

UP

A magazine for alumni and friends of the
University of South Carolina Upstate

FALL/WINTER 2022-2023

AWAY THEY GO

*Study abroad resumes
at USC Upstate*

Thinking Globally

Students gain career competencies
and broader world view

Open to Interpretation

Minor trains students to bridge
language barriers

New Leadership

Tierney Bates seeks to have an
impact in Student Affairs



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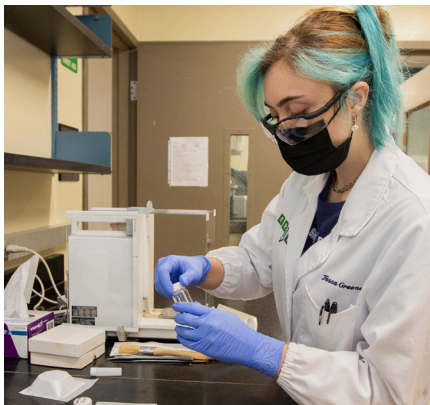
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UP Magazine

FALL/WINTER 2022-2023

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A magazine for alumni and friends of the University of South Carolina Upstate

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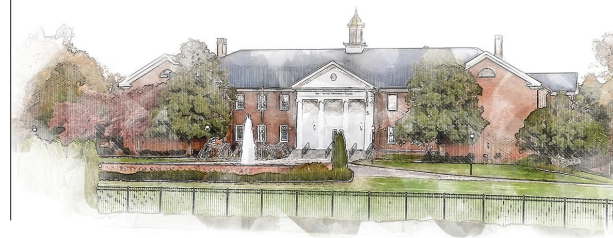
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A message from **THE CHANCELLOR**

The university community began to **Reimagine Upstate** last fall to elevate USC Upstate to greater heights of service and influence. With that energy infusing our work, I am pleased to say that 2022 has been a great year!

First, the **university is financially sound** because of campus-wide efforts to right-size our budget and substantial new support from the South Carolina General Assembly, which appropriated \$3.4 million for tuition mitigation, a library addition totaling \$21 million, and \$3 million for deferred maintenance at USC Upstate. Investments in the university are investments in the future of the state: 85% of USC Upstate alumni live and work in South Carolina, and the university generates a \$500 million economic impact.

Our **academic program** is unsurpassed for excellence! USC Upstate was reaccredited in March with no recommendations by the Commission on Colleges of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools, the toughest regional accrediting body in the nation. This wonderful outcome demonstrates the quality and leadership of our exceptional faculty and staff.

New or recently added features of our academic program detailed in these pages include a new **Spanish Translation and Interpretation** minor, the only one in South Carolina to teach both skills to undergraduates; the return of our **Study Abroad** program with a new partnership that expands students' choices; and the exciting new **University Crime Analysis Center**.

As we seek to provide an "education for all that inspires a thriving and just society," 2022 saw us create new programs to make the university more accessible. The **Spartanburg Promise Scholars Program** offers debt-free bachelor's degree programs for up to 90 Spartanburg County-area high school graduates; the **South Carolina Promise Scholarship** creates a



bridge for students from the Hope Scholarship as freshmen to the Life Scholarship as sophomores; and the **Aspire Scholarship** assists students whose finances might keep them from returning to school without extra help.

New scholarships have also been established by a grant from the **National Science Foundation** and gifts from **Prisma Health** and **Denny's Corp.** And **Amazon** has selected USC Upstate as a partner in its Career Choice program, which pays tuition for its employees to earn a degree or learn new skills at the university.

If that's not exciting enough, the rising enthusiasm for the university was

on full display as thousands of USC Upstate fans descended on downtown Spartanburg for **Morgan Square Madness**, the tipoff of the new basketball season, and our reimagined **Family Weekend**.

I am thrilled to be part of the USC Upstate community and look forward to an even more exciting 2023. Thank you for all you do for our students.

Go Spartans!

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Bennie L. Harris". The signature is fluid and cursive, written in a professional style.

Bennie L. Harris, Ph.D.
Chancellor

BUILDING AN ENDURING LEGACY

The USC Upstate Foundation was established in 1973 as a nonprofit 501(c)(3) corporation to allow donors to make tax-deductible contributions in support of USC Upstate. The Foundation receives, manages, invests, distributes, and stewards private resources in support of the university's mission in the areas of teaching, research, public service, and scholarship.

Support from alumni and friends allows deserving and aspiring students opportunities to benefit from a well-rounded education. Your commitment is an impactful way to support current students on their journeys toward an education and future success.

Together, we can continue our promise to every student at USC Upstate - Reach Greater Heights.

To learn more about how you can support USC Upstate, please contact the Office of University Advancement at **864-503-5234** or **giving@uscupstate.edu**.

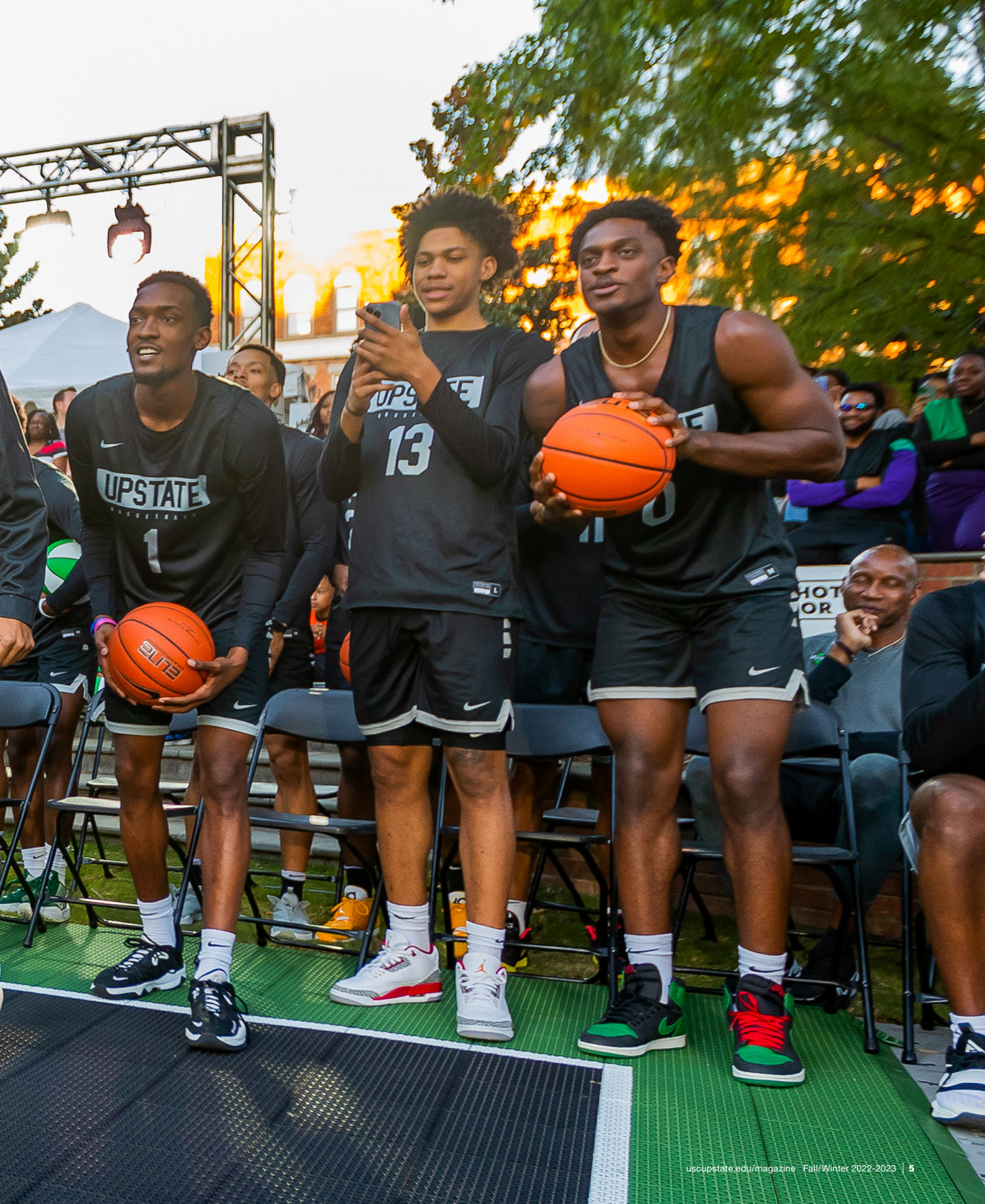
UPSTATE
University of South Carolina

OFFICE OF UNIVERSITY
ADVANCEMENT

MAD ABOUT U

USC Upstate brought the campus to the city on Oct. 6 with Morgan Square Madness, a new event spotlighting the men's and women's basketball teams. With an enthusiastic crowd of green-clad spectators and residents looking on, adults and children took part in friendly competitions on a court set up in Morgan Square in downtown Spartanburg, while team members showed off their skills. The event kicked off a weekend of family activities on campus that included Rocktoberfest and Family Fest. Its success established, Morgan Square Madness will return in fall 2023.





THIS IS UP

A Capitol Experience

Senior Emily Martinez-Villalobos is a strong believer in keeping a cool head and working collaboratively. Those may seem like rare traits in Washington, D.C., these days, but Martinez-Villalobos found they served her well during her summer internship in the office of U.S. Rep. Juan Vargas of California.

Martinez-Villalobos was one of 30 students selected from colleges and universities across the country to participate in the Congressional Hispanic Caucus Institute's internship program. The political science major says working on Capitol Hill was a special experience for her.

"My family immigrated from Mexico, we grew up poor, I'm a first-generation college student," she says. "So just being in D.C. was really emotional. I'd never thought that I would be there. Stepping into the halls of Congress, being in the Rotunda, just seeing that and thinking, wow, I'm here."

Every Monday, the interns took part in morning seminars that examined different aspects of the legislative and political process. Afternoons were devoted to team-building activities or hearing from diverse players in the political system – lobbyists, lawyers, government officials. "It was a good perspective on the many opportunities the world has to offer you," Martinez-Villalobos says.

During the rest of the week, Martinez-Villalobos conducted research on



policy issues and prepared briefings and memos for Vargas' staff. A lot of the work focused on immigration and foreign affairs, both of which are areas of interest for Martinez-Villalobos, an aspiring lawyer. She appreciated that she was trusted with substantive projects to work on, and was impressed by Vargas' kindness to the staff.

"He would sit down with us and have one-on-one conversations," she says. "It was a really humanizing experience, because sometimes you see people and they don't talk to you. But he really did a good job of making us feel welcome in the office and seeing us as human beings."

A high point of the experience was getting to write a bill for her final project. Martinez-Villalobos's proposed legislation focused on allowing immigrants to come to the U.S. to work in specific high-needs sectors of the


economy, such as construction.

Bipartisanship was part of the culture of Vargas' office, Martinez-Villalobos says. Staff members looked for areas that both parties could agree on. "It was nice working with both sides and just bringing it to the middle, because the only way to pass bills is if you're working together," she says.

Still, she says, the level of polarization she witnessed was disappointing. "One of the main reasons we're not passing bills is because people are unwilling to work with each other," Martinez-Villalobos says. "You have to take a step back and be realistic, and understand it's not going to be 'my way,' it's never going to be 'my way.' Because if it's really a democracy, it's about everyone coming together and deciding in the middle."

Martinez-Villalobos is now in the midst of applying for law school, and hopes to study immigration law. Far from making her cynical about the political system, her experiences have made her interested in going into politics one day.

She says her internship also made her appreciate how government works, which in turn inspired personal pride.

"I feel more patriotic, because it showed me that the American dream is real," she said. "I am the product of my parents' dreams." 



Emily Martinez-Villalobos spent the summer working in the office of U.S. Rep. Juan Vargas of California.

An Infusion for Nursing

USC Upstate is one of five South Carolina colleges to share in a \$5 million grant from Prisma Health that provides scholarships to upper-level nursing students.

This fall, 24 juniors and seniors pursuing a BSN were selected as Prisma Scholars, with each receiving a \$2,500 award. Prisma Health will also offer employment opportunities to interested graduating seniors, and provide internships to those who are still students.

Prisma's gift seeks to increase the pipeline of skilled nurses in South Carolina, which is anticipated to have the fourth highest nursing shortage in the nation by 2030, according to data compiled by RegisteredNursing.org.

Shirleatha Lee, dean of the Mary Black College of Nursing, said the partnership is a win for students and the region. "There are a lot of facilities and clinical sites that need nurses right now," Lee said. "Being able to make that transition into practice much easier and more streamlined is a benefit to not only the student but also the facility."

Additionally, she said, "The scholarships help support student success and progression toward degree completion because they allow students to work less and focus more on their education."

While a portion of the grant will be


used on immediate scholarships, the majority has been set aside to grow an endowment for future aid. The gift also provides funding for a recruiter/liaison who will help recruit students for the BSN program and provide information about career opportunities available at Prisma Health.

For students who already have an interest in working with Prisma, the partnership will help them connect early with the health care system, and take advantage of internships, shadowing experiences, and NCLEX support, Lee said.

"As students graduate, it ensures they feel more comfortable. And when you are more comfortable, and more connected to the facility, your likelihood of staying there increases," she said.

Akira Salley, a USC Upstate senior

who will graduate in May, said the grant has ensured she stays on track this year. In addition to helping her cover her rent and her travel expenses between Spartanburg and Prisma Health in Greenville, where she is doing her clinicals, the grant will also help her purchase NCLEX study guides and attend prep classes. After graduation, Salley hopes to work as an ICU nurse or further her education and become a certified registered nurse anesthetist in the Prisma system.

"I had medical problems myself and seeing how the nurses helped me get through that made me want to become a nurse," she said. "I want to make a difference in the people of color community, because everyone should receive the same good quality of treatment." 



Vaccine Boosters

As long as there are still people hesitant about getting a COVID vaccine, Ginny Webb wants to reach them.

Over the summer, Webb, an associate professor of biology, hired seniors Andres Villegas and Reem Hassan to put together videos in Spanish and English that shared people's reasons for why they'd gotten vaccinated. Webb was particularly interested in reaching African American and Hispanic populations, groups that her research

showed were less likely to be vaccinated but more likely to leave the option open.

Villegas used previously planned trips to Spain and his native Colombia to gather testimonials from the Spanish speakers he met. He and Hassan, both biology pre-med majors, also took part in the MedEx internship program at Prisma Health over the summer, and interviewed fellow students from many different colleges and backgrounds.

Hassan and Villegas put their completed videos on a website they created, <https://reemhassann7.wixsite.com/my-site-2>, with Spanish translations added to the English versions and vice versa. The website also contains vaccine facts, and invites visitors to share their own vaccine stories.

THIS IS UP

A Gift of Hope

Couple's gift to El Centro supports first-generation Latino/a students.

BY TREVOR ANDERSON '04

John and Kelly Swift know intimately the challenges that first-generation students encounter.

The couple, who met in an accounting class during the second semester of their senior year at the University of South Carolina, faced many obstacles as they navigated their way through college. Their desire to make that journey a little easier for others led them to make a \$50,000 gift to USC Upstate to fund endowed student scholarships and support the university's South Carolina Centro Latino, known as El Centro. The scholarships are anticipated to be available to students in the fall of 2023.

Araceli Hernández-Laroche, director of El Centro and professor of modern languages at USC Upstate, said the gift will give hope, particularly to first-generation students and their families.

"Words cannot express our gratitude for John and Kelly," said Hernández-Laroche, the first tenured Mexican-American professor in USC Upstate's history and the university's first Hispanic faculty member to be promoted to the rank of full professor. "This gift is an investment in our future and will enable us to continue to highlight our Latino/a students, faculty, and staff."

After graduating from college, the

Swifts both became certified public accountants. They settled in Greenville, where they had successful business careers, raised their family, and were actively involved in civic and community outreach.

"It became important to us in the next phase of life to find some way to impact lives," John Swift said. "We both put ourselves through college. We decided we wanted to find a way that we could help kids who want to pursue higher education."

The couple began mentoring students. What they discovered led them to research and explore other ways that they could give back. They also began working with Adela Mendoza, executive director of the Hispanic Alliance of South Carolina.

"In working with kids from Latino/a or Hispanic backgrounds, we found that about 90 percent of them were first-gen students," John Swift said. "We found that 'Dreamers,' even though they live in-state, are considered out-of-state students and could not take advantage of financial aid and other scholarships."

Adds Kelly Swift, "We found that in many cases they weren't being advised effectively in high school. They have the capacity and the capability to go to

college, they just need to be shown the way.

The Swifts found the retention of first-gen Latino/a or Hispanic college students to be a nationwide challenge. They began investigating why.


"Loans and scholarships may not be the solution for every student," John Swift said. "They may be facing pressure from their families or communities. There may be language barriers, social challenges, or just a lack of access to resources ... We wanted to connect the dots to help these kids with college, whatever that big picture looks like."

A few months ago, the Swifts attended a Student Dreamers Alliance meeting in Greenville, where they were introduced to USC Upstate student Emily Martínez-Villalobos. They explained their desire to help, and Martínez-Villalobos put the couple in touch with Hernández-Laroche.

"(Emily) asked us if we had heard of El Centro," John Swift said. "She connected us with Araceli. We had lunch and everything just grew from there."

"We've managed the whole process of getting to college, graduating from college, and then pursuing a career," he added. "We've really been drawn to first-gen Latino/a or Hispanic students and we're trying to give back with our time, our talents, and our funds to help other folks navigate that same process. We're excited about the work being done at USC Upstate."

"It really touches our hearts when we get to sit down with a student and hear their story or listen to their family history," Kelly Swift said. "We could not deny that we knew we were called to share our resources."

The Swifts currently reside in Prosperity. They have three children and three grandchildren, with a fourth expected. 

John and Kelly Swift, center, have made a gift to the South Carolina Centro Latino that will benefit first-generation Latino/a students, such as those in USC Upstate's Avanzando Through College program.





Tessa Greene, center, works in the lab as a participant in the summer 2022 Er(Up)t program at USC Upstate. Greene was part of professor Josh Ruppel's research team, and plans to return this summer to continue the work.

Process of Discovery

Could a molecule one day have the potential to act as antibiotic, and maybe even kill cancer cells?

It's an intriguing possibility, but Josh Ruppel, director of research and professor of chemistry, is focused on much more modest goals with his research. With the support of a grant from the National Institutes of Health, Ruppel and his research collaborator Nicole Snyder, professor of chemistry at Davidson College, are exploring types of molecules that, when activated by light, could eventually have potential to target harmful bacteria or fight cancer.

Approximately half of the \$402,695 grant will be used to fund work at USC Upstate over the next three years, including paid summer research positions for students.

While Ruppel and his students explore methods for creating the molecules, Snyder and her team will look at how they behave with different carbohydrates attached. Ruppel says the hope is to create a "library" of molecules that can be tested to keep improving their properties and see what outcomes result.

Assisting in Ruppel's research will be two to four students selected from

the next applicants for Er(UP)t, USC Upstate's summer research program. While the research assistants will take part in many Er(UP)t activities, their work will last 10 to 12 weeks, beyond the eight weeks of the Er(UP)t program. They will also get to present their work at the American Chemical Society National Meeting.

Ruppel says he sometimes has to manage students' expectations when they hear about his work. "They walk away thinking, 'Oh, we're going to cure cancer.' No, we're not," he says. "We are going to be in the lab, making a couple of molecules that then we're going to test."

Like everything in science, it's just one tiny piece of something that "might lead to something that might lead to something else that might lead to something that's useful," Ruppel says.


Sophomore Tessa Greene, who worked on Ruppel's team this past summer, is just fine with that. Her time in the lab confirmed chemistry was the right path for her, and she appreciated that Ruppel worked to bring her up to the same level as the seniors in the group.

"His plans are helping students not

only grow in their confidence in the laboratory and get experience, but also grow in all their courses, not just chemistry," she says.

Greene says by the end of the summer, she and her teammates could figure out a synthesis on their own and then complete the reaction without Ruppel's help. "It didn't feel like being in a classroom, it felt like you're being a scientist, which was so invigorating and exciting," Greene says.

That's the main outcome Ruppel likes to see. "I'm at Upstate because I want to work with students," he says. "This type of training is absolutely fantastic for students who want to pursue careers that involve research, whether that's going to grad school or working in industry."

Greene in fact is already considering a doctoral program, something she had never thought about before. More immediately, though, she can't wait to get back to the lab this summer and continue the work her team started. "I'm really excited to help train the students that will be coming and be able to tell them, 'Hey, I did this last summer, it's going to be life-changing. Just wait.'" 

THIS IS UP

Parting Shot

You may have never met Les Duggins (though if you're a Spartanburg resident, there's a pretty good chance you have), but you've most certainly seen his work. Just turn a few pages of this magazine, and you'll find his photos.

Duggins recently retired after 14 years as USC Upstate's official photographer. But his career began long before that. For the past 50 years, Duggins has photographed pretty much everyone who is anyone in the Spartanburg region – and beyond. From The Marshall Tucker Band to National Football League gridiron legends and many others, he has captured Spartanburg's history through the lens of a camera.

His photography career began in 1973, when he went to work as a staffer for B&B Studio and the Spartanburg Herald-Journal. In 1981, he opened his own photography studio near the city's east side.

Through a combination of hard work,



skill, and customer service, Duggins eventually caught the eye of Spartanburg entrepreneurial leader Jerry Richardson, the founder and former owner of the NFL's Carolina Panthers.

In 1990, Duggins went to work for Richardson's company Spartan Foods as the manager of the Creative Service Photography Department. He was named one of the Panthers' team photographers in 1994. Duggins returned to the Herald-Journal in 1999 to serve as photo editor. As anyone who

has ever accompanied Duggins on a photo shoot can attest, it seems like everyone in Spartanburg knows and respects him.

In 2009, Duggins joined USC Upstate as the university photographer. For the past 14 years he has captured some of the most iconic images of campus. His work includes the opening of the George Dean Johnson, Jr. College of Business and Economics in downtown Spartanburg, multiple commencement ceremonies, chancellor investitures, and more. His extensive collection of building, campus beauty, and student images have elevated the story of USC Upstate's critical role in the region and state.

While Duggins may be officially retired, expect to see him out in the community taking pictures. He'll be the one hovering at the edge of the action with his cameras around his neck, looking for just the right angle and the best lighting.

Downtown Gallery Opens

USC Upstate is bringing art to the community through a new gallery space at the Chapman Cultural Center in downtown Spartanburg. The Upstate Art Gallery has not only shared some of the university's own holdings, but also exhibited the work of diverse artists living in the Upstate region and beyond.

Gallery director Lex Lancaster, assistant professor of art history, is committed to showcasing the work of



women, immigrant, queer, trans and emerging underrepresented artists in the South. Programming built around the exhibits focuses on the artistic innovations and cultural contributions of each artist and offers learning opportunities for USC Upstate students.

Lancaster says the goal is to foster conversations about how art works to shape culture, promote social justice, and help everyone view the world from a multitude of perspectives.

The gallery opened with a display of celebrity portraits by Andy Warhol from the university's collection. Subsequent exhibitions featured the works of Yehimi Cambrón, an Atlanta-based artist and activist whose works depict immigrants and the experiences of undocumented Americans, and art by Mo Kessler, a queer Appalachian artist whose mixed media creations center on the social and environmental landscape of Appalachia.

In January, works by ceramic artist Valerie Zimany will be featured. Admission to the gallery is free, and open to all. Hours are 10 a.m. – 5 p.m., Tuesday through Friday, 10 a.m. – 7 p.m. Thursday, and 11 a.m. – 4 p.m. Saturday.

Upstate, is that U?

Over the last few months, you may have noticed a lot of billboards, mall kiosks, bus shelters and buses promoting USC Upstate. The new advertising is part of a rebranding campaign, "Greater Heights," that is designed to elevate and strengthen the university's visibility and position in the region.

The new campaign was developed by marketing firm Ologie, which also created USC Upstate's current logo. After conducting focus groups with various university stakeholders, the Ologie team identified several key attributes that define USC Upstate: supportive faculty who mentor their students; an academic culture that is available to all and offers career-relevant learning; and opportunities to push past limitations and make generational change possible. "Greater Heights" incorporates these themes and captures the aspirational nature of learning at USC Upstate.

As part of the official rollout, alums and friends of USC Upstate are encouraged to snap a selfie with one of the ads when they see one and email it to trevora2@uscupstate.edu. Photos will be shared on USC Upstate's social media accounts.

A Walk in the Woods

Step onto the trail behind the Burroughs building and you enter a world far removed from the manicured lawns and tidy flower beds of the USC Upstate campus.

The path can be easy to miss – some red blazes and a modest dedication plaque set back from the parking lot mark the start. Follow the red clay trail along and you pass a semicircular seating area for outdoor classes, the weathered wood benches warmed by sunlight filtering through the canopy of branches. A small footbridge, warped and twisted from age and weather, crosses a trickling creek, while here and there rough benches invite visitors to sit in contemplation.

This quiet, peaceful corner of campus almost was lost to development in the campus' early days, says Jack Turner, director of the Watershed Ecology Center. At that time, Turner notes, "We had a few trees that lined the sidewalks, river oaks and water oaks, but they were small." The arboretum was still years away from existence, so the woods provided a unique outdoor lab for botany classes.

But plans for the fast-expanding central campus called for clearing the land for a new building, something Gillian Newberry, a now-retired professor of botany at USC Upstate, says she and Turner vehemently opposed. They successfully made a case for why the university should

preserve the land, ensuring that students today still have access to this natural resource.

Among the main reasons for preserving the land was Newberry's discovery of *Hexastylis naniflora*, a threatened plant commonly known as dwarf-flowered heartleaf, which grows in seepages. The plant, which for most of the year can be identified by its single heart-shaped leaf, blooms from February to May, and its seeds are distributed by ants, Newberry says.

"The fact that we have a plant that grows here and Greenville County and Henderson County, and nowhere else in the world, is certainly an eye-opener to many people," she says.

It also highlights what a valuable teaching tool the woods are, Newberry says, full of treasures to share with students. "If you're giving a lecture about deciduous woodlands, it's much more inviting to show than to tell," she says.

Creating the trail was a labor of love for Newberry and students in the Science Club, which she advised. The group gradually completed a loop through the woods and added the amphitheater for outdoor classes. Always there was brush to be cut back and debris to be removed.

But the restoration work that took place in the 1989-90 school year had an added purpose. Rebecca "Becky" Cox, a 40-year-old student who died of a




Gillian Newberry, a retired professor of botany at USC Upstate, has been studying dwarf-flowered heartleaf populations, including this one at Upstate, over the course of many years.

brain tumor before she could complete her senior year, had been an active member of the Science Club and students wanted to honor her memory.

"I remember the shock with members of the club when she so tragically left us," Newberry recalls. "She was a joy to have in the group. She was quiet, but very willing to work, very willing to join in our activities, and seemed to truly enjoy being with us."

A small plaque was erected at the trailhead paying tribute to Cox. A few weeks later, Newberry noticed a young man making a rubbing of the plaque, and introduced herself. The man told her he was Cox's brother, and was so touched by the Science Club's tribute that he wanted to have a record of it.

While trail maintenance today is on an as-needed basis, a new spur was recently added that leads to a small pollinator habitat. Large planter boxes contain plants that provide food for bees, butterflies and other beneficial insects, and signage offers suggestions for how to encourage pollinators in backyard gardens. The habitat is also accessible by foot from East Campus Boulevard. 

Hexastylis naniflora, commonly known as dwarf-flowered heartleaf, grows in only three counties, two of which are in South Carolina. Newberry estimates this plant on the Upstate campus is around 100 years old.



‘Service and Transformation’

Tierney Bates seeks to elevate the student experience as the new vice chancellor of Student Affairs.

BY KESHA BOYCE WILLIAMS

Six weeks before Tierney Bates began pursuing the opportunity to become vice chancellor of Student Affairs at USC Upstate, he received a promotional box from a Greenville-based tourism organization that said “Move to the Upstate.”

Inside were materials for sharing with students at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, where Bates was assistant vice chancellor for special projects and executive director for university career services, touting the exciting career opportunities available in Upstate South Carolina. That was the beginning of Bates’ chapter with USC Upstate.

Bates officially began serving as the vice chancellor for student affairs on July 1, but the day before, he attended an orientation session as an observer. As he was introduced to the crowd, he found a new way to engage them with the call and response chant of Spartan Pride ... Magnified!

Bates’ years of experience in student affairs includes leadership positions at Virginia Union University, North Carolina Central University, the University of Louisville, the University of Tennessee, Bowling Green State University and Baldwin-Wallace University.

What kind of student were you in college?

Very active. I went to the University of Akron. I was in a fraternity (Phi Beta Sigma). My freshman year I focused on academics. My sophomore year is where I really took off. I became an RA and I became involved with student organizations. Junior year I became homecoming king and I was also very involved in our student-run radio station. I was a DJ and a producer and vetted all the music that went on the air.

What attracted you to the field of student affairs?

I had two mentors who showed me down this path. One encouraged me to consider student affairs and gave me a pamphlet to read about the field. I read it and said “this is me” and got excited about working in the field.

The second mentor said the field needs more people who look like me to become leaders in the profession. I realized that we didn’t have enough leaders who looked like me as an African-American at these institutions.

And not just being the leader who is African-American, but being the leader for all students to see that leadership comes in different colors, ethnicities, sexes, and more.

What attracted you to the opportunity to serve at USC Upstate?

I wanted to serve at a smaller university to have more of an impact in transforming the lives of students. I heard good things about Upstate from the lens of student support. I also came for the opportunity to work with the great Dr. Bennie L. Harris, a leader who I respect and who looks like me from a leadership perspective.

How would you describe your leadership style?

Service and transformation. As a man of Phi Beta Sigma, I firmly believe in “culture for service, service for humanity.” Service to me speaks to how am I making an impact in other people’s lives? Transformation speaks to how can we transform experiences, engage individuals and take it to another level versus just being transactional?

A prime example was Family Weekend. It was an opportunity for parents and families to come to campus and support their students and have fun, but there was real transformation when connections were made to resources and people to help shape the direction of students going forward at USC Upstate.

How does your leadership style help inform your understanding of student involvement?

In my career I’ve worked at both HBCUS (historically black colleges and



universities) and PWIS (predominately white institutions). I'm basically taking all of my experiences serving at both PWIS and HBCUS and learning how they merge together at an institution like Upstate that is so diverse. What are the type of programs, populations, policies and procedures we need to address to be able to meet the needs of students while they are? How do you find the common ground that gets everybody together?

How have you been getting to know USC Upstate?

I eat in the cafeteria every other day with the students. I have met with all the student organizations. I have met with student leaders. I engage with students on social media. I went on a tour to each college to help them understand Student Affairs – who we are and what we do – and try to put a face to the names and create a culture of care.

What are the biggest changes you've seen in student affairs over the years?

Mental health has become really big for everyone and how we take care of ourselves. There also has to be more flexibility in the work for student affairs staff so they have time to take care of themselves and model that for students. What education do we need to give students up front, and what information do we need to give to parents to create and maintain a culture of care for these students?

You give your cell number out to parents. Why?

I do that because people can feel the need to connect to someone. When you know a person that will get things done (since that is what I'm known for), that is a way for people to relax. Parents will know that somebody really cares about their student.

What do you hope Spartan Pride, Magnified! communicates about the USC Upstate experience?

That you are really happy that you chose USC Upstate. Great school spirit creates an atmosphere of belonging. It creates an atmosphere where people feel like they thrive overall. It magnifies their experiences and their goals.





Taking a Byte Out of Crime

New USC Upstate center helps improve policing through data analysis.

When a community experiences a crime spike, examining data to determine where, when and why the incidents are occurring is often the first step in finding a solution. The job of reviewing that data falls to a crime analyst in large law enforcement agencies, but small departments often don't have the budget for a dedicated analyst. That's where the new Upstate Crime Analysis Center (UCAC) hopes to have an impact.

"I think what's making this work is that we are taking our cue from the community and the needs of the community, because that's what our job is supposed to do," says Michele

Covington, UCAC director and associate professor of criminal justice.

Covington says one reason she proposed the center is she realized the region lacked the kind of collaborative and analytical space that other parts of the country have. In speaking to crime analysts in the area, she learned many felt isolated, without any way to connect to others in the field and share ideas. The university seemed like a natural environment to provide such a space, but Covington wanted to make it a little different from the regional centers she'd seen.

"In other places, regional crime centers are generally controlled access. They don't interact with the public in

any way," says Covington. While the area of the center containing law enforcement data will be restricted, UCAC will be a place for trainings, meetings, and civilian events that help the public understand how police decision-making works, Covington says.

"A lot of people, when they hear crime analysis, they're thinking about forensics," she says. "That's not what it is, it's really data analysis. We're the nerds of policing."

Once an analyst has collected and reviewed the crime data, they can look at strategies other jurisdictions have used to deal with the problem, and recommend ways to better allocate resources to address the issue,



Michele Covington, director of the Upstate Crime Analysis Center, works with student intern Kaelyn Scurry '22 at the Greenville campus.

Covington explains.

“You’re not replacing traditional policing – you still have to respond to calls and do all those things,” she says. “But you can use data to try to better understand what’s happening in your area to make it safer, and make sure the policing is there.”

Gerard Hildebrandt, a full-time police officer who went through the crime analysis program while getting his degree in criminal justice at USC Upstate, agrees.

“Rather than just being reactive to things, crime analysis gives you a more proactive approach and allows you to look at the big picture,” Hildebrandt says.

For example, a sketchy motel might generate multiple calls about prostitution, drugs, violence and theft, using up a lot of a department’s time and resources. Looking deeper into the situation can lead to a comprehensive solution, such as getting code enforcement agencies involved, Hildebrandt says.

“Crime analysis provided a great deal of information that opened my eyes to a lot more than just answering calls and knowing who the bad guy is,” he says.

Crime analysis classes are offered entirely online through Upstate’s Greenville campus, of which Covington is the executive director, and a certificate program for non-students was added for the first time in the fall. Covington says the latter option is particularly attractive to those in law enforcement seeking additional training.

The center will also be a resource for students in the criminal justice program who are interested in learning more about crime analysis or who have a concentration in that area. Kaelyn Scurry '22, a criminal justice major, was introduced to the concentration through Covington’s courses, and ended up doing a summer internship at the center.

“It’s a different experience from sitting in class, doing the work and listening to lectures,” Scurry says. “This is hands-on experience. You get to do different trial runs, you see what works and what doesn’t.”

She particularly enjoyed sitting in on meetings Covington had with members of the Highland community in Spartanburg. The neighborhood is the focus of a grant to reduce crime and improve residents’ safety, and Covington is providing the data for specific areas to focus on.

“By having the tools and the programs that we have in the Crime Analysis Center, we’re able to help them,” Scurry says. “It’s all about helping.”

Thanks to partnerships with top vendors in the crime analysis field, UCAC is equipped with powerful software tools that enable the center to provide assistance in a variety of areas, including mapping and social media analysis. It’s another way the center can share resources that are too costly for most small law enforcement agencies, Covington says.

One of the best resources, though, is other professionals, and Covington values the shared expertise they bring through collaboration. “Because so many crime analysts are self-taught, they tend to be very generous with their knowledge and their time, because they’ve been there,” Covington says.

So when an agency comes to UCAC with an issue, “we can say, here’s what this agency, which has a comparable mission and size, did for that, and it worked or didn’t work. We’re just trying to connect those dots for them.”



Visitors tour the Upstate Crime Analysis Center during its official opening in September.

All in a Night's Work

Upstate alum Carson Moore '13 opens an evening clinic to serve the region's children.

As any parent knows, it's a given that the minute the doctor's office closes, their child will spike a fever, sprain an ankle, or come down with a stomach bug.

Carson Moore, '13, a physician assistant, would see these families regularly when he worked in the emergency room at Spartanburg Regional. Without an evening option available, parents would take their children to the ER for medical care, which is not an ideal situation for anyone, Moore says.

But Upstate children now have an alternative. Moore and his business partner, pediatric nurse practitioner Becky Brown, opened Carolina Children's Clinic in Boiling Springs in October. The clinic, which is open 5 to 10 p.m. Sunday through Friday, is there to treat all those bumps, cuts, coughs, and other ailments that crop up after hours.

"We wanted to have a place where parents would feel comfortable and confident bringing their kids, knowing that they're going to get high quality

Carson Moore '13, right, opened Carolina Children's Clinic in Boiling Springs in October. The clinic is the only pediatric evening care facility in the area, and sees patients 5 to 10 p.m. Sunday through Friday. Below, USC Upstate student Autumn Boykin takes Cecil Casey's temperature. Moore wanted Upstate students to benefit from the same kind of training experience he had as a student, so he hired five of them when he opened the clinic.





care from people who really care,” Moore says.

Moore didn’t intend to go into medicine when he began his career. A Summerville native, Moore completed two years at Spartanburg Methodist College before transferring to USC Upstate, where he was a Spanish major. His goal at that time was to pursue ministry, perhaps in the Hispanic community or through mission work.

For awhile, Moore worked at Polydeck in Spartanburg, doing international sales and customer service. He enjoyed the job and the company, but felt something was missing. When he mentioned this to his wife, Amy, one day, she said, “What about medicine?”

The concept wasn’t completely new. Moore says his wife, who has known him since childhood, reminded him he used to talk about medicine fairly often. Moore recalls that when he was 6 or 7 years old, he once sneaked into the living room while his parents were watching the hit TV show “ER.” A character on the show had been

stabbed and the medical team was working to save her life. “So growing up, for the longest time, I said, ‘I’m going to be a heart surgeon,’ not really knowing what that entailed,” he says.

He did know he was drawn to serving others, and his involvement in his church was what initially led him to ponder ministry as a career. After his wife’s reminder of his earlier interest, however, he began turning the idea over in his head. He had his breakthrough a short time later when his wife asked him, “Have you ever thought about PA school?”

“It was like the Lord was saying, ‘Yes, that right there, I just used your wife to tell you what you’re supposed to do,’” Moore says.

He knew he had some catching up to do first, though. “I went back to Upstate because I had taken maybe two lab sciences ever,” he says. For the next year, he focused on taking all the prerequisites he’d need to get into a physician’s assistant program, and worked at EmergencyMD in Boiling



Moore examines patient Jacob Fletcher. The clinic helps keep children out of the ER when they need after-hours care, Moore says.

Springs to gain experience. He then enrolled at North Greenville University.

Moore explains that physician assistants, like doctors, go through rigorous training, but on a far more condensed schedule and not as in-depth. The profession arose out of a need to address doctor shortages, and physician assistants have helped provide greater access to care in many underserved communities.

State laws determine what PAs can do, and in South Carolina, permissible duties include seeing patients independently, writing prescriptions, ordering and interpreting labs, and referring patients to specialists. PAs work in collaboration with a physician, who is available for consultation and to review what the PA does.

Moore has known his clinic partner Brown since he was an undergraduate at Upstate. He connected with her when she worked at the now-closed pediatric evening clinic in downtown Spartanburg, where he shadowed her and the clinic interpreters to get practice using the Spanish medical terminology he’d learned in class.

Brown was the ideal partner for the new clinic, Moore says, since she not only brought years of experience to the job, she also had built-in name recognition. “The community adores her and knows her very well, so when I put her face out on social media, we blew up,” he says. “People were saying, you took care of me when I was little and now I’m bringing my kid to see you.”


Working at the clinic are USC Upstate students Khyati Patel, from left, Olivia Castaneda, Sarah Beth Woodfin, Emery Jones, and Autumn Boykin.



Moore admits starting the clinic was a lot of trial and error. He didn't have any business background, but he knew there was a strong need in the community. The pediatric evening clinic where Brown had worked closed when the owner retired, and nothing had replaced it. "My big thing was I wanted to keep kids out of the ER that didn't need to be in the ER," he says.

Helping to provide treatment are six students interested in becoming PAs, five of them from USC Upstate. Moore remembered how valuable it was for him to get clinical experience before starting his PA program, and wanted to offer the

same opportunity to students from his alma mater. The students commit to two years at the clinic, during which time they gain the skills and knowledge to prepare them for graduate school.

Since its opening in October, the clinic has seen a steady stream of young patients, including some from outside the immediate area, Moore says. On their very first night, a frantic parent called 10 minutes before closing time to say they were on the way, and was grateful when Moore said he would wait for them. "It's the relief of knowing somebody is here in that moment," he says. "That's what we're here for." 



Moore prepares a shot for a patient.

Five USC Upstate students interested in pursuing a physician's assistant program after graduation also work at the clinic. Student Sarah Beth Woodfin takes vitals for patient Estie Hice.







Open to Interpretation

An Upstate program is training students to bridge language barriers.

BY ELIZABETH ANDERSON

Andres Villegas remembers the frustration of being in a classroom surrounded by students speaking a language he didn't understand.

He was a teenager when he arrived in the United States from Colombia, and started high school without knowing any English. That disorienting experience is one of the reasons Villegas, a biology pre-med major, is pursuing a minor in Spanish translation and interpretation at USC Upstate. "I just want to be able to help the people who are not able to speak the language," he says. "I know how those people feel when they're not able to express themselves."

With Spanish the primary language spoken in nearly 5% of South Carolina households, and 13% of households nationwide, according to 2021 census figures, interpreters and translators are a growing need in everything from health care to the justice system. Because of that demand, the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics estimates employment of interpreters and translators will grow 20 percent over the next 10 years.

Maria Montesó wants to be sure those jobs are filled by qualified people. Montesó, senior instructor of Spanish at USC Upstate and an accredited Spanish-English translator and interpreter, won approval for a minor in Spanish translation and interpretation earlier this year, making USC Upstate the only college in South Carolina to offer a formal undergraduate program in the subject.

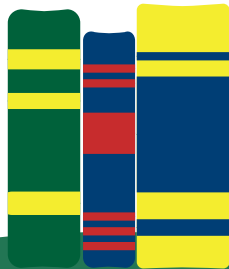
"We have a community eager to do things, and they are already bilingual, so we need to provide them with the academic tools to know how to protect themselves and do a good job," Montesó says.

A new approach

Montesó has offered Spanish interpretation and translation classes before, and she teaches a summer program on interpreting in education settings. She also organizes an annual translation and interpretation conference at USC Upstate. But formalizing the program as a minor allows her to go into greater depth in both areas and spend more time helping students hone their skills.

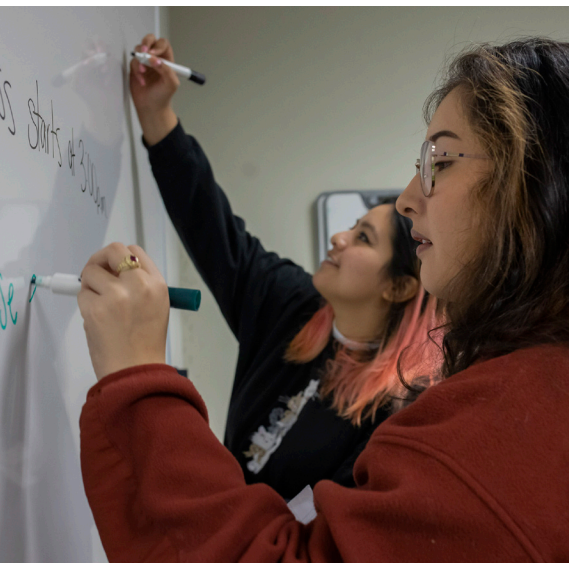
No formal certification is required to become a general translator or interpreter in the U.S., but medical, legal and government agencies do require certification and often an additional proficiency test. Montesó, a native of Spain, prepares her students using a research-based approach that's common in Europe and Latin America, where many schools offer advanced degrees in translation and interpretation.

A common misconception, she notes, is that anyone who speaks another language can be called upon to act as an interpreter. At schools, for example, she's encountered situations where children, Spanish teachers, and even janitors have been asked to interpret for non-English speaking parents. "That's completely unethical, because you





Bryan A. Lopez-Montoya listens during an exercise in class.



Sandy Ortiz-Cubides, front, and Sofia Villegas do a translation exercise in Maria Montesó's class. Students learn how to do research and utilize professional resources as part of their coursework.

wouldn't ask a teacher to clean the bathrooms or a janitor to teach a math class," Montesó says. "You need to follow a protocol."

Sofia Villegas, a junior majoring in early childhood education, was one of those people who was asked to interpret as a child. "When I was in elementary school, teachers would come to me to help interpret with parents," Villegas says. "And when I was in middle school and high school, I would go back to my elementary school to volunteer during the summer, and I would get called often to the nurse's office to interpret for the nurses."

Taking Montesó's class showed Villegas how much more skill is involved in interpretation beyond bilingualism. As a child, Villegas says, you often just summarize what you're being told, which is not interpreting. "With class, you learn all the different strategies you have to use, and also the amount of research you have to do before you do an actual interpretation," Villegas says.

Getting it right

When Montesó began the translation and interpretation program, she offered one semester of each, which she says wasn't enough to fully prepare students.

The minor has allowed her to teach two semesters of each subject, so students have the option of deeper study in both areas or just in one.

An important part of the coursework is learning ethics, including a person's rights as a professional interpreter/ translator and the limits of those rights. When doing an interpretation, for instance, you always speak in first person, Montesó says, and try to match a person's tone as closely as possible.

"The intonation, the pronunciation you're using has an impact on the person who's listening," she says. "So all of that is very important, especially when it's a delicate situation. You need to know how to do it right."

Research is a major component of Montesó's classes. Not only do students learn about developments in the field, but they also learn about the resources available to professionals and how to use them, such as software, linguistic databases and online dictionaries.

Knowledge of world events and cultural competency is important as well. Students study several Spanish-speaking cultures, to make them aware of the various meanings words



Andres Villegas and Bryan A. Lopez-Montoya confer over their work. Montesó says audio visual translation is one of the most in-demand skills right now, since the explosion of streaming content has created a need for subtitles on a quick turnaround.

can have in different contexts, and follow global developments and immigration trends that may impact local communities.

Work in education, medical, or legal fields also requires a general understanding of state law in those areas and knowledge of frequently used terminology. If, for example, you are interpreting between parents and a school psychologist about a child's behavioral disorder, you have to have the vocabulary to accurately convey the diagnosis so the parents fully understand it and can ask questions, Montesó says.

Because a professional translator or interpreter brings all these skills to any job, they should be compensated accordingly, Montesó says. Part of her mission as a teacher is educating people why using a certified translator or interpreter matters. "You're paying me not only because I have training behind me, but also because I'm going to give you quality," she says. "I'm going to give you a good product."

Jeannette Houchens, president and founder of HIT Services, a professional translation and interpretation agency in Greenville, agrees, noting schools and other organizations often overlook how they, too, benefit when their message is professionally communicated to clients.

"When providers understand how crucial language access is, not just for the people that are receiving the services, but for them to be able to provide good services, they tend to see the value of the services in a different way," she says.

Language justice

Community service is a required component of Montesó's classes, since much of the need for interpreters in the U.S. is in the social services sector, especially education, health care, and criminal justice. It's also a way the university can directly engage with the community, and provide a service to some of its most vulnerable members.

"Our jobs as interpreters depend on how we treat migrants who have come here for a better life, and on how we give them the possibility to communicate in their own language and be understood in their own language," Montesó says.



Montesó works with students Elizabeth Stapleton and Valeria Perez Espinosa de los Monteros. Making translation and interpretation a minor has enabled Montesó to go more in depth with her classes and provide more guidance to students.

Kimberly Ramos, a senior political science major who is staying on an extra semester just to complete the minor, finds that idea particularly compelling. "I think it's very important to value that cultural sense of language," she says. "Being able to communicate could resolve a lot of things in the world."

The concept of language justice is well established in places with large immigrant populations such as California, but it's still new in South Carolina, despite years of steady growth in immigrant populations, Montesó says. She notes one reason is that universities, which have the resources to train students to meet community needs, are often disconnected from the changes occurring outside their walls. "Society goes much faster than we as an institution," she says.

But that's slowly starting to change, she says. USC Upstate's South Carolina Centro Latino, of which Montesó is the assistant director, gives the university a foothold in the community so it knows what changes are happening and how the university can provide support. "We bring the community to the university and the university to the community,"

she says. "It's helping each other."

Houchens says academic programs such as Montesó's can also help change the perception of translation and interpretation as a hobby for bilingual people. "When you have the backing of an institution like a university, and you can say, I took my classes at a university, that has a lot more recognition and helps the profession," she says.

Many of Montesó's students plan to use translation or interpretation in their future career fields, and some have already gotten certified in a specific area. Others, such as Valeria Perez Espinosa de los Monteros, a sophomore engineering major with a concentration in chemistry, want to be prepared for wherever their careers lead them. "If we're talking about a medical setting, a life is involved," Perez Espinosa de los Monteros says. "And I need to know how to interpret correctly."

She notes, too, that even bilingual people like her parents sometimes have trouble with language. "So I think a big part is, whenever I think about interpreting and translation, I want to do it right," she says. "Because I would want somebody to do it right if this were my parents." ■

The World Awaits

Study abroad returns with more destinations and greater accessibility.

Greg Castillo, '22, and Miriam Elizalde, '22, barely had time to get used to being new USC Upstate graduates when they were on a plane headed to Alicante, Spain, for a month-long study abroad experience.

The summer trip, led by senior Spanish instructor María Montesó in coordination with the University of Alicante, marked the return of study abroad at USC Upstate. Temporarily on hold during the pandemic, international travel, including faculty-led trips like Montesó's, has resumed and now includes a new partnership with program provider ISEP. The arrangement will offer students more destinations at an affordable cost, says Patrick McCleary, blended classroom coordinator.

"The fact that we are able to engage with this many more institutions still using the exchange model, we never would have been able to accomplish this on our own," McCleary says.

Greg Castillo and Miriam Elizalde, both May 2022 graduates, became close friends over the course of the trip. Because their host families were related and lived across from one another, the students would frequently take part in family activities.



Students who traveled to Spain with María Montesó, senior instructor of Spanish, balance their days between classes and cultural activities, such as enjoying churros and chocolate.

As an ISEP partner institution, USC Upstate can access 55 different countries and more than 280 programs, McCleary says. Instead of paying fees to a program provider, which can be expensive, students pay their regular USC Upstate tuition and room and board. This means that destinations that were previously cost-prohibitive – such as Japan, South Korea, New Zealand and Australia – are now more accessible, McCleary notes.

"So I'm really hoping that our students are going to be able to start engaging with parts of the world that they maybe hadn't considered," he says.

Castillo says the trip to Alicante was an opportunity to try a new experience. Inspired by Chancellor Bennie Harris' advice to "live life with an empty cup," Castillo says, "I knew that I was getting close to the end of my educational path and my cup was full with all this knowledge. I realized I had to empty some of it to learn more."

For Elizalde, the experience was a chance to improve her Spanish. Though a native speaker, "I really wanted to expand my vocabulary even more," she says. "And I've always dreamed of going to Spain."

The summer program helped both

students achieve their goals. All USC Upstate students lived with host families while attending classes at the University of Alicante. Castillo and Elizalde ended up being neighbors. Castillo boarded with the son and daughter-in-law of Elizalde's host mother, who Elizalde says they affectionately referred to as grandma, both because she was one and because she "loved on us and gave us a lot of attention."

The experience also brought the USC Upstate graduates closer together. Because of their proximity, Castillo, Elizalde and her roommate spent a lot of time together, taking trips to the beach, going shopping and catching the train together in the mornings to attend classes. "Study abroad definitely gives you new friendships," Elizalde says.

Castillo admits he was a little wary at first about living with strangers. But he quickly grew to love the arrangement. "I like coming home," he says. "Being in a dorm on campus, we probably wouldn't experience that – we'd probably have been hanging out just with each other in the common room."

As part of a family, he says, he was able to experience Spanish culture firsthand, and he, Elizalde and her



Maria Montesó, center, once again led a six-week trip to Alicante, Spain, over the summer. Paused during the pandemic, study abroad programs have returned.

roommate were invited along when their host families visited friends in the mountains. “Even going 35 minutes away and seeing a whole different scenery, we got to experience a different culture,” Castillo says.

Montesó also led the USC Upstate group on field trips. A particular favorite for Castillo was the visit to the Valor Chocolate Museum in Villajoyosa, while Elizalde enjoyed trying out paddleboarding and kayaking in the ocean.

These types of cultural and educational experiences, and the personal growth that accompanies them, are what make study abroad so

enriching, McMillan says.

“There’s that self-confidence that comes with removing yourself from everything you’ve ever known, from a context you’re quite comfortable in, and visiting somebody else’s context and understanding how difficult that can be,” he says. “But then after you’ve gone through it, realizing, ‘Oh wow, I am capable of this – so what’s next?’”

McMillan says while he used to emphasize how much students would love the experience if they tried it – he himself was an exchange student in Russia when he was 16 – he now focuses more on the career readiness benefits of international study.

“Even if our students don’t plan on working abroad, they need those global skills to be able to function in a global workforce locally,” he says.

Zane Gray ’18, former internship coordinator in USC Upstate’s Office of Career Management, says those skills take many forms, foremost of which is the ability to speak another language.

But beyond that, “you’re learning to work with other cultures,” he says. “As we look at the entire economy of the state of South Carolina, it’s essentially international. So there’s the ability to see how people do things differently and be curious and not judge.”

Gray himself studied abroad while an Upstate student, through the university’s dual degree program with Landshut University in Germany. He notes just negotiating a foreign country demonstrates two important skills: initiative and adaptability. “You’re having to adjust to different languages, different techniques, find your way around a new city, figure out how to bank.”

Inevitably, students who go abroad come back transformed, McMillan observes. In fact, by the time they’re ready to return, students often discover their host country feels like home now. That can be the impetus for many more adventures, he says.

“For a lot of the students that we send, travel becomes a part of their life. They realize there’s so many other wonderful places in the world to go see.”



Students in Montesó’s summer travel program take part in a cooking class at the University of Alicante in Spain.



Thinking Globally

Students gain career competencies and broaden their world view.

For student Elizabeth Stapleton, global studies is more than a program – it’s an integral part of her coursework and career interests.

Stapleton, who will graduate in December with a Spanish major, already had an interest in immigration issues when she started at Upstate. She is pursuing a minor in Spanish interpretation and translation, and has completed an internship with an immigration lawyer.

That experience allowed her to work with people from all over the world, something she found fascinating.

“I loved the diversity,” she says. “You learn about different cultures and how different people act, and what’s important to them and how they communicate.”

Gaining that kind of understanding, and being open to learning from people from different backgrounds, is one of

the desired learning outcomes of the global studies minor, says Alex Lorenz, assistant professor of German and director of global engagement at USC Upstate. “The goal is to create a culture of global understanding for students enrolled in any classes to show them they are able to have a global mindset,” Lorenz says.

Today’s workplaces increasingly extend beyond a physical office in



Senior Tim Bolton, above, is studying at Landshut University in Germany as part of USC Upstate's dual degree program. The opportunity has afforded him the ability to meet students from around the world and travel throughout Germany.



the United States to include divisions all over the world, he notes. Even companies that are entirely based in America often attract a diverse workforce that represents many cultures and viewpoints. Students who demonstrate experience with cross-cultural communication can therefore be valuable additions to an employer's staff, Lorenz says.

"We have so much globalization going on, so much migration, especially from different parts of the country to our area," Lorenz says. "Our students need to get ready for that, they have to be able to understand and react to differences."

The global studies program has two different tracks. The first, the minor, which requires 18 credit hours, can be fulfilled with a variety of classes from multiple disciplines. Language, history, political science, business, and communication, among others, all offer courses that count toward the minor. Study abroad is mandatory, and can be as short as a weeklong faculty-led trip or a more intensive semester or summer program.

Stapleton, for example, will be joining Hannah Terpack, director of Career Management, on a weeklong trip to Costa Rica in March. Student Tim Bolton, however, is spending the semester in Germany as a participant

in USC Upstate's dual degree program with Landshut University. Bolton has already learned what Lorenz says is one of the most important skills of being in a foreign country – dealing with being uncomfortable.

"When I first came here and did not know a soul, I was naturally anxious about how my time here would be," Bolton says. But once he got to know the other international students, he quickly formed friendships with them. "These are some of the strongest relationships I have made so far," Bolton says.

Not every student can afford the cost or time of study abroad, so a second track that does not require travel, the global competence certificate, was created in 2020, Lorenz says. The certificate requires 12 credit hours, and an internship with a global or intercultural focus can count toward credits. As with the minor, students who earn the certificate demonstrate to future employers they have the skills to contribute to a diverse workforce.

"When we talk about empathy towards other people or cultures, in these classes that's what you learn," Lorenz says. "You learn about the differences of thinking and what they stem from."

He notes that equity and inclusion is one of the eight career readiness skills, identified by the National Association of Colleges and Employers, that students should have by the time they graduate. That competency includes the knowledge to engage with and include people from different global cultures.


That's exactly what Stapleton says she's gained through her internship

and service experiences. "I love connecting with people and learning more about them, and learning more about what goes on in places outside of the U.S.," she says.

In addition to encouraging more students to go abroad, and more faculty to lead international trips, Lorenz sees other opportunities to grow the global studies program on campus. He envisions additional events that would increase students' exposure to other cultures, such as an international festival that showcases the diversity of USC Upstate students, or a guest speaker series featuring people sharing their experiences of migrating to South Carolina. Other ideas include international movie nights or mini cooking courses where students could try their hand at creating dishes from another country.

"We have the academic side, where students can take classes and learn about different cultures," Lorenz says. "Now we need to figure out ways for them to experience that on campus."

Stapleton, who is currently working on a paper with Lorenz on Latin American immigrants' experiences coming to the U.S., says when people push themselves to get outside their bubbles, they begin to see how much more there is to life than what they're familiar with.

"A lot of us have no idea what the rest of the world holds," she says. "I think to really achieve our capacity to live to our fullest potential, we need to be exposed to those things and learn." 



UP, Where We Belong

A sociology senior seminar explores the Hispanic/Latino student experience on campus.

Emily Martinez-Villalobos was just a few months into her first semester at USC Upstate in 2020 when the COVID-19 pandemic hit and all her classes moved online.

As a transfer student, she hadn't yet had time to make many friends and explore campus life. So when she returned to campus in 2021, she quickly connected with the Latin American Student Organization.

"Joining the organization and getting to meet everybody was really nice," says Martinez-Villalobos, a first-generation college student. "I was able to find a community of people like me, people that have been through similar things."

Finding out what makes a Hispanic/Latino student feel at home – and, by extension, what more the university can do to support that sense of belonging – was one of the motivating factors behind Lizabeth Zack's senior seminar research class last spring. Zack, a professor of sociology, realized having hard data could help USC Upstate's fledgling South Carolina Centro Latino (El Centro), of which she is an advisory board member.

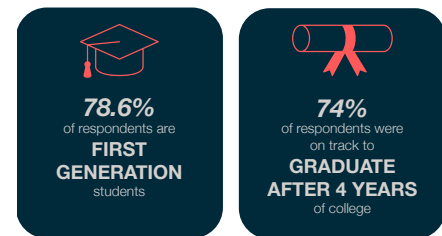
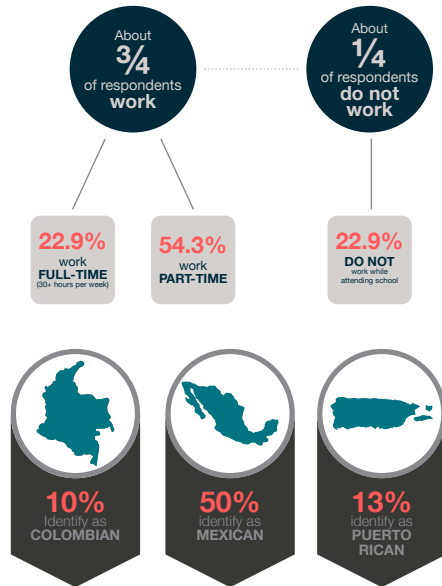
"One of the questions that I asked was, how much do we know about our Latino student population on campus," Zack says. "Because if we don't have much, maybe our department could work on a needs assessment or a survey."

Zack introduced her students to the topic during the 2021 fall semester, when they learn research methods. The class read up on national trends involving Hispanic/Latino college students, and heard from El Centro's director and assistant director, Araceli Hernández-Laroche and Maria Montesó, respectively, about the importance of following these trends.

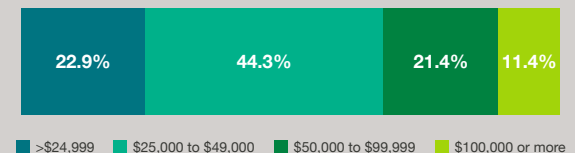
"In the Southeast, like a few other regions in the country, the Latino population is growing the fastest," Zack says. "And Latino college students have also in recent years been the fastest growing college student sector. But there are also some disparities in retention and graduation rates."

In the spring, students moved to the project phase, developing a survey to administer to Hispanic/Latino students around campus and collecting and analyzing the data. Giles Rabideau '22 says at first the group was disappointed when their initial efforts to collect data yielded a low response. Zack reached out to Martinez-Villalobos, who helped spread the word among friends and campus clubs to encourage participation in the survey. While the outreach took time, it had greater success getting results.

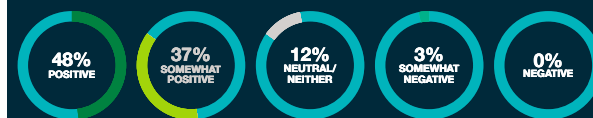
Each student looked at a specific aspect of the Hispanic/Latino experience that could affect student success. Amy Saine '22 studied factors that influence graduation rates. In the literature reviews, the data showed Hispanic/Latino students had significantly lower graduation rates than all other racial or ethnic groups, Saine says. But that was not the case at USC Upstate, she notes, though the reason for that matched what she had seen in the literature.



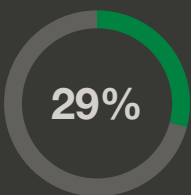
HOUSEHOLD INCOME



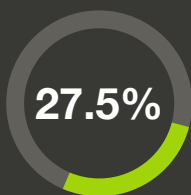
OVERALL UPSTATE EXPERIENCE



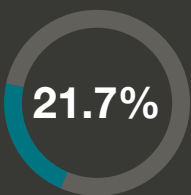
Challenges/Barriers Faced in College



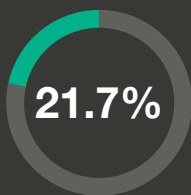
Course work too heavy/difficult



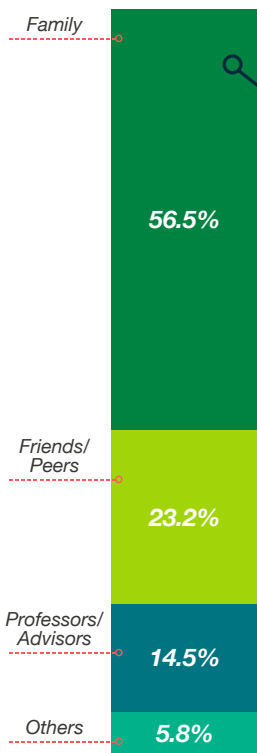
Lack of sense of belonging



Cost



Other



The most important source of support while attending college was

FAMILY.

OVER 90%
of respondents live
OFF CAMPUS



67% live with FAMILY/GUARDIANS

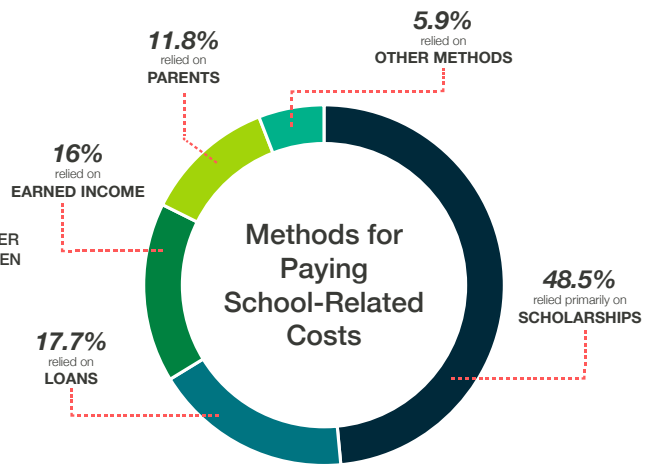


7% live with SPOUSE/PARTNER AND/OR CHILDREN

17% say ENGLISH is their PRIMARY LANGUAGE

70% speak both ENGLISH & SPANISH fluently

7% say SPANISH is their PRIMARY LANGUAGE



“We found that family was a huge motivator for staying in school, or completing their degree, or both,” Saine says.

Though many students cited challenges to being in college – finances, mental health, balancing school and work – Zack says most indicated they were on track to graduate within the timeline they had set for themselves, usually four to six years.

“One thing we saw among the students who participated in the survey was that they were relatively strong academically,” Zack says.

She cautions that the sample size – about 20% of USC Upstate’s approximately 350 self-identified Hispanic/Latino students – may be somewhat self-selective. Students who are motivated academically may also be more likely to respond to a survey. Still, the results were encouraging, particularly since about 70 to 80% of the respondents were first-generation college students, Zack says.

Zack says another interesting finding that differed from the existing literature concerned language barriers. In many of the studies, challenges with English created a barrier to students feeling a part of a campus. At Upstate, language wasn’t a problem for the survey respondents, but they did report that

their family members felt left out of their student’s college experience.

“That was one of the recommendations, to provide more bilingual services to families,” Zack says.

Rabideau says when the class made its final presentation, the interest and questions they received from faculty validated the effort they had put into the project.

“The buzz around it speaks to its value in my eyes,” he says. “This is the first study on this topic, and could lead to more studies that help staff here at Upstate cater to the target population and help them be more successful.”

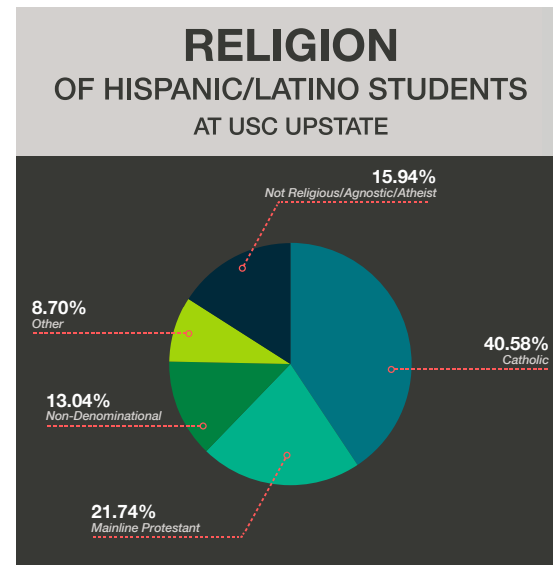
Zack’s fall semester seniors recently completed a new survey to build on the work from spring. This time the students examined the challenges and barriers confronting Hispanic/Latino students. The group took a qualitative approach, conducting in-depth interviews either in person or virtually. The sample size was small, but respondents identified financial struggles, balancing coursework and home life, and a sense of belonging as the biggest obstacles they faced.

Zack’s class also suggested areas where the university could help, such as reaching out to students to encourage tutoring or providing more opportunities for students and their families to socialize together. The group recommended connecting with high school students, too, to prepare them

and their families for what to expect in college and to assist them with the application process.

Hernández-Laroche says Zack and her students have demonstrated how universities can utilize the resources they have to gather valuable insights about their students. At Upstate, that data helps El Centro improve its outreach efforts to current and prospective students and their families, she says.

“Everything we do is really related to language, and they’re helping us with that mission on what language to use to make sure that we’re speaking to our students.”



Promising Start

USC Upstate launched a new effort in the spring to make a four-year degree affordable for local students. The Spartanburg Promise Scholarship Program provides up to 90 recent high school graduates from Spartanburg County a chance to earn their bachelor's degrees debt-free.

Ten students from each of the county's nine public high schools are having the balance of their tuition covered after all their other grants and scholarships were applied. Promise Scholars have to earn a South Carolina LIFE Scholarship, which is \$5,000 for freshmen, in order to qualify for the program. The current cost of tuition at USC Upstate is about \$12,000 per year.

"We are so excited about this opportunity, which demonstrates USC Upstate's commitment to postsecondary attainment in Spartanburg County and reducing student debt throughout our region and state," says Chancellor Bennie L. Harris.

The inaugural Promise Scholars cohort is funded by up to \$2.5 million



Meet the Scholars

Jennings Pruitt



Jennings Pruitt has lived in the Upstate all his life. A native of Campobello, he is an interdisciplinary studies student in the pre-chiropractic program at USC Upstate. Pruitt says he chose to attend Upstate because of its vast campus, energetic atmosphere and rigorous academics. He's been enjoying opportunities to network, form connections, and make new friends. When he's not studying, Pruitt relaxes by taking care of his animals and spending time with friends. "The lessons I have learned this fall semester have brought with them

challenges, bold ideas and new paths," Pruitt says. "The most important lesson I have learned, and am able to apply, would be that your effort parallels your expectations. To overcome your own expectations and set standards, you must rise above and exceed the challenges at hand."

Braylen Covington



Braylen Covington is a computer science major from Moore, South Carolina. Both his parents are Upstate alums, but Covington says he was drawn to Upstate because of the care professors have for their students and

the positive impact that has on the quality of education. He enjoys studying on the second floor of the library, both for its proximity to his classes and because he and his classmates can utilize the group study spaces there. In his free time, he likes to unwind with video games and by playing Dungeons and Dragons. Covington loves the freedom of being a college student, and the academic discoveries that come with it. "I'm surprised that I'm enjoying my Spanish class as much as I am," he says. "Learning the ins and outs of a language has been really interesting. Fun fact: The closest thing to 'y'all' in Spanish is 'vosotros!'"



from USC Upstate’s budget. As a public institution in South Carolina, the university is empowered to invest up to 4 percent of its annual budget in scholarships. USC Upstate intends to raise additional funding that will allow the program to extend beyond its pilot year.

While the program is designed to provide opportunities for at least 10

graduates from each of the county’s nine public high schools, a short turnaround time for the initial cohort meant that some schools were unable to submit 10 recommendations. This enabled other schools to provide the names of more than 10 students. In subsequent years, USC Upstate hopes to have an equal distribution across all of the local schools involved in the

program. Promise Scholarships are not based on a student’s major.

During the fall semester, Promise Scholars were invited to learn more about the Spartanburg community at luncheons with chamber leaders at OneSpartanburg and executives at Milliken & Co. A holiday-themed luncheon celebrated the end of students’ first semester at USC Upstate. 



Morgan Monet De Barros

Morgan Monet De Barros is a communications major from Mount Pleasant, South Carolina.

She is a member of the women’s soccer team, and is excited to be playing under new head coach Sharif Saber. After the team’s successful season, De Barros is looking forward to many more. She loves being a college student and exploring all the new opportunities and experiences that come with it. One of her goals is to intern with a news program to gain experience in a field she hopes to one

day work in. She has enjoyed taking part in activities going on around campus, and discovering what the surrounding area has to offer. “Spartanburg is continuously growing and is a great place for college students, especially because there are so many opportunities around the corner,” she says.



Sunshine Moua

Sunshine Moua is a biology major from Boiling Springs, South Carolina. One of her biology labs introduced her to Persimmon Creek, which

runs through the Susan Jacobs Arboretum on campus. Moua says it’s her favorite place on campus because it incorporates the beautiful, natural qualities of the Upstate area. An exciting part of college for her is meeting new people, and interacting with students who come from different areas and all walks of life. “I’ve really enjoyed getting to know everyone’s passions and the stories that led them to today,” she says. “My life has only just begun, and I’m glad that I started it at USC Upstate.”

Faculty Achievements

Wren Bareiss (Communication) is the editor of the journal *Qualitative Research in Medicine and Healthcare*.

Stephen Bismarck (Education) is the 2022 recipient of the Exemplary Service to the Teaching Profession Award from the South Carolina Association of Teacher Educators (SCATE).



Michele Covington (Criminal Justice) is the author of the new book “Guns in America,” an overview of gun issues in the United States.

Matthew Brisebois, Chien-Ting Wu and

James Kamla (Exercise Science) co-authored the article “Dietary Practices and Supplement Use Among CrossFit Participants” in the *Journal of the International Society of Sports Nutrition*, and Brisebois presented the findings at the society’s international conference in June.

Logan Camp-Spivey (Nursing) co-authored “Survey of South Carolina Public School Personnel Perspectives on Barriers and Facilitators to Regular Physical Activity and Healthy Eating Behaviors in Schools” in the *Journal of School Health*; “Use of a Simulated Medication Administration Scenario With Embedded Errors to Foster a Culture of Safety” in *Nurse Educator*; “Theoretical and Contextual Considerations for Self-Management Strategies of Children and Adolescents With Chronic Diseases: An Integrative Review” in *Journal of Child Health Care*; and “Innovative Teaching Strategies Using Simulation for Pediatric Nursing Clinical Education During the Pandemic: A Case Study” in *Academic Medicine: Journal of the Association of American Medical Colleges*.

Virginia Cononie (Library) was recognized among the Movers & Shakers – Advocates by the *Library Journal* for conceiving, compiling, publishing and promoting the book “Share Your Story,” a collection of more than 100 testimonials and photos from library supporters that was sent to South Carolina lawmakers.

Ona Egbue (Engineering) received the American Society for Engineering Management Fellow Award in October. She currently serves as the chair of the Engineering Economy Division, American Society for Engineering Education. She also co-authored “A Unit Commitment Model for Optimal Vehicle-to-Grid Operation in a Power System” in the *International Journal of Electrical Power and Energy Systems* and “Push Them Forward: Challenges in Quasi-Governmental Organizations’ Influence on Rural Broadband Infrastructure Expansion” in *Government Information Quarterly*. She recently presented at the International Conference on Smart and Sustainable Technologies in Bol, Croatia, and the American Society for Engineering Education Annual Conference and Exposition in Minneapolis.

Ron Fulbright (Informatics) was granted a patent from the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office for his “Swarm-Based Firefighting Drone and Mass Aerial Drop System and Method.” The patent covers several design features of a drone customizing flight time and lifting capacity while also reducing the cost of manufacture and operation.

Polinapilinho Katina (Advanced Manufacturing Management) published research in four different journals: *Discrete Dynamics in Nature and Society*, *Evaluation*, *International Journal of System of Systems Engineering*, and *Journal of Cleaner Production*. He also co-edited, and contributed to, the new book “Complex System Governance: Theory and Practice.” He presented two research

papers at the 2022 ASEM International Annual Conference in Tampa, Florida, and was part of the team that was awarded the 2022 Meritorious Service Award by the American Society for Engineering Management.



Lex Lancaster (Art History) is the author of the new book “Dragging Away: Queer Abstraction in Contemporary Art.” Their book is the first to be published on the topic of queer abstraction.

Kim Land (Marketing) was named director of the Honors Program at USC Upstate.

Shirleatha Lee (Nursing) was appointed to the Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education Standards Committee.

Walter Lee (Education) facilitated two sessions at the annual meeting of the Association for Middle Level Education (AMLE) in Orlando. Accompanying Lee were students Shaekwon Heard and Rebekah Long, who represented Upstate in the inaugural class of student ambassadors. Heard and Long also presented with Lee at one of the sessions.

Alex Lorenz (LLC) authored “Correct Me if I’m Wrong: Student Attitudes towards Learning Russian Grammar” in the forthcoming collection “Student-Centered Approaches to Russian Language Teaching.” With student Dawson Adams, he published “Origins of Religion: A Comparison Between the United States and Germany” in the *SC Upstate Research Journal*. He also received a Scholarly Startup Grant for his research on the life and language of German immigrants in South Carolina and their economic, cultural and linguistic contributions to the Upstate.

David Marlow (LLC) published two articles this year, both with a Chinese scholar who visited the U.S. in the 2019-20 academic year: “Chinese Ecolinguistics: Development and Contribution to the Discipline” in *ECO-REBEL* and “Toward a More Transcultural Ecolinguistics: Applying Harmonious Discourse Analysis to ‘Ode to Autumn’” in the *Southern Journal of Linguistics*.

Benjamin McCraw (HPPA) published “Alston, Aristotle, and Epistemic Normativity” in *Logos and Episteme: An International Journal of Epistemology*, and has two forthcoming articles: “Duncan Pritchard on the Epistemic Value of Truth: Revision or Revolution?” in *Philosophia* and “Epistemic Virtues” in *Oxford Bibliographies in Philosophy*.

Rebecca Mueller (Education) authored the article “A Conversation Too Late: An Examination of Early-Career Teachers’ Experiences With New Social Studies Standards,” which was recently published in *Social Studies Teaching and Learning*, and her article “‘More Resilient Than I Thought’: Examining the Stress of Teaching Through COVID-19,” was accepted for publication in the *Teacher Education Journal of South Carolina*.


Melissa Pilgrim (Biology) was the recipient of USC Upstate’s 2021-22 Faculty Excellence in Service award for her contributions to the RISE program; her work as a reviewer on many grant proposals, manuscripts and awards; and her community service with SPACE and the North American Amphibian Monitoring Program.

Josh Ruppel (Chemistry) spoke on “CuAAC Glycosylation of Porphyrinoids: Preliminary Effects of Linker Length on the Photodynamic Inactivation of Mycobacterium” at the 12th International Conference on Porphyrins and Phthalocyanines (ICPP-12) in Madrid, Spain. He also is the co-principal investigator on a \$402,695

National Institutes of Health grant, half of which will support research activities at USC Upstate, including paid summer research positions for students.

Sharda Jackson Smith (Education) received a 2022 Distinguished Research & Practice Fellows Award from the National Education Finance Academy.

Nolan Stolz (Commercial Music) served as the commercial music representative on the editorial board of a new series, “College Music Society Pedagogies & Innovations in Music.” The first book in the series, “Commercial and Popular Music in Higher Education,” was published this summer. He also presented research about Black Sabbath’s music at an international conference on progressive rock held at the University of Oxford (England). In April, Stolz was the special guest for the season one finale of the “Heavy Metal 101” podcast to discuss Black Sabbath’s first eight albums. From February to July, Stolz gave over 40 interviews about his forthcoming *Route 66 Suite for orchestra*, appearing on over 90 TV stations, in over 80 newspapers, and on over 80 radio stations in the U.S. and Europe (including local and regional NPR stations).

Ginny Webb (NSE) co-authored, with **Justin Travis** (Psychology) and student Brianna Sacchetti, “Identification of the Main Contributors to Blood Culture Contamination at a Tertiary Care Academic Medical Center” in *Infection Prevention in Practice* and “Effects of the Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) on Blood Culture Contamination at a Tertiary Care Academic Medical Center” in *Microbiology Spectrum*. With Sacchetti, she co-authored “Factors Affecting Blood Culture Contamination Rates and Effective Reduction Measures” in *Reviews and Research in Medical Microbiology*. 

RISE Recipients

Fourteen USC Upstate faculty were awarded RISE (Research Initiatives for Summer Engagement) grants from the University of South Carolina Office of the Vice President for Research. The RISE program provides financial support for faculty conducting research and scholarly activities during the summer. The 2022 recipients from Upstate are:

- **Wren Bareiss** (Communication Studies)
- **Michael Dinger** (Management, Entrepreneurship, & Marketing)
- **Allison Ellis** (Political Science)
- **Araceli Hernandez-Laroche** (Modern Languages)
- **Yin-Chi Liao** (Management, Entrepreneurship, & Marketing)
- **Thomas McConnell** (English)
- **Benjamin McCraw** (Psychology)
- **Anita Nag** (Chemistry)
- **James O'Connor** (Management, Entrepreneurship, & Marketing)
- **Nicole Richardson** (History)
- **Susan Ruppel** (Psychology)
- **Scott Tanner** (Biology)
- **Ginny Webb** (Biology)
- **Griffin Woodworth** (Commercial Music)

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The USC Upstate women's soccer team under new head coach Sharif Saber enjoyed its most successful season to date in the Division I era.

Surpassing Their Goals

Women's soccer celebrates best season yet since joining Division I.

USC Upstate women's soccer had a historic year with the most successful season in its Division I era. The Spartans finished second in the Big South conference, and collected Goalkeeper of the Year, Freshman of the Year, and Coach of the Year honors for the very first time.

Upstate went 9-4-4 on the regular season, while finishing with a 6-2-1 Big South conference record. The Spartans downed some opponents, such as High Point University, for the first time in program history, while beating others, such as Radford, for the first time on the road.

The 2022 season marked the best season since Upstate joined the Big South in 2018 (11-9). The Spartans achieved a .647 winning percentage, the best in the program's Division I era. Of the nine recorded victories during the season, six were against Big South opponents, the most conference wins in the program's DI era. Its No. 2 seed in the Big South tournament was also the highest in program history, surpassing the team's No. 6 seed in its previous tournament appearance.

Throughout the season, several Spartans collected Big South weekly

awards for their performances. Cora Brendle and Dara Russo each received three Big South weekly honors, while Emily Rangel earned the first Big South honor of her career. Brendle and Russo earned two of their honors in back-to-back weeks in October.

Following the conclusion of the regular season, Upstate gathered seven postseason awards. Brendle was named the Goalkeeper of the Year, while Russo was named Freshman of the Year. Head coach Sharif Saber was named the Coach of the Year after his successful first year with the Spartans. Brendle was also named to the All-Conference First Team, along with Alaina McKnight.

Russo was named to the All-Conference Second Team and the All-Freshman Team. Ashley Finn received an honorable mention for the second year in a row, while also being named to the All-Academic Team.

In addition to the postseason honors, Brendle and Emily Sanders were named to the Big South All-Tournament Team for their efforts during the semifinal match against Radford.

Several Spartans carved their names into the Upstate women's soccer record books with their performance over the

season. Sanders had two assists in a single game, not just once, but twice, during the season (against Longwood and S.C. State). Her five total assists are the most in program history in a single season, surpassing Montana Hill's four (2018).

Russo is tied for tenth overall with Nora Vangsnes (2021) in shots in a single game, after she took six shots against both Furman and Presbyterian. She also claims the fifth-place spot for shots in a season (48), surpassing Michelle Calmeyn, who had 42 (2011). Additionally, Russo ties for seventh place for shots on goal in a season (20) with Kenzie Major (2013). The freshman ties with Ashley Finn (2021) for third place overall for game-winning goals in a season (3).

Finn finds her way into the rankings after going 1-1 on penalty kicks this year, which ties her for fourth overall for penalty kicks. Finn, McKnight, and Brendle all tied for eighth overall for games started with Montana Hill (2018), Emma Honis (2018), and Ciara Murphy (2015).

Brendle places tenth overall for saves (79), just above Brittany Daughtery (74, in 2009), while also ranking fourth for goals against average (0.88, 15 GA/1,540 mins), just above Samantha Munyon with a 1.24 average (10 GA/725 in 2018). She also ties for first for goalkeeper's games started, with 18 games started, next to Rachell Collins (2018), and is ranked third for goalkeeper minutes played, with 1,540, surpassing Sarah Plantz (2013). The junior set a few records as well, with the most wins in a single season (9), breaking the previous record of four that she set in 2021, and the most shutouts in a single season (6), surpassing the five by Sarah Plantz in 2013. [UP](#)





1



2



3



4



5



6

Sports Standouts

Cross Country

The men's team finished 24th overall at the NCAA Division I Southeast Regionals, their fourth-highest finish in school history. All seven who competed made it onto the Men's All-Time 10k List for their performances at the NCAA Division I Southeast Regionals.

Noah White 1 made it onto the Men's All-Time 8k List with his 25:20.40 finish at the Live in Lou Classic. White also made it onto the Men's All-Time 10k List with his 32:05.00 finish at the NCAA Division I Southeast Regionals.

Both **Allie Leavitt** 2 and **Heaven Allen** 3 hit new personal bests

during the NCAA Division I Southeast Regionals, and both finished in the top 150. Allen finished 14th at the Big South Conference Cross Country Championships, with a time of 18:20.30. Her run not only secured her a spot on the Big South All-Conference Second Team, but also a fifth-place spot on the Women's All-Time 5k List.

Men's Soccer

Men's soccer 4 achieved a Division I era record of 11 post-season honors, with six players named to the All-Conference Second Team (Luca Bulfon, Felipe Marty, Julian Fernandez, Kasper Jørgensen, Pablo Diaz, and Jeremy Montero), one named an honorable mention (Andrin Zumbühl), one named to the All-Freshman Team

(Kasper Jørgensen), one named to the All-Academic Team (Luca Bulfon), and two named to the Big South All-Tournament Team (Luca Bulfon and Pablo Diaz).

Three Spartans collected Player of The Week honors during the season. **Xavi Wences** 5 and **Andrin Zumbühl** were named Offensive Players of the Week while **Marcus Wærn** 6 was named Freshman of the Week.

Senior goalkeeper Luca Bulfon led the Big South in saves on the year, denying 81 shots on the season. That total is the most by a Spartan keeper since 2018.



The Spartans set a Division I era record by ending the regular season on a six-match unbeaten streak, highlighted by a 2-1 road win at Gardner-Webb and a playoff-clinching draw at home against High Point.

Upstate made it to the postseason for the second time since joining the Big South. The post-season berth was the Spartan's fifth since moving to Division I.

Volleyball

Ady O'Grady ⁷ was named to Big South All-Freshman Team. She was also named Big South Freshman of the Week on Oct. 10 and finished the season ranked third in the Big South in blocking (1.03 blocks per set).

Julia Gladhill ⁸ was named to the Big South All-Academic Team. Gladhill secured the program's first 30-plus dig match since 2016, with 31 digs versus Presbyterian on Oct. 22.

Men's Golf

The team opened the season with all six members of the lineup carding career-low 54-hole totals at the Allstate/Streamsong Invitational. It was also the team's lowest 54-hole total (865) since 2019.

Elias Becker ⁹ was named Big South Freshman of the Week on Sep. 29.

USC Upstate co-hosted The Carolina Cup at Carolina Country Club. It was the most successful in the event's history.

Women's Golf

The team closed the fall schedule with back-to-back wins at the Terrier Intercollegiate and the French Broad Collegiate Invite. The back-to-back wins were the first for the program since the 2020-21 season.

Preaw Nontarux