



UNIVERSITY OF
South Carolina

SALKEHATCHIE

*Academic Awards
Virtual Celebration*

Spring 2020

Salkehatchie Student of the Year

Each academic year, the USC Salkehatchie faculty elect a Student of the Year. This student must have completed 30 credit hours at USC Salkehatchie with at least a 3.4 GPA, and this student must demonstrate other outstanding attributes such as involvement in campus activities, engaging in community service, and going above and beyond to help fellow students.

2019–2020 Salkehatchie Student of the Year..... Ashley Schirmer

I have the honor of being one of two professors who nominated Ashley Schirmer for the Student of the Year Award. Ashley took Rhetoric and Composition with me in Fall 2019, and it was apparent from the first day of class that she would be an excellent student. She was an enthusiastic participant in every class, and I was impressed by her ability to make thought-provoking connections between the work we were doing in English and her other classes. As the semester progressed, I discovered that Ashley is more than just an excellent student; she is also an exceptionally hard worker and indefatigable advocate for all those around her. I often saw Ashley schedule time outside of class to assist students who were struggling, all while balancing the demands of her own college courses, a job, and parenthood. I am proud of all that Ashley has accomplished here at USC Salkehatchie, humbled by her drive, and excited to see what else she will accomplish in the future.

Dr. Kirsten Iden
USC Salkehatchie Professor of English

I was excited to nominate Ashley Schirmer for Student of the Year, as I believe she is the embodiment of what we at Salkehatchie hope for in our students. She is intelligent, hardworking, proactive, and helpful. I have taught Ashley in two classes and I have worked with her in her role as research assistant. From the beginning Ashley impressed me with her dedication and work ethic. Ashley is the mother of two small children, and, despite many personal challenges, she excels in all she does. In class she strives for perfection in her work and she helps her fellow students meet their challenges. As a research assistant, Ashley often foresees problems that need to be dealt with and addresses them effectively. She is also involved with support groups for parents who face challenges similar to her own. She is not only a great student, but an excellent citizen of this community.

Dr. Carmela Gottesman
USC Salkehatchie Professor of Psychology

Academic Award Recipients

Colleton Museum History Award William “Bill” Blackman

This year’s Colleton Museum History Award is proudly presented to William "Bill" Blackman. Bill has taken courses with Dr. David W. Dangerfield, Dr. Rodney Steward, and me, and we unanimously agreed on Bill’s exceptional talent in the field. Dr. Dangerfield recounted that “Bill approached my course with an open mind and a desire to not just do our assigned work—he wanted more.” Dr. Steward agreed: “Bill is a model student with genuine interest in expanding his historical knowledge.” I will add that Bill gave a wonderful perspective of history for the younger students and told fascinating stories about history he had witnessed. Bill is a non-traditional student who had a 20+ year career in the Navy. He is a native of Charleston and currently resides in Round O. We are proud to present him with this year’s History Award.

Dr. Sarah Miller
USC Salkehatchie Professor of History

Dr. Shannon Pye Chemistry Award.....Savannah Reid

I had the pleasure of meeting Savannah Reid when she was a first-semester freshman in Fall 2019. I found her to be extremely bright but reserved. She always ensured she had a clear understanding of what was expected of her and critically thought about the subject matter. She began to stop by the chemistry lab before class just to watch lab prep and interact. I learned that Savannah is a first-generation college student who had been a dual-enrollment student at Salk the previous year. Her work culminated in her excelling in General Chemistry I and II. Currently, she is enrolled in Chemistry 399, an independent-study course that allows her to conduct computational chemistry research while learning how to write and present findings, applying for a Magellan Grant, and being trained as the chemistry-lab assistant and as an Opportunity Scholars Program tutor. She was also accepted into the Summer Health Professions Educational Program at Florida State University and multiple research conferences for poster presentation prior to the COVID-19 pandemic. Her work ethic, ability to catch on quickly, and drive will serve her as she strives to become a physical therapist.

Dr. Marquita Watkins
USC Salkehatchie Professor of Chemistry

Laffitte and Warren Biology Award.....Savannah Reid

The biology faculty are pleased to present Savannah Reid with the 2020 Laffitte and Warren Biology Award. Savannah performed at an exceptional level throughout the 2019–2020 academic year with the introductory biology course sequence. She looks forward to continuing with the upper-level coursework required to complete a biology degree. In addition to her academic success, Savannah has a genuine interest in biology, confident approach to learning, and an inquisitive nature—traits that will surely lead to many more academic accomplishments in the future.

Dr. Eran Kilpatrick
USC Salkehatchie Professor of Biology

Colleton Medical Center Nursing AwardJoseph Arnold

Joseph is a South Carolina homeschool graduate who began at USC Salkehatchie in Spring 2018. During his time at USC Salkehatchie, Joseph has excelled academically, consistently being named to the President's List and Dean's List. He will earn an Associate in Science and an Associate in Art degree in May 2020, and he is currently completing his first semester of Upper Division nursing through USC Beaufort on the USC Salkehatchie campus. He is working diligently to complete his BSN degree with a projected graduation date of spring 2022. Joseph is consistently described by the faculty as hard-working, smart, enthusiastic, and great at making connections (which is uncommon for a first-semester nursing student). Even with the significant challenges presented to him and his classmates this semester, Joseph continues to keep a positive attitude and strongly encourage his classmates.

Dr. April Cone
USC Salkehatchie Nursing Coordinator

Walterboro Police Department Criminal Justice AwardNathan Tuten

The Walterboro Police Department Criminal Justice Award recipient is Nathan Tuten. Nathan's parents are Leslie and Reahnita Tuten. He is a graduate of Wade Hampton High School. A criminal justice major completing his second year at USC Salkehatchie, Nathan is impressive and hardworking in the classroom. This is reflected by the fact that he has already earned enough credits to be classified as a senior next semester. Nathan has a goal of transferring to the University of South Carolina in Columbia to finish his degree requirements. He then plans to enroll in the USC School of Law. Nathan has already taken steps toward that goal, as he currently is working with the Hampton law firm of Peters, Murdaugh, Parker, Eltzroth and Detrick. I have watched Nathan grow and mature as a student and a young man during his years at USC Salkehatchie. I think the future is bright for Nathan and I expect wonderful things in his career.

Professor John Peek
USC Salkehatchie Professor of Criminal Justice

Palmetto State Bank Math Award Pedro Santana

Pedro is originally from São Paulo, Brazil. After studying in Mississippi as an exchange student for his senior year of high school, he was recruited to play soccer at USC Salkehatchie. I first noticed Pedro when he took my College Algebra course in Fall 2019. He has a solid foundation in mathematics, and strong comprehension skills. It is not surprising that Pedro received a solid A while many students struggled. Knowing his capabilities, I am offering him Business Calculus in an independent-study style this semester. He is very motivated and doing extremely well: he has an A on every assignment, and, despite the complicated semester, we are ahead of schedule! It is really a pleasure to have him as a student. One last thing I want to mention is Pedro is very thoughtful and he is using his talent to help others. Before we moved all classes online, Pedro was working in OSP as a math tutor for the Allendale campus. I know he has helped many students! The math faculty have rarely awarded freshmen the annual Palmetto State Bank Math Award, but this year Pedro becomes the latest freshman recipient! Congratulations, Pedro!

Dr. Wei-Kai Lai
USC Salkehatchie Professor of Mathematics

Allendale Study Club Psychology Award Ashley Dantzler

I've had the pleasure of teaching Ashley in my Introduction to Psychology and Human Sexual Behavior classes. In both, she has been an exemplary student, achieving a very rare final average of 100% in my Psychology 101—and she is projected to score similarly in Psychology 300. In class, she is insightful, often noticing details and drawing conclusions that are more characteristic of a graduate student. She is also diligent and takes responsibility for her education. During this semester, she had to miss several classes for an excused reason. Throughout this time, she stayed in unsolicited contact with me about the content she was missing. Upon return, she provided evidence that she had followed through. I often review prior lectures at the beginning of each class, asking students to recall important concepts. Despite her absences, Ashley was able to answer more of my questions about recent material than students who had attended lecture. Moreover, she has been working full-time while earning her degree—and remains a cheerful and focused student despite that challenge. I have little doubt that Ashley will continue to exceed the norm however she decides to apply her talents. She most certainly deserves this award.

Dr. Justin Mogilski
USC Salkehatchie Professor of Psychology

Opportunity Scholars Program Student of the Year Tyrese Elmore

Student Support Services (Opportunity Scholars Program or OSP) recognizes Tyrese Elmore as our Student of the Year. Tyrese is a native of Allendale. He attended both national and regional leadership conferences for Salkehatchie's OSP program. Tyrese's overall GPA is 3.49. His advisor, Paris Dubois, stated that Tyrese immediately presented himself as an "intelligent and outgoing student." Tyrese serves other students as a paid tutor in math and English. He came highly recommended by his professors in both subject areas. A couple of qualities that help Tyrese stand out from his peers are 1) his willingness to be in constant communication with his OSP advisor about educational and personal achievements and challenges, and 2) prior to becoming a paid tutor, he noticeably set aside time in the OSP lab to help peers in subjects they were struggling with. Congratulations, Tyrese!

Latoya Robinson
Director of the USC Salkehatchie Opportunity Scholars Program

Male and Female Athletes of the Year

Each year, USC Salkehatchie Dean Chris Nesmith and Athletic Director Jane Brewer ask for nominations from the coaches for student athletes to be considered for Male and Female Athlete of the Year. The criteria include high academic achievement as well as a positive attitude on the field and on campus. The idea is that these two students will represent what USC Salkehatchie considers the ideal student athlete. Dr. Nesmith and Director Brewer then selected the recipients from the coaches' nominations.

2019–2020 Female Athlete of the Year Kerri Smutney

Kerri Smutney will graduate in May with a great GPA and a full-tuition scholarship to Middle Georgia State University. As a captain of the women's soccer team, Kerri took on a leadership role *long before* training began last August, using social media to stay in contact with new players, not only those who were committed, but also those still on the fence. In doing so, she helped to ensure that the women's soccer roster was full come opening day. In the classroom, Kerri's work ethic, so apparent on the soccer field, shines through. It's scary to think of how far she can go in life if she just stops spending so much time on TikTok!

Coach Bill Glass
Men's and Women's Soccer Coach

2019–2020 Male Athlete of the Year Zach Hayes

Zach Hayes was an outstanding leader, both on and off the baseball field. He exemplified what a silent leader should be. He was never known to raise his voice or direct others regarding what should be done, but instead led by example. Not only was he a valuable leadoff hitter with the right attitude and demeanor at the plate, but Zach was asked to play a number of positions and the only responses I ever received were "I can do that" or "If that's where you need me, Coach, that's where I'll play." And he did. He embraced every role that he was given. On the rare occasions Zach was not in the lineup, you could find him keeping a chart or doing something to benefit the team. Zach also never fell short on study-hall hours. These are just a few of the reasons that Zach is USC Salkehatchie Male Athlete of the Year.

Coach Jeremy Joye
Baseball Coach

