

University of South Carolina Palmetto College

# CONNECTIONS

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Fall/Winter 2022



**Celebrating 10 years of  
Palmetto College!**

**Palmetto College nursing students  
dedicate hands to tackle rural  
health challenges across S.C.**





Please submit all items for the Fall 2023 edition no later than Wednesday, Nov. 8, 2023.

**USC Palmetto College Connections** is published biannually, at the conclusion of the spring and fall semesters.

If you have an interesting story to share with the Palmetto College community, please share the news with the following contact for your respective campus/location:

**USC Lancaster**  
[Shana Dry](#)

**USC Salkehatchie**  
[Stephanie Gruber](#)

**USC Sumter**  
[Adrielle Cooper](#)

**USC Union**  
[Annie Smith](#)

**Palmetto College Columbia**  
[Jean Carrano](#)

**Palmetto College Central and Online**  
[Jason Darby](#)

Archived editions of **USC Palmetto College Connections** from the Fall 2015 semester edition onward may be found [online](#) on the Palmetto College website.

### About the Cover:

This issue's cover features the hands of nursing students and faculty at USC Sumter as they participate in the Dedication of Hands Ceremony.

The spiritual ceremony emphasizes the art and science of nursing. [Inspired by Jean Watson's philosophy and theory of nursing](#), the ceremony is an act of caring for first semester nursing students before they begin their clinical experience with patients. [The ceremony was created by Julia Ball and Thayer Wilson McGahee of the USC Aiken School of Nursing](#). Featured in the ceremony are acts of caring as faculty members ritually wash and dry the students' hands and then apply oil to the students' palms. As each student's hands are washed, the words, "May your hands provide fervent and skillful nursing care," are spoken.

During the drying, the faculty member states, "May your spirit of compassion and gentleness guide your hands." Finally, oil is applied to the student's palms with the words, "May your hands bring comfort and promote healing to all who come into your care." The ceremony concludes with the nursing students and faculty members holding hands in a circle with their ceremony leader making the closing statement, "Go in peace with the knowledge of the human and spiritual caring that your hands will convey."

Pictured above are nursing students from USC Union preparing to participate in the ceremony. [USC Sumter](#) and [USC Union](#) partner with the USC Aiken School of Nursing to offer a Bachelor of Science in Nursing degree. [USC Salkehatchie](#) partners with the USC Beaufort Nursing Program and [USC Lancaster](#) partners with USC Columbia's College of Nursing. Registered nurses can earn the BSN degree from [USC Upstate's Mary Black College of Nursing through Palmetto College Online](#).

This academic year marks several milestones for Palmetto College and the University of South Carolina System. This year, of course, marks the tenth anniversary celebration of the development and formation of the University of South Carolina Palmetto College. And this past summer marked the beginning of the tenure of Dr. Michael Amiridis as the 30th President of the University of South Carolina. President Amiridis held an important role in the formation of Palmetto College during an earlier tenure with USC as its provost. We are appreciative of the continued support and leadership of President Amiridis and First Lady Dr. Ero Aggelopoulou-Amiridis.



**Dr. Susan A. Elkins, Chancellor  
University of South Carolina  
Palmetto College**

Other important key additions to the university leadership include Dr. Donna Arnett, executive vice president for academic affairs and provost; Dr. Julius Fridriksson, vice president for research; Ms. Michelle Dodenhoff, vice president for development; Dr. J. Rex Tolliver, vice president for student affairs and academic support; and Dr. Stacy Fritz, the president's chief of staff.

President Amiridis and Provost Arnett both spoke at the semester's first meeting of the Palmetto College Campuses Faculty Senate. President Amiridis has also begun to visit our Palmetto College campuses as he tours the USC System and the state of South Carolina to meet with stakeholders. This semester, he has visited USC Sumter, USC Union and USC Union at Laurens. In 2023, he is scheduled to visit USC Lancaster, USC Salkehatchie and Palmetto College Columbia. Provost Arnett is

also scheduled to visit our Palmetto College Campuses during the Spring 2023 semester.

As we welcome President Amiridis and Provost Arnett to our campuses, our own faculty gathered at the Columbia campus on Oct. 21 for our inaugural Palmetto College Campuses Faculty Barbecue. We had a great opportunity for fellowship, and our first large gathering since the pandemic began allowed us to recognize the 2019-22 recipients of the Duffy, Plyler and Shaw Awards. We were also able to honor the leadership of the pandemic-era Palmetto College Campuses Faculty Senate Chairs Dr. Christine Sixta Rinehart and Dr. Ernest Jenkins.

In addition, to celebrating a decade of service and success for the University of South Carolina Palmetto College, we are marking another significant decade milestone of service. This October, the Native American Studies Center at USC Lancaster commemorated its tenth anniversary in the downtown Lancaster Cultural Arts District. The NASC has proven to be an essential resource for those who would like to learn about the culture, contributions and legacies of the Indigenous Americans who were the first to live in the area that we now know as South Carolina. The center, as well as the online Native American South Carolina Archive, have furthered conversations and learning.

The Palmetto College iCarolina Lab Network grew from five to seven locations over the summer with the additions of Apple labs on

the USC Salkehatchie campuses in Allendale and Walterboro. The labs exist to bring broadband access to residents in Allendale, Lancaster, Sumter, Union and Walterboro. All of the locations are located within 15 miles of a broadband desert. Three additional locations are scheduled to open in Clinton, Laurens and Kershaw in the Spring 2023 semester.

This year's Niche.com rankings were released this fall and showcase the value of our regional Palmetto College campuses! Among the 2023 Best Community Colleges in South Carolina, two Palmetto College campuses ranked among the top five institutions: No. 1 Lancaster and No. 3 Sumter. In addition, USC Salkehatchie and USC Union remain high on the list at No. 8 and No. 11, respectively. The continued place of our campuses at the top of this list each year reaffirms the value of the University of South Carolina and the Palmetto College educational experience. It also displays the strength of our Palmetto College campuses' collective ability to offer opportunities for South Carolinians to obtain an accessible, flexible, and affordable higher education within their respective communities.

We look forward to a new year and the culmination of our ten-year celebration of Palmetto College. As we end the Fall 2022 semester, please know how very much your many efforts are appreciated! May you continue to transform lives across South Carolina every day! Have a much-deserved restful break and a wonderful holiday season!

**FOREVER TO THEE!**

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Susan Elkins". The signature is fluid and cursive, written in a professional style.

# Palmetto College nursing students dedicate hands to tackle rural health challenges across S.C.



Each fall, new BSN nursing students at the Palmetto College campuses are inducted into the profession through the Dedication of Hands Ceremony.

Inspired by [Jean Watson's philosophy and theory of nursing](#), the ceremony is an act of caring for first semester nursing students to mark their transition from classroom learning to clinical practice. The ceremony is a symbolic representation of the commitment, compassion and professionalism that nursing students pledge to bring to their practice. Specifically, this ceremony emphasizes the art and science of nursing through a series of symbolic acts.

As a part of the ceremony, the students' hands are washed, dried and oil is applied to their palms. The ceremony, which is now being used at many campuses across the country, was [created by Julia Ball and Thayer Wilson McGahee of the USC Aiken School of Nursing](#).

Graduates earning the Bachelor of Science in Nursing degree are produced from every regional Palmetto College campus and through Palmetto College Online. Truly a USC System collaborative effort to produce nurses that serve their local communities, the USC Aiken School of Nursing partners with [USC Sumter](#) and [USC Union](#). The USC Beaufort Nursing Program partners with [USC Salkehatchie](#); the campus partnered with USC Columbia prior to 2020. The College of Nursing at USC Columbia partners with [USC Lancaster](#). And, through [Palmetto College Online](#), the Mary Black College of Nursing at USC Upstate offers registered nurses (RNs) an opportunity to complete the BSN in just 12 months.

According to an [October 2022 segment](#) on Columbia, S.C., NBC affiliate WIS-TV, officials with Prisma Health indicated that South Carolina ranks among the top four states in the nation with the highest shortage of nurses per capita. It is estimated that by 2030 the state will have a shortage of up to 10,000 nurses according to [RegisteredNursing.org](#). An instructor shortage, an aging population and pandemic burnout are all cited as part of the shortage.

The effects of these issues is exacerbated in the rural communities served by the regional Palmetto College campus locations in Allendale, Indian Land, Lancaster, Laurens, Sumter, Union and Walterboro; however, the Palmetto College campuses are rising to the challenge to produce nurses who will serve the needs of their local communities.

The Lancaster-Columbia collaborative BSN program was recently awarded a \$200,000 Rural Health Grant by the USC School of Medicine's [Rural Innovations Cooperative Agreement Program](#), which is supported



*Nursing students and faculty from USC Union (above) and USC Sumter (opposite page) participate in the Dedication of Hands ceremony. Both campuses partner with the USC Aiken School of Nursing to offer the Bachelor of Science in Nursing degree.*



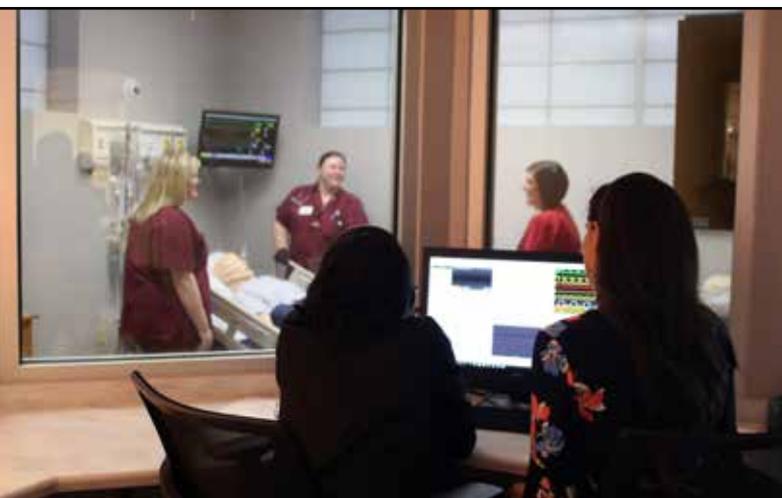
*The partnership between USC Salkehatchie and the USC Beaufort Nursing Program graduated its first BSN nursing cohort in Spring 2022. Salkehatchie previously partnered with USC Columbia's College of Nursing.*



*The first cohort of the Sumter-Aiken BSN program partnership completed its first year in Spring 2022.*



***An important part of their local Allendale community, USC Salkehatchie nursing students volunteered at COVID vaccination clinics during the height of the global pandemic.***



***In recent years, all four regional Palmetto College campuses renovated spaces on their respective campuses with redesigned nursing classrooms, dedicated study space, nursing skills labs and state-of-the-art, high-fidelity simulation labs.***



***Registered nurses like Chan Samreth, '18, have been able to complete their Bachelor of Science in Nursing degrees through a 12-month RN-BSN Program offered by USC Upstate's Mary Black College of Nursing through Palmetto College Online.***

and managed by the S.C. Center for Rural and Primary Healthcare. The program identifies and supports innovative programs or strategies that address unmet needs or support efforts to improve rural health. Awarded projects focus on supporting health in rural communities through improving access to healthcare services; enhancing the health professions workforce; implementing services/programs that promote improved health outcomes for rural patients and residents; or integrating health care and community-based programs.

The Lancaster-Columbia project, “CNA to BSN Pathway to Enhance the Healthcare Workforce in Rural South Carolina,” seeks to create an opportunity for healthcare professionals who already serve as certified nurse assistants to pursue the Bachelor of Science in Nursing degree to reduce the nursing shortage within the Palmetto state.

USC Salkehatchie has partnered with the [South Carolina Area Health Education Consortium](#) (AHEC) to expand experiential learning opportunities for nurse practitioners, physician assistants, pharmacy and nursing students who are committed to underserved and rural communities. Using the simulation-based technology and equipment housed at USC Salkehatchie's campus, Lowcountry AHEC is providing training for students from multiple institutions including the Medical University of South Carolina, USC Columbia and Charleston Southern University. USC Salkehatchie senior nursing students also participate in sessions alongside the AHEC Scholars.

This is an outgrowth of the USC Salkehatchie Rural Nursing Initiative, established in 2006 while the program was partnered with USC Columbia's College of Nursing. Its purpose is to “grow our own nurses” by offering students from the region an opportunity to earn a BSN.

To facilitate the learning needs associated with the hybrid nursing programs at the regional Palmetto College campuses, USC Lancaster, USC Salkehatchie, USC Sumter and USC Union have renovated spaces on their respective campuses in recent years where students experience an active learning environment with redesigned nursing classrooms, dedicated study spaces, nursing skills labs and state-of-the-art high-fidelity simulation labs.

The BSN graduates produced by Palmetto College and its partnering institutions entering the profession are achieving and succeeding at a high level of training. For example, by the end of the Spring 2021 semester, USC

Salkehatchie BSN graduates earned a 100% NCLEX first-time pass rate for a sixth straight year. The NCLEX exam is a standardized test used to determine state licensure.

In the past decade, over 1,000 students have earned their bachelor's degrees in nursing. The resulting BSN graduates address a nursing shortage across the state, especially in rural, under-served areas. Through programs like the on-campus and online BSN degree,

Palmetto College continues to make a tremendous difference in the state by addressing the high need for degrees for the state's workforce, creating a positive impact on economic development and improved quality of life for South Carolinians.

## USC Salkehatchie BSN graduate serves local community

*Reprinted from November 2021 USC website article by Megan Sexton*

**R**ocio Mundo, who grew up in Allendale County, never doubted she would be a nurse in a rural part of South Carolina. She had been working as a licensed practical nurse for 11 years before returning to school at USC Salkehatchie to earn her Bachelor of Science in Nursing through the school's Rural Nursing Initiative. Mundo, 38, graduated from the nursing program in May 2020, right at the height of the pandemic.

Now a registered nurse, she accepted a job as the lead school nurse for Bamberg District 2, covering the elementary, middle and high school.

"Growing up in a rural area, there's always been a shortage of nurses. There's always been a shortage of almost everything. The local grocery store is 25 to 30 miles away. We're out in the middle of nowhere. So it was very important for me to come back to my home county or the surrounding county and just give back."

She said her first year working as an RN in the school, from August 2020 until 2021 wasn't too hectic, because students had the option of in-person or virtual school, and roughly half of 750 students in the small district chose the virtual option.

"It wasn't bad because we didn't have a full population. If we had a positive (COVID) case in the

school, it was very limited in the amount of kids that actually had to be quarantined," she says. "However, when school started back in August of this year, it was very bad. We had to close down for two weeks. We were quarantining. I think our total was up to 200 cases."

And the cases were more serious.

"In 2020, our kids who got COVID, it was just a mild case, with cold or flu-like symptoms. Well, this year, it was bad. Nine times out of 10, the kids who got COVID at our school, they were really, really sick. We had a handful of kids who were actually hospitalized," she says.

"It was horrible because we're such a small school district, we pretty much know all the kids and you bond with the kids. When your kids start getting sick, it breaks your heart."

She says resources are limited in the rural area and there is not a hospital in Bamberg County, meaning there have been times when she has had to call EMS for a student and it takes about 30 minutes for an ambulance to arrive.

"I know that these kids need me. It kind of melts your heart to know how much the kids need you, to know that we're all family."



UNIVERSITY OF  
**South Carolina**  
SUMTER



# President Amiridis begins tour of Palmetto College campuses with Sumter, Union, Laurens

**T**hirtieth University of South Carolina President Dr. Michael D. Amiridis began his tenure leading the USC System on July 1, 2022.

No stranger to USC nor Palmetto College, President Amiridis was instrumental in the development and 2013 launch of Palmetto College during his tenure as university provost.

This Fall 2022 semester, President Amiridis began a statewide tour of USC System institutions, including the regional Palmetto College campuses. He visited USC Sumter in October, USC Union and USC Union at Laurens in early December. It is anticipated that he will make scheduled visits to USC Lancaster, USC Salkehatchie and Palmetto College Columbia in the Spring 2023 semester.

Congratulations to President Amiridis and First Lady Dr. Ero Aggelopoulou-Amiridis on their new role at the university and their continued leadership and strong support of the work and mission of USC Palmetto College, the regional Palmetto College Campuses, Palmetto College Columbia, and Palmetto College Online!





# USC Lancaster community donates suitcases full of supplies for Ukrainian refugees, soldiers

Reprinted from WBTV

Russia invaded Ukraine in late February 2022, creating a crisis for many that has already lasted for nearly a year.

Ukrainians are still trying to leave. Many fleeing with the clothes on their backs. One local university says it is time to give back and help Ukrainians who so desperately need it.

University of South Carolina Lancaster students took a 12-day trip to eastern Europe in May after it was canceled twice because of the pandemic. But after hearing about the Ukrainian people who needed help in the exact countries where they planned to visit, they said it was time to act.

Rising sophomore Rio Shadow traveled all over the world but never got the opportunity to go to Europe. A class trip changed that.

"Finding out I had a chance to go to Europe, a place I've never been before and couldn't dream of, I immediately jumped for it," Shadow said.

The trip was to Eastern Europe – countries like Poland and Hungary, places where Ukrainian refugees have fled to seek shelter from their war-torn country.

"It is the 21st century and we're still dealing with issues in the world like this," Shadow said. "It's just like wow."

Shadow's professor, Dr. Susan Cruise, knew if they were going to Europe they need to do something to help.

"Hearing all of the news about the Ukrainian refugees and how they were suffering and leaving with no notice and nothing," Cruise said. "You know, leaving with hardly any of their belongings. We thought we'd do a donation drive on our campus."

That drive turned into something much bigger than either could imagine. What they thought would be a few suitcases full of supplies turned into 28 large suitcases of relief.

All of the donations came from the community. Members donated the same suitcases the students filled. The students also raised almost \$2,500 as well.

"The cabinet was so full I could barely close it

sometimes," Shadow said. "Floor to ceiling, completely packed."

Donations of medical supplies, diapers, clothes and so much more poured in from the community. Every single piece going to help refugees or those still fighting in Ukraine was donated.

"This just touched a personal soft spot for me because of my grandparents," Cruise said.

Cruise is from Canada, but said her grandparents



emigrated from Ukraine. She remembers singing Ukrainian Christmas carols, eating the food and hearing her grandparents speak Ukrainian to each other.

The USC Lancaster students helped unpack all their efforts, even meeting some of the people it would help.

"The need is just so great," Cruise said. "There's just so much more they need and how much more I wish we could have done."

What they have done, though, made a difference. In their lives, in the refugees' lives, and Shadow hopes in others' lives who see this and are inspired to help as well.

"Obviously, there will always be evil in this world," Shadow said. "There will always be bad things. But we should always do what we can to fight that. There will always be darkness, but candles can eventually light up a room."

# Palmetto College Faculty Fall Barbecue creates

The Palmetto College Campuses Faculty Senate sponsored a **Palmetto College Faculty Fall Barbecue** on Oct. 21, 2022, on the patio of the Russell House University Union on the USC Columbia campus.

Envisioned in 2019 for the Spring 2020 semester under the leadership of then-Faculty Senate Chair **Dr. Christine Sixta Rinehart**, the faculty social was postponed by the onset of the global COVID-19 pandemic through the leadership of Faculty Senate Chair **Dr. Ernest Jenkins**.

This event served to recognize the leadership and remarkable work of those past chairs on behalf of Palmetto College.

Due to the pandemic, the Palmetto College Campuses Faculty Senate was unable to recognize, in-person, our Palmetto College Campuses Excellence Awards for the 2019-20, 2020-21 and 2021-22 academic years. At the event, Palmetto College Chancellor Dr. Susan Elkins congratulated these outstanding faculty members.

For their exemplary dedication and commitment to students and their academic success, the following faculty were recognized as recipients of the **John J. Duffy Excellence in Teaching Award for Palmetto College Campuses**:

- **Dr. Francis Burns**, assistant professor of chemistry at USC Salkehatchie (2021-22)
- **Dr. Fidele Ngwane**, professor of mathematics at USC Salkehatchie (2020-21)
- **Dr. Sarah Hunt Sellhorst**, professor of exercise science at USC Lancaster (2019-20)



# opportunities for fellowship, awards recognition



For their extraordinary professional, campus and community service, the following faculty were recognized as recipients of the **Chris P. Plyler Excellence in Service Award for Palmetto College Campuses:**

- **Dr. Bryan Lai**, professor of mathematics at USC Salkehatchie (2021-22)
- **Dr. Christine Sixta Rinehart**, professor of political science at USC Union (2020-21)
- **Dr. Maggie Aziz**, associate professor of sociology at USC Union (2019-20)



For their outstanding scholarly research and/or creative achievement, the following faculty were recognized as recipients of the **Denise R. Shaw Excellence in Scholarship Award for Palmetto College Campuses:**

- **Dr. Andy Kunka**, professor of English at USC Sumter (2021-22)
- **Dr. Li Cai**, professor of chemistry at USC Lancaster (2020-21)
- **Dr. Fran Gardner**, Distinguished Professor Emerita of art and art history at USC Lancaster (2019-20)



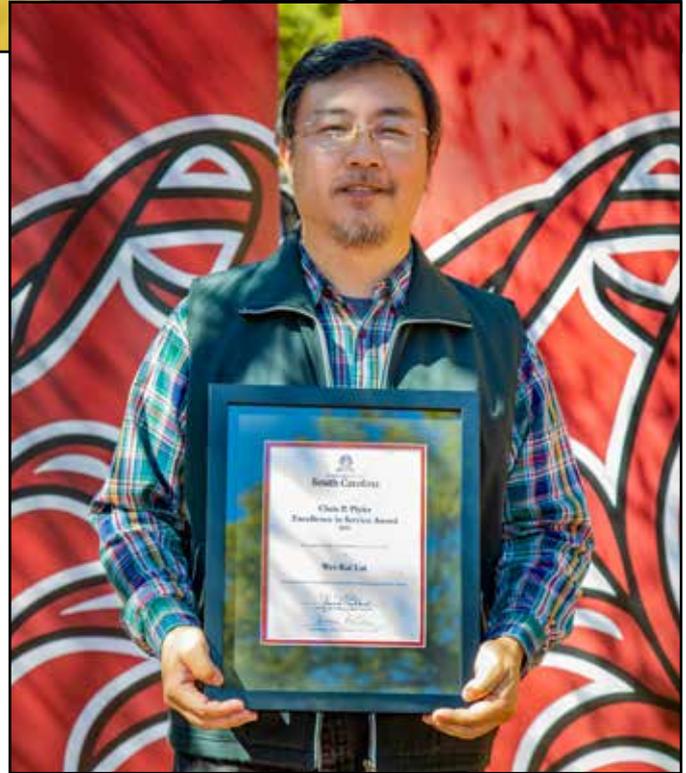
In addition to these Palmetto College Campuses faculty honorees, Chancellor Elkins also recognized **[Dr. Tom McNally on the occasion of his retirement in October 2022 as dean of the University of South Carolina Libraries](#)** for his steadfast support for the university libraries on the regional Palmetto College campuses. McNally served as libraries dean for 15 years.



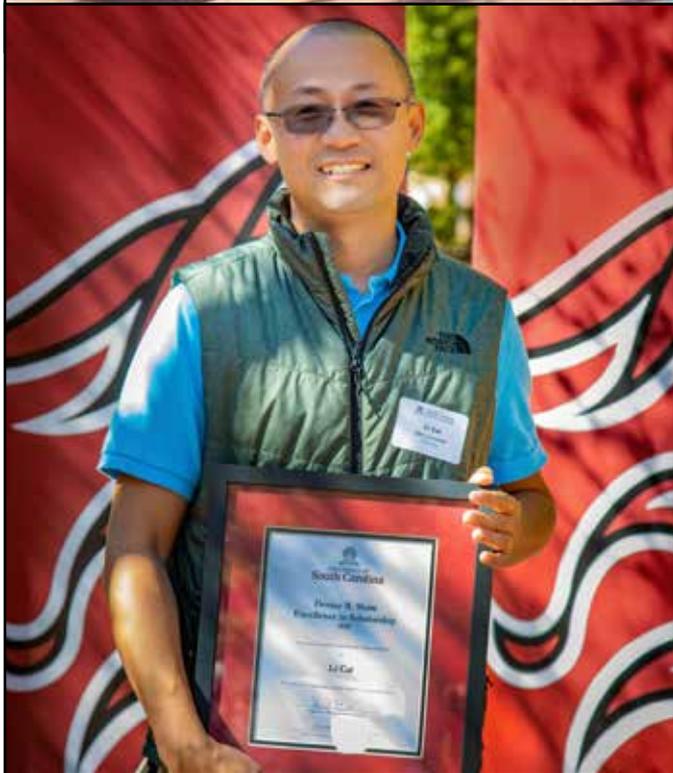




Dr. Francis Burns, assistant professor of chemistry at USC Salkehatchie, was recognized as the 2021-22 recipient of the John J. Duffy Excellence in Teaching Award for Palmetto College Campuses.



Dr. Wei-Kai Lai, professor of mathematics at USC Salkehatchie, was recognized as the 2021-22 recipient of the Chris P. Plyler Excellence in Service Award for Palmetto College Campuses. Lai is the first faculty member to receive all three Palmetto College Excellence Awards, for teaching (Duffy), service (Plyler) and scholarship (Shaw), respectively.



