with unique foci, described below, will also reflect on the objectives of the specific program. Results from these surveys will be used to identify topics for future programming.

b. Faculty/Staff Expertise in Supporting Students' Integrative Learning: Increase faculty and staff knowledge, skills and dispositions related to beyond the classroom experiences, integrative learning, and assessment of student learning.

    i.   Faculty/Staff Expertise in Supporting Students' Integrative Learning: Associate Director of Integrative Learning in the Center for Teaching Excellence

This position in the Center for Teaching Excellence will be responsible for faculty development programs and coordination of activities of other units that support *USC Connect*. This position will be filled by a full-time senior faculty member with a demonstrated ability to lead and motivate faculty, administrators and staff. This position will involve summer salary and academic year course release. The appointment will be for the Associate Director to work an average of 10 hours/week supporting the professional development activities of *USC Connect*. A major activity will be the management of the *USC Connect* Fellows program (see b.iii).

    ii.   Faculty/Staff Expertise in Supporting Students' Integrative Learning: Cohort Programs

The Center for Teaching Excellence will recruit groups of faculty from the Columbia and Regional Campuses to participate in cohort groups to develop courses and instructional strategies that support integrative learning. Faculty cohorts will meet of over an extended period to collaborate, share ideas, find solutions, and build innovations. The goal of the cohort programs is to provide

a safe, supportive community in which faculty can investigate and take risks in implementing new approaches to teaching and advising. A strength this approach is increasing the collaboration and coherence of learning across disciplines. Cohorts will typically consist of 10 faculty members from multiple disciplines and a facilitator with common interests. Participants in each cohort program will commit to meeting for one hour every two to four weeks. Cohorts will be created through competitive Teaching Excellence grants. Grant-funded cohorts will provide additional resources to the university by presenting workshops or developing online resources for professional development. Other cohorts will involve voluntary participation in a Community of Practice (CoP) model. In both models, the CTE will support each cohort by providing a meeting place and facilitating discussions on topics of interest, and scheduling relevant speakers as appropriate. This program will be managed by the Associate Director of Integrative Learning.

Participants in cohorts will become local experts in integrative learning, and will be encouraged to participate in the Faculty Fellows program (see 2.b.iii).

iii.   Faculty/Staff Expertise in Supporting Students' Integrative Learning: Faculty Fellows

Sustaining a culture of faculty working with faculty is the goal of the Faculty Fellows Program. This program will engage full-time faculty from the Columbia and Regional campuses in a train-the-trainer model of professional development. Each semester, a cohort of five to ten Faculty Fellows will participate in program. Each fellow will develop and facilitate a workshop or seminar on integrative learning and develop and implement a professional development project. Projects could include supporting the cohort program or online resource initiatives (see b.iv). The goal is to engage with others at the university to share best practices and innovations related to integrative learning. Over a five year period, at least one representative from each college/school will participate. Faculty fellows will be resources and responders, will meet as a group at least twice during the semester, and will serve as an expert advisory board to the Associate Director for Integrative Learning. Each Fellow will receive a small fund to support his or her activities. Fellows will also be eligible to apply to a professional development fund to travel to conferences and other workshops for learning about and for disseminating knowledge of integrative learning. This program will be managed by the Associate Director of Integrative Learning.

iv.   Faculty/Staff Expertise in Supporting Students' Integrative Learning: On-line Resources

The CTE will expand its online Teaching Guide to provide information to faculty about best practices, teaching tips, ideas, and intramural resources for integrative learning. The guide will use text, pictures, sound and video to provide information. The CTE will also expand its Video Archive to support this effort. In addition to including recorded seminars, a series of video clips could be developed that depict students discussing their out-of-classroom experiences in relationship to course concepts. The development of these resources will be the responsibility of the Associate Director of Integrative

Learning and will be supported by the webmaster of the Center for Teaching Excellence.

v. Faculty/Staff Expertise in Supporting Students' Integrative Learning: Workshops and Seminars

Center for Teaching Excellence
The Center for Teaching Excellence will sponsor workshops, seminars and other events that allow participants to explore a broad range of topics relevant to integrative learning. Topics include service learning, study abroad, supporting students in intentional selection of learning experiences, mentoring undergraduate researchers, assessing integrative learning, leadership development, how to build upon pre-requisite courses, and more. Workshop topics will be continually identified thought the formative assessment processes described above. Most workshops will be facilitated by veteran faculty from Columbia and the Regional Campuses, and will be designed to be highly interactive. Seminars will typically feature award-winning USC faculty or outside speakers with national or international reputations. Seminars will typically be video recorded and streamed over the internet through the CTE's online Video Archive. The CTE will seek and embrace opportunities to collaborate with other units to co-sponsor seminars, colloquia and workshops that contribute to improving the practice and status of integrative learning.

Student Affairs and Academic Support
Student Affairs and Academic Support will create a variety of opportunities for Columbia and Regional Campus faculty and staff to explore concepts of integrative learning and high impact beyond the classroom activities to enhance student learning. These opportunities might include using the monthly SA-AS meetings to highlight specific high impact learning activities, using the annual IdeaPOP conference, webinars, and other venues. Included will be large group gatherings with expert presenters followed by small group meetings in which faculty and staff brainstorm creative applications and ways to engage students in the beyond the classroom activities.

New Faculty Orientation
Information on integrative learning will be incorporated into teaching workshops that are part of the university's New Faculty Orientation. This event occurs each August and January prior to the start of classes. This presentation will be developed by the Associate Director of Integrative Learning.

vi. Faculty/Staff Expertise in Supporting Students' Integrative Learning: Unit-Specific Professional Development

Student Affairs and Academic Support
Each unit in the Division of Student Affairs and Academic Support will develop programs that address the *USC Connect* outcomes. These initiatives will be included in each unit's Blueprint for Service Excellence. Members of the division's Planning, Assessment and Innovation Committee will be trained in addressing and assessing student achievement of *USC*

Connect learning outcomes. They in turn will teach and advise their colleagues in the Division on this task.

Custom Workshops from the Center for Teaching Excellence
The Center for Teaching Excellence will offer Custom Teaching Workshops on integrative learning topics. The goal is to offer workshops and presentations that are tailored to the instructional needs of individual departments, schools, and colleges across all USC campuses. Workshops can be requested for any group whose members are actively engaged in teaching at USC, including faculty, adjuncts, instructors, and teaching assistants. Each workshop will be designed with the audience, specific purpose, schedule and goals in mind. Sessions will offer researched information that is closely related to the academic disciplines of the participants.

c. **Professional Development Evaluation: Evaluate the effects of professional development activities for faculty and staff that are related to beyond the classroom experiences, integrative learning, and assessment of student learning.**

    i.   Professional Development Evaluation: Annual Survey

A summative assessment plan will be developed and implemented by the Associate Director for Integrative Learning in the Center for Teaching Excellence, with input from the Division of Student Affairs and Academic Support and the *USC Connect* Office. A variety of assessment strategies will be implemented as a way of accommodating individual learning styles, learning domains and diverse academic disciplines. However, because a common data set is useful in evaluating overall efforts, the summative assessment plan will include an annual survey. Faculty and staff who participate in integrative learning events and programs will be asked, at the end of each academic year, to complete a survey that evaluates the effects of professional development activities related to beyond the classroom experiences, integrative learning, and assessment of student learning. The intent is to evaluate competence in and mastery of core principles and skills.

    ii.   Professional Development Evaluation: Qualitative Studies to Assess Participant (Faculty/Staff) Growth

Qualitative research methods will be a required part of the summative assessment plan due to the nature of the professional development activities. For example, CTE cohorts will disseminate what they have done through workshops and seminars that are video recorded. These recordings will be analyzed using qualitative methods to demonstrate the participant's growth in applying integrative learning strategies. In other programs, faculty and staff might choose to create and keep personal journals, portfolios, self-assessment/reflection essays which document their understanding and perception of their overall progress. Participants may be asked to submit excerpts from these products which will be aggregated and reviewed for recurring themes. This content analysis will not only provide valuable information about the culmination of participants' learning but will provide

direction for future integrative learning programs and events. Other strategy options will include peer observation, presentations, and panel discussions. The use of electronic and multimedia formats will be encouraged, where appropriate, as a way of reducing participant burden, capturing results, and disseminating findings quickly. The part-time USC Connect Assessment Coordinator will work with the Associate Director for Integrative Learning to facilitate this analysis.

3. **Assess student knowledge, skills, and dispositions in relation to integrative learning and orient students to the benefits and opportunities of integrative learning.**

   a. **Pre-matriculation materials: Introduce potential students and parents to *USC Connect,* including beyond the classroom experiences and integrative learning, in pre-matriculation materials and activities.**

   The *USC Connect* Office will work with appropriate offices to provide concise explanations of *USC Connect* and testimonies of students involved in beyond the classroom experiences and integrative learning in marketing materials and admissions information for all campuses (including paper and web-based venues). Training and talking points on *USC Connect* will be provided to University Ambassadors to include during campus tours.

   b. **First-Year Student Experiences: Introduce and assess students in relation to *USC Connect* through Orientation, the First-Year Reading Experience, and the First-Year Seminar (i.e., UNIV 101)**

      i. First-Year Student Experiences: Orientation

   USC provides a one-day orientation for all new undergraduate students. Sessions are led by University administrators and student leaders. All orientation programs are designed to assist students with the transition to life at USC including familiarizing students with University expectations and helping them learn about campus resources. Students also meet with an academic advisor at orientation.

   The *USC Connect* Office will work with appropriate offices to integrate information on *USC* Connect into orientation materials and presentations. For example, a brochure could be produced and distributed during orientation for each campus that explains the purpose and opportunities associated with *USC Connect*. Orientation leaders will be trained to answer questions about *USC Connect*. A common script will be developed that speakers can use during orientation remarks to ensure a consistent *USC Connect* message.

   The Department of Student Life is piloting an extended orientation session for students during the summer of 2011. This specific experience could provide students with additional opportunities to promote integrative learning prior to beginning classes in the fall semester of their first-year. Special consideration could also be given to orienting transfer students into the *USC Connect* process through specialized orientation sessions during the

summer, fall, and spring semesters and/or working with technical colleges from which significant numbers of students transfer into USC (e.g., Midlands Technical College) to provide orientation information on *USC Connect.*

ii.　First-Year Student Experiences: First-Year Reading Experience (FYRE)

The University of South Carolina initiated the First-Year Reading Experience in 1994 to provide incoming freshmen with a common academic experience - a book to read during the summer followed by a first-year class gathering and discussion groups before fall classes begin. The First-Year Reading Experience is a half-day event held each fall before the start of classes during the university's Welcome Week. Sponsored by the Office of the Provost, the program introduces students to academic life at the University of South Carolina. By bringing students together, before the first day of classes, to discuss a common reading, the university demonstrates that academics are the top priority at the University of South Carolina.

The *USC Connect* Office will work with the First-Year Reading Experience planning committee to coordinate integration of *USC Connect* into FYRE. For example, a brief *USC Connect video* that highlights significant beyond the classroom opportunities at the University of South Carolina, explains to students why they should participate, and/or provides examples of how to get the most out of the college experience could be shown during seating during FYRE or Convocation. FYRE book selection will be coordinated with the offering of beyond the classroom experiences throughout the year that relate to the themes and content of the FYRE selection (e.g., cultural events, lectures, film series, service projects). The FYRE selection for 2011, *No Impact Man* (Beaven, 2009), has already been chosen for its potential in relation to beyond the classroom and integrative learning experiences (i.e., *USC Connect*). The *USC Connect* Office will also work with the Center for Teaching Excellence to provide faculty development workshops to help course instructors determine ways to utilize themes and content from FYRE selection into their courses.

iii.　First-Year Student Experiences: First-Year Seminar (University 101)

First-year seminars are often noted as examples of high impact practices that foster deep and integrative learning (Huber and Hutchings, 2004; Kuh, Kinzie, Schuh, Whitt, and Associates, 2005; Leskes & Miller, 2006). The first-year seminar has been defined as a "structure for encouraging and intrusively demanding active student involvement in learning and in the life of the institution." It is an important gateway to the opportunities and expectations of the institution.

The modern form of this course was introduced at the University of South Carolina in 1972 and has grown over the years to serve approximately 80 percent of the incoming freshman class. The program has received great national recognition, including being named a "Program to Look For" nine years in a row by *U.S. News and World Report* and being replicated at hundreds of other institutions around the world.

The purpose of University 101 is to help new students make a successful transition to the University of South Carolina, both academically and personally. It aims to foster a sense of belonging, promote engagement in the curricular and co-curricular life of the university, articulate to students the expectations of the University and its faculty, help students develop and apply critical thinking skills, and help students clarify their purpose, meaning, and direction. A set of common learning outcomes are required for all sections. UNIV 101 is regularly taught on all USC campuses. The course is an elective for the majority of its enrollees; however, some colleges and programs require students to take specialized sections of the course. In fall 2010, approximately 3500 students enrolled in UNIV 101.

Because University 101 involves so many of our new students, and because of the natural alignment between the purpose of *USC Connect* and the existing outcomes for UNIV 101, the first-year seminar is a logical mechanism for assessing and orienting students in relation to *USC Connect*. One outcome of UNIV 101 is for students to "identify appropriate campus resources and opportunities that contribute to their educational experience, goals, and campus engagement." Thus, orienting students to the pathways outlined in *USC Connect* is an enhancement of an existing course outcome. Another course goal is to "prepare students for responsible lives in a diverse, interconnected, and changing world". This goal is at the heart of USC's mission and *USC Connect*.

University 101 is team-taught in small groups (18-24 students) by faculty members or administrative personnel and upper-class peer leaders/grad leaders who have a special interest in first-year student education. A robust annual professional development series, including a 3-day required training (Teaching Experience Workshop) for all new instructors, a one-day conference for every instructor, and a 500+ faculty resource manual, ensures that instructors are properly prepared and supported for teaching this course (see http://sc.edu/univ101/instructors/pd/). As part of the Teaching Experience Workshop, instructors are introduced to the Kolb model of experiential education. This model is used as a framework for developing approaches to the course that foster the integration of concrete experiences and abstract learning by having student reflect and apply the information derived from both domains. Support from the Center for Teaching Excellence will be needed to help instructors learn strategies for assessing and fostering integrative thinking. The main challenge will be in helping instructors develop the necessary processing skills to help students make the connections between their beyond the classroom experiences and their academic coursework.

In order to design a system to assess and support students in meeting *USC Connect* learning outcomes, the Director of the University 101 Office will work with course instructors and other appropriate personnel to:

- Require students attend at least one short-term beyond the classroom event/experience and help them make connections between the event and other experiences or course work they have had.

- Enhance activities, lesson plans, and assignments to 1) make students aware of *USC Connect* opportunities; 2) help students understand how participating in Beyond the Classroom experiences can deepen the learning and enrich their educational experience; 3) actively involve students in short-term Beyond the Classroom experiences; and 4) foster the habits of mind that lead to an integrated learner.

- Assist students in learning how to use the *USC Connect* technology system that connects students with relevant opportunities and information and tracks participation

- Enhance the content on integrative learning for *Transitions*, the common UNIV 101 textbook. This textbook, which is required by all sections of UNIV 101, helps ensure consistency between sections. Currently, chapter 3 of this text (Exploring Your Carolina) introduces students to the major resources and engagement opportunities available to them and is organized around the concept of developing an engagement plan.

- Develop materials for the UNIV 101 faculty resource manual with ideas for lesson plans, activities, and assignments that foster and assess integrative learning.

- Enhance current UNIV 101 faculty development efforts to include training on integrative learning. More specifically, University 101 Programs can utilize the Building Connections Conference in May 2011 to educate the 150+ UNIV 101 instructors on best practices in fostering integrative learning. This should include a keynote address by a national expert and several breakout sessions to discuss specific course activities.

- Train UNIV 101 Peer Leaders to help their students better understand the purpose and opportunities associated with USC Connect.

In addition, select sections of University 101 will utilize deeper methods to foster integrative learning, including service-learning and linked course learning communities. In fall 2011, 10 sections of UNIV 101 will be linked to another academic course whereby students are co-enrolled in two courses. Linked coursework serves a variety of purposes, including integrating within the classroom experiences with beyond the classroom experiences, providing greater coherence to the curriculum by helping students make connections between courses, and helping students develop the skills of an integrated learner. UNIV 101 sections could be developed that link to specific beyond the classroom pathways (i.e., undergraduate research, community engagement, international learning, leadership, career exploration).

Finally, student work collected through UNIV 101 can be used as baseline data to assess student perceptions of integrative learning and their ability to

articulate the connections they make between within and beyond the classroom experiences.

Goal B: Develop the infrastructure to support and enhance students' integrative learning opportunities.

While the ultimate goal of *USC Connect* is to enhance students' integrative learning, significant re-organization and development of technology, processes, and personnel are required to support the effort. Further background related to each area is provided within each action step.

1. **Develop innovative technologies to provide students, faculty, and staff with access to and interaction with information on within and beyond the classroom experiences and efficient systems to track and assess student learning.**

   USC Connect strives to establish an intelligent virtual community in which students, faculty, and staff can build and assess a comprehensive, individualized, and integrative learning experience, placing specialized academic study in the broader context of experiential learning. Students will have powerful tools for planning and discovery, as well as for remembering and organizing their experience. The system will also include tools for systematic assessment including student perceptions of experiences and assessment of student knowledge, skills, and dispositions related to integrative learning.

   USC Offices that are particularly involved in decisions and development regarding technology efforts are University Technology Services (UTS), the Center for Digital Humanities (CDH), and the Registrar's Office. The QEP Proposal Technology Subcommittee comprised of representatives from these areas, faculty with technology expertise, and student representatives drafted a *USC Connect* technology plan that was presented to and approved by the Vice President for Information Technology.

   The development of innovative technologies that will support *USC Connect* is critical to the success of this initiative. Upgrades to USC technology systems began in 2007 and a timetable is in place that supports the implementation of *USC Connect* over the next four years (see Appendix D). In particular, *OneCarolina*, a major initiative to modernize, streamline, and enhance academic and administrative services, transforming virtually every system throughout the University's eight campuses, has been under development since 2009. The first phase of *OneCarolina* is a user-friendly interface for student records, class selection, scheduling, and student finances that will become live in 2011. By 2012, the next phase of *OneCarolina* implementation (Student Portal) will allow students to publish and subscribe to information resources—processes at the heart of *USC Connect*.

   See Appendix E for the Technology Committee's initial summary of the desired functions and current status of technology development. Among the most critical aspects noted within the appendix are

- an updated calendaring system to post upcoming events,
- an interface with academic systems for access to information regarding courses,
- a tracking system to record student participation,
- an assessment system to collect data on student performance related to integrative learning, and
- e-portfolios for students to record and summarize their experiences in an integrated way.

A goal for future development includes an intelligent suggestion system that spontaneously recommends opportunities to students that tie in with their curricular or beyond the classroom choices (as in "readers who liked this also chose . . ."). Other future innovations include a social networking interface facilitating connections between those exploring similar interests and Avatar-like presentations in which students can make choices and explore consequences on-line (see http://research.cdh.sc.edu/tenthdimension/visualization.html). *USC Connect* systems can also incorporate peripheral enhancements that would be attractive to users such as integrating directories, maps, and news updates into the *USC Connect* mobile applications.

Specific action steps regarding technology are as follows:

a. ***USC Connect* Technology Committee: Establish an on-going Technology Committee to work with the Director of *USC Connect* to coordinate, plan, and implement *USC Connect* technologies.**

Because of the central role that technology will play in *USC Connect,* an on-going committee with appropriate representation across the university is critical to the initiative's success. Representatives will come from University Technology Services, the Center for Digital Humanities, the Registrar's Office, Office of Institutional Assessment and Compliance, faculty with expertise in technology, and the student body. The committee will meet on a regular basis and be co-chaired by the Director of *USC Connect* and another committee member. The committee will coordinate and guide the development of the *USC Connect* technology system. The committee will make recommendations to the Provost who will work with the Vice President for Information Technology to make final determinations.

b. **Technology System to Support Students' Integrative Learning: Plan, develop, and implement the *USC Connect* technology system through the leadership of the Technology Committee.**

i. Technology System to Support Students' Integrative Learning: Coordination

It is imperative that *USC Connect* technology be a coordinated system that utilizes the power of resources that are available from the university as a whole and carefully coordinates with and in existing systems including University Technology Services, the Center for Digital Humanities, academic units, and other potential developers and users.

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The *USC Connect* Technology Committee will advise the *USC Connect* Director who will work with appropriate University administrators in coordinating technology development related to *USC Connect.*

ii. Technology System to Support Students' Integrative Learning: Multiple technologies

Initially, the core technology to support USC Connect will be web-based and built from the USC's OneCarolina initiative. Additional formats and innovations will be assessed and integrated as deemed appropriate such as card swiping, mobile interfaces, and gaming technology. The Technology Committee will work with appropriate stakeholders to determine the feasibility for utilizing each format to achieve specific *USC Connect* goals and coordinate efforts across areas of development.

iii. Technology System to Support Students' Integrative Learning: Additional externally-developed systems

USC will utilize appropriate, commercially available systems that can support *USC Connect* goals and meet criteria for being cost-effective and sustainable. Any purchased platforms must be compatible with existing university systems. For example, *Blackboard Outcomes* is proposed as an addition because it will meet important assessment needs for both the *Carolina Core* and *USC Connect* and is compatible with the University's existing use of Blackboard.

iv. Technology System to Support Students' Integrative Learning: Timeline

A timeline for major university technology development is presented in Appendix D. This timeline will be updated, expanded, and modified over time to include more specific information related to *USC Connect* as more specific decisions related to technology are finalized.

2. **Enhance and coordinate university policies, procedures, structures, and offerings to provide a clear path of support and encouragement for students from intentional selection of within and beyond the classroom experiences to in-depth reflection, synthesis, and application of experiences.**

In order to plan for this area, the Engagements Subcommittee of the QEP Proposal Committee reviewed USC's current offerings of beyond the classroom and integrative learning opportunities. In brief, findings reinforced that a wealth of opportunities are available, but that they are not systematically coordinated. While USC has many programs available and encourages student participation through a host of offices, programs, and departments, ultimately whether or not a student participates in beyond the classroom experiences and integrative learning is dependent on his/her major, personal initiative, and happenstance. For example, does an advisor, academic coach, professor, or peer encourage involvement?

All students have academic advisors who guide students in relation to university and program requirements. Some advisors also work with students in relation to their experiences beyond the classroom, but this is not a systematic component of advisement. In 2008, working in conjunction with the Academic Centers for Excellence (ACE), the Office of Student Engagement developed the Student Engagement Plan. This planning document is designed to help students reflect and be more intentional regarding their involvement on campus throughout their time at USC. Through use in ACE coaching sessions, some University 101 classes, and the Student Success Center over 400 students participated in some form of engagement planning in 2009-10. This is a small step toward assisting students with intentionally selecting their collegiate experiences.

Descriptions of beyond the classroom and integrative learning opportunities in each pathway (e.g., undergraduate research, community engagement, leadership, international learning) and at each campus were collected by the Engagements Subcommittee and revealed a tremendous number of experiences. (See Appendix F for a sample from one pathway from the full 47-page document which can be obtained at http://www.sc.edu/provost/qep/documents.shtml.)   Lists included such items as programs, projects, fairs, grant supported opportunities, internships, training for peer leadership, tutoring, drives to support causes in need, service work, living and learning communities, cultural events, conferences, and coursework related to each area. The lists include both long-term and short-term opportunities. The university and its related organizations also offer a variety of short-term activities. These sometimes offer students a glimpse of or entry point to one or more of the long-term high impact BTC activities, such as the Civil Rights Tour (http://www.sa.sc.edu/omsa/diversityinitiatives.htm) leading to leadership development or an in-depth research experience.

A "snapshot" of events from the USC Calendar of Events (one month) and the Russell House calendar (one week) were also reviewed to provide an overview of the activities available to students that enhance their academic experience from other areas. The review found that USC Calendar of Events currently focuses on USC's offerings in the Arts. Of the 43 activities listed in November 2010, 31 were musical or theatrical performances, 6 events were professional development classes for staff, 2 were cooking classes, and 4 were scholarly seminars or lectures. The Russell House (student center) calendar of events consists primarily of organizational meetings by Greek life or student organizations. These meetings provide much of the "hands on" leadership development for our students.

Departments and programs also offer courses other than those affiliated with pathways areas that provide a combination of the traditional class or lecture format with directed, first-hand immersive experiences. Some courses offer students an introduction or "taste" of a particular type of experience leading to a longer-term, high impact program. For example a course incorporating a 1-2 week study abroad experience may encourage a student to pursue a full semester or academic year international learning experience. Other courses engage students in long-term internship experiences in preparation for a specific career (e.g., teaching, health care, social work). An accurate and complete

listing of courses that involve beyond the classroom experiences and/or integrative learning would be very helpful, but is a long-term project.

Similarly to beyond the classroom experiences, there is long list of existing efforts that focus on opportunities for reflection on and synthesis of experiences. Again, however, procedures are not in place to systematically provide these integrative learning opportunities to *all* students. Some experiences at both levels of reflection and synthesis that reflected in the *USC Connect* learning outcomes are already part of USC experiences*:* One level focuses on individual experiences. Does a student have an opportunity to debrief or reflect on what a particular experience means in his/her greater context? Does the engagement complement or contradict a point discussed in class? Does it provide a window into a perspective the student had not previously considered? On another level, *USC* Connect challenges students to synthesize across experiences and make more complex connections and applications to the future. Students synthesizing experiences at this level make connections across theory and practice in consideration of a range of experiences over time. These more in-depth reflections are typically aligned with such activities as action research projects, major papers, culminating seminar presentations, and electronic portfolios.

Current opportunities for reflection and synthesis at USC include opportunities within and beyond course experiences. Courses with significant reflection components include service learning courses (which include a reflective component by definition), lab courses in which students make observations and analyze results in the theoretical framework of their field, and culminating or capstone courses in a student's major area which require a significant student demonstration synthesizing their experience (e.g., paper, performance, portfolio). A review of undergraduate majors at USC found that 48 programs (of the total 94 undergraduate programs) already include a culminating requirement that integrates beyond the classroom experiences. USC also has access to the Blackboard e-portfolio system which is utilized by a small number of programs.

Opportunities supporting reflection at USC outside of courses include such vehicles as completing a research project sponsored by the Office of Undergraduate Research; competing for scholarships through the Office of Fellowships and Scholar Programs; presenting at USC Discovery Day or at a local, state, or national conference; or completing a Post-Study Abroad Program Assessment. Evaluating and problem-solving are natural components of many students' beyond the classroom experiences (e.g, student government, peer leadership, internships), but systematic data on student learning from these experiences is very limited.

a. **Ongoing Inventory to Facilitate Students' Selection of Experiences: Create and maintain an accurate inventory of beyond the classroom (BTC) experiences in academic and student affairs**

The information above provides an overview of the breadth and depth of beyond the classroom opportunities available at USC. There is no single repository of activities for short or long-term experiences and not all units or groups are using

the calendars reviewed. The following recommendations are for the informational needs of *USC Connect.*

    i. Ongoing Inventory to Facilitate Students' Selection of Experiences: Survey of BTC experiences

       A complete overview of existing BTC activities is being compiled.   See Appendix G for the draft survey to obtain detailed information. Departments and offices enter activity data and self-select one or more appropriate pathway. Content and procedures for administrating the survey will be approved by the Offices of *USC Connect* and the Provost. The survey will be administered using a computer-based system such as StudentVoice which is already owned by the University.

    ii. Ongoing Inventory to Facilitate Students' Selection of Experiences: USC calendar of events

       A calendar of events will be a component of the *USC Connect* technology system. Policies and procedures will be developed so that approved users (requiring USC username and password) post, edit, and delete information on upcoming activities or events keeping information current and accurate. Specifications should include procedures appropriate for different types of groups (e.g., student affairs offices, departments, student organizations).

       Extensive coordination is needed between technology developers and representatives from student affairs and academic areas who are knowledgeable of the type of information to be posted. For example, data fields should include BTC pathway categories and permit multiple selections for "Event type".

    iii. Ongoing Inventory to Facilitate Students' Selection of Experiences: Course identification system

       The viability of a system to identify courses with significant BTC experiences with course identifiers (such as R for Research-based) will be investigated. There is currently no such system and while a list of potential courses has been extrapolated from the course bulletin, accuracy can only be assured through a more formal process. Implementation of such a system could provide a quick reference to pathway specific course options. The university's anticipated new technology system (Banner) will provide the mechanism to "tag" courses in this way. A short-term solution listing of courses under pathways could be developed if a cost-benefit analysis determines that it is worthwhile to do so.

       Some institutions, such as Indiana University-Purdue University Indianapolis (IUPUI) have developed criteria and processes to identify and categorize courses with significant beyond the classroom experiences. The *USC Connect Council* in consultation with appropriate

parties will investigate this issue and make a recommendation regarding the feasibility of such a process at USC. Draft guidelines were developed by the USC Connect Subcommittee on Student Engagement for consideration in the QEP process. See Appendix H for the draft *USC Connect Criteria and Approval Process Guidelines*.

One possibility is that once established, guidelines could be forwarded to Academic Program Liaisons (APLs) who would coordinate the review of current course offerings within their programs to identify and categorize courses that meet pathway requirements. A process for new courses or courses that were not initially identified for a particular pathway would be developed. A web-based listing of all courses approved for each pathway would be a component of the *USC Connect* technology system to be maintained as identified in the process.

b. Students' Selection, Reflection, and Records: Develop systems that encourage and facilitate students' selection, reflection, synthesis and application of experiences.

   i. Students' Selection, Reflection, and Records: Intentional Selection of Experiences

      The *USC Connect Council* will work with the Division of Student Affairs and the Center for Teaching Excellence to develop a plan to increase expertise of advisors and student affairs staff in relation to supporting students in intentionally selecting within and beyond the classroom learning experiences. The Student Engagement Plan developed by the Office of Student Engagement and results from implementing the form in 2009-2010 will be considered.

   ii. Students' Selection, Reflection, and Records: Opportunities for reflection, synthesis, and application

      Reflection, synthesis, and application are at the heart of *USC Connect.* While numerous opportunities exist at USC in relation to these processes, there is not a coordinated and consistent effort in providing these opportunities for all students. Strategies to increase student reflection, synthesis, and application of experiences include:

- Faculty and staff professional development as described in 2b with attention to identifying student affairs programs and academic courses that could benefit from increased opportunities for reflection and recruiting related personnel to develop integrative learning strategies appropriate to the experiences they are leading
- Significantly increasing the number of majors for which culminating experiences include integration of beyond the classroom experiences

- Offering sections of UNIV 201 and 401 that focus on assisting students with synthesis and application related to a particular pathway or other area of interest
- Development of reflection, synthesis, application strategies in living and learning communities and other student affairs programs which engage students over time
- Promoting the use of electronic portfolios through academic majors and offices assisting students in BTC engagements
- Development of Pathway Reflection Groups [Community Engagement, International, Research, Leadership] or Student Communities of Practice

iii. Students' Selection, Reflection, and Records: Recording and recognizing experiences

The *USC Connect* Council in consultation with appropriate standing committees will develop a plan to increase student opportunities to record their beyond the classroom experiences such as opportunities to develop e-portfolios. Training and guidance for students can be integrated into academic programs or accessed through student affairs offices such as the pathways of undergraduate research, community engagement, and others. Support for development of electronic portfolios may be provided to students in a variety of venues such as training sessions through University Technology Services (which regularly provides sessions on all aspects of Blackboard), providing an introduction to e-portfolios in University 101, creating on-line support for e-portfolio development through the Student Success Center, and/or including e-portfolio sessions through Career Center workshops. The Center for Teaching Excellence and Division of Student Affairs can also offer programs on the development of e-portfolios and other record keeping and assessment strategies so that faculty and staff are better prepared to assist and encourage students with record keeping strategies.

The new technology systems will allow for greater possibilities in tagging courses such that an automatic record of courses designated as BTC experiences (or as associated with particular pathways) could be designated on their transcripts. (See the section on course identification 2.a.iii).

Students who participate in extensive beyond the classroom experiences and integrative learning may be recognized by graduating with distinction in one or more pathways (i.e., research, community engagement, leadership, international studies) as recommended by their department. Some preliminary work investigating this possibility has already been completed (See Appendix I). The *USC Connect* Office and Council will use this information as a basis for discussion with advisory groups to make recommendations regarding criteria for graduating with distinction related to *USC Connect.*

VII. Timeline

Throughout spring and summer 2011 the *USC Connect* Proposal Committee will continue their work of refining the plan and implementing first steps. The *USC Connect* Director will be named summer 2011. The *USC Connect* Administrative Assistant and Assessment Coordinator will be hired to begin fall 2011. The *USC Connect* Council and Committees will also be named to begin work in fall 2011. The *USC Connect* Office and Committees will lead continued refinement, implementation, and evaluation of the plan. The 5-year timeline for development in each area is presented in Table 4. This is an initial projection based on a realistic appraisal of USC's current context. The plan will be monitored and adjusted as conditions warrant throughout the process.

Table 4: *USC Connect* Five-Year Timeline

Year	Student Orientation	Faculty/ Staff PD	Engagements	Technology	Assessment of Student Performance
Year One: Spring 2011-Spring 2012 (includes one extra semester as some aspects of preparation/ implementation will begin Spring 2011 through the efforts of the QEP Proposal Committee)	Plan to Integrate USC Connect into orientation materials/ procedures finalized UNIV 101 reflection requirement developed (spring 2011) UNIV 101 reflection	Assoc. Dir. Integrative Learning named (fall) New faculty orientation includes *USC Connect* Survey of faculty and staff needs PD plan for faculty and staff fully	Initial inventory long-term BTC completed-survey (spring 2011) System/ procedures for entering calendar info planned ID of BTC courses planned Plans for planning, tracking, recording BTC fully developed	OneCarolina Student Information System launched (records, scheduling) Develop tagging system for courses New calendaring system launched	Finalize and pilot integrative learning rubric (Phase I spring 2011, Phase 2 2011-12) Complete inventory of existing culminating experiences & assessments in major/plan future data collection by major Analyze first year

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Year	Student Orientation	Faculty/ Staff PD	Engagements	Technology	Assessment of Student Performance
Year One (continued)	piloted (2011-2012) Materials for UNIV 101 instructors created Integration of USC Connect into FYRE piloted	developed Workshops and seminars (fall and spring)	(including e-portfolio options and training) Recognition plan for BTC achievement finalized (grad w/ distinction) including plan to support colleges/schools in development of grad with distinction option	Plan for phase in of swipe card technology developed Acquire and pilot student assessment software (i.e., Blackboard Outcomes) Seek grants to support development of gaming platforms	baseline data: CIRP Freshman Survey, U101 Collate/analyze participation data in BTC Develop/analyze comprehensive list of existing student perception data on BTC Develop common parameters for surveys of students' re BTC Develop plan for obtaining data from BTC providers Pilot student focus groups

Year	Student Orientation	Faculty/ Staff PD	Engagements	Technology	Assessment of Student Performance
Year Two: Summer 2012- Spring 2013	Orientation materials include *USC Connect* Train UNIV 101 faculty/peer leaders (summer 2012) BTC experience and reflection in UNIV 101 Expansion of FYRE and *USC Connect*	New faculty orientation Faculty cohort program (fall) Faculty fellows (spring) Web resource development Workshops and seminars (including orientation to *Outcomes* Assessment Software)	Phase 1: SA and academic offices using calendar system Phase 1: Implementation of additional plans to maintain accurate BTC database Phase 1: Implementation of identification of BTC/integrative learning classes Pilot implementation of planning, tracking, recording BTC experiences Information and support for college/schools to develop options to graduate with distinction implemented	Refine tagging system for information & calendaring systems Launch OneCarolina Student Portal Expand use of swipe card technology Expand use of student Outcomes software Gaming platforms development Explore "smart suggestion" options	Expand piloted use of integrative learning rubric Collect/analyze integrative learning program assessment data Analyze baseline data: CIRP Survey, U101 Collate/analyze participation data in BTC Pilot revised surveys on students' BTC perceptions Pilot data collection from BTC providers Conduct student focus groups

Year	Student Orientation	Faculty/ Staff PD	Engagements	Technology	Assessment of Student Performance
Year Three: Summer 2013- Spring 2014	Refine orientation materials as needed Assess UNIV req and revise as needed, continue training Assess FYRE-USC Connect integration and revise as needed	New faculty orientation Faculty cohort program (fall) Faculty fellows (spring) Web resource development Workshops and seminars (including orientation to *Outcomes* Assessment Software)	Phase 2: SA and academic offices using calendar system Phase 2: Implementation of additional plans to maintain accurate BTC database Phase 2: Implementation of identification of BTC/integrative learning classes Expanded pilot of planning, tracking, and recording BTC experiences Graduation with Distinction begins	Continue expanded use of all established systems Launch mobile platforms Pilot use of "smart suggestions" Integrate gaming options as available	Assess student random sample using integrative learning rubric Analysis of - program assessment data - CIRP, U101 -BTC participation -NSSE Pilot revised surveys on students' BTC perceptions Pilot data collection from BTC providers Studnt focus grps Survey/focus groups of grads Analysis of CC data in relation to USC Connect

Year	Student Orientation	Faculty/ Staff PD	Engagements	Technology	Assessment of Student Performance
Year Four: Summer 2014- Spring 2015	Refine orientation materials as needed

Assess UNIV req and revise as needed, continue training Assess FYRE-USC Connect integration and revise as needed | New faculty orientation

Faculty cohort program (fall)

Faculty fellows (spring)

Web resource development

Workshops and seminars (including orientation to *Outcomes* Assessment Software) | Full implementation SA and academic offices using calendar system

Full implementation of additional plans to maintain accurate BTC database

Full implementation of identification of BTC/integrative learning classes

Expansion of planning, tracking, and recording BTC experiences

Further refinements and support for e-portfolio development | Continue expanded use of all established systems

Expand use of "smart suggestions"

Integrate gaming options as available | Analysis of - program assessment data - CIRP, U101 -BTC participation -NSSE -surveys on students' BTC perceptions -data from BTC providers -focus groups of students -grad survey/focus groups -random sample of students assessment re integrative learning -CC data in relation to USC Connect |

Year	Student Orientation	Faculty/ Staff PD	Engagements	Technology	Assessment of Student Performance
Year Five: Summer 2015-Spring 2016	Refine orientation materials as needed Assess UNIV req and revise as needed, continue training Assess FYRE-USC Connect integration and revise as needed	New faculty orientation Faculty cohort program (fall) Faculty fellows (spring) Web resource development Workshops and seminars	Full implementation planning, tracking, and recording BTC experiences Full services for e-portfolio development in place	Continue expanded use of all established systems	Analysis of - program assessment data - CIRP, U101 -BTC participation -NSSE -surveys on students' BTC perceptions -data from BTC providers -focus groups of students -grad survey/focus groups -random sample of students assessment re integrative learning -CC data in relation to USC Connect

VIII. Organizational Structure

The Director of *USC Connect* is integrally connected with and reports to the Provost's Office. The *USC Connect* Office also has strong ties to USC Student Affairs and Academic Support (see Figure 1). The director will be supported by a part-time Assessment Coordinator and a full time administrative assistant. The director's primary advisors will be the members of the *USC Connect C*ouncil which includes faculty, staff, and students including high level administrators and representatives of the regional campuses. The director is also advised by and works with committees focused on specific aspects of *USC Connect*. Each committee is designed to promote discussion across academic and student affairs with membership that includes students, staff, and faculty (including Regional Campus representatives).

The Director of *USC Connect* is responsible for leading and coordinating all aspects of *USC Connect* including planning, implementation, and evaluation. The Assessment Coordinator will support assessment of student performance and *USC Connect* as a whole. The *USC Connect o*ffice will work collaboratively with the Center of Teaching Excellence (particularly the Associate Director for Integrative Learning) to promote and guide meaningful assessment of student learning and develop multiple assessment points (e.g., program specific, random sample, and Carolina Core related). The *USC Connect* Director and the Assessment Coordinator will lead *USC Connect* data analysis. The Assessment Coordinator and Administrative Assistant will work with the director to develop the *USC Connect* website so that it provides a ready source of information regarding beyond the classroom experiences and integrative learning for faculty, staff, and students as well as a continuing site for input from all parties into the continued development of *USC Connect*.

Membership and responsibilities of the *USC Connect* Council and core committees follow:

USC Connect Council: Serves as the primary advisory body to the Director, *USC Connect*. The *USC Connect* Council meets with the director monthly during the academic year and as needed. It is chaired by a collaborative tri-partite team including a faculty, staff, and student member elected by the group.
- Chairs/Co-chairs of the Standing Committees (Technology, Assessment, Engagements, Professional Development, and First-Year Experiences)
- Regional Campus Representative
- Two student representatives
- Director, Office of Institutional Assessment and Compliance, Ex-officio
- Vice Provost and Dean of Undergraduate Studies, Ex-officio
- Vice President of Student Affairs (or designee), Ex-officio
- External Consultant with Expertise in Integrative Learning, Ex-officio

Standing Committees: Each committee meets at least twice per semester or more frequently as needed.

Assessment Committee: Provides input regarding assessment strategies and issues related to assessment of student performance, such as plans for collecting assessment

data and supporting faculty and staff in developing appropriate assessments of integrative learning. The Committee is co-chaired by a faculty and staff member.
- 3 Faculty with Expertise in Assessment
- 3 Student Affairs Staff with Expertise in Assessment
- 2 Academic Program Liaisons (i.e., Associate/Assistant Deans)
- 2 Student Representatives
- Director, Office of Institutional Assessment and Compliance (or Designee)
- Assessment Coordinator, *USC Connect*, Ex-Officio
- Director, *USC Connect*, Ex-officio

Engagements Committee: Provides input and assists with the development, coordination, communication of, and tracking of beyond the classroom experiences. It is co-chaired by one faculty and one staff representative.
- Director, Office of Community Engagements
- Director, Office of Leadership
- Director, International Programs (or Designee)
- Director, Office of Undergraduate Research
- Director, Career Services (or Designee)
- 4 Faculty Members Engaged in Beyond the Classroom Experiences (Including One Regional Campus Representative)
- 2 Student Representatives
- Director *USC Connect*, Ex-Officio

Note: Each high impact pathway (i.e., Community Engagements, Research, International, and Leadership) will also create a Student Advisory Committee that will provide input into the Engagements Committee.

First-Year Experience Committee: This committee provides insights and feedback related to the integration of *USC Connect* into Orientation, the First-Year Reading Experience, and the First-Year Seminar (UNIV 101). It is co-chaired by a Peer Leader and the University 101 Director.
- Director, University 101
- 5 University 101 Instructors (including one from a regional campus)
- 3 Peer Leaders (Students)
- 1 Orientation Representative
- 1 First-Year Reading Representative
- Director *USC Connect*, Ex-Officio

Professional Development Committee: Provides input and assistance in planning professional development experiences for faculty and staff related to beyond the classroom experiences and integrated learning. The committee is co-chaired by Center for Teaching Excellence's Associate Director for Integrative Learning and a professional staff committee member.
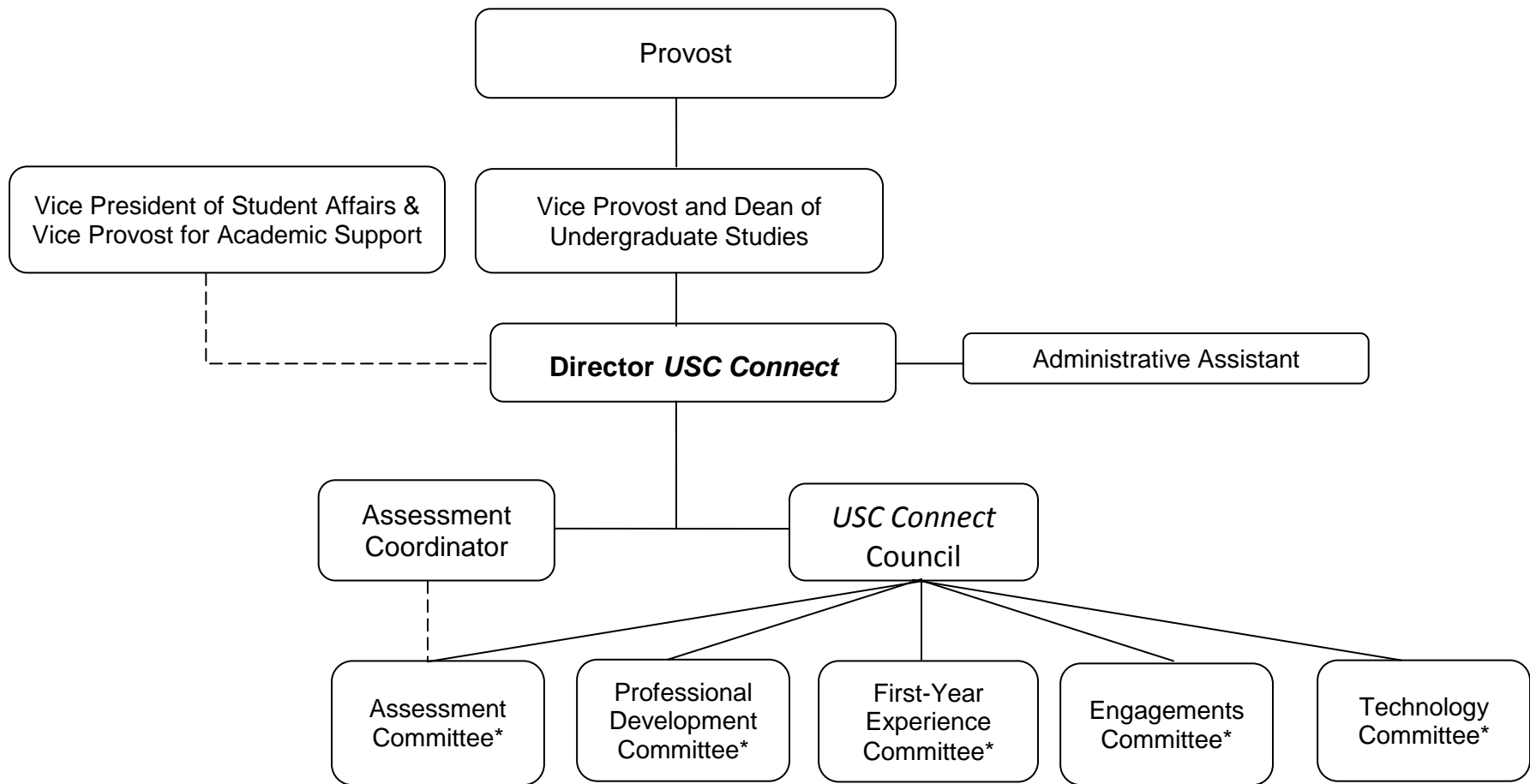- Associate Director for Integrative Learning, Center for Teaching Excellence
- Student Affairs, Division Leader for Professional Development (or Designee)
- 3 Faculty Fellows of the Center for Teaching Excellence
- 3 Student Affairs Professional Development Team Representatives
- Regional Campus Representative

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- 1 Graduate Teaching Assistant
- Director *USC Connect*, Ex-Officio

Technology Committee: Assists with communication, input, and planning regarding the coordination of technology to support *USC Connect*. The Committee is co-chaired by one faculty and one staff member from the committee.

Representatives of the following—
- University Technology Services
- Center for Digital Humanities
- Registrar's Office
- Division of Student Affairs
- 2 Faculty Members with Expertise in Technology
- 2 Student Representatives
- Director *USC Connect*, Ex-Officio

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│ Vice President of Student │   │ Vice Provost and Dean │
│ Affairs & Vice Provost    │   │ of Undergraduate      │
│ for Academic Support      │   │ Studies               │
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            ┌────────────────────┐        ┌─────────────────────────┐
            │ Director USC Connect│────────│ Administrative Assistant│
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│ Assessment   │────────│ USC Connect  │
│ Coordinator  │        │ Council      │
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| Assessment Committee* | Professional Development Committee* | First-Year Experience Committee* | Engagements Committee* | Technology Committee* |

Figure 1: Organizational Structure *USC Connect*

*Each committee includes faculty, staff, and student representatives including at least one regional campus representative. See the full explanation of the USC Connect Council and committees in the text description of the Organizational Structure.

IX. Resources

As described throughout this proposal, *USC Connect* builds on the infrastructure and programs already established at the University. *Existing* resources that will support *USC Connect* represent a budget allocation exceeding $27 million annually with over 100 professional personnel housed throughout the university. Established offices/programs that will support *USC Connect* include the following (by major *USC Connect* area):

- Student Orientation
  - Office of Orientation
  - University 101 Office
  - National Resource Center for the First-Year Experience and Students in Transition
- Beyond the Classroom Experiences
  - Office of Community Services
  - Office of International Programs and Study Abroad
  - Office of Student Engagement
  - Office of Undergraduate Research
  - Office of Fellowships and Scholar Programs
  - Living and Learning Communities including
    - Preston Residential College
    - Green Quad
    - Capstone
  - TRIO Programs
  - Career Center (Experiential Education)
  - Office of Student Life (Leadership)
- Faculty and Staff Professional Development
  - Center for Teaching Excellence
  - Student Affairs and Academic Support Professional Development Team
- Technology
  - University Technology Services
  - Center for Digital Humanities
- Assessment
  - Office of Institutional Assessment and Compliance
  - Office of Student Affairs Assessment Team

In addition to current professional staff, hundreds of students, faculty, and administrators participating in programs currently in place will support *USC Connect* including

- Students who participate as University 101 Peer Leaders, Orientation Leaders, Study Abroad Peer Advisors, Community Service Interns, and mentors or peer advisors in other programs
- Faculty who teach courses that involve beyond the classroom experiences and/or integrative learning
- Faculty and students involved in the development of innovative technologies
- Administrators that support coordination of services (e.g., associate/assistant deans, directors of clinical/field experiences).

These existing human resources (i.e., professional staff, students, faculty, and administrators) and the infrastructure that supports them (e.g., offices, computers, university services) are a tremendous baseline to which USC will add almost $2.4 million over five years to support *USC Connect*.

See Table 5 for specific *new* budget allocations in four categories: *USC Connect* Leadership, Faculty and Staff Professional Development, Student Orientation and Engagements, and Technology. In addition to the listed items, existing university infrastructure will be used to house new personnel (i.e., space/furniture reallocation).

Table 5: *USC Connect New* Budget Items

Item	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5		Total
USC Connect **Leadership**							
Director	85,000	85,000	85,000	85,000	85,000		425,000
Administrative Asst.	40,000	40,000	40,000	40,000	40,000		200,000
Assessment Coordinator	20,000	20,000	20,000	20,000	20,000		100,000
Travel	5,000	5,000	5,000	5,000	5,000		25,000
Communication (e.g., publications)	5,000	5,000	5,000	5,000	5,000		25,000
Equipment/ space	12,000	2,000	2,000	2,000	2,000		20,000
Faculty and Staff Professional Development (PD)							
Associate Director, Integrative Learning (part-time faculty position CTE)	25,000	25,000	25,000	25,000	25,000		125,000
Faculty Fellows ($500 per fellow and some travel support)	0	10,000	10,000	10,000	10,000		40,000
Co-hort Programs/Grants ($3,000 each)	30,000	30,000	30,000	30,000	30,000		150,000
Workshops and Seminars	5,000	5,000	5,000	5,000	5,000		25,000
Unit-specific PD	2,500	2,500	2,500	2,500	2,500		12,500
Student Orientation and Engagements							
Develop/maintain 101 and orientation materials	20,000	5,000	5,000	5,000	5,000		40,000
Support for BTC in 101	0	20,000	20,000	20,000	20,000		80,000
Support for BTC personnel/ materials with increased student participation	0	50,000	100,000	100,000	100,000		350,000
Technology							
Personnel support	50,000	50,000	50,000	50,000	50,000		250,000
Software acquisition/ fees*	68,000	68,000	136,000	136,000	136,000		544,000
Totals	**367,500**	**422,500**	**540,500**	**540,500**	**540,500**		**2,411,500**

*Note: Includes Blackboard fee for assessment software years 1-5 and mobile application software in years 3-5.

X.   Assessment

The Director of *USC Connect* will oversee implementation and modifications to the assessment plan with the support of the Assessment Coordinator. The plan includes data collection on institutional progress in implementing action items and assessment of students including participation in beyond the classroom experiences and knowledge, skills, and dispositions related to integrative learning.

The *USC Connect* Office will serve as the initial collection and storage point for data. Ultimately, data will be stored via advanced technologies which will allow common portals and reference points for multiple parties who need to access the data. Data collection and storage will continue to be monitored by the *USC Connect* office. Centralized storage and access should more easily facilitate the generation of reports and sharing of data among university constituents.

Assessment of Student Learning

The data to be collected to evaluate student learning is summarized in Table 6 according to each learning outcome and by year. As indicated in the table, learning outcomes 1 and 2 are the focus of the first- and second-years. While some first- and second-year students may move beyond these learning outcomes and address learning outcomes 3 and 4, **our baseline expectation for the first two years is that students will meet learning outcomes 1 and 2. Third- and fourth-year students would be expected to address outcome 3. Some may demonstrate this outcome in year three and others in year four. Graduating students and post-graduates would be expected to demonstrate learning outcome 4.** Although we have identified the years in which demonstration of each outcome would be *expected*, data will continue to be collected on student performance related to learning outcomes 1, 2, and 3 throughout subsequent years (as listed in Table 6).

The Center for Teaching Excellence will provide extensive support for faculty and staff development of integrative learning assessments. Mechanisms to provide this support include a new position (Associate Director for Integrative Learning), Faculty Cohort and Faculty Fellows programs focused on integrative learning, on-line resources, workshops, and seminars.

The USC Connect Director will also work with academic and student affairs leaders (e.g., deans, academic program liaisons, office directors) at Columbia and the Regional Campuses on system-wide efforts to ensure assessment of integrative learning in academic and student affairs programs. As noted in the original proposal, some academic units, particularly those focusing on specific professions, are already assessing students in relation to the connections they make between theory and practice and their ability to apply their experiences to decision-making through major course projects, e-portfolios, seminar presentations, action research projects or other major course requirements. As programs consider modifications to culminating courses in relation to the integrative course requirements of the Carolina Core, additional programs are expected to add more in-depth assessments of integrative learning. Similarly, some student affairs offices are already working with students on tracking and assessing their beyond the classroom experiences through e-portfolios. Development of assessments of

integrative learning in student affairs' programs will build on existing efforts. Assessment of a random sample of students (cutting across programs and units) also remains a component of the plan.

Data will be collected throughout students' collegiate experience. Baseline measures will be collected on student dispositions toward beyond the classroom (BTC) and integrative learning experiences; participation levels; and ability to reflect on their experiences. Data will be collected through beginning and end of year freshman surveys (e.g., Cooperative Institutional Research Program's Freshman Survey) and via UNIV 101. UNIV 101 will include student participation and reflection on at least one BTC experience. Performance data collected throughout the college experience will be described next.

A modified version of the Carnegie Foundation/AAC&U Rubric on Integrative Learning has been developed for assessing students' ability to reflect on, synthesize, and apply knowledge and skills across within and beyond the classroom experiences (See Appendix J). Use of the rubric will be pilot-tested in Spring 2011 in selected sections of UNIV 101.

The *USC Connect* Assessment and Professional Development Committees will work collaboratively with the Director of *USC Connect* regarding such issues as alignment of the rubric with assessments being conducted in courses and other BTC experiences and the development of other rubrics for assessing students' integrative learning.

Initially, data on student participation level in beyond the classroom experiences will be gathered through such means as high impact pathways offices (e.g., Undergraduate Research, Community Engagements), the Registrar's office (upon appropriate identification of BTC course work), the Division of Student Affairs (e.g., students participating in Living and Learning Communities), and academic units (e.g., participation in events sponsored in departments). These data will eventually be collected primarily through *USC Connect* developed technologies (e.g., swipe cards, course registration systems).

Student ratings regarding the value of experiences and their perceptions on their own learning will be increasingly gathered through event surveys as these are more extensively developed and more readily collected through new technologies.

Student focus groups will be conducted with students in their sophomore, junior, and senior years. Longitudinal collection of data from groups of students initially identified in UNIV 101 who would continue to participate in focus groups in future years is being explored. Cohort tracking could involve identifying a small number (5-10) of sections of U101 (including instructor), then tracking each student in these select sections across the remaining 3-4 years of their undergraduate experience. Scheduled meetings/group interviews could be held once or twice per semester each semester after completion of U101 and follow-up contact after graduation. The data would provide perspective on levels of engagement, reflections, perceptions, and uses of integrative learning by the students in these select sections.

Measures of students' ability to make connections related to a particular beyond the classroom experience will be collected from experiences originating in both academic and student affairs. As noted earlier, the development of rubrics and other assessment tools will be the work of the Professional Development and Assessment Committees.

Collecting data from the "frontline" providers of BTC experiences is being explored. Their assessment of students' abilities to make connections and solve problems as they work with them in the field can provide valuable information.

As students' exit the university and enter post-collegiate life, data will be collected through NSSE, exit surveys, and graduate surveys and focus groups. The ultimate question is whether or not students' integrative learning experiences at USC influenced their post-collegiate decisions and actions in a positive way.

Potential measures and comparisons related to the first learning outcome may include baseline measures of awareness of integrative learning activities, comparisons of perceptions of integrative learning among students who participate in U101 courses to non-U101 students, comparisons of early semester perspectives to end of semester perspectives in U101, and comparisons among USC students and those at other institutions using select questions from the NSSE survey related to integrative learning.

Significant questions include: Which students participate in particular pathways or types of experiences and which do not? What differences are there by students' entry point into the university (e.g., native vs. transfer students or program affiliation differences— are there differences between students who participate in a specific university program such as TRIO or the Honor's College and those who do not?) Use of results will guide decision-making in areas related to integrative learning such as increasing the number of BTC opportunities for students, increasing course offerings in certain areas based on student feedback, development of new advertising/promotional methods, or other initiatives as determined by *USC Connect* leadership.

Data will be collected in multiple ways to answer these and similar questions. Some academic units, particularly those focusing on specific professions, are already assessing their students in relation to the connections they make between theory and practice through major course projects, e-portfolios, seminar presentations, action research projects or other major course requirements. As programs consider modifications to culminating courses in related to the integrative course requirements of the Carolina Core, at least some additional programs will likely add more in-depth assessments of integrative learning. Professional development through the Center for Teaching Excellence in relation to integrative learning will be designed to encourage and support faculty in developing meaningful assessments of students' integrative learning. One of the tasks of *USC Connect* is to investigate the ways in which different units make these assessments and find ways to collate data across units.

There is also a strong link between *USC Connect* and the new *Carolina Core (CC).* Assessment data from the *Carolina Core* will provide important insights into the success of *USC Connect*:

- A *Carolina Core* sub-committee will be appointed for each *Carolina Core* learning outcome – with one faculty 'expert' and 2 o ther members – to oversee assessment of student learning achievement of the outcome.
- Part of the review process is to consider what is provided on the 'application' form regarding course activities and assignments that will be used to develop students' knowledge, skills and/or attitudes related to the outcome of focus
- These activities and assignments will provide the objects of assessment of student learning – samples of student work will be assessed (separate from grading in the course) to determine how well students are, in the aggregate, achieving the expected learning outcome. Each sample of student work will be linked to the student author's academic record, so that results of assessment can be considered by major, by college, by classification, etc.; this will help the CC committee and other institutional users of assessment data identify areas where improvement is needed, and create a plan for improvement.

We expect that students will improve their integrative learning skills through *USC Connect,* which will advance their learning in all areas – including general education and major programs. Thus analysis of student performance on the *Carolina Core* as it correlates to their level of involvement in *USC Connect* should provide insights into the level of success of *USC Connect.*

The technology developments of *USC Connect* are critical to the assessment of students' integrative learning. In particular, obtaining software to assist faculty and staff in creating rubrics that align with various standards, rating students on-line as to how well they meet standards (sometimes with multiple raters), and then having the data automatically collated and analyzed in various ways. Obtaining such software and supporting faculty and staff and utilizing are part of the *USC Connect* proposal.

Besides collecting data from individual programs or units, *USC Connect* will also develop and administer an integrative learning assessment to a random sample of students in their senior year ensuring comparisons on a single measure across students from various programs and with varying backgrounds and levels of achievement. Potential analyses using the data collected on students' integrative learning include comparisons of student achievement on an integrative learning-based rubric among students with extensive BTC experience versus those with little or no BTC experiences, comparisons among units/degree programs that use end of program assessments with those units/degree programs that do not use such assessments, and tracking of student growth/development related to integrative learning across 4-years in undergraduate degree program. Results can guide decision making with regard to refinement of existing end of program assessments, encourage development of new end of program assessments, and identify activities and experiences that seem to have lasting impact on long-term use of integrative learning.

Learning Outcome (Students will . . .)	Sources of Evidence				
	Year 1 Students	Years 2 Students	Year 3 Students	Year 4 Students	Post-Grad
1. Provide examples of beyond the classroom experiences in which they have engaged and describe how one or more beyond the classroom experiences has contributed to their learning.	-students' survey ratings and other assess. of their experiences (e.g., MLK day/ internship surveys) -student focus groups -aggregated data from UNIV 101 assessments	-students' survey ratings and other assess. of their experiences (e.g., MLK day/ internship surveys) -student focus groups -selected performance data of students' ability to describe BTC experiences and how they contributed to learning	-students' survey ratings and other assessments of their experiences -student focus groups -selected performance data of students' ability to describe BTC experiences and how they contributed to learning	-students' survey ratings and other assessments of their experiences -student focus groups	-post-grad survey/focus groups including self-report on impact of USC exp. on choices/ decisions
2. Articulate examples of beyond the classroom experiences that illuminate concepts/theories/frameworks presented in their coursework including a clear description of elements of the beyond the classroom experience that are consistent with or contradictory to the identified concept.	-aggregated data from UNIV 101 assessments	-selected performance data of students' ability to make connections between BTC-WTC	-selected performance data of students ability to make connections between BTC-WTC	-selected performance data of students ability to make connections between BTC-WTC	-post-grad survey/focus groups

Learning Outcome (Students will . . .)	Sources of Evidence				
	Year 1 Students	Years 2 Students	Year 3 Students	Year 4 Students	Post-Grad
3. Thoughtfully connect examples, facts, and/or theories from more than one experience, field of study, and/or perspective such as describing the similarities and differences across experiences, fields of study, or perspectives.		-selected performance data of students' ability to make connections across experiences -student focus group data -assessment/survey of BTC providers (including faculty/staff/ community)	-selected performance data of students' ability to make connections across experiences -student focus group data -assessment/survey of BTC providers (including faculty/staff/ community)	-culminating exp. data of student ability to make connections across experiences -student focus group data -assessment/survey of BTC providers -analysis of *Carolina Core* data in relation to *USC Connect* participation	-post-grad survey and focus groups
4. Pose solutions to problems (i.e., make recommendations) that incorporate learning from both beyond the classroom and within the classroom experiences, articulate how their decisions are supported by what they have learned through their experiences and content preparation, and implement those solutions (if appropriate).				-culminating exp. data of student ability to apply exp. to decision-making - stdnt focus grp data -assessment/survey of BTC providers -student exit survey -analysis of *Carolina Core* data in relation to *USC Connect* participation	-post-grad survey and focus groups

Expectations for first- and second-year students
Expectations for third- and fourth-year students
Expectations for graduating students and graduates

Assessment of Institutional Goals and Action Steps

Goal A: Develop a university <u>culture</u> that supports integrative learning.

Action steps:

1. Create an administrative structure to support integrative learning and *USC Connect*
   a. Establish a *USC Connect* Office with a focus on uniting the work of academic and student affairs.
   b. Implement a *USC Connect* governance structure that connects the office to all constituencies.

   Evaluation: Items to be reviewed in relation to implementation of the <u>administrative and governance structures</u> are
   - hiring and continuation of appropriate personnel for the *USC Connect* Office,
   - appropriate representation and regular meetings of the *USC Connect* Council and related committees,
   - adequate funding to meet *USC Connect* needs as budgeted,
   - development of the *USC Connect* website and other communications to provide resources and connections to faculty, staff, and students,
   - evidence of breadth of outreach throughout the university community (students, faculty, and staff), including the regional campuses
   - thorough annual evaluations of *USC Connect* submitted in conjunction with the University's strategic planning process (Blueprint for Quality Enhancement).

   In addition, the *USC Connect* Office will conduct a targeted annual survey of all participants in USC Connect (i.e., committee members, leadership in related offices) soliciting input on the effectiveness of the office and committee structure. Results will be shared, as appropriate per item, with appropriate administrators and the *USC Connect* Council.

2. Assess faculty and staff needs related to integrative learning and provide and facilitate faculty and staff participation in professional development opportunities resulting from the analysis.
   a. Assess current levels of faculty and staff knowledge, skills and dispositions related to beyond the classroom experiences, integrative learning, and assessment of student learning.
   b. Increase faculty and staff knowledge, skills and dispositions related to beyond the classroom experiences, integrative learning, and assessment of student learning.
   c. Evaluate the effects of professional development activities for faculty and staff that are related to beyond the classroom experiences, integrative learning, and assessment of student learning.

   Evaluation: Items to be assessed in relation to <u>faculty and staff professional development</u> include
   - Hiring of an Associate Director for Integrative Learning
   - Evidence of the integration of *USC Connect* into orientation for new faculty
   - Number of participants in programs of the Center for Teaching Excellence and the Division of Students Affairs including workshops/seminars, Faculty Fellows, Co-hort Programs, etc.
   - Implementation and results of exit surveys of participants in faculty and staff development on *USC Connect* topics
   - Increase in web resources for faculty/staff/student leaders on beyond the classroom experiences, integrative learning, and assessment of student learning
   - Implementation and results of initial and follow-up surveys on
     - faculty/staff self-perceptions of levels of knowledge, skills, and dispositions related to beyond the classroom experiences, integrative learning, and the assessment of student learning

- o mastery of core principles and skills by faculty/staff who have participated in professional development experiences
- Qualitative assessment of professional growth as demonstrated through selected evaluation projects (e.g., analysis of professional development participant journals)
- Solicited examples of growth in teaching practices such as through faculty submissions to USC's *Celebration of Teaching*
- Increases in number and/or quality of
  - o courses that integrate BTC experiences
  - o course assessments that evaluate student knowledge, skills, or dispositions related to integrative learning
  - o assessments in co-curricular experiences (e.g., Living and Learning Communities and other student affairs programs) that evaluate student knowledge, skills, or dispositions related to integrative learning
  - o culminating experiences in majors that include assessment of integrative learning
  - o faculty publications or other scholarly works related to integrative learning

3. Assess student knowledge, skills, and dispositions in relation to integrative learning and orient students to the benefits and opportunities of integrative learning
   a. Introduce potential students and parents to *USC Connect,* including beyond the classroom experiences and integrative learning, in pre-matriculation materials and activities.
   b. Introduce and assess students in relation to *USC Connect* through Orientation, the First-Year Reading Experience, and the first-year seminar (i.e., UNIV 101)

   Evaluation: Items to be assessed in relation to <u>initial assessment and orientation</u> of students to *USC Connect* include
   - Inclusion of *USC Connect* in pre-matriculation and orientation materials
   - Inclusion of *USC Connect* in scripts of USC Ambassadors, orientation presentations, etc.
   - Selection of First Year Reading Experience (FYRE) selection in consideration of *USC Connect*
   - Resources for faculty expanding on the FYRE to encourage inclusion of BTC and integrative learning experiences
   - Revision of the First-Year seminar materials for instructors, peer leaders, and students in relation to *USC Connect*
   - Integration of *USC Connect* into training for instructors and peer leaders
   - Inclusion of at least one BTC experience in First-Year seminars
   - Survey responses from First-Year seminar instructors indicating use of course experiences, assignments, readings, assessments related to integrative learning
   - Assessment of students' knowledge, skills, and dispositions toward integrative learning in a First-Year seminar assessment and resulting data

Goal B: Develop the <u>infrastructure</u> to support, facilitate, and enhance integrative learning opportunities.

Action steps:

1. Develop innovative technologies to provide students, faculty, and staff with access to and interaction with information on within and beyond the classroom experiences and efficient systems to track and assess student learning.
   a. Establish an on-going Technology Committee to work with the Director of USC Connect to coordinate, plan, and implement *USC Connect* technologies.
   b. Plan, develop, and implement the *USC Connect* technology system through the leadership of the Technology Committee.

Evaluation: Items to be assessed in relation to development of appropriate <u>technologies</u> include the implementation of the following

- a University calendaring system that effectively collects/ shares information on BTC experiences
- implementation of OneCarolina components that enhance students, faculty, and staff ability to access information related to academic information (Student Information Systems) in 2011 and communication services (Student Portal) in 2012 in which students can publish and subscribe to information resources tailored to meet their needs
- enhancement of capability to assess student learning through technology (i.e., acquisition and utilization of *Outcomes*)
- ability to track and record student participation in BTC experiences through electronic means (e.g., swipe technologies and e-portfolios)
- ability to access appropriate *USC Connect* information/tools through mobile applications
- additional enhancements such as an intelligent suggestion system and gaming interfaces (Note: These are not critical to the delivery of *USC Connect* but remain as long term goals.)

2. Enhance and coordinate university policies, procedures, structures, and offerings to provide a clear path of support, encouragement, and resources for students from intentional selection of within and beyond the classroom experiences to in-depth reflection, synthesis, and application of experiences.
   a. Create and maintain an accurate inventory of beyond the classroom experiences in academic and student affairs
   b. Develop systems that encourage and facilitate students' selection, reflection, synthesis and application of experiences

Evaluation: The evaluation of <u>beyond the classroom experiences and integrative learning</u> is intertwined with every other *USC Connect* goal and as such is evaluated through many of the items already listed. Items to be assessed in relation to BTC experiences and integrative learning *that have not been cited previously* include

- Development of clear policies and procedures in relation to identifying and maintaining an accurate accounting of beyond the classroom experiences (both curricular and co-curricular)
- A thorough inventory of BTC experiences
- Professional development, information, and systems to assist advisors in relation to *USC Connect* and opportunities for students

Success in relation to development of systems that encourage and facilitate integrative learning will also be assessed through the following *previously listed items* AND through the assessment of student performance described in the first half of this section on Assessment (pp. 57-62):

- Assessment of students' knowledge, skills, and dispositions toward integrative learning in a First-Year seminar assessment and resulting data
- Increases in number and/or quality of
  - courses that integrate BTC experiences
  - course assessments that evaluate student knowledge, skills, or dispositions related to integrative learning
  - assessments in co-curricular experiences (e.g., Living and Learning Communities and other student affairs programs) that evaluate student knowledge, skills, or dispositions related to integrative learning
  - culminating experiences in majors that include assessment of integrative learning
- Ability to track and record student participation in BTC experiences through electronic means (e.g., swipe technologies and e-portfolios)
- Enhancement of capability to assess student learning through technology (i.e., acquisition and utilization of *Outcomes*)

XI.   References and Appendices

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Appendix A

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Tell me about the academic-oriented beyond the classroom experiences you have been involved in at USC? These could include long term experiences such as a service learning project, international studies, an internship, or a research project OR short term activities such as attending a lecture by a speaker at the Russell House or attending another special event.

If you chose experiences (versus having to participate as a course requirement), how did you find out about the experiences? Why did you choose to participate?

If you have <u>not</u> been involved in any BTC experiences (except those specifically required in a course), tell me why not.
Follow-up questions:
- Tell me why you think you have not chosen to be involved in these kinds of experiences.
- What do you think has kept you from getting involved?
- What would make it more likely for you to choose to be engaged in some of these experiences?

Do you have any other recommendations about how we could help students be more aware of BTC opportunities or encourage their participation?

If you participated in a BTC experience(s), did you engage in any conversations or follow-up activities that gave you an opportunity to ask questions or helped you think about what you learned from the experience? (If yes, tell me more.)

[Hand out a summary of the QEP and briefly explain.] This handout summarizes a plan that the faculty, staff, and students of the university are developing to create an enhanced learning environment at USC. The key points are . . . .

Given this brief introduction, what is your response to the plan? What looks most helpful? If you were to ask one question about the plan, what would it be? If our goal is to increase student participation in a variety of experiences and help students make connections across those experiences, what do you think is missing?

INTEGRATING LEARNING WITHIN AND BEYOND THE CLASSROOM

USCONNECT

A. Goals:

1. **Increase student participation in beyond the classroom experiences** including
   a. **Short term experiences** such as Martin Luther King Service Day, attending guest lectures, and participating in many other one-time events
   b. **Long term experiences** such as extended service learning, international experiences, leadership involvement, internships, and undergraduate research projects
2. Support students in making sense of their experiences (e.g., **what did I learn from this experience that will help me in the future?**) and connecting relevant beyond the classroom experiences to their coursework (i.e., **making coursework relevant by seeing the connections with real world experiences**).
3. Support students in synthesizing their within and beyond the classroom experiences over time and apply resulting knowledge, values, and skills to act upon their experiences through personal and professional decision-making (e.g., **How do my experiences help me to make career decisions? How have my experiences helped me discover what is really important to me and what activities I want to be involved in after I leave USC?**)

B. Implementing the plan

1. Build a **continually updated database** of beyond the classroom experiences including those offered through Student Affairs and those offered through course work and academic programs.
2. Provide ready access to the database to students, faculty, and staff with an **innovative technology** system which not only provides data but that operates as an interactive system and can help students connect with activities and other individuals with similar interests. [i.e., Picture yourself with a mobile device that helps you find people and academic & other experiences related to your interests and track your participation.]
3. Provide an **orientation** to students to beyond the classroom learning and how to connect experiences and coursework (i.e., integrated learning) through such programs as orientation, the First-Year Reading Experience, and UNIV 101.
4. Increase support for students **to debrief with others (i.e., faculty, staff, and students), assess, and integrate their experiences** throughout their years at Carolina through such means as
   a. Living and Learning communities
   b. Planned discussion and analysis as part of the beyond the classroom offerings
   c. Opportunities to apply experiences to develop real world projects and research
5. Additional **senior year culminating experiences** through major course work (e.g., senior seminars, capstone courses) and other venues (support in developing e-portfolios and co-curricular transcripts) that are focused on helping students **plan for the future**.
6. Additional Questions:
   a. Tracking and providing recognition for beyond the classroom involvement is possible such as graduating with distinction in "community engagement". How important is this?
   b. Should beyond the classroom experiences be required of everyone? If so, what types of experience should be required and how much?

Appendix C

University of South Carolina Salkehatchie Report On Beyond the Classroom Experiences Fall 2010

International Learning

USC Salkehatchie places an emphasis on students being exposed to international experiences while attending our campus. From a travel abroad program to the annual international festival on campus to our respectable number of international students enrolled, a student at USC Salkehatchie has great opportunity to learn about other nationalities and cultures.

Opportunities:

  Professor Sharon Folk provides a trip to Spain every other academic year open to all students. Prior to the 10 day trip each May, students may enroll in a Spanish culture course for the spring semester to prepare themselves for the trip.   She had 10 travelers this past May. Four of them enrolled in the course the prior spring. These students were all sophomores or juniors, all females, and all from our five county service area. Two years ago Professor Joe Siren and Dr. Arthur Mitchell sponsored a student trip to China with 10 students making that 10 day trip as well.

The Opportunity Scholars Program sponsors an International Festival each year on campus. Drawing from our own faculty, staff and students, a wide variety of programs are offered over the course of a week by presenters from other countries or who have traveled extensively to other countries. These programs are open to everyone on campus. The last festival had over 100 participants for the 20 plus programs offered on our two campus sites. The participants represented all the demographic groups on our campus. The Opportunity Scholars Program collected evaluation forms from each participant on each of the presentations.

USC Salkehatchie currently has 17 international students enrolled. In addition another 10 have permanent resident status but were born in other countries. For a campus our size, 27 students from other countries exposes our student body to a wide range of international experiences. One of our professors, Dr. Wen-Kai Lai, is the sponsor for the international student organization. This group gathers for meals and trips to gatherings for international students at other college campuses. Recently, the group participated in the International Festival in Walterboro, serving desserts from their home countries in the "Sweets from Around the World" event.

One of our standing faculty committees is the Globalization Committee. The committee plans further ways for our campus to expose our students to global issues and experiences. They will sponsor a potluck lunch before our February faculty meeting for all faculty and staff with international dishes to be brought by all.

Student Leadership Development

USC Salkehatchie is very fortunate to have on its campus the USC Salkehatchie Leadership Institute. This Institute provides leadership training, economic development, community development and other community support services for our five-county area. Our students have the opportunity to participate in all of these activities.

The USC Salkehatchie Leadership Institute has a community needs committee in each of the five counties we serve. A student is appointed by our Dean to serve on each of those committees. This gives the committees the student's perspective and also gives the student the learning experience of working with the committee and helping to plan activities to benefit his or her own home county.

The USC Salkehatchie Leadership Institute provides training for our Student Government Association on leadership skills. Topics such as how to run a meeting, how to be an effective leader and others are covered.

Students from all demographic groups such as age, gender and race are on our student government association.

This year the USC Salkehatchie Leadership Institute presented a program on leadership to each of the University 101 classes on campus. These six presentations were heard by 200 of our freshmen as they participated in topics such as how to be an effective leader and interpersonal skills necessary in the world of work.

Community Engagement

Students at USC Salkehatchie are strongly encouraged and expected to participate in volunteer service and in service-learning projects.

All six fall sections and 3 spring sections of University 101 at USC Salkehatchie have components that require students to participate in volunteer service. Students enrolled in University 101 are expected to perform 10 hours each of volunteer service. Many students choose their own projects as they live here in the local communities. Working with school groups, local recreation departments, church organizations or civic groups are all acceptable service. For those students who do not readily have that opportunity available, the campus also connects students to opportunities. An examples is: Dr. Sarah Miller, history professor, used University 101 students to help the local historical society this year with their publications as well as their annual historical tour;

Our Student Government Association has as one of its goals to work closely with our community. This year the Association sponsored a Halloween Haunted hayride and carnival open to the entire community. Approximately 200 community people attended the event, enjoying the hayride and the games and goodies for children of all ages. Just under 100 students worked the event, running games, playing scary characters on the hayride and serving the refreshments. The admission fee charged for the event was donated to the local United Way. In addition our Student Government Association is collecting canned goods for the needy the month of November to go to a local food bank. One other project just completed was the angel tree. Student Government requested names from the Department of Social Services for a tree to buy gifts for those children for Christmas. All names were chosen by students, faculty and staff and the gifts have been delivered to Social Services. The group also sponsored a blood drive on campus this fall.

Volunteer service is also important to our athletic teams. Just this year alone we have had several activities. Our softball team members have participated in two Breast Cancer Awareness 5k runs this fall and have also sponsored a breast cancer awareness fall scrimmage game wearing pink breast cancer awareness t-shirts. The these 14 young women have had a huge impact on breast cancer awareness on our campus. Our four athletic teams in Allendale competed in a fund-raising activity for a local church group, Abba's Kitchen, to raise money to buy turkeys for needy families for Thanksgiving. The team who raised the most money was provided a free pizza dinner by Abba's Kitchen. Fifteen turkeys will be bought for needy families in the name of USC Salkehatchie athletics. Seventy-five of our athletes participated in this endeavor. Athletes also will travel with Abba's Kitchen in early December to carol at the local nursing home.

Undergraduate Research

USC Salkehatchie students have an opportunity to participate in undergraduate research through several programs. On the page following is a chart outlining recent student research activities.

Name	Mechanism	Research	Campus	Date
Nicole Patz Race: White Gender: Female	Volunteer	Vascular plant inventory of the Great Swamp Sanctuary	USC Salkehatchie	Spring 2007
Rebecca Scheffler Race: White Gender: Female	Magellan Scholars Program; STEPs to STEM Intern	Herpetofauna Inventory of Red Bluff Lodge, Allendale County, SC	USC Salkehatchie	Spring 2009 – Spring 2010
Tyler Ard Race: White Gender: Female	STEPs to STEM Intern	Amphibian Community Dynamics Following Longleaf Pine Restoration	USC Salkehatchie	Summer – Fall 2009
Holly Hughes Race: White Gender: Female	STEPs to STEM Intern	Amphibian Community Dynamics Following Longleaf Pine Restoration	USC Salkehatchie	Spring – Summer 2009
Autumn Farley Race: White Gender: Female	Volunteer	South Carolina Component of the N. American Amphibian Monitoring Program	USC Columbia	Spring –Fall 2010;
Bobby Jones Race: White Gender: Male	Work Study	Hybridization Among *Notophthalmus viridescens* Subspecies in South Carolina	USC Salkehatchie	Summer 2010 – Current
Keith Browning Race: White Gender: Male	Magellan Scholars Program	Assessment of Herpetofauna Habitat Components at Red Bluff Lodge, Allendale County, SC	USC Salkehatchie	Spring 2010 – Current
Casey Rowe Race: White Gender: Male	Faculty Development Funds	Amphibian Community Dynamics Following Longleaf Pine Restoration	USC Salkehatchie	Summer 2010 - Current

**Past, Present, and Future Timeline for USC Major Technology Projects
Relevant to *USC Connect***

2007-08	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013-14
USC Light-rail added	OneCarolina development begins	Carolina Learning Initiative (Instruc-tional Tech,)	One-Carolina: Student Info System (records, classes, scheduling)	One-Carolina: Student Portal (publish/sub-scribe to info resources)	One-Carolina: Finance and Human Resource Systems
Note: Blackboard Course Manage-ment and E-portfolios in place)	Campus WiFi Services	Enhanced Research Network (Increased capacity)	Web Redevelop-men.	*Outcomes* (Assessment Software—Blackboard)	Mobile Applications
			Upgrade of Learning/ Course Manage-ment (Black-board)		

1) South Carolina Light-rail – 2007

The University of South Carolina in partnership with other South Carolina institutions of higher education implemented plans to provide facilities-based advanced high performance communications infrastructure in support of the academic and research missions of South Carolina. The new Lightrail network delivers high speed, highly available network access across the State, nation, and world by providing new in-state high speed infra-structure connecting directly to other national and regional networks. (Current funding level: $200,000 annual support cost.)

2) USC Campus WIFI Project 2009 – 2010

In 2008, the University of South Carolina expanded wireless network access services beyond the existing outdoor services to include all indoor academic and housing facilities. The University of South Carolina partnered with AT&T to create a unified wireless network on the USC Columbia campus which now includes both indoor and outdoor areas. This project was completed in 2010. (Approximate investment: $1.3M.)

3) OneCarolina Enterprise Resource Planning – 2009 – 2014

OneCarolina is the University of South Carolina's multi-year project for technology transformation. Its primary goal is to replace outdated academic and administrative systems at the University. ($45M approved for Phase 1 Student Information Systems with 35 percent completion.)

The OneCarolina project will modernize, streamline, and enhance academic and administrative services, transforming virtually every system throughout the University's eight campuses. Implementation of the project will be in four scheduled phases:

- 2011 - Student Information Systems (SIS) - the first phase to be implemented, SIS will develop an easy-to-use web-based system for student records, class selection and scheduling, student financial management, and student financial aid.
- 2012 - Student Portal communication services – An opportunity to provide "one-stop-shopping" for student information needs. Students will be able to publish and subscribe to information resources tailored to academic and personnel interests.
- 2013 - Finance - streamlining financial operations and increasing connectivity to diverse University systems and projects.
- 2013 - Sponsored Programs - developing faster identification, development, and submission for programs and research grants, as well as post-award management.
- 2013 - Human Resources - employment and benefits management.
- 2014 – e-Procurement and Travel systems.

4) Carolina Learning Initiative – 2010

The Carolina Learning Initiative (CLI) is a collaboration between University departments with an interest in technology enhanced teaching and learning. The CLI project seeks to enhance the teaching and learning environment at the University of South Carolina by:

- Identifying, supporting, and promoting effective uses of classroom technology
- Raising faculty awareness of and connection with academic technology support resources
- Growing and developing a community of practitioners who effectively apply technology to enhance teaching and learning
- Coordinating initiatives among various University resources (e.g., University Technology Services (UTS), Teaching Technology Services (TTS), Center for Teaching Excellence (CTE), Distance Education) in order to connect faculty to available university support services

5) Enhanced Research Network Access – 2010

The University of South Carolina upgraded the infrastructure to deliver expanded network capacity to key research locations around the university. These upgrades included expanding network fiber infrastructure and network management equipment to increase network bandwidth where the most compute

intensive environments require high speed connectivity. (Approximate investment: $1M with 70 percent completion.)

6) **Web Redevelopment – 2011 – 2012**

The University of South Carolina recognizes the impact of the web as a key marketing tool, and has established this project to create a new web presence for the university system's web sites. In addition, this project will establish the self-service tools with which to create and maintain ever changing web presence around the university. The primary goal of the new web presence is to project an image uniquely established for the University of South Carolina with a thematic harmony designed into all web based communications. This project includes a web content management system (CMS), which is accessible by all campuses, and easy to use as part of the self-service goals of the project. Policies and procedures will be developed to guide web site development, while a Governance Committee will be chartered to administer the ongoing change management process.

Web redevelopment includes a new university calendaring system to provide unified, current, and accurate information on events at USC. The updated calendar is key to providing on-line access to beyond the classroom experiences as a component of *USC Connect*. (Approximate investment: $1.2M with project just beginning.)

7) **Learning Management Systems Enhancements– 2011-2014**

Blackboard 9.1 (2011): USC utilizes Blackboard as its standard learning and course management system. The system provides an integrated set of web-based tools for course management and delivery and is used for both in-class instruction and distance learning. USC also utilizes Blackboard's e-portfolio system. The next major release of Blackboard (9.1) will include integrated social learning and teaching tools that provide for a more active learning environment for students, helping them stay better connected to their educational experience. (Blackboard support costs are approximately $550K per year.)

Blackboard *Outcomes* (2011-2012). USC is exploring the addition of Blackboard *Outcomes* to enhance our on-line capability and efficiency in assessing student learning. *Outcomes* provides an electronic system for student submission of work (e.g., projects, e-portifolios, research papers), faculty review/ratings of student work according to specific standards (e.g., an integrative learning rubric), and automatic collation of data. *Outcomes* is being explored for use in relation to university-wide and unit-specific evaluations of integrative learning (i.e., *USC Connect)* and for evaluation of *Carolina Core* learning outcomes. Integration of *Outcomes* in anticipated by December 2011.

Blackboard mobile applications (2013-14): USC is also exploring utilization of Blackboard's mobile applications which includes user-ready applications as well as opportunities to integrate unique applications developed in-house (e.g., through our Center for Digital Humanities). Mobile applications are a future innovation of *USC Connect*, anticipated for 2013-14.

Appendix E

Technology Committee Summary of Desired Functionality and Current Status of Potential *USC Connect* Technology Features

Systems will be accessible on a range of platforms that best serve users including desk top systems (e.g., websites) and portable technology (e.g., smart phones, net books).

1. **Stage One Technology : The Core**

    a. **Database of Beyond the Classroom Experiences**

        i. **Co-curricular (non-course related)**
        Proposed functionality: An online calendar in which authorized users can post, edit, and delete information on upcoming activities or events will feed information into web and, eventually, mobile interfaces. Possible categories of beyond the classroom experiences include: academic, arts/entertainment, athletics, club sports, exhibits, outdoor recreation, seminars, lectures, special events, student activities, student organizations, workshops, conferences, and classes. Events will be "tagged" in a variety of ways such as event type, key content, and proposed audience (e.g., undergraduate, graduate, faculty, staff, and general public).

        Current Status: Events are currently captured using several methods depending on the group, department, or college. The University is finalizing options for a universal calendaring system planned to be implemented April 2011 as a component of the university's web redevelopment.

        ii. **Curricular (course-related)**
        Proposed functionality: Being able to search courses for specific information such as identifying courses that include beyond the classroom experiences.

        Current Status: Students can currently access basic course information (e.g., schedule, instructor, location) on line and manage their enrollment status (registration, drop/add, etc.) The extended functionalities rely on the conversion to the new Banner web and the ability to interact with the Banner system (a component of OneCarolina).

    b. **Tracking Participation**

        Proposed functionalities:
        i. Tracking co-curricular experiences (swipe technology):

        Functionality would include a centralized hub to track data on student participation. For example, students would be able to notate their attendance from automated (swipe card technology) or non-automated (sign-in lists) which would allow for event hosts to generate audience lists and to facilitate assessment of beyond-the-classroom events**.** Functionality would also include provision of a system to support participant response to surveys following event attendance (student perceptions).

Current Status: There currently exists a lack of digital swipe technologies to track student participation, so initial versions of the application would likely be based on "attending" or "not attending" statuses that event hosts could use to generate and upload a list of attendees. Student Affairs currently uses Student Voice to collect data on student perceptions following events. It is yet to be determined if we should continue to use this system and work toward interfacing it with mobile applications.

ii. Curricular/course tracking
Functionality: Feeding <u>class rolls</u> of courses identified as including beyond the classroom experiences into the system so that students and advisors could track student BTC experience.

Current status: Courses are not yet identified. Technology to allow this type of tracking will be part of the OneCarolina system.

c. **Assessment of Student Learning**

Functionality: The system will include mechanisms to collect data regarding assessment of students' ability to integrate learning (e.g., students submit work on-line, faculty/staff assess work related to integrative learning entering ratings directly into the system, data are automatically collated and summarized, variety of comparisons can be selected for data displays).

Current status: Commercial vendors (e.g., Blackboard which interfaces with current university systems) offer software that provides the required mechanisms. Purchasing access to this system is proposed.

d. **E-portfolios**

Proposed functionality: Ability to store and organize data into an electronic portfolio. Automated population of records with student beyond the classroom experiences.

Current Status: USC already owns the Blackboard electronic portfolio function that is accessible to students who can build a record of their experiences in the existing system.

2. **Stage Two Technology: Future Innovations**

a. **Intelligent suggestion system.**
Proposed functionality: Student records and the databases of within and beyond the classroom experience opportunities will be utilized by an automated search system to spontaneously suggest opportunities that tie in with given curricular choices.

Current Status: Once the calendar and course systems are on-line (anticipated 2011) students will be able to search based on tags and key words. The addition of automated suggestions is a complex step to be added in the future as development allows.

b. **Student planning**

Proposed functionality: A step by step technology driven process that enables a student to create a four year integrative learning plan (e.g. questions/reflection points and a plan that helps a student map out their four year experience).

Current status: A "manual" planning format was developed by Office of Student Engagement that has been piloted with xx students.

c. **Gaming interfaces**

Functionality: Avatar-like presentations in which students can make choices and explore consequences on-line. It is anticipated that such presentations would be particularly engaging to students and increase their interactivity in planning and selecting experiences.

Current status: Prototypes are under development at the Center for Digital Humanities. Grant funding is anticipated to support further development.

3. **Peripheral Enhancements**

a. **Additional Mobile applications**

Proposed functionality: As indicated above the core and future technology will be available in a mobile platform. Besides accessibility of core features, additional mobile applications could be integrated with the system such as a university directory, campus map, campus news, athletics, libraries, campus tours, and iTunes U. Directory and other information would be searchable through both an alphabetical index and a search box interface. Extended mapping functionalities could use a phone based GPS to identify a user's current location for navigation to campus landmarks as well as the inclusion of "live" bus schedules and other transportation based information.

Current Status:
- Directory: USC currently maintains a directory which could be exported in the needed format to a mobile directory.
- Map: A digital map is under development by the USC Visitor's Center. Extended functionality will rely on converting the digital map to the appropriate platform (likely Google maps) as well as integrating bus schedules into a database for access by the application.
- News: USC news currently is fed to www.sc.edu site as well as individual college and newspaper sites. An RSS data feed would be needed from those particular sites to feed into the news portion of the application for basic functionality.

b. **Social networking**

Proposed functionality: Facebook or some type of social interface for students to interact with other students in their classes and those with similar interests.

Current Status: Blackboard has student networking capabilities which are currently utilized in conjunction with courses.

Appendix F
Sample Beyond the Classroom Experiences from
One USC Pathway: Undergraduate Research

1. Description and definition of Pathway
Undergraduate research is a faculty-mentored process aimed at developing a student's skills in inquiry and opportunities to contribute to and/or pursue original intellectual or creative work. Students work with and are supervised by faculty to explore an issue of interest to them, and communicate the results with others. The type of inquiry is dependent upon the discipline and topic of study and can include any combination of design, investigation, research, scholarship, discovery, application, or performance.

The University of South Carolina uses a broad definition of research founded on inquiry and the ability to ask questions and find answers. This encourages "Discovery for every discipline" (our motto) and promotes research opportunities in any area that will provide an environment for students to creatively explore their interests at a level more in-depth than can be attained in the classroom.

The Office of Undergraduate Research was created to promote, develop, and enhance the academic experience of all USC undergraduates by providing research and scholarly experiences in their chosen fields. The office promotes inquiry, discovery, and creativity in all disciplines through faculty-student mentoring relationships and the integration of instruction with research, scholarship, and creative activities. A variety of funding programs and access to research opportunities are available to USC students on all campuses through the office.

The university and Office of Undergraduate Research are committed to assisting students and facilitating research opportunities at all stages of their academic career and to meet a variety of student needs and interests. USC has programs geared toward a) early research participation both to get a student involved in research and to fund early research experiences, b) supporting and funding students engaged in research (through internal and external sources), c) facilitating research opportunities outside of the university (projects partnering with local community organizations and research projects outside of the US), d) research-based-learning or research course offerings, and e) showcasing undergraduate research.

2. Initiatives and program examples within each opportunity
According to the 2009 National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE), by graduation ~27% of USC students (more than 5500 students) have worked on research project with faculty. This is a 7% increase since the 2007 NSSE report. It is difficult to capture real-time data and confirm numbers of students in research due to the variety of options in which students engage in research. The university has recently initiated two strategies to better capture the bulk of student research activity. The first seeks to capture students in independent studies who are engaged in research projects (not all independent studies are considered research). The second identifies students who are receiving salaries or stipends to conduct research and has been established through our student hire system. Both strategies are relatively new and the accuracy of the systems is expected to improve with awareness and compliance.

a. **Research participation** both to get a student involved in research and to fund early research experiences: Approximately 300 students in their first and second year work with the OUR to engage in or fund research opportunities. *[DATA LIMITATIONS: This does not include students who seek opportunities directly with a faculty mentor or through academic coursework as these students do not generally go through the OUR.]* The OUR offers one-on-one and small group advising as well as a research foundations course to assist students in identifying a mentor and project in their first and second year. The OUR also provides four programs that fund early research experiences.
    i. *Discover*: Research foundations course for first-year students. Introduction to research at USC and basic skills needed for research. Offered as a not-for-credit 8 week seminar and one-credit class (UNIV 290A). Enrolls 10-20 students per semester.
    ii. *Mini-Grant program*: Awards up to $1000 to purchase materials and supplies or to off-set travel costs for undergraduates conducting research projects. Mentors can be faculty or staff. Only open to students who live on the Columbia campus (funded by Housing). Preference is given to projects with an impact on the USC community but all projects are eligible.
    iii. *Magellan Guarantee*: Provides mentored research experiences in the first and second year for students of low socio-economic status and/or first generation college students who qualify for the Gamecock Guarantee (need-based financial and academic support initiative). Up to 20 students per year. (funded by TRIO programs and OUR)
    iv. *Magellan Apprentice*: Funds mentored projects but is geared toward students just beginning to develop scholarship skills in a discipline. Students must be in the Capstone Scholars program. Awards: $2000 for materials, travel, and stipend. Up to 20 students per year. (funded by Capstone Scholars Program)
    v. *Magellan Scholar Program*: Funds mentored student research projects. Students can work directly on their mentor's research (~80% do this), develop their own ideas, or a combination. Awards: $3000 for materials, travel, and stipend. Deadlines: mid-October and mid-February. Students must have a minimum GPA of 3.3; all campuses, majors, and academic years are eligible (~30% of scholars are in their first or second year at time of application). Acceptance rate: 60-70% (~120 awards per year).

b. **Supporting and funding** students engaged in research (through internal and external sources):
    INTERNAL SOURCES: Over 200 students are known to be funded through internal funding programs, including the OUR opportunities listed above (Mini-Grant program, Magellan Guarantee, Magellan Apprentice, and Magellan Scholar Program) and those through the South Carolina Honors College (http://schc.sc.edu/thehonorsexperience/academics/studentresearch.aspx):
    i. *Exploration Scholars Program*: Funds mentored student research projects in fields dealing with qualitative or exploratory scholarship methods: Arts, Music, Humanities, Journalism, Business, Law, Public Health, Social Work, Education, etc. Awards can be used for

materials, travel, and/or stipend. Two award levels are available: Apprentice for students just beginning to develop scholarship skills in a discipline ($1,500) and Journeyman for students who are more experienced and/or possess more research skills ($3,000).

ii. *Science Undergraduate Research Fellowship*: Funds mentored student research projects in science, engineering, mathematics, and some social sciences such as Psychology. Up to $3000 for stipend and/or supplies.

EXTERNAL SOURCES: At this time, we do not know how many students are being funded through external sources. The newly initiated student hire codes will assist with this information. Programs that fall under this category include externally funded faculty research (such as from the National Science Foundation or National Institutes of Health) and nationally competitive research fellowships such as the Goldwater Scholarship. The Goldwater Scholarship awards outstanding students pursuing research careers in mathematics, the natural sciences, or engineering. USC has had 36 Goldwater recipients since 1990. Two additional examples of externally funded projects:

i. *Ronald E. McNair Post-Baccalaureate Program* assists low income first-generation college students and under-represented undergraduates (all USC campuses) planning to pursue a graduate degree. Rising juniors and seniors are eligible. Students in this program conduct research over the summer with a faculty mentor and are encouraged to continue their projects during the academic year. This program serves 15-20 students per year. http://www.sc.edu/trio/index.htm

ii. *National Science Foundation South Carolina STEPs to STEM* (science, technology, engineering, and math) program is aimed at increasing the success and retention of transfer students from SC technical colleges and USC regional campuses in science, technology, engineering, and math disciplines. Students engage in research internships, special academic courses, and enhanced student services. Approximately 20 students are served through this initiative.

c. **Facilitating opportunities** outside of the university (projects partnering with local community organizations and research projects outside of the US). Very little data is available on projects in this area except when funded through the OUR. Additional information is acquired through registered study abroad coursework or self-reports of students or faculty. Faculty are not required to contact the appropriate Pathway office for course development.

i. *Community-based-research* partners community organizations with our faculty-student teams to answer questions and provide solutions to the organization's needs. These projects provide students with the opportunity to apply skills and knowledge gained in the classroom to real world applications and community partners gain resources to assist in fulfilling an organizational need. A number of service-learning courses include a research component or students engaged in the course will be inspired to further their learning through research such as with the Challenging Horizons Program (a mentoring program for

young adolescents). This course has led to research on mentoring techniques, improvements in tutoring, wellness education, and more. Approximately 15% of projects funded through OUR fall under community engagement.

    ii.   *Research Abroad* incorporates all projects requiring international travel for inquiry completion. Research abroad allows students to incorporate aspects into their inquiry that may be unavailable within the US or to expand or combine a different dimension to their studies. Most projects are independent student-generated ideas (for example, a student traveled to South Africa to evaluate how small businesses turned profits acquired during the 2010 World Cup into long term, sustainable economic development). However, USC is increasing the availability of courses with international research opportunities (such as UNIV 201 – Inquiry in Taiwan combines learning about and exploring Taiwanese culture and society) and increasing access to formal international research experiences (such as the German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD) where students conduct research at universities and top research institutions across Germany over the summer). Approximately 15% of projects funded through OUR involve research abroad.

d. **Research-based-learning or research course offerings:** Course-based projects vary in level of structure given to the course from independent studies where the student-faculty team designs the outcomes to pre-designed inquiry based curricula. As with research opportunities outside of the university it is difficult to collect information on research-based courses as there is no university established coding system. The current listing of courses was obtained through review of the course bulletin. In 2009-2010, there were 17 research methodology courses (classes that teach students discipline-specific research techniques), 34 research-based courses (courses contain traditional elements such as lectures with significant course time devoted to exploring faculty designed or approved projects generally in team formats), 29 capstone courses (generally the final course taken by a student in his/her major; often contains significant independent research to demonstrate application of knowledge and skill development), 31 independent research courses (little to no traditional course elements except often a final paper or presentation requirement; generally an individualized research plan), and 72 independent studies (little to no traditional course elements; can be any format to facilitate directed study of a topic; may be directed readings, supplemental coursework, or may qualify as "independent research,"; varies significantly based on student needs). In Academic Year 2009-2010, 1488 students were enrolled in a research methodology course, 859 in a research-based course, 477 in a capstone course, 180 in an independent research course, and 641 in an independent study course. (See Appendix)

e. **Showcasing undergraduate research:** Presenting or sharing research experiences occurs through university sponsored events and journals and at externally sponsored discipline-specific regional, national, and international meetings or conferences and peer-reviewed journals. Data is difficult to

obtain except for Discovery day as departments do not provide information on events and only students funded for travel through the OUR register discipline-specific sponsored conference attendance.

UNIVERSITY SPONSORED EVENTS:

i. *Discovery Day* is an annual event for undergraduates, of all USC campuses and all disciplines, to showcase or present their beyond-the-classroom experiences. It is not limited to research/scholarly projects. In 2010, 209 students participated with 130 posters, 47 oral presentations, 7 creative performances, and 3 static displays. Presentations by category (presentations may be counted in more than one category): research (173), international (21), community engagement (16), and internships (1).

ii. *Discipline-specific*: The university also hosts a variety of discipline-specific undergraduate research conferences and sponsors three journals (specifically for undergrads). The conferences include: INK! (an undergraduate literary conference, open to all USC undergraduates) and the South Carolina Anthropology Student Conference (for graduate and undergraduate students at any SC institution). The journals consist solely of submissions by undergraduates (all are international) and in the case of MarSci and IMPULSE are reviewed and published by undergraduates under the supervision of Faculty Advisors. IMPULSE is for neuroscience, The Oswald Review for English (faculty panel reviewed), and MarSci for marine and aquatic science.

EXTERNALLY SPONSORED EVENTS: As stated above, we do not formally collect data on how many presentations or publications our students have made at externally sponsored events, except for travel that is sponsored by the OUR through the *Magellan Voyager Travel Awards*: Assists with travel expenses for students to share their research at regional, national, or international meetings, conferences, art shows, musical performances, etc. (as appropriate for student's project). Students must be presenters (~$500/award). Open to all campuses. Approximately 20 presentations are funded per year. In 2009-2010, conferences included the American Public Health Association in Philadelphia, National Flute Association in Anaheim, CA, American School of Classical Studies in Greece, Society for Neuroscience in Chicago, Benthic Ecology Meeting in Wilmington, NC, and the American Chemical Society in San Francisco.

3. Any significant assessment data regarding your pathway (Methodology and results)
Assessment data is available for specific OUR funded programs. Numbers, demographics, and satisfaction are the primary data available.

a. **Total number of students engaged in research**: As with many large universities, this is a very difficult number to capture due to the different ways students engage in research (student hires, volunteers, and for-credit) and how they get engaged (through OUR or directly through department). Historically, only students participating in specific funding programs could be counted accurately. Over 300 students directly participate in programs funded by the OUR (Magellan Scholar program, Voyager, mini-grant, Discovery Day, etc). An additional 75-100 students participate in funding programs offered by campus partners (the Honors College, College of Arts & Sciences, College of

Engineering and Computing, TRIO programs, etc.). As indicated above, these numbers do not include students participating in research for credit or those who are being paid through grants or other funding sources. The best estimate for student participation comes from the NSSE report, which indicated that currently ~27% of USC students (more than 5500 students) have worked on research project with faculty by graduation. The university has recently initiated two strategies to better capture the bulk of student research activity. The first seeks to capture students in independent studies who are engaged in research projects (not all independent studies are considered research). The second identifies students who are receiving salaries or stipends to conduct research and has been established through our student hire system. Both strategies are relatively new and the accuracy of the systems is expected to improve with awareness and compliance.

b. **Discover program:** pre and post-testing; numbers, demographics, and satisfaction; Survey data collected prior to, and after participation in the course. This data reveals student increases in research skills, personal confidence with research, and ability to make faculty connections. Qualitative reporting is also available.

c. **Magellan Scholar program:** post-testing; numbers, demographics, and satisfaction. Since the program began AY 2005-06, there has been a 70% increase in applicants with a 19% increase over the last year. In Fall 2009, the Magellan Scholar program reached the $1M mark. Including Spring 2010, the OUR has granted ~$1.3M to 465 students to conduct mentored research experiences. Program participation has broadened since inception, particularly in system campus participation and increased diversity of disciplines: in AY2005-06, 100% of participants were from USC Columbia; while in AY 2009-10, 11% of participants are from non-Columbia campuses (Aiken, Beaufort, Lancaster, Salkehatchie, Sumter, and Upstate).

d. **Discovery Day:** post-testing; numbers, demographics, and satisfaction. originated as an undergraduate research poster session for the sciences offered through the Honors College in 2003 and the OUR began hosting the event in 2005. In 2009, the day was expanded to include all beyond-the-classroom experiences: internships, study abroad, fellowship applicants, service-learning/community service, and undergraduate research. In 2010, we experienced a 30% increase in presentations and a 60% increase in attendance over 2009. Students report that Discovery Day adds educational value to their academic experience (83%) and 90% would recommend the experience to others. A common theme is the increased understanding of their own research gained by students when preparing and presenting their work: "[the most useful aspect of participating in Discovery Day was] articulating my research- It's one thing to perform research and another to understand it thoroughly enough to explain it to someone else. I think that this opportunity is extremely important, and helped me prepare for graduate school seminars."

4. *Describe low impact, short-term (1 shot programs, lectures, and seminars, etc.) that supplement your pathway.*

There are many lectures and seminars related to research that are scheduled regularly throughout USC by colleges, departments, and student organizations. These are not

collected in a central location and more information can be seen in the appendix. Below is a listing of OUR offerings and a few examples from around campus.

- OFFICE OF UNDERGRADUATE RESEARCH:
    a. **Getting started workshops:** 30-60 minutes advising sessions. Students are assisted in identifying their research interests, learn how to navigate the faculty research database to find a faculty mentor, develop strategies for contacting the faculty, and learn about the resources available (at and outside of USC) once they have a project and mentor
    b. **What is research presentations:** 15-60 min general education presentations that provide a broad overview of research at USC with the goal of instilling the concept of "Discovery for every discipline" and to let students know early that research is not scary and can be fun. Geared toward UNIV 101, entry level courses, and student organizations
    c. **Discovery Day workshops** (how to create and "man" a poster and Creating effective powerpoint presentations) 60 min presentations to help students prepare for Discovery Day
- Examples of GENERAL UNIVERSITY RESEARCH SEMINARS, PRESENTATIONS, AND EVENTS:
    a. **McMaster Gallery**: art and creative exhibits by USC faculty and students and invited guest artists; rotating schedule of exhibits (http://web.mac.com/mcmastergallery/McMaster_Gallery/Gallery_Schedule.html)
    b. **Brain Awareness Week:** held every March; global campaign to increase public awareness about the progress and benefits of brain research. Neuroscience students host a series of public events featuring USC neuroscientists, neurosurgeons, and psychologists (such as: PAIN: Why Men are Babies and Women have the Babies?) and brain-themed activities (such as trivia night and brain-related movies).
    c. **Departmental seminar or lectures series** (generally a combination of presentations by USC faculty, post-docs, graduate and undergraduate students and guest lecturers from visiting faculty):
    d. **College of Arts & Sciences:** http://www.cas.sc.edu/upcoming.html
    e. **Moore School of Business**: http://mooreschool.sc.edu/events.aspx?category_id=9
    f. **Jewish Studies**: http://www.cas.sc.edu/jstp/events.html
    g. **Chemistry**: http://www.chem.sc.edu/about/dept_seminars.asp

5. Appendices information
    a. Any comprehensive lists of courses, opportunities, experiences, associated with your pathway (if this information is online then please provide the appropriate link to this information).
    *See Academic courses: Research

Appendix G
USC Connect Draft Survey of Beyond the Classroom Experiences

Instructions for Survey Completion
1. Please complete one form for each program or activity that you implement.
2. Indicate whether you are describing a program or activity based on the following definitions:
   - Program – a series of workshops or activities that are combined with others and share a common title
   - Activity – a one-time activity such as a single workshop, project or speaker
3. Upload or provide a link to any documents related to the program or activity that you are describing. These may consist of brochures, applications, evaluations or reports.
4. Please contact _____ with any questions you may have when completing the survey.
_____

Under which of the following categories does the course/program/activity fall (please select all that apply):
   - International learning
   - Undergraduate Research
   - Community Engagement
   - Leadership development
   - Practica/Internship
   - Other

Is this a:
   - Program – a series of seminars, lectures, speakers, workshops, activities, etc. that are combined with others and share a common title or theme
   - Activity – a one-time experience such as a single workshop, project or speaker

Title of program/activity:
Website:
Name of Primary Contact:
Title of Primary Contact:
Department:
Email:
Phone Number:

How long has the program/activity been in existence?
   - 0 – 5 years
   - 6 – 10 years
   - 11 – 15 years
   - 16-20 years
   - 21 – 25 years
   - 25 years
   - Not an annual event

What are the background, overall purpose and goals of the program/activity?
   - Background: (Statement of need for the program or activity)
   - Purpose:
   - Primary Goals/Learning Outcomes:

What is the format of your program/activity? (Check all that apply)
- Seminar/Lecture/presentation
- Retreat
- Series of workshops
- Individual workshop
- Visits to Residence Halls/Organizations
- Certificate/documentation
- Other (Please specify)

What time of the year is program/activity offered? (Check all that apply)
- Summer Semester
- Fall Semester
- Spring Semester

How often does this occur:
- Once (does not recur)
- Times per week:
- Times per month:
- Times per semester:
- Times per year:
- Other:

What is the target audience for your program/activity? (Check all that apply)
- Freshmen
- Sophomore
- Junior
- Senior
- Graduate students
- Student Government members
- Club/organization leaders
- Greek student leaders
- Other (Please specify)

How are your participants determined? (Check all that apply)
- Application
- Nomination process
- Open to all students

Other (Please specify)

What is the cost to students who participate in your program/activity?
- No cost
- $0.01 - $25
- $26 - $50
- >$50

What do students gain by participation in the program/activity? (Check all that apply)
- Academic knowledge
- Skill development

- Certificate
- Recognition
- Chance to become facilitators
- Participation credit for club or other group
- Other (Please specify)

Who are the program/activity facilitators? (Check all that apply)

Freshmen	Departmental Staff	Consultants/Trainers
Sophomore	Division of Student Affairs Staff	Administrators
Junior	Staff outside of Student Affairs	Other (Please specify)
Senior	Faculty	
Graduate	Community members	

Are program/activity facilitators compensated? If so, how much per session/training program?

What are the expected primary participant outcomes of the program/activity? (i.e. Knowledge of problem solving techniques)

How is your program/activity funded? (Check all that apply)
- Not funded
- Institutional Funds (Annual Budget)
- Outside Funding Sources (Grants, Corporate Sponsorships)
- Registration Fess of Participants
- Student Government Funds
- Other (please specify)

What is the current annual operating budget of your program/activity? (If not a specific budget line, estimate the total cost of providing the program/activity)
- $0 - $500
- $501 - $1,000
- $1001 - $2,000
- >$2,000

Please describe the specific BTC components included in the program/activity. (how or why does this activity fit under the pathway(s) chosen)

What has been your rate of participation for this program or activity? (annually or per activity)

<10	11-25	26-50	51 – 99	100 – 199
200 – 299	300 – 399	400 – 499	500 – 1000	>1000

How is your program/activity evaluated by participants? by departmental staff? (Check all that apply)
- Not evaluated
- Participant evaluations
- Campus wide surveys
- Focus Groups
- Retention and Graduation
- Other (Please specify)

Appendix H
USC Connect
Draft Course Criteria and Approval Process

NOTE: This document is a DRAFT based on the IUPUI-RISE course approval process. It is NOT recommended for use in current form, but is a reflection of items under discussion.

USC Connect courses must be formally identified and the registrar must be notified of a course being designated as meeting USC Connect criteria. In this document you will find criteria for registering and creating a USC Connect course, the categories of USC Connect, and the process by which you can achieve a USC Connect designation.

USC Connect Criteria

In order for a course to qualify as fulfilling a USC Connect requirement, it must be credit bearing and include the following elements:

1. **Qualified experiences:** Students must engage in directed, first-hand immersive experiences in the "real world," laboratory, studio, etc. that are appropriate to the educational goals of the course and that occur beyond a normal classroom or on-line framework. The purposes of these external experiences are: 1) to apply and practice concepts, methods, and skills learned in the classroom; and 2) to develop new knowledge through original research and/or dialogue with individuals and groups beyond the university. In this process students will discern how contextual nuances change the dynamics of a learning situation and recast abstract theory. They will also gain knowledge of how to learn from experience and appreciate multiple sources of wisdom. These qualified experiences must fall under one of the foci of USC Connect described below.

2. **Integration of knowledge:** Students must be provided with an intellectual framework that enables them to integrate knowledge with application, and theory with real world experiences. The concepts, theories and information that constitute the course learning objectives must be purposefully integrated with the experiential learning opportunities to relate abstract learning with real world situations, independent research, and/or artistic production.

3. **Reflection:** Students must engage in critical analysis (directed reflection) about the meaning of the experiential learning in the context of the course objectives, and professional and personal development. The course must require, foster, and evaluate such reflection, which may cover any or all of the following domains:
    i. Personal growth,
    ii. Academic and professional development,
    iii. Concepts of civic engagement and responsibility.

4. **Assessment:** The course must have a clear plan of assessment, both of student learning and the effectiveness of the experiential learning component of the course. Students must be appraised in relation to the learning objectives for the course as a whole and the learning objectives identified for the experiential learning component of the course.

Categories of USC Connect
- **Undergraduate Research Experience Courses**
  - To qualify under this area of USC Connect, courses must involve students in conducting research or artistic work under the mentorship of a faculty member.
  - Undergraduate research experience courses may include any scholarly or artistic activities that lead: to the production of new knowledge; to increased problem solving capabilities, including design and analysis; to original critical or historical theory and interpretation; or to the production of original works of art or artistic performances. The USC Connect research requirement will not be met by courses that teach about research.
  - Those interested in creating a USC Connect Undergraduate Research Experience Course should contact xxx at xxx to learn about more specifics that will assist in course development in this area.

- **International Learning Courses**
  - To qualify under this area of USC Connect, courses must involve travel and learning outside the U.S. as well as guided reflection on the cross-cultural elements of the experience. Courses that do not include travel but creatively incorporate extensive international learning experiences may be considered.
  - International Learning Courses may occur as part of USC's study abroad program, approved study abroad programs by other U.S. institutions, or approved programs at overseas institutions. Independent study courses abroad are also eligible. Courses may be in any subject, as long as they include an experiential element (e.g., significant interaction with the host community, guided research, service learning or workplace/community experience), and require reflection that leads to enhanced skills of international understanding and interaction, both generally and with respect to the particular discipline or profession reflected in the course.
  - Those interested in creating a USC Connect International Learning Course should contact the Study Abroad office, at 803-777-7557 to learn about more specifics that will assist in course development in this area.

- **Community Engagement Courses**
  - To qualify under this area of USC Connect, courses must require students to participate in an organized service activity that meets identified community needs and also reflect on the service activity in such a way as to gain further understanding of course content, a broader appreciation of the discipline, and an enhanced sense of personal values and civic responsibility.
  - Those interested in creating a USC Connect Community Engagement Course should contact the Office of Student Engagement, at 803-777-1445 to learn about more specifics that will assist in course development in this area.

- **Leadership (TBD)**

- **Experiential Learning Courses (experiences in work/community settings)**
  - To qualify under this area of USC Connect, courses must involve students in work and community settings, pre-practice experiences, including but not limited to internships, practica, co-ops, or other clinical experiences under the mentorship of a faculty member.

- Experiential Learning Courses include community-based professional practice activities that lead to the acquisition, production, integration, and/or application of knowledge; to increased problem-solving capabilities and decision-making skills; to enhanced communication skills; and to professional growth in and increased knowledge of the field of practice. The Experiential Learning Course requirement will not be met by courses that teach about career skills. Rather, it will be met by credit-bearing professional practice-based educational experiences that involve students in application of knowledge to a community problem or in a community setting under the mentorship of a faculty member that students make the desired connections.
- Courses with significant use of any of the following instruction formats may qualify: Clinical Education, Cooperative Education, Field Work, Internship, Practicum, Student Teaching, Mentoring Practice, Other categories (TBD)

USC Connect Course Approval Process
Those interested in creating a USC Connect course, either by course conversion/transformation or by creating a new course, need to follow the USC Connect Course Approval Process.

Expedited process:
For established courses, faculty may submit a request for USC Connect status through their Academic Program Liaisons (APLs).

Step 1: Consult the Academic Program Development Policies and Procedures (http://www.sc.edu/provost/acadprog/) and contact the appropriate Center for consultation related to your course plans.

Step 2: Design your course according to the criteria. Secure the needed approvals within your unit or school.

Step 3: Have the course approved as a USC Connect offering through your school curriculum mechanism.

Step 4: Secure coding by the registrar for this course to be designated a USC Connect offering. The coding will notify students in the course catalogue that this is a USC Connect offering and will indicate which of the four categories of USC Connect the course satisfies. **A course may only count in more than one category**. The school making the request indicates the category.

Those interested in designating an existing course or revising an existing course to fit a USC Connect category should notify the registrar that this course has been approved by school faculty as a USC Connect offering. The requesting school must indicate which of the four categories will be used for this course. This notification can be accomplished as part of the schedule build process. Otherwise, the course will be added to the USC Connect course inventory in the next possible semester based on schedule build deadlines. If this is a new course, it needs to go through the new course approval process found at http://www.sc.edu/provost/acadprog/.

Appendix I

Sample Student Opportunities for Involvement in Beyond the Classroom Experiences and Integrative Learning

- **Enroll in a Univ. 201 section that is themed around a USC Connect Pathway**
University 201 provides an introduction to the historical foundations, ethics, essential components, and methodologies of inquiry within specified academic disciplines. The course specifically focuses on the essential components of research. Topics vary to engage students in current interests and events. University 201 is often taught by a teaching team of university faculty and undergraduate peer leader. (see http://sc.edu/univ101/aboutus/courses/univ201.html for sample course descriptions). Specific sections have already successfully incorporated each of the pathway areas and could be expanded.

- **Participate in a residential learning community that emphasizes integrative learning and academic success**
Recognized by U.S. News and World Report for two years in a row among "Programs to Look For," living-learning communities continue to be an integral part of the university experience, providing students with the opportunity to live in an environment that promotes diversity, embraces excellence, encourages insightful faculty-student interaction and works to develop a strong sense of community. These associated communities also emphasize active service-learning experiences, study-abroad opportunities and undergraduate research. On average 95% of first-year students live on campus, making associated learning communities an ideal vehicle to reinforce the themes of USC Connect. Transfer students also have a unique opportunity to participate in the Bridge Living-Learning Community. Use of the Bridge Community is strongly recommended for including transfer students into USC Connect. For more information and a listing of communities: http://housing.sc.edu/rsl/rescom.html.

- **Participate in a technology driven integrative learning platform that will prompt student reflection and encourage them to maximize their engagement at the University of South Carolina**
Each student has the opportunity through USC Connect to participate in an integrative learning platform that will prompt their reflection and encourage their involvement in beyond the classroom learning activities.

- **Develop a personalized integrative learning plan through yearly meetings with a trained USC Connect guide. Guides include: Peer leaders hired through the USC Connect Office, ACE coaches, academic advisors, University 101 instructors, Resident Mentors, and USC Connect Pathway Offices and the Career Center**
The current Student Engagement Plan could be used as a method to promote students' planning, reflection and integrative thinking within USC Connect. In 2008, working in conjunction with the Academic Centers for Excellence (ACE), the Office of Student Engagement developed the Student Engagement Plan. This document is designed to help students reflect and be more intentional regarding their involvement on campus throughout their time at USC and can be found on the ACE website at http://www.housing.sc.edu/ace/pdf/StudentEngagementPlan.pdf. The Student

Engagement Plan includes an inventory of current involvement on campus, reflective questions, mind-mapping techniques, and defined learning outcomes. The Student Engagement Plan pays special attention to service-learning, undergraduate research, study abroad opportunities, and other high impact activities.

In the Engagement Planning piece, students are asked to complete the Student Engagement Inventory, which is a simple tool developed at the University of South Carolina that gauges students' interests in a variety of campus activities and cultural events. The inventory not only provides a quick assessment of the types of activities a student is interested in but allows a Coach or USC Connect guide the opportunity to use the inventory as a frame of reference for where to begin the conversation. Along with the inventory, the student is prompted to self-reflect using a variety of questions such as: 1) Tell me about a project or activity that made you lose track of time, something that you worked on for hours upon hours without even thinking about it. 2) When was the last time you were really excited about something? What was exciting about it? 3) If you were going to create a new special interest club or group on campus, what would it be? Why? What kinds of things would you do? During the planning phase, the student works with their Coach or Guide to identify three areas of interest and map a plan for how to learn more about the specific activity or area of interest and the steps they will need to achieve the goal. Finally in subsequent meetings, the Coach can help the student connect their experience back to the general education learning outcomes through a mapping exercise as well as help the student monitor progress towards achieving his or her goals.

Through use in ACE coaching sessions, University 101 courses and the Student Success Center **over 400 students** participated in some form engagement planning in 2009-10. USC Connect guides including peer leaders, current ACE coaches, academic advisors, and faculty could be trained to facilitate students' use of the Engagement Plan.

Engagement coaching could be especially effective for sophomore students at the University of South Carolina. Second-year students could be strongly encouraged to meet with either an ACE Coach or their academic advisor to review their engagement plan. The Academic Centers of Excellence have 4 locations in three residence halls and the Thomas Cooper Library. One hour coaching sessions are offered from 12-4pm Monday through Friday and 7-9pm Monday through Wednesday. Current ACE appointment capacity would allow for approximately 840 1 hour coaching sessions for students. However, the engagement coaching appointment could be streamlined to 30 minutes thereby increasing current capacity to approximately 1680, 30 minute coaching sessions. Extension of ACE hours could be considered to increase capacity even further.

- **Produce a co-curricular record of their participation in beyond-the-classroom activities**

The technology platform of USC Connect allow students the opportunity produce a record of their participation in beyond-the-classroom learning activities. Currently many units throughout the Division of Student Affairs track the number of students who participate in a variety of activities. In order implement a co-curricular transcript, data from each of these offices and academic units could be consolidated in one system.

The proposed USC Connect Office could play a key role in the coordination of the activities associated with building a co-curricular record.

- **Create an e-portfolio that incorporates directed reflection from beyond-the-classroom activities**

The USC Connect Technology Platform will allow for the creation of e-portfolios. The e-portfolio should provide a representation of the interface among curricular learning, co-curricular learning, and life planning. Students should examine their acquisition, development, and application of knowledge, skills, and attitudes in their within and beyond the classroom experiences and apply them to their life plans through goal setting. This process of examination, application and planning is a reciprocal rather than linear process, because each of the three areas can influence and inform the others.

Potential Learning Outcomes for an E-Portfolio Project
By completing an e-portfolio students will:
- Create a plan for a meaningful and engaging USC undergraduate experience.
- Document relevant/complementary co-curricular experiences.
- Organize artifacts to articulate the connection between academics, beyond the classroom experiences, and life goals to relevant audiences.
- Reflect upon and demonstrate ways they have developed skills, knowledge and attitudes embodied in the Carolina Core and Carolinian Creed.

Possible Components of e-portfolio
- Self-Reflection (life experiences, how they shape and define who they are at this time)
- Reflection of what it means to be a Carolinian (utilizing the Carolinian Creed and Carolina Core as guiding documents)
- Goal Setting & Planning documents (curricular and co-curricular)
- Documentation and organization of artifacts accompanied by reflection upon the connections among their curricular learning, co-curricular learning and life plan.

- **Participate in Pathway Reflection meetings or Communities of Practice led by trained USC Connect guides**

To facilitate student achievement of integrated learning will require a variety of points at which we encourage students to reflect on their accomplishments, decisions, and future plans. One method is to prompt reflection through discussion. The concept is to bring students together who share a passion for something they do (or are interested in) and learn how to do it better as they interact regularly. Led by a peer leader trained in guided reflection, students would share their BTC activities, learn about a variety of activities, discuss how to get involved and evaluate how the BTCs impact their academics and vice versa. It is recommended that groups not be limited to individual pathways but open to students in all activities to promote interactions and opportunities between pathways. Students could be assigned to groups or meetings could be open to all.

- **Develop an individualized major**

Through USC Connect and the intentional reflection on interests and goals, students may find that traditional majors and minors do not offer the flexibility or range of educational opportunities appropriate for their academic and career goals. The College of Arts and Sciences and the College of Hospitality, Retail, and Sport Management offer the Interdisciplinary studies degree and the South Carolina Honors College offers the

Baccalaureus Artium et Scientiae. These programs provide students the opportunity to develop rigorous individualized programs of study incorporating a wide range of interests under the guidance of their program committees. These options could be reviewed to ensure that these programs meet the needs of USC Connect both in the availability to students and the breadth and depth of their academic interests. (http://www.sc.edu/admissions/interdisciplinarystudies.php; http://www.hrsm.sc.edu/bais/information.html; http://schc.sc.edu/thehonorsexperience/academics/baccalaureusartiumetscientiae.aspx)

- **Present their experience at USC Discovery Day**

Discovery Day is an annual event for undergraduates, of all campuses and all disciplines, to showcase or present their beyond-the-classroom experiences including but not limited to research/scholarly projects, study abroad, internships, and community engagement. Students share their BTC activities through poster, oral, creative, or artistic presentations as well as visual art displays. Discovery Day provides the opportunity for students to reflect upon their experiences as they develop their presentation plan and materials. The application process and presentations themselves provide a mechanism for assessing integrative learning. It is recommended that guided reflection questions be added to the application process and that a rubric be developed to assess a subset of presentations. In 2010, 209 students participated with 130 posters, 47 oral presentations, 7 creative performances, and 3 static displays. Presentations by category (presentations may be counted in more than one category): research (173), international (21), community engagement (16), and internships (1). Discovery Day is also a venue for increasing awareness of BTC activities with over 400 attendees in 2010.

- **Take an integrative or capstone course within their major**

Our committee supports the recommendations of University's Carolina Core General Education Review Committee to establish integrative courses within the major. The third component of the *Carolina Core* is the integrative course, which allows selected *Carolina Core* learning outcomes to be threaded into the major program area in an upper division course (of 3 or more hours). Although the integrative course is an addition in the new *Carolina Core,* no additional hours are required because this requirement is met through an already required course in the major. Most programs – even those currently without capstone courses – likely already offer a course or courses that thread *Carolina Core* learning outcomes through the curriculum. Students with more than one major would take an integrative course in each program major. We believe these courses will not only provide an opportunity to reinforce Carolina Core Learning Outcome but will also provide the opportunity to promote integrative learning. More information about the Carolina Core can be found below or on the following website: http://www.sc.edu/generaleducation/

Please note: the committee recognizes transfer students as a population requiring specialized targeting for involvement in USC Connect. The following is recommended:
- Creation of targeted marketing and informational materials specifically for transfer students
- Development of information sessions during Transfer Orientation Programs (summer, fall, and spring)
- Partnership with the Bridge Living-Learning Community and Univ. 101 sections for transfer students

Appendix J
Draft *USC Connect* Rubric on Integrative Learning*

Element	Fails to Meet Expectations	Meets Expectations	Exemplary
Student articulates the role beyond-the-classroom experiences play in contributing to their overall learning.	Student cannot provide examples of BTC experiences and give an example of how a BTC experience can contribute to understanding	Student can provide examples of BTC experiences and give at least one example of how a BTC experience can contribute to his/her own learning.	Student can provide examples of a variety of BTC experiences and give multiple examples of how BTC experiences contribute to his/her own learning and that of others.
Student connects relevant experiences and academic knowledge.	Student cannot not give a specific example of a BTC experience that reflects or demonstrates a concept/theory/framework from his/her coursework.	Student can articulate examples of BTC experiences that illuminate concepts/theories/frameworks presented in their coursework including a clear description of elements of the BTC experience that are consistent with or contradictory to the identified concept.	Student can articulate examples of BTC experiences that illuminate concepts/theories/frameworks presented in their coursework in ways that reflect a deep understanding of the concept as informed by the BTC experience.
Student thoughtfully connects examples, facts, and/or theories from more than one experience, field of study, and/or perspective.	Student cannot thoughtfully connect examples, facts, and/or theories from more than one experience, field of study, and/or perspective.	Student can thoughtfully connect examples, facts, and/or theories from more than one experience, field of study, and/or perspective such as describing the similarities and differences across experiences, fields of study, or perspectives.	Student can thoughtfully connect examples, facts, and/or theories from multiple experiences, fields, or per-spectives in complex ways. (e.g., student can describe how a BTC experience adds a new perspective or raises questions for further consider-ation regarding a particular framework.
Student appropriately applies experiences to solve real life problems including the ability to articulate how his/her experience and content preparation provide a rationale for decisions/actions.	Student cannot articulate the relevance of his/her BTC and/or WTC experiences to problem solving. Student cannot pose or implement solutions to problems that incorporate learning from BTC and WTC experiences.	Student can pose solutions (e.g., recommendation for actions) to problems that incorporate learning from both BTC and WTC experiences, and implements those solutions, as appropriate. Student articulates how his/her experience and content preparation provide a rationale for decisions and/or actions.	Student poses creative and innovative solutions to problems that incorporate learning from both BTC and WTC experiences, and implements those solutions, as appropriate. Student can provide an in-depth analysis of how his/her experience and content preparation provide a rationale for recommended decisions/actions.

*Adapted from the AAC&U/Carnegie Foundation Rubric on Integrative Learning (2010). Excerpted with permission from *Assessing Outcomes and Improving Achievement: Tips and tools for Using Rubrics*, edited by Terrel L. Rhodes. Copyright 2010 by the Association of American Colleges and Universities.