**Dr. Li Cai, professor of chemistry at USC Lancaster, was recognized as the 2020-21 recipient of the Denise R. Shaw Excellence in Scholarship Award for Palmetto College Campuses.**



**Dr. Maggie Aziz, associate professor of sociology at USC Union, was recognized as the 2019-20 recipient of the Chris P. Plyler Excellence in Service Award for Palmetto College Campuses.**



Dr. Fran Gardner, Distinguished Professor Emerita of art and art history at USC Lancaster, was recognized as the 2019-20 recipient of the Denise R. Shaw Excellence in Scholarship Award for Palmetto College Campuses.



Dr. Andy Kunka, professor of English at USC Sumter, was recognized as the 2021-22 recipient of the Denise R. Shaw Excellence in Scholarship Award for Palmetto College Campuses.



Dean of USC Libraries Tom McNally was acknowledged for his strong support of library resources and access for the regional Palmetto College campuses. He retired at the end of October 2022.



Dr. Christine Sixta Rinehart, professor of political science at USC Union, was recognized as the 2020-21 recipient of the Chris P. Plyler Excellence in Service Award for Palmetto College Campuses, and for her distinguished service (2019-20) as Palmetto College Campuses Faculty Senate Chair.



Dr. Ernest Jenkins, associate professor of history at USC Lancaster, was recognized for his distinguished service (2021-22) as Palmetto College Campuses Faculty Senate Chair.

# Faculty and Staff Notes



**Sahar Aghasafari**, assistant professor of art and graphic design at USC Lancaster, co-authored a paper, titled "[Art Integration and Identity: Empowering Bi/Multilingual High School Learners](#)," in Art Education.

In October 2022, she presented a paper, titled "Investigating How Emergent Bi/Multilingual High Schoolers Construct Meanings Through the Integration of Visual Arts and Biology," at the AERI Art Education Research Institute at the University of Georgia in Athens, Ga. Aghasafari's graphic design students held a "Concept Design and Creativity" exhibition. The exhibition was based on their class projects this semester.



**Christine Anderson**, director of archives in the Native American Studies Center at USC Lancaster, has been elected vice president/president-elect of the [South Carolina Archival Association](#).



**Gale Ashmore**, instructor of Spanish at USC Union, was awarded a USC Center for Teaching Excellence

Innovative Pedagogy Grant to support the "[TalkAbroad](#)" program in which students have real-time conversations with native Spanish speakers living in Spanish-speaking countries.

**Greta Bailey**, adjunct instructor of political science at USC Union, was appointed by South Carolina Superintendent of Education Molly Spearman to serve on the [S.C. Advisory Council for Educating Students with Disabilities \(ACESD\)](#). The council works closely with the S.C. Department of Education to ensure the educational needs of children with disabilities are met.



**Mary Ellen Bellanca**, professor of English at USC Sumter, presented a paper, titled "The Victorian

Reception and Appropriation of Dorothy Wordsworth's 'Recollections of a Tour Made in Scotland'," at the [Victorians Institute Conference](#) on Oct. 15, 2022.



**Marybeth Lee Berry**, associate professor of theatre and speech at USC Lancaster, performed the RISE

Grant-funded "On the Spectrum" in the San Diego Fringe Festival to good reviews in June 2022 and performed the show to a full audience (where it was well-received) at La MaMa Umbria's Cantiere Oberan in Spoleto, Italy, in August 2022. The show was also selected for performance at the Scranton Fringe Festival in September 2022.



**Adam Biggs**, instructor of African American studies and history at USC Lancaster, presented a

lecture, titled "Black Doctors and the Making of 'Good' Medicine: Confronting Structural Racism in Early 20th Century Reforms," in a seminar series for the [Barbara Bates Center for the Study of the History of Nursing at the University of Pennsylvania](#) in October 2022. The lecture explored how reforms in medical education impacted African American physicians in the early 20th century and examined how standards of professional legitimacy and academic merit were predicated on the maintenance of racial, gender and class hierarchies.



**Albert Blackmon**, adjunct instructor for business at USC Lancaster, has been named advisory board chair for the

[Lancaster Promise Neighborhood Program](#), effective Sept. 20, 2022. This program is a unique partnership committed to doing "whatever it takes" within the "zone" to empower, strengthen and educate families through restoring community pride and helping to ensure educational success for every child from birth to college. The Zone is a 6.2-square-mile focus area. Targeted schools include Clinton Elementary School, A.R. Rucker Middle School and Lancaster High School.

He was also recognized for his efforts as lead developer of USCL's "Personal Finance Bootcamp," receiving the 2022 ACHE Distinguished Program Award (Non-Credit) from the Association

for Continuing Higher Education in October 2022. In addition to Blackmon, Phillip Parker, Stan Emanuel, Brandon Newton, Mike Sherrill and Kenneth Cole served as bootcamp presenters.

Blackmon has also been elected president of the Indian Land Rotary Club in Indian Land, S.C.



**Chris Bundrick**, professor of English at USC Lancaster, presented an October 2022 lecture, entitled “Elliott White

Springs and Old South Humor,” at the Lancaster Cultural Arts Center’s Seminar Series.



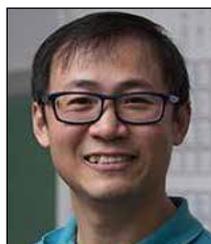
**Fernanda Burke**, associate professor of biology and chemistry at USC Lancaster, had an abstract, titled

“Relationship of Fatty Acid Structure and Soap Properties: Inquiry Based Lab Experiment for Undergraduate Chemistry,” accepted to the Southeastern Regional Meeting of the American Chemical Society (SERMACS) Conference in San Juan, Puerto Rico, in October 2022.



**Francis Burns**, assistant professor of chemistry at USC Salkehatchie, presented “Factors Affecting

Retention and Success at a Small Two-year Institution” at the 2022 NASPA Conference on Student Success in Higher Education.



**Li Cai**, professor of chemistry at USC Lancaster, gave an oral presentation, titled “Integrative Student

Research to a Wider Audience – Teaching,” at the 2022 NSF EPSCoR EOD Conference in Isle of Palms, S.C. in September 2022.

He also published the following abstracts: “Synthesis of flavonoid 7-O-glycosides” in 2022 *Southeastern Regional Meeting of the American Chemical Society*, 2022, 152 and “Integrative student research to a wider audience – teaching” in *The 2022 NSF EPSCoR Education Outreach & Diversity Conference*, 2022, 38.



**Courtney Catledge**, director of the USCL Lancaster BSN Collaborative Program and nursing instructor, and **Bridgett Plexico**, internship coordinator at USC Lancaster, wrote a grant to S.C. Rural and Primary Healthcare to fund a CNA-



to-BSN Pathway to Enhance the Healthcare Workforce in Rural South Carolina. They requested for one-year funding and were awarded two-year funding totaling \$189,938 starting July 2022.

In addition, the USCL Simulation Lab received notification of a five-year partnership, beginning in the Fall 2022 semester, with Mid Carolina Area Health Education Consortium (AHEC) to serve the participating communities of the S.C. SET Grant for IPE in Rural S.C.



**Allan Charles**, emeritus professor of history at USC Union, was elected President of the Union County

Historical Society, publishing several historical pieces on Union County in the *Union County News* and the organization’s historical newsletter.



**Tracey Chavous-Mobley**, director of human resources at USC Lancaster, was featured in *Distinction*, the 2021-22

[annual report of the USC Center for Integrative and Experiential Learning](#), for her work on the UNIV 101 portfolio project. The article, titled “There’s no such thing as ‘too early,’” appears on page 11.



**Sher Chhetri**, assistant professor of mathematics at USC Sumter, had a project, titled “Comparing Multiple

Proportions using the Marascuillo Method (An analytical study of COVID-19 data in three different care facilities),” win second place in the Category of Health Sciences (Session J) for a poster presentation at Discover USC on April 22, 2022. Students involved in the project were Antonio Turner (USC Columbia) and Christian Sterner and Kaitlin Kiser (USC Sumter) with Chhetri serving as mentor.

Chhetri and student Ngaru Ngom received the 2022 SMART (Support for Minority Advancement in Research Training) Grant.

The funding helped with the summer research project entitled “Multiple Linear Regression for Predicting Rainfall in Columbia, South Carolina.” The duo also made a poster presentation (with Ngom as lead contributor), “Multiple Linear Regression for Predicting Rainfall in Columbia, South Carolina,” which they presented at the 2022 Summer Research Symposium hosted by the Office of the Vice President for Research (USC Columbia) on July 28.

Chhetri chaired a General Invited Session at the Fourth International Conference on Statistical Distributions and Applications (ICOSDA-2022) Marshall University, Huntington, W.V., Oct. 14-15, 2022. He also made a presentation on “Parameter Estimation for a Stochastic Climate Model with Alpha-Stable Lévy Jumps” at ICOSDA-2022.



**Stephen Criswell**, professor of English and Director of Native American Studies at USC Lancaster, received a

grant from the South Carolina Arts Commission to help fund events for the tenth anniversary of the USCL Native American Studies Center.

He also gave a talk on Catawba pottery at the Kings Mountain Historical Museum in Kings Mountain, N.C., in July 2022.



**Susan Cruise**, associate professor of sociology at USC Lancaster, and **Angela Neal**, associate professor of sociology at USC Lancaster, were recognized with a proclamation from Lancaster County for their work in gathering supplies for



Ukrainian refugees and delivering them during their Travel Study experience in May. This occurred at the Good Samaritan Scholarship Foundation’s Spring Shindig. Students assisted in the effort and donations came in from faculty, staff, students and the greater community.



**David Dangerfield**, assistant professor of history at USC Salkehatchie, wrote the narrative for

a museum interpretive panel on African American and Indigenous Experiences in the American Revolution. The six-foot-tall panel was unveiled at the Old Exchange and Provost Dungeon Museum in Charleston, S.C., on Oct. 29. He also presented research on free non-white participants in the Confederate military, titled “Fighting to Pass: Free Men of Color and the Confederate Army,” at the Southern Historical Association Annual Meeting in Baltimore, Md., Nov 10-13. Dangerfield recently joined the Board of the University of South Carolina Press.



**Jason Darby**, Palmetto College director of marketing and communications, received the 2022 ACHE Crystal Marketing Award

from the Association for Continuing Higher Education in October 2022 for the [current commercial campaign for Palmetto College Online](#).



Palmetto College Chancellor **Susan Elkins** has been elected president of both the [Society for the](#)

[Advancement of Management \(SAM\)](#) and the [Association for Continuing Higher Education \(ACHE\)](#).



**Pearl Fernandes**, professor of biology at USC Sumter, as a mentor with student Kara Samuels, presented

“Access to Health Care Among Patients with Sickle Cell Anemia” as a PowerPoint presentation at Discover USC on April 22, 2022. They later made a poster presentation on the same subject at the 66th Annual Meeting of the Association of College and University Biology Educators (ACUBE) on Oct. 21, 2022.



**Rebecca Freeman,** director of Medford Library and associate librarian at USC Lancaster, presented

a paper, titled “Cooking in the Library,” at the Dublin Gastronomy Symposium in June 2022. The paper discussed a brief history of food in libraries and the current trend towards adding mobile and teaching kitchens to public libraries. Freeman and McKenzie Lemhouse, assistant librarian at USC Lancaster, presented a poster, titled “Adding Color to Our Shelves,” at the American Library Association in Washington, D.C., in June 2022. The poster discussed how they created the USCL Graphic Novels collection.



**Vincent Frontero,** instructor of English at USC Sumter, had translations of the poems “Roma IV,” “Games With

Time VII” and “Maternal Verses IV” by Maria Luisa Spaziani accepted for publication in *Ezra*. In addition, translations of the poems “The Figurehead II,” “Games With Time XI,” “Intermezzo III” and “Autumnal IV” have been accepted for publication in *The Georgia Review*.

Frontero’s poem “After The Seine at Beaugival” has been accepted for publication by *The Cincinnati Review*.



**Jessica Gonzalez,** instructor of anatomy and physiology at USC Sumter, earned a second master’s degree, a Master of

Science in Nursing degree in nursing administration in May 2021. She has also been accepted to a nursing doctoral program with an anticipated 2023 graduation.



**Carmela Gottesman,** associate professor of psychology at USC Salkehatchie, presented “Robust

Boundary Extension effects with different picture sets, set sizes, and presentation times” at the International Vision Sciences Society Conference.



**Kristina Grob,** assistant professor of philosophy at USC Sumter, facilitated a workshop, titled “Academic

Redlining and Appreciative Education: What Can We Do About Persistently White Classes?,” at the 23rd Biennial International Workshop-Conference on Teaching Philosophy in July 2022.

“The Master’s Tools, Revisited: Implicit Gender Essentialism in Second Wave Beauvoir Scholarship,” accepted for publication in *Southwest Philosophical Studies*, vol. 44, 2022.



**Lisa Hammond,** professor of English at USC Lancaster and director of faculty affairs at USC Columbia, has participated

in a public poetry project in Columbia, entitled “Poems on the Menu.” Patrons of Pawleys Front Porch in Five Points will notice one of her poems at the top of the menus that they can read while perusing meal options.

“Oh Girlfriend,” a poem in honor of the memory of her friend and colleague USC Union professor Dr. Denise Shaw, was published in *Twelve Mile Review* (volume 2.1, Spring/Summer 2022, page 29).

Hammond’s poem, “Hydrangeas,” was published in the 2022 issue of *Fall Lines: A Literary Convergence* (volume 7/8, page 27).



**Randall Ivey,** senior instructor of English at USC Union, had his poem “May Day Haiku” accepted for publication in

the [2022 South Carolina Bards Poetry Anthology](#).



**Ernest Jenkins,** associate professor of history at USC Lancaster, gave a talk on the “History of African

American Churches in Lancaster County, S.C.” in an Aug. 3 lecture at the Lancaster Cultural Arts Center.



**Bettie Obi Johnson**, professor of chemistry at USC Lancaster, worked with USCL students Charis Grabbe

and Laurie Melton to complete a RISE Grant-funded project this summer, titled “Evaluation of the SPME Arrow for Floral Scent Analysis.” Their abstract for the project was accepted for presentation at the Southeastern Regional Meeting of the American Chemical Society (SERMACS) meeting in October 2022.

USCL sophomore physics major Andrew Ferebee and Johnson received a PURE grant to work on a project, titled “Using Games to Engage Students in the General Chemistry Classroom.” Ferebee developed the games over the summer, and USCL has implemented them in its CHEM 111 classroom this semester. After fine-tuning, the tools will be implemented in classrooms on other campuses next semester and their impact on student learning and engagement will be assessed.



**Tekla Ali Johnson**, assistant professor of African American studies at USC Union,

successfully completed a year-long faculty fellowship at Johnson C. Smith University funded by grants from the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS) Laura Bush 21st Century Librarian Program and the National Park Service and Historic Preservation Fund: Civil Rights Grant Program. The latter grant supported “A Virtual Sense of Place: Critical Black Urbanism,” to document alteration in housing

and land use for African Americans beginning with the period of the modern Civil Rights Movement in Charlotte, N.C.

She was also elected vice president of the Romare Bearden Branch (Charlotte, N.C.) of the Association for the Study of African American Life and History (ASALH).



**Andrew Kettler**, assistant professor of history at USC Union, gave a presentation at the [Southern Conference on](#)

[British Studies](#), held Nov. 11-12 in Baltimore, Md., and served as a chair/commentator on a panel at the conference.

He also recently published a chapter on the Dominican Republic in a textbook, titled [The Americas: An Encyclopedia of Culture and Society](#) (ABC-CLIO). His book, [The Smell of Slavery: Olfactory Racism and the Atlantic World](#) (Cambridge University Press), will be released in paperback in December 2022.



**Dan Kiernan**, senior instructor of biology at USC Sumter, is a among a group of STEM faculty that represented USC Sumter on

Oct. 1 at [eSTEAM Sumter](#), a family festival celebrating and bringing together enthusiasts in Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts and Math. The festival exposed participants to advances and opportunities in these ever-growing areas through interactive exhibits, fun filled displays and hands-on activities.

Kiernan also manages USC Sumter’s annual science camp, which celebrated its 12th year this June. Local school children built

and launched rockets, assembled solar car models, worked with ultrasound equipment to examine a real beating heart, extracted their DNA and did much more.

He also presented “Using Ultrasound Technology in Introductory Biology Courses: A Hands-On Approach in Teaching Case Study Based Units” at the Association of College and University Biology Educators (ACUBE) 66th Annual Conference in October.



**Andy Kunka**, professor of English at USC Sumter, has been nominated for a Will Eisner Comic Industry Award for Best

Academic/Scholarly Work for *The Life and Comics of Howard Cruse: Taking Risks in the Service of Truth*. The Eisner Awards ceremony will be held July 22 at San Diego Comic-Con.

His essay “A Contract with God, The First Kingdom and the ‘Graphic Novel’: The Will Eisner/Jack Katz Letters” was reprinted in the *Norton Critical Edition of Will Eisner’s A Contract with God and Other Stories of Drowsie Avenue*, edited by Jared Gardner (2022).



Laurens (S.C.) Police Chief **Chrissie Cofield Latimore**, adjunct criminal justice instructor at USC Union, has stepped

away from both of those roles following her nomination by U.S. President Joseph Biden to lead the United States Marshals Service for the District of South Carolina. She is currently awaiting confirmation of the Executive Nomination by the United States Senate.



**Dana Lawrence**, associate professor of English and director of the academic success center at USC Lancaster,

presented a paper, titled “What makes you think you know how to tell a story better than Louisa May Alcott does?”: Children’s Literature, Literary History, and Hybrid Identities in Helen Oyeyemi’s *The Icarus Girl*,” at the Children’s Literature Association Conference in Atlanta in June 2022.

Lawrence’s long-form encyclopedia entry on Isabella Whitney, a 16th-century English poet, was published in the *Palgrave Encyclopedia of Early Modern Women’s Writing* in September 2022.



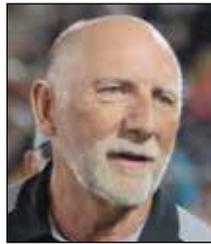
**Patrick Lawrence**, associate professor of English and director of the academic success

center at USC Lancaster, has been awarded an advance contract from University of Texas Press for a collection of essays that he is co-editing with a colleague (Jorge Santos, associate professor of English at College of the Holy Cross). The book is called *Out of the Gutters: Obscenity, Censorship, and Transgression in American Comics*, and its content addresses the book’s subtitle. They are set to deliver the manuscript in Summer 2023.



**Brian Lindmark**, adjunct engineering instructor at USC Salkehatchie, had two students present

their STEM internship at the Salkehatchie Scholarly Research Forum.



**Gene Lipsey**, adjunct instructor of physical education at USC Union, was re-elected to the

Union County School Board, representing District 4, in November 2022.



**Randy Lowell**, USC Union campus dean and professor of psychology, has a co-authored paper under review:

“The effects of vocabulary depth, morphological variation, and repeated exposure on word learning: An examination of incidental vocabulary acquisition through eye-tracking,” which was submitted in July 2022 for consideration in the journal *Reading and Writing*.

He also received a Palmetto Undergraduate Research Experience (PURE) program grant with student Jessica Dawkins for a total grant amount of \$2,500, for a project entitled “Context Consistency and Vocabulary Acquisition.”



**Steve Lownes**, assistant professor of world languages at USC Union, received a grant from PRAGDA Spanish Film

Club to offer the third annual USC Union Latin American Film Festival in September and October 2022. The festival featured a series of films to be viewed in-person and via online streaming, with accompanying follow-up discussions facilitated by USC Union faculty on each film.

Lownes also has an upcoming presentation entitled “Latin America Film for Future Nurses: Teaching Clinical Empathy and Narrative Medicine Awareness to Work with Immigrant Populations” at the third annual Barcelona International Academic Forum on Arts and Education.



**Antonio Mackey**, information services specialist and webmaster at USC Lancaster, was recently recognized as

one of the “[Lancaster County Top 10 Under 40](#)” award winners at the Lancaster County Chamber of Commerce’s annual meeting. Honorees have made significant impacts for the organization where they work. They stand out for their dedication, customer service, and professionalism.



**Ray McManus**, professor of English at USC Sumter, chair of both the Division of Arts and Letters and the Division of

Humanities, Social Sciences and Education and director of faculty, curricula and courses for dual enrollment programs in Lexington and Richland Counties, published the poem “On the Road to Damascus,” in *Twelve Mile Review*, May 2022, Two poems, “Wrasslin” and “Backstrap,” will be published in the forthcoming 2023 edition of *Twelve Mile Review*.

In addition, seven poems – “Angels Already Know” “We Know the Field,” “The Dale Earnhardt School of Human Experience,” “Reproduction,” “the Last Saturday in America,” “Demolition Disco” and “The Butchers” – were published in *Salvation South*, June 30, 2022.

McManus has also signed a publishing contract for his new book of poetry, *That Last Saturday in America*, which will be published early 2024 with Hub City Press.



**Luisa F. Melo**, assistant professor of management at USC Sumter, received a Best Reviewer Award from

the Academy of International Business (AIB), 2022, for reviews on submissions for the Annual Meeting.



**Sarah Miller**, professor of history and interim associate dean for academic and student affairs at USC

Salkehatchie, co-produced two documentaries about historically significant buildings in Allendale, S.C.: “On with the Show: Celebrating a Century of the Carolina Theatre” and “The Hut: A Legacy of the Works Progress Administration in Allendale, S.C.” These films debuted at the South Carolina Humanities Festival in September 2022.



**Justin Mogilski**, assistant professor of psychology at USC Salkehatchie, gave a talk, titled “Multi-partner

maintenance: Using evolutionary theory to predict and resolve the challenges of non-monogamy” at the fourth Brazilian Meeting on Evolution of Human Behavior in São Paulo, Brazil. In July, he presented “Development and validation of the multi-partner relationship maintenance scale in an international sample” at the International Academy of Sex Research Conference in Reykjavík, Iceland. In addition, Mogilski presented “Disgust sensitivity and apprehension towards consensual non-monogamy” in April at the Northeastern Evolutionary Psychology Society Conference. In May, he gave an invited talk on jealousy, mate retention and sexual ethics within consensually non-monogamous relationships at the Sexual Health Alliance CNM Sexceptional Weekend Summit Virtual Conference, and for the Durham University Think Tank Society in June.



**Erin Moon-Kelly**, adjunct professor of music at USC Lancaster, and The Lancaster County Council for the Arts

coordinated a concert as part of their annual art competition. The Charlotte Concert Band, a nonprofit that Moon-Kelly has been a member (and principal flute/piccolo) of since 2004, performed in a free concert at Indian Land High School. The Lifelong Learning Club at Sun City of Carolina Lakes is sponsored the Nov. 5 Veterans’ Day show.



**Evan Nooe**, assistant professor of history at USC Lancaster, presented a paper, titled “Coalescence

and the Unification of South Carolina: native Resistance, a Memory, and Ethnohistorical Methodologies,” at the American Society for Ethnohistory Annual Meeting at the University of Kansas in September 2022.

He also presented “Settling Cabin Histories: The Cracker Cabin in Florida Tourism and Disney Nostalgia” at the Northeastern Popular Culture Association Annual Conference (Virtual) in October 2022.

Nooe served as review essay editor for “Roberts on Dickerson-Cousin, ‘Black Indians and Freedmen: The African Methodist Episcopal Church and Indigenous Americans, 1816-1916” and “Ferdinando on Bialuschewski, ‘Raiders and Natives: Cross-Cultural Relations in the Age of Buccaneers’.”



**Courtney Pinnell**, nursing faculty at USC Union, received a Palmetto Undergraduate Research Experience

(PURE) program grant with students Melissa Catrone and Carson Nance for a total grant amount of \$5,000, for a project entitled “First Semester Nursing Students Anxiety and Stress Levels associated with Clinical Practicums versus High Fidelity Simulation.”



**Andrew Pisano**, associate professor of English at USC Union, was selected as a peer reviewer for the top-tier

journal *Early American Literature*. His essay “Quaker Spiritual Autobiography” was published in the edited collection *The Quaker World* (Routledge Press).



**Melissa Rack**, assistant professor of English at USC Salkehatchie, has been named 2022-23 president

of the Southeastern Renaissance Conference (SRC). SRC is an organization of over 100 scholars and the second oldest regional conference in Renaissance studies in the United States. The conference is jointly sponsored by University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, Duke University, North Carolina State University and the University of South Carolina. The organization publishes Renaissance Papers, an annual journal first established in 1954. As president, Rack will organize the 80th Annual Meeting

of SRC at UNC Chapel Hill in October 2023; this will be SRC’s first in-person meeting since the COVID pandemic began.



**Michele Reese**, professor of English at USC Sumter, is the 2021-2022 recipient of the Hugh T. Stoddard Sr. Outstanding Faculty Award.



**Tyrrie Rowell**, financial aid counselor and loan coordinator technical director at USC Lancaster, and Marybeth

Lee Berry, associate professor of theatre and speech at USC Lancaster, collaborated with students Hettie Barnhill and Jared McNeil on a devised piece about racism in the United States from the deconstruction of Athol Fugard’s “The Island” in Summer 2022 in a creative residency in Spoleto, Italy, at La MaMa Umbria. The show will also be submitted to future fringe festivals and presented on the USCL campus for Black History Month.



**Emily Schafer**, assistant professor of psychology at USC Union, had an article, “[Recognizing resilience in](#)

[children: A review](#),” published in *Trauma Care*. She also has an oral presentation, entitled “Resilience in Children: Theory and Practice,” at The Barcelona Conference on Arts, Media & Culture” at the University of Barcelona in Spain, Sept. 20-23.

In addition, she received a Palmetto Undergraduate Research

Experience (PURE) program grant with students Za’Kyah Jeter-Walton and Hannah Copeland, for a total grant amount of \$5,000, for a project entitled “Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) and Mental Health in Students at Two-Year College Campuses.



**Ann Scott**, clinical assistant professor of nursing at USC Lancaster, attended and made an oral presentation

at Sigma Theta Tau Nursing Congress in July 2022 in Edinburgh, Scotland. She presented “Hepatitis B Immunity Among Undergraduate Nursing Students: Documentation



and Alignment with Best Practices” with **Robin Dawson**, associate professor of nursing in the College of Nursing at USC Columbia.

Scott attended and made an oral presentation at the S.C. Nursing Education Simulation Alliance Fourth Annual Conference in July 2022 at the Clemson School of Nursing in Greenville, S.C. The presentation was titled “Ready. Set. Game.” and participants used unfolding case studies and NGN style questions to breakout from a virtual escape room.

Scott will be participating in the INACSL’s Let’s Talk Sim podcast, produced by the International Nursing Association of Clinical and Simulation Learning (INACSL).



**Annie L. Smith**, director of marketing and development at USC Union, was elected to Union County Council, representing District 4, in November 2022.



**Rodney Steward**, associate professor of history at USC Salkehatchie, presented recent research, titled “Seizing

the Home Front: The Legacy of Confederate Confiscation” at the British American Nineteenth Century Historians (BrANCH) Conference at the University of Leicester (UK) in October 2022.

He also participated in the UNESCO World Heritage-sponsored excavations at the L’Anse aux Meadows National Historic Site in Newfoundland, Canada, this past summer.



**Brittany Taylor-Driggers**, associate professor of art and art history at USC Lancaster, received a “Save America’s

Treasures” federal grant in the amount of \$83,805 to preserve the collection of oral histories, documents, artwork and artifacts at the Native American Studies Center.



**Lauren Thomas**, adjunct professor of public health at USC Lancaster, and **Leigh Pate**, associate professor of nursing at USC Lancaster, received USCL’s Fact Forward grant (in partnership with Upper Midlands Rural Health Network), which concluded on Sept. 30, 2022.

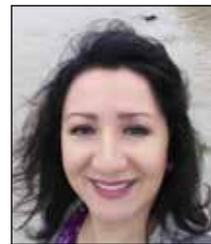


The grant focused on decreasing unintended pregnancies among young people in Lancaster and Chester Counties. Pate and Thomas played an integral role in the planning and implementation of this grant. As a result of this two-year grant, USCL and community health partners were able to: 1) establish a long-term partnership with the S.C. Department of Health and Environmental Control (DHEC) to provide free and low-cost preventive health services to young people on campus on a monthly basis (The Hubb); 2) offer resources to enhance several teen-friendly spaces on campus; and 3) integrate and sustain evidence-based health education programming into Medford Library’s circulation processes, identify and partner with several three teen-focused organizations to promote The Hubb with peer networks, and strengthen a partnership with a fiscal agent, Upper Midlands Rural Health Network, which can help USCL expand health education-related grant funding opportunities in the future.



**Kevin Torres**, instructor of world languages at USC Union, is presenting “Teaching about the Holocaust through

Literature” to at the 2023 Northeast Conference on the Teaching of Foreign Languages in New York City, N.Y.



**Yasmina Vallejos-Moreno**, assistant professor of Spanish at USC Salkehatchie, was a faculty mentor and led

a research project made possible by the PURE grant titled “Influence and Contributions of the Hispanic Population in the Lowcountry” in Summer 2022. The purpose of the project was to increase awareness of Hispanics living in the Southeast and explore some of the social challenges the Hispanic community has experienced.

She also organized the inaugural Latin American Film Festival at USC Salkehatchie to honor Hispanic Heritage Month (Sept. 15 - Oct. 15) through support from a grant from PRAGDA Spanish Film Club. The film series consisted of five films that represent contemporary and historical issues that are present in Latin America.

Vallejos-Moreno presented a paper at the Rocky Mountain Modern Language Association (RMMLA) Convention, Oct. 13-15, in Albuquerque, N.M., on the works of Fernanda Garcia Lao, an Argentine writer and her writings about the act of pretending and interpersonal relations.



**Sami Varjosaari**, assistant professor of chemistry at USC Sumter, has been awarded a Magellan Scholar award to

fund his project entitled “Magellan-Thomas-Improving Opal synthesis using DIY electric arc furnace under low pressure.”



**Marquita Watkins**, assistant professor of chemistry at USC Salkehatchie, has been selected as Young

Professional of the Year (2022) by Science Gateways Community Institute, Oct. 18-20, in San Diego, Calif.



**Matt Williamson**, director of TRIO Programs at USC Lancaster, has been elected president of the Lancaster Rotary Club in

Lancaster, S.C.



# Career Transitions

## New Hires:

### Frenche Brewer

Program Coordinator for Student Support Services, USC Sumter

### Elizabeth Hawkins

Program Coordinator of Teacher Education, USC Sumter

### Asia Parker

Upward Bound Academic Advisor, USC Sumter

### Emily Ray

Division Assistant, USC Sumter

### Kinsey Phillips

Registrar, USC Sumter

### Adrielle Cooper

Director of Marketing and Public Relations, USC Sumter

### Latrice Petty

Financial Aid Counselor, USC Sumter

### Daniel Stanforth

Instructor of Spanish, USC Sumter

### Sami Varjosaari

Assistant Professor of Chemistry, USC Sumter

### Bruce McFarling

Instructor of Economics, USC Sumter

### Sarah McDaniel

Instructor of Nursing, USC Sumter

### Tania Hazra

Assistant Professor of Mathematics, USC Sumter

## Retirees:

### Julie McCoy

Bookstore Manager, USC Sumter

## New coach leads Fire Ant Volleyball to successful second season

USC Sumter introduced volleyball to its athletics roster last year. The addition brought the number of sports offered at the campus to nine.

This year, with leadership from new head coach **Heath Griffin**, the Fire Ant volleyball team placed second in their regional tournament.

Heath Griffin started playing volleyball in 1992 at the age of 19 when he joined a beach volleyball game at Shaw Air Force Base.

Being from Sumter, pursuing beach volleyball was a bit of a challenge.

Griffin decided to set higher goals for his new passion after attending the 1996 Olympics in Atlanta. He earned the opportunity to train in Myrtle Beach, S.C., and Deerfield, Fla., with three future Olympians. Griffin won the American Volleyball Series in 2000, which opened the gateway to play in AVP Qualifiers from 2001-2009.



**Heath Griffin**  
Head Volleyball Coach  
USC Sumter

Throughout his career, Griffin played on several different beach tours, including EVP, East End Volleyball, and Toyota Pro-Am Tour. He accumulated 23 wins at the top level in grass and beach volleyball. He played with four indoor National teams at four different positions.

Griffin's coaching career began in 1996 as an assistant at Sumter High School. Since that time, he has led several high school teams to successful seasons, including three regional titles with Lee Academy, two state playoff appearances with Thomas Sumter Academy, and a final four appearance with Lee Academy.

In 2008, Griffin and his wife founded a successful travel volleyball program in Sumter, which has grown to over 130 girls. He began his collegiate coaching career at Coker University as an assistant coach. Having completed his first season as a collegiate head coach, Griffin is looking forward to building the Fire Ant program and going after a NJCAA Championship in the future.

## Palmetto Pathway

Palmetto College Chancellor **Susan Elkins** (center) met Palmetto Pathway students **Brody Runser** (left) and **Claire Long** (right) at the 2022 Taxslayer Gator Bowl in Jacksonville, Fla.

In the bowl game, the USC Gamecocks played against Notre Dame, completing an 8-5 season under new Head Football Coach Shane Beamer.

Launched in 2019, Palmetto Pathway is a residential connector program designed to offer yet another pathway to students who desire to complete a baccalaureate degree from the University of South Carolina.

Palmetto Pathway students are housed on the USC Columbia campus, take courses on campus from Palmetto College faculty and are enrolled through the regional USC Palmetto College campuses. After eligible students have completed the year-long Palmetto Pathway cohort program, they will be able to officially transfer as first-year students to sophomore status at USC Columbia.



# Lancaster and Sumter campuses ranked No. 1 and No. 3 Best Community Colleges in S.C.

The 2023 Niche.com rankings have been released and the regional Palmetto College campuses are ranked highly among community colleges in South Carolina. In its list of [2023 Best Community Colleges in South Carolina](#), Niche ranked all four regional Palmetto College campuses: No. 1 USC Lancaster, No. 3 USC Sumter, No. 8 USC Salkehatchie and No. 11 USC Union.

“Our Niche rankings continually reaffirm the value of the University of South Carolina educational experience,” said USC Palmetto College Chancellor Susan Elkins. “The regional Palmetto Colleges offer South Carolinians an opportunity to pursue an accessible and affordable higher education within their respective communities.”

The four two-year regional Palmetto College campuses – USC Lancaster, USC Salkehatchie, USC Sumter and USC Union – collectively enroll nearly 5,000 students within the Allendale, Lancaster, Laurens, Sumter, Union and Walterboro communities. The campuses confer associate degrees to graduates and partner with baccalaureate-granting USC institutions to offer the flexibility to complete bachelor’s degrees on the campuses or via Palmetto College Online.

USC Lancaster, which has held its No. 1 ranking in South Carolina for six straight years, is emblematic of the experiences shared among the regional Palmetto College campuses in the University of South Carolina System. USC Lancaster invests in a variety of programming and support structures to enhance the student experience on campus and to provide students with resources to make them successful. For example, Lancaster provides free tutoring in all academic disciplines, enriched academic advising, the TRIO Opportunity Scholars Program for first-generation students, as well as personal and career counseling. Supporting academic encouragement, the college offers a student food pantry and clothing closet that exists to meet the needs of students who need additional assistance in reaching their personal and academic goals. Similarly, USC Sumter has ranked within the top

five best community colleges in South Carolina.

In addition to these efforts to reach students beyond the classroom, the regional Palmetto College campuses are important resources within their respective communities as well. USC Sumter hosts Swan Con, Sumter’s annual comic arts festival, on its campus. USC Union sponsors the annual Upcountry Literary Festival for poets, musicians, novelists, oral storytellers, playwrights, essayists and short-story writers.

The USC Salkehatchie Leadership Institute

prepares community members for leadership roles to help stimulate economic development in its five-county service territory. The Native American Studies Center at USC Lancaster offers a comprehensive resource for the study of South Carolina’s Native American peoples, their histories and their cultures.

Beyond their individual community efforts, the regional Palmetto College campuses are home to the USC Palmetto College

iCarolina Lab Network.

Niche analyzes 4,050 colleges to create rankings and grades for all aspects of campus life, including academics, student life and value. These “2023 Best Community Colleges in South Carolina” ranking system and grades are based on a rigorous analysis of academic, admissions, financial and student life data from the U.S. Department of Education along with millions of reviews from students and alumni.

Niche also grades institutions on several other factors, including academics (40 percent), value (27.5 percent), professors (7.5 percent), student life (5 percent), campus (5 percent), diversity (5 percent), local area (2.5 percent) and safety (2.5 percent). The student surveys are self-reported by Niche users. A detailed explanation of methodology can be found on the Niche.com website.

Niche.com is a website that facilitates the discovery of schools and neighborhoods for its users through analysis of dozens of public data sets and millions of reviews to produce comprehensive rankings, report cards and profiles for every K-12 school, college and neighborhood in the United States.





## Area Middle school students “Take Flight!” at USC Salkehatchie aviation camp

The camp is a partnership between USC Salkehatchie, Boeing South Carolina, the Hiram E. Mann Chapter of Tuskegee Airmen and Joint Base Charleston

Around 75 sixth-grade students from Allendale-Fairfax Middle School and Colleton County Middle School participated in [USC Salkehatchie's Take Flight! Aviation Camp](#) in November 2022. The camp is offered as part of USC Salkehatchie's STEM program in partnership with [Boeing South Carolina](#), the [Hiram E. Mann Chapter of Tuskegee Airmen](#) and [Joint Base Charleston](#).

"USC Salkehatchie is thrilled to host our annual aviation camp," Jackson Alexander, director of the [USC Salkehatchie Leadership Institute](#), said. "As a regional catalyst for education and learning, the University looks forward to providing opportunities that impact young people throughout the region. It's exciting for students to explore and engage in aviation and the related opportunities in our area by participating in authentic, hands-on learning activities. We're appreciative of our partners for sharing their knowledge."

The camp focused on the opportunities and career paths in the region's aviation industry, the rich heritage

of the Tuskegee Airmen who trained at an airfield in Walterboro during World War II and the development of skills in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM). This year, students took part in experiential learning activities including building and launching bottle rockets, coding sensors and navigating drones. Field trips to the Lowcountry Regional Airport, Joint Base Charleston and Boeing South Carolina were also included. Educational presentations on the significant contributions of the pilots who were the first African American military aviators in the United States Armed Forces were also featured.

The camp has been offered annually since 2014 for middle school students in Allendale and Colleton counties and provides opportunities to learn about STEM, aviation, and the importance of our military installations.

"We hope this camp sparks students' interests not only in aviation but also in all STEM careers," Alexander said.



## Native American Studies Center celebrates tenth anniversary

The Native American Studies Center (NASC) at USC Lancaster celebrated its tenth anniversary in October 2022 in the downtown Lancaster Cultural Arts District. Community events were held over several days at the Center to celebrate this special occasion.

A private event included drumming from the Catawba women's and men's drum groups, pottery demonstrations by Keith "Little Bear" Brown and remarks by special guests including USCL Dean Walter Collins, USCL Academic Dean Todd Lekan, Palmetto College Chancellor Susan Elkins, Chief Bill Harris (Catawba Nation), Tribal Administrator Lisa Collins (Wassamasaw Tribe of Varnertown Indians), Chief Louis Chavis (Beaver Creek Indians), former USCL NASC Co-Director Brooke Bauer, Lancaster Mayor Alston DeVenney and additional city and county officials and Center staff and faculty.

Additional events featured storytelling by Beckee Garris, pottery demonstrations by Keith "Little Bear" Brown, beadwork demonstrations by Tammy Leach and Joshua Shumak, dancing and drumming by the Catawba Cultural Preservation Project, Native American art vendors and food from the Smokin' Butts BBQ food truck.

On the occasion of its tenth anniversary, the NASC extends special thanks to the S.C. Arts Commission's Folklife and Traditional Arts Program, OceanaGold/Haile Operation, Duke Energy, the City of Lancaster and the University of South Carolina Lancaster for their generous support of the milestone.

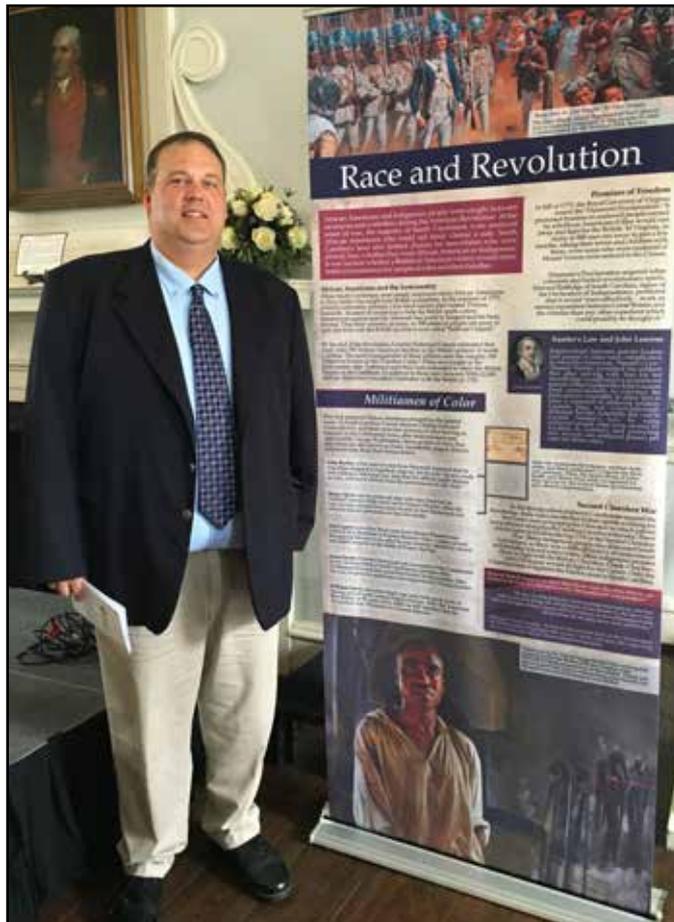


## USC Lancaster reopens newly renovated Indian Land location

A ribbon-cutting celebration was held on Thursday, Nov. 10, 2022, for USC Lancaster's newly renovated location in Indian Land, S.C.

The USCL campus location in Indian Land first opened in August 2018. This Fall 2022 semester, USCL began offering courses in the newly renovated space at Indian Land Middle School.

The extension site of USC Lancaster in Indian Land is the preeminent provider of nontechnical higher education opportunities in the dynamic and growing panhandle region of Lancaster County. The campus continues to serve all types of students including dual credit and senior citizens in Indian Land and surrounding communities.



## Race and the revolution: Dangerfield's research featured on display at historic Charleston site

The [Rebecca Motte Chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution](#) unveiled a marker and an exhibit panel based on Dr. David Dangerfield's research on race and the Revolutionary War. Dangerfield is an assistant professor of history at USC Salkehatchie.

The six-foot tall interpretive panel highlights African American and indigenous experiences during the American Revolution. The display, which is part of the [America250](#) United States semiquincentennial observance at the [Olde Exchange and Provost Dungeon](#) in Charleston, S.C., helps tell stories from the Revolution that have often gone untold and helps promote a richer story about America's founding.

"This project remembers people who were caught in between the Crown and the colony. They had few choices, and they had to navigate the Revolution hoping their decisions and circumstances might lead to better conditions for themselves and their families. These conditions and the work for full freedom and equality that remained unrealized even after the Revolution make their stories all the more important for us to include and honor," said Dangerfield.

# iCarolina Lab Network to offer free Swift coding certification classes to local communities

The University of South Carolina, in partnership with Apple Inc., is launching a free coding certification course in the Spring 2023 semester to teach Apple's iOS language to students in the USC system and to community members across South Carolina.

The course, which teaches Apple's Swift programming language, will be delivered through the iCarolina Community Learning Lab network. The iCarolina labs were established in 2021 through a \$6 million grant award from the Governor's Emergency Education Relief (GEERs) fund.

The lab network — with current locations in Union, Lancaster, Sumter, Allendale, Walterboro and a future location in Laurens — is open for use by local school districts, Historically Black Colleges and Universities, the South Carolina Technical College System and community residents. The lab locations provide reliable technology and internet access to the communities surrounding USC Palmetto College campuses, which are all located within 15 miles or less of a broadband desert. A location at USC Columbia will provide training and instructional support to the network.

Swift is an enterprise programming language that is friendly to beginners. It was created by Apple for building apps for iOS, Apple TV, Mac and Apple Watch. Swift is a flexible programming language that allows developers to easily operationalize their ideas with incredible speed. As part of the partnership, Apple has provided the curriculum and “train-the-trainer” courses, as well as project management and engineering services to assist with the rollout.

The pilot course, led by Noble Anumbe, a post-doctoral fellow in

USC's College of Engineering and Computing, will begin in January 2023 and will meet once a week for about three months at no cost. Participants will earn a certification for application development with Swift, which is certified and administered by Certiport, the leading provider of certification

from computer literacy to Apple IT, Deployment, and Help Desk certifications. USC also plans to add additional industry certification courses in the future, covering artificial intelligence and cyber security by leveraging existing partnerships with IBM, Amazon Web Services (AWS) and Siemens.



The Palmetto College iCarolina Lab at USC Salkehatchie - Allendale location, which opened in June 2022, is one of five current community broadband labs in the iCarolina Lab Network to offer Swift coding courses and other Apple software training courses at no cost to users. Three additional locations are set to open in Clinton, Laurens and Kershaw in the Spring 2023 semester.

exam development, delivery, and program management services worldwide.

“This free certification course is a wonderful example of how the university is partnering with leading industries and the state of South Carolina to give students and residents of under-served areas the skills they need to be more competitive,” said USC President Michael Amiridis.

The iCarolina lab network will offer other Apple-related content in the future, covering everything

Registration for the Swift course opened in December 2022 and the course will begin in late January 2023 at locations across the Palmetto College iCarolina Lab Network. Additional locations are will open in Clinton and Laurens in January 2023, and in Kershaw in March 2023.

For more information about the University of South Carolina's industry partnerships, visit the [USC Office of Economic Engagement website](#).

## 2022-23 Leadership Salkehatchie class announced

The University of South Carolina Salkehatchie Leadership Institute has announced the 19 participants of its 2022-23 Leadership Salkehatchie class. This prestigious, regional leadership development program is offered by USC Salkehatchie and sponsored by the SouthernCarolina Alliance. Alumni of the program serve as leaders in business, healthcare, education, government, and non-profits across the Salkehatchie region.

“I’m thrilled with this year’s Leadership Salkehatchie cohort. This year’s class includes emerging leaders from Allendale, Barnwell, Bamberg, Beaufort, Colleton, Hampton, and Jasper counties, who are stepping up to the plate to grow their skills to continue their public service and address tough issues facing the region,” Jackson Alexander, director of the USC Salkehatchie Leadership Institute, said.

The year-long program will include workshops designed to empower participants with the economic development knowledge and the skills needed to cultivate progress within our region. The program highlights the strengths of the Salkehatchie region and explores the obstacles facing small-town America. Program topics include economic development, education, the judicial system, local government, legislative advocacy, leadership skills, and diversity.

Alexander says he is grateful for the continued partnership with the SouthernCarolina Alliance because they understand that developing strong leaders is paramount to the future of economic development in the Salkehatchie region. SouthernCarolina Alliance has sponsored the regional leadership program in partnership with USC Salkehatchie for more than 20 years.

“We need leaders who understand the importance of economic development, education and training in fostering great communities for both families and businesses. The leadership program brings together our brightest and most promising leaders to share ideas about the future of our region, collaborate, and learn more about the impact of health care, education, training, taxation, infrastructure, and our environment to create a shared vision for the future,” Vice President, Marketing for SouthernCarolina Alliance Kay Maxwell said. “We are pleased that many of our past leadership participants are now today’s leaders in industry, business, nonprofits, and local and county government. They are making decisions every day that will create stronger communities for our future, and SouthernCarolina Alliance is proud to be a part of that.”

The new members of the Leadership Salkehatchie class represent the following counties:

### Allendale County

- Lawanda Patterson, Project Manager, Savannah River Nuclear Solutions
- Lawrence Wiggins, Chief of Police, Allendale Police Department

### Barnwell County

- Sunil Kumar Tadamatla Christopher, Owner and General Manager, Eat Street Multi-Cuisine Restaurant
- Bob Snead, Program Coordinator, Southern Palmetto Regional Chamber Innovation Center
- Jessica Brabham-James, Assistant Principal, Barnwell School District 45
- James W. “Will” Kears, Sub-Contractor to the Department of Energy, Savannah River Nuclear Solutions

### Bamberg County

- April Wolfe, Nursing Academic Program Manager, University of South Carolina Salkehatchie
- Kathy Rhoad, Director of Strategic Initiatives, SouthernCarolina Alliance

### Beaufort County

- Ryan Coleman, GIS Manager, Town of Bluffton
- Erin McGuire, Communications Manager, 14th Circuit Solicitor’s Office

### Colleton County

- Graci Hiers, Regional Beautification Marketing Coordinator, SouthernCarolina Alliance
- Haley Rowe, Interim Director of Student Success and Engagement, University of South Carolina Salkehatchie
- Donna Lamb, Executive Assistant, Colleton County Economic Alliance
- Steven Baker, Charleston Area Director of Land Development, K. Hovnanian Homes
- Christie Slocum, Colleton Museum Coordinator, Colleton Museum and Farmers Market

### Hampton County

- Jack Hutto, Director of Communications and Grants, Hampton County School District
- Noah Alexander, County Council Member, Hampton County Council

### Jasper County

- Matthew Davis, Acting City Manager, City of Hardeeville
- Neil Parsons, Director of Administrative Services, City of Hardeeville

# Palmetto College wins non-credit program award and marketing award at 2022 ACHE conference

Palmetto College Online and the regional Palmetto College campuses were well-represented among the accolades presented at the association for Continuing Higher Education (ACHE) annual awards luncheon. ACHE convened in New Orleans for the 84th Annual ACHE National Conference in October 2022.

USC Lancaster received the **2022 ACHE Distinguished Program Award (Non-Credit)** for its "[Personal Finance Bootcamp](#)." The free six-hour course, co-sponsored by the Arras Foundation, was offered to middle school, high school, college students, parents and families from the surrounding community to equip attendees with lifelong financial tools to increase personal and family wealth.

Congratulations to USC Lancaster Campus Dean **Walter Collins**, Adjunct Business Instructor and Lead Course Developer **Albert Blackmon**, and bootcamp instructors **Stan Emanuel**, **Phillip Parker**, and **Mike Sherrill** on providing this very necessary resource to their local community!

In addition, USC Palmetto College was selected as the winner of the **2022 ACHE Crystal Marketing Award** for the current "[Palmetto College Commercial Campaign \(2020 to Present\)](#)." The commercial campaign highlights the experiences of Palmetto College Online alumni (many of whom are graduates of our Palmetto College



USC Lancaster received the 2022 ACHE Distinguished Program Award (Non-Credit) for its community-based Personal Finance Bootcamp. Accepting the award at awards luncheon was Lead Course Developer Albert Blackmon and USCL Campus Dean Walter Collins



USC Palmetto College earned the 2022 ACHE Crystal Marketing Award for the current Palmetto College Online commercial campaign. The commercials were produced under the direction of Jason Darby, Palmetto College director of marketing and communications.

campuses) to extol the benefits of PC Online to prospective students.

Congratulations to **Jason Darby**, Palmetto College director of marketing and communications, on his ongoing work in using alumni testimonials in our digital and TV commercial campaigns to appeal to prospective students!

## USC Union promotes mental health resources on Fresh Check Day



The USC Union Lady Bantams Softball Team

The Lady Bantams softball team assisted and participated in Fresh Check Day 2022 at USC Union.

[Fresh Check Day](#), the signature program of the [Jordan Porco Foundation](#), is an uplifting mental health promotion and suicide prevention event for colleges that includes interactive expo booths, peer-to-peer messaging, support of multiple campus departments and groups, free food, entertainment, and exciting prizes and giveaways. Fresh Check Day aims to create an approachable and hopeful atmosphere where students are encouraged to engage in dialogue about mental health and helps to build a bridge between students and the mental health resources available on campus, in the community, and nationally.

What started as a single Fresh Check Day in 2012 has grown to 1,038 Fresh Check Days at more than 175 colleges and universities in 42 states, impacting over 206,000 college students. Three USC System institutions participate in the initiative: USC Union, USC Upstate and USC Columbia

## Alumni spotlight: Ty'keezie Thompson, '17, '19



**Ty'keezie Thompson**  
USC Union, '17, USC Upstate, '19

**T**y'keezie Thompson attended USC Union from 2015-2017, then transferred to USC Upstate where he completed his matriculation in December 2019. After graduating USC Upstate, he continued his education at Liberty University, with a focus on administration and supervision.

Thompson currently teaches fifth-grade math and science at Buffalo Elementary School in Union. He looks back fondly on his matriculation.

"USC Union means a lot to me. My experience here truly impacted my years in college. It helped me to be better equipped when I transferred to Upstate. I had no fear or worries, and I lost my need to procrastinate," said Thompson.

"USC Union prepared me for my future by providing me with skills that I now use in my career field," he continued. "Attending USC Union, I was able to become better organized, my time management was improved, and I got better at reading to learn new things."

When asked if he had any advice for current or prospective students, Thompson said, "The advice that I would give to newly enrolled students would simply be to just breathe. Take each day one at a time and put forth your best effort. If you do those things, you will succeed in your years at college."

## USC Salkehatchie, Colleton County High School expand early college partnership

**M**ore Colleton County High School students will have the opportunity to earn a college degree while still a high school student thanks to an expanded partnership with USC Salkehatchie.

Currently, USC Salkehatchie offers dual enrollment classes at several area high schools where students can earn college credit but not necessarily a degree. The early college program provides a structured pathway for dually enrolled high school students.

"We're excited to partner with the Colleton County School District to provide an early college experience for its students. Students will commit the summer before their junior year to earning both a high school diploma from CCHS and an Associates of Arts from USC Salkehatchie. Students will take specially selected classes with their cohort on the Salkehatchie campus," Dr. Sarah Miller, interim associate dean for academic and

student affairs, said.

Miller hopes the program will increase the number of CCHS students earning college degrees to around 25 each year by 2024. The class of 2022 had five college graduates: Iain Yahner, Alasia Stephens, Amariyan Persad, Genesis Frazier, and Lauren Reynolds. Miller recognized these students at the CCHS graduation.

"They are college graduates. They graduated from college before they graduated from high school," she said during the ceremony. "They worked independently with our dual enrollment coordinator to earn enough high school and college credits for their degrees. This is no small feat – it takes a lot of time, coordination, studying and commitment. They juggled high school and college courses, extracurricular activities, jobs, and, I hope, some fun."

Colleton County School District Superintendent Vallerie Cave believes that this program will have

a positive impact on CCHS students.

"The early college partnership is going to be paramount to the success of Colleton County students. It will expand opportunities for students to earn associate degrees in high school. USC Salkehatchie is opening doors for students to gain access to educational content to prepare them for lifetime careers," Cave said. "We are excited about this partnership, and we look forward to the impact it will have on the lives of our youth. This partnership only makes our community stronger."

USC Salkehatchie will continue to offer dual credit classes for students who want to take challenging coursework but not necessarily earn a college degree. Students interested in participating in dual enrollment or the early college program should check with their school counselor to see if they are eligible.

## USC Sumter hosts 37th annual poetry contest

For the 37th year, faculty from USC Sumter organized the USC Sumter Spring Poetry Contest. This year's competition saw 108 entries. Students from Sumter County public and private middle and high schools sent in submissions with the support of their teachers.

The mission of the USC Sumter Poetry Contest is to promote writing and reading in complex forms, provide a creative outlet for young poets, celebrate the talents of youth in our community and, lastly, honor the teachers and schools that support these poets.

"I am truly passionate about poetry, and so, to connect with my students over something so deeply personal was a wonderful experience. I was thrilled to learn that the student judges from USC could not see the names of or the schools of the poets; so, their final decisions were genuinely focused on the poetry itself," said Leah Kiernan, ELA teacher at Thomas Sumter Academy.

The winners were announced during a presentation which featured readings from the contest's finalists. Finalists for this year's competition included middle schoolers Megan Reber, Alaina Anderson, Eva Halloran, Madi Nichols and Kenji Stanton from Thomas Sumter Academy; and Amirah Wright, Benjamin Nock, Sanaa Henriquez and Gabrielle Garrison from Hillcrest Middle School.

High school finalists were Lillian Williamson from Sumter High School; Josie Jackson, Sara Hayes Ridgeway, Isabella Grudzinski, Mary Parish Williams, Kate Eichburg, Alex Jackson and William Hardee from Wilson Hall; Allison Culick, Kelsey Martin and Vera Fitzke from Thomas Sumter Academy.

Representing area middle schools were first place winner Alaina Anderson, Thomas Sumter Academy, for "I Am From," second place winner Madi Nichols, Thomas Sumter Academy, for "Pristine Future" and third place winner Kenji Stanton, Thomas Sumter Academy, for "Rain."

Representing area high schools were first place winner Kate Eichburg, Wilson Hall, for "A Promise," second place winner Lillian Williamson, Sumter High School, for "Tell Me, Show Me" and third place winner Isabella Grudzinski, Wilson Hall, for "Music."

Contest winners received a certificate, a Books-A-Million gift card and a swag bag of USC Sumter merchandise.

The contest was organized by USC Sumter faculty

members Instructor of English Vincent Frontero, Professor English Ray McManus (who also serves as director of faculty, curricula and courses for dual enrollment programs in Lexington and Richland Counties) and Professor of English Michele Reese.

"We were beyond excited by the number and the quality of entries, and I think this was a great opportunity for the community to come together once again," said Vincent Frontero.



Poetry contest high school participants



Poetry contest middle school participants

## USC Lancaster launches Lancers Esports Program



USC Lancaster launched its Lancer Esports program in the Fall 2022 semester in a newly renovated space on campus.

The team currently has ten participants and is looking to expand for the Spring 2023 semester.

A ribbon-cutting ceremony was held on Thursday, Dec. 8, 2022, at 4 p.m. in Hubbard Hall.



## USC Sumter Upward Bound Program awarded \$1.4 Million

The U.S. Department of Education awarded USC Sumter with a federal Upward Bound grant of \$1,488,005 to help more low-income students who would be the first members of their families to earn degrees to prepare for and enroll in college.

USC Sumter introduced the Upward Bound program in 2017 at Manning High School and has served over 125 students since that time. To qualify, prospective students must be in grades 9-12 and come from income eligible families whose parents do not have a bachelor's degree.

One of the federal TRIO Programs, Upward Bound is an intensive intervention program that prepares students for higher education through various enrichment courses. Campus-based Upward Bound programs provide students instruction in literature, composition, mathematics, science, and foreign language during the school year and the summer. Upward Bound also provides intensive mentoring and support for students as they prepare for college entrance exams and tackle admission applications, financial aid, and scholarship forms.

“Working with high school students to achieve their dream of being the first in their family to graduate from college has been extremely rewarding for me and the Upward Bound staff,” said Lisa Rosdail, director for Upward Bound and



Opportunity Scholars Programs at USC Sumter.

Rosdail continued, “We work closely with our students to increase their GPA, improve their test-taking skills, assist in securing financial aid and scholarship sources, and provide assistance with college application and enrollment processes. We closely monitor our participants course selections to assure they graduate with a rigorous high school diploma making them more competitive to college admissions departments.”

According to the U.S. Department of Education, 86% of Upward Bound participants enroll in postsecondary institutions immediately following high school graduation. In FY21, more than 70,000 students were enrolled in 966 Upward Bound TRIO projects in the United States.



## USC Union students study abroad in Spain

By Kevin Torres, USC Union instructor of Spanish

Ready, set...your flight has been delayed...canceled...and now rebooked.

Seven students and I traveled to Spain in May 2022 and encountered many difficulties due to canceled flights, delayed flights and rebooked flights that sent us to Paris, France, and then onward to Spain. However, the students were determined to get to Spain and enjoy the study abroad, and turned the mood of the trip around very quickly after so many difficulties

with our flights.

We finally arrived to Spain and had a memorable trip that started in Barcelona and took us to Valencia, Costa del Sol, Sevilla, Toledo and Madrid. The students were constantly on the go from one place to the other wanting to see more and do as many activities as possible.

The students even surprised themselves with how much Spanish they could produce while in shops, restaurants, stores, etc. They even

had a day off from activities to sit on the beach, enjoy the sun, Mediterranean Sea and swim before getting back to our schedule of many activities, adventures, and sight-seeing.

The best part of the trip was hearing from students that they plan on traveling more internationally with some already booking trips for the winter break and next summer!





## USC Salkehatchie hosts Smithsonian's "Voices and Votes" traveling exhibition

Over 2,000 people attended the Smithsonian Institution's traveling exhibit "[Voices and Votes: Democracy in America](#)" hosted at USC Salkehatchie as part of its [Museum on Main Street](#) partnership. The Smithsonian partnered with USC Salkehatchie, the Allendale Rural Arts Team and Southern Carolina Alliance to bring the exhibit and the South Carolina Humanities Festival to Allendale.

Through a selection of photographs, objects, film, audio and interactive content, "Voices and Votes" takes a broad look at the nearly 250-year-old American experiment of a government "of, by and for the people." From the revolution and suffrage, to civil rights and casting ballots, everyone in every community is part of this ever-evolving story—the story of democracy in America. Exhibition sections explore the origins of American democracy, the struggles to obtain and keep the right to vote, the machinery of democracy, the right to petition and protest beyond the ballot and the rights and responsibilities of citizens.

"The traveling exhibit was an impressive display that provided a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity for local community members to learn about the historical context of democracy in America," said Campus Dean **April Cone**. "The interactive exhibit attracted a wide variety of individuals to campus and USC Salkehatchie is honored to have been the temporary home to the inspirational exhibit."

Hosting the six-week exhibit allowed visitors to explore the multi-faceted presentation multiple times to learn pieces of history a little bit at a time. Additionally, the exhibition spurred conversations between people of different ages, generations, and backgrounds on using their voices to initiate change.

"As a member of the steering committee that started meeting in October 2020, I could not have imagined how wonderful the exhibit would be," said History Professor **Sarah Miller**. "I watched buses and buses of elementary, middle, and high school students funnel through the exhibit stopping at various places and pointing to pictures with their friends. As a professor of history, I was impressed by the amount of information conveyed and accessible to visitors at all age levels. The high point of the exhibit, for me, was the closing ceremony when the winners of the Voices and Votes essay contest read their essays. Zoe Bunch, Aiden Isham and Trinity Mickell exemplified what being a citizen really means, and I feel confident they will be the leaders of tomorrow."

"Voices and Votes: Democracy in America" is part of Museum on Main Street, a unique collaboration between the Smithsonian Institution Traveling Exhibition Service (SITES), state humanities councils across the nation, and local host institutions. Support for Museum on Main Street has been provided by the United States Congress.

## Bantams Soccer players receive NJCAA Region 10 awards

USC Union Bantams Soccer players received awards at the end of their season.



**Nico Steinweg**  
Bantam Men's Soccer  
USC Union

Freshman **Nico Steinweg**, from Dortmund, Germany, scored 16 goals during regular season and was recognized as the National Junior College Athletic Association

Region 10 Player of the Year. Nico led the entire Region in goals scored (16) and also in points (35). His

goals scored consisted of eight at away games, six at home games and two at neutral sites. Nico also received First Team All Region and is a team captain.



**Jose Fernandez**  
Bantam Men's Soccer  
USC Union

Sophomore **Jose Fernandez**, from South Carolina, was awarded Second Team All Region. He will continue his academic career at Coker University and play soccer there next year.



**Maximus Moriarty**  
Bantam Men's Soccer  
USC Union

Freshman **Maximus Moriarty**, from Reading, England, was awarded Third Team All Region.

## Lancaster Players work with international theatre artist Jared McNeill

USC Lancaster Theatre students recently had an amazing opportunity to work with [international theatre artist Jared McNeill](#). Professor Marybeth Berry met him at [La MaMa Umbria](#) in Italy this summer and facilitated bringing him to USC Lancaster to conduct a weekend workshop on acting and movement.

Individuals from the USCL theatre program have been invited to perform at theatrical piece at the [19th International Festival of Making Theatre](#) in Athens, Greece, in July 2023.

The [USC Lancaster Players](#) was established in 2009, and was created to promote the theatrical art form, by which students are allowed to participate in various productions throughout the school year. By participating in the arts, this group is able to reach the larger student body and the local community with its collaborative work.

The USC Lancaster Players creates opportunities that bring creativity,



USC Lancaster Players with advisors Tyrie Rowell (lower left) and Marybeth Lee Berry (standing second from right) recently had an opportunity to work with international theatre artist Jared McNeill (lower center).

social awareness and authenticity in relationships and communication

among each other, the university and the community at-large.



# Palmetto College student shares sex trafficking story to raise awareness, help victims

Sarah met the man who would become her sex trafficker at a club on the West Coast. (In order to protect her identity, her last name is not being used.)

Her friend was a singer who'd recently made a CD, so the man's claim of being in the music industry was appealing. Before long, her friend "got a weird vibe and had no interest in working with him," she says — but Sarah didn't pick up on the same signals. After a month of his persistence, she agreed to a date. It was the start of a difficult period in Sarah's life.

The man, who was nearly twice her age, introduced Sarah to people he said were part of the music industry. He also urged her to connect him with people she felt had money and influence. She attended meetings with them, believing the purpose was to establish business ties. But eventually an unspoken expectation became clear: She was supposed to sleep with these men. When she told them sex was not part of the agreement, they responded with, "That's not what we were told."

Feeling scared and confused, Sarah left the man — but was soon unable to support herself and depended on him again. When he pressured her to use drugs, she found it took her mind to a different place and cemented his hold on her.

"I didn't feel scared anymore, and I didn't feel confused anymore," she says. "I felt numb and focused."

Having spent most of her adolescence in the foster care system, Sarah had weak family ties, something that is [common in the background of trafficking victims](#). Combine that with being a young woman in her early 20s navigating an unfamiliar city, and it is a perfect

recipe for a trafficking target.

"The trafficker, on the inside, gets a big evil grin thinking, 'Perfect. You have nobody to go to, you have nobody to lean on. I'm your savior, I'm your person,'" Sarah says.

One day, Sarah's trafficker claimed to be pursuing a real estate venture that would make a lot of money. But he had no intention of bringing Sarah along to a better life. In his mind, she was no longer useful to him. He left and never came back.

Alone with nothing and facing withdrawal from drugs, she had no direction.

"I wanted to die," she remembers thinking.

## Coming out the other side

Unable to afford rent, Sarah sought refuge in a shelter, through which she attended group sessions, stayed off drugs and got a job. These achievements earned her entry into a new shelter program that gave her a private room and amenities. After hearing Sarah's story, a counselor recommended she leave the state for her own safety, as traffickers are sometimes retaliatory. Sarah moved to a North Carolina shelter and eventually returned to her home state of South Carolina.

"It's really difficult when you've been through a lot of trauma because it all seems to kind of mush together, the good stuff and the bad stuff," she says. "And that's what makes it so hard to see someone you thought was your partner as a monster — because you still want to be with them."

At [Pathways to Healing](#), Sarah received counseling. She struggled with feelings of guilt and naivete, thinking what happened was her fault. She didn't feel her situation was that important because it seemed mild in comparison to

other victims' stories. But Sarah learned that trafficking has different forms.

"It sounds cliché, but my limited knowledge of trafficking could have been compared to the Taken movie. That's what I thought trafficking was. But in my case, nobody put their hand over my mouth, dragged me into a room, beat me, chained me up, and took me to a different country."

According to the [National Human Trafficking Hotline](#), sex trafficking is a form of modern-day slavery in which individuals perform commercial sex through the use of force, fraud and coercion. And the [Polaris Project](#) states that while abductions can occur, the majority of traffickers use psychological tactics to force their victims into performing commercial sex. In 2020, there were [10,836 sex trafficking victims](#) identified throughout the country. That number does not account for the victims who did not report or those who were victims of other forms of trafficking.

## Finding a new life

Years later, Sarah has a new life. She's studying [human services](#) through Palmetto College Online at the University of South Carolina Beaufort, loving on her dog and spending time with her son and fiancé.

Sarah always wanted a career in social work, and her trafficking experience steered her to pursue a career in counseling as she hopes to make a difference in the lives of others. She volunteers at [Lighthouse for Life](#), a local human trafficking nonprofit, helping the organization build and maintain nationwide resource contacts. She's arranged to do her internship there and plans

to work there after she graduates. In fact, she hopes to be its first in-house counselor.

This is the first time Sarah has shared her story for publication. She says talking about it is part of the healing process and she hopes that by telling others what happened to her, and through her volunteer work, she can help shed light on sex trafficking and bring hope and healing to people going through similar experiences.

“It heals me to heal other people, knowing that I can give back what I know to someone else.”

### The psychology of survival

USC College of Social Work clinical assistant professor Patrice Penney has more than 30 years of experience as a clinical social worker and clinical supervisor. She says a state of fear when a person is trafficked can cause human instincts to shift. The brain gets good at survival, but it doesn't have the resources in those moments to think, reflect, stop, ponder or plan.

“Our thinking brains really shut down and our survival brains kick in, which means we're going to feel emotionally fried, completely overwhelmed,” Penney says. “The brain stem, which coordinates all of our bodily functions, just kicks us into flight, fight or freeze mode, so we really don't have the opportunity to use our full brain competencies.”

According to Penney, victims learn helplessness and feel out of control because of the coercion they experience. And when they go to family, but their support isn't available, it reinforces for the victims that there are no options. Traffickers often encourage drug use as it makes the victim dependent and sometimes in debt to them.

“It's not cognitive activity; it's more a felt sense of trying to speak up or trying to escape won't do any good. The fact that (Sarah) did is

remarkable,” Penney says.

### Supporting victims

USC School of Law associate professor Aparna Polavarapu says the U.S. legal system focuses on punishment and sometimes the needs of victims and survivors are overshadowed as a result. She stresses the importance of proper training for all service providers to help ensure positive support is available for those who seek help.

“The truth is we don't have a system that is very supportive to survivors of many types of harms,” Polavarapu says. “We ought to be thinking about that as we're asking why people don't report, why they don't seek help. Are we offering the kind of help that people need?”

Sarah was fortunate she got the help she needed and was able to turn her life around. She says everything in life had more meaning once she escaped trafficking and she developed an appreciation for the things she had once taken for granted. Sarah had always put USC on a pedestal and, after encouragement from a family member who was a Gamecock, she decided to make education part of her new life.

“I always saw USC as the staple big college of South Carolina that had higher standards,” she says. “I knew I'd be proud to say I graduated from here because you have to work for it, not everyone is admitted. I respect the level of education I'm getting. It's something I'm proud of.”

She's graduating with a bachelor's degree in human services next year and plans on pursuing a master's degree so she can become a certified counselor. She has a fiancé who's supported her throughout her studies. That support, along with the understanding and guidance she's gotten from Lighthouse for Life and Pathways to Healing, has given Sarah the courage to forge a new life for herself.

“The journey to healing is not an easy one. But the reward on the other side of it is the new life, the life you always wanted, the one where you are happy and fulfilled, the life that never comes in trafficking,” Sarah says. “There is salvation through the healing.”

### How to help

Both the West Coast and the Southeast are [hubs for human trafficking](#). Professor Patrice Penney says public awareness can play a huge role in combating human trafficking.

“If you're a serviceperson out there making deliveries or doing electrical work at people's houses and you see someone behind a window who then disappears, [call and report it](#),” Penney says. “There are people who will listen to you. We need more awareness about what trafficking looks like and it's not an abduction in broad daylight.”

### Resources

Several websites provide information about the trauma leading to and resulting from human trafficking, including how to report suspected trafficking and where to seek help to escape trafficking.

- [Polaris](#)
- [National Human Trafficking Hotline](#)
- [Lighthouse for Life](#)
- [National Child Traumatic Stress Network](#)

You can call the National Human Trafficking Hotline at 888-373-7888 if you or someone you know is a victim of human trafficking. Calls are confidential and are accepted all day every day.

## 2022 Leadership Salkehatchie class meets with lawmakers in Washington, D.C.

After nine months of learning about the Salkehatchie region, the 2021-22 Leadership Salkehatchie cohort reported their findings to South Carolina's congressmen during a trip to Washington, D.C.

"The trip to Washington, D.C., is always a highlight for each Leadership Salkehatchie class," said Jackson Alexander, director of the USC Salkehatchie Leadership Institute. "These meetings are a

great opportunity to convey areas of concern for the Salkehatchie region, as well as to relay good news from the area."

This year the class was able to meet in-person with Senator Lindsey Graham and Representative James Clyburn (SC-6), who served as House Majority Whip. The group also met with staff members from the offices of Senator Tim Scott and Representative Joe Wilson (SC-2).

[Leadership Salkehatchie](#) is a

year-long, intensive leadership program sponsored by the [USC Salkehatchie Leadership Institute](#) and the [SouthernCarolina Regional Development Alliance](#). The program empowers its emerging leaders to improve their communities. Since its inception, more than 200 men and women have participated in the program with most of those participants currently residing in the area.



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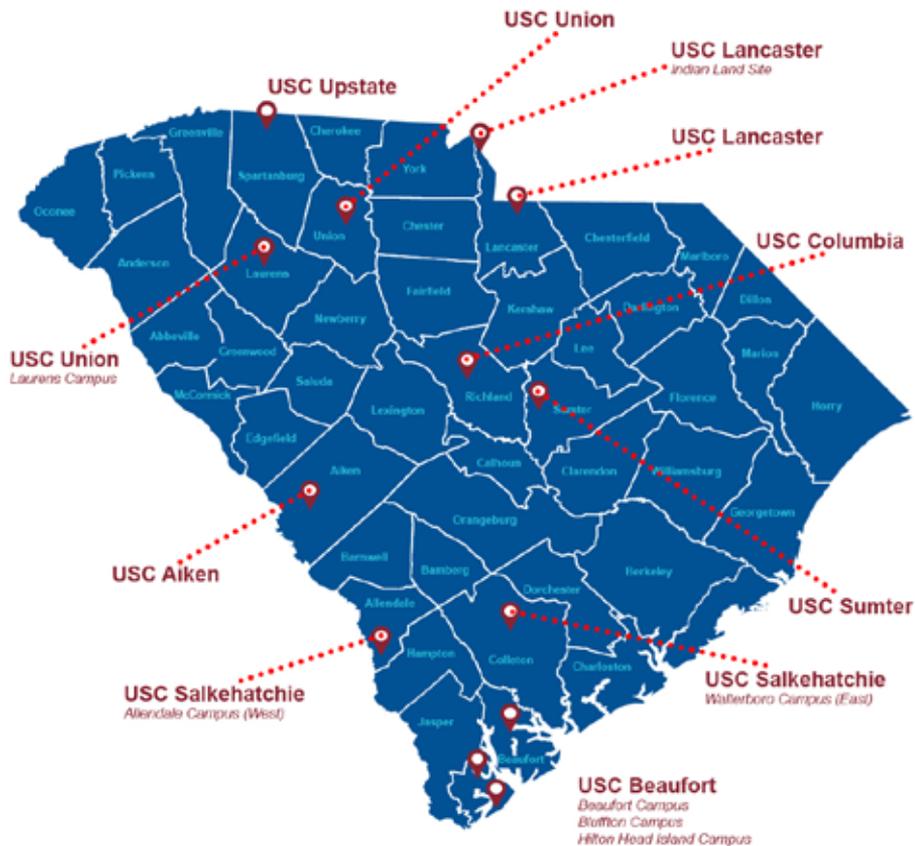
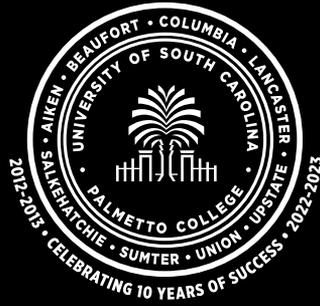
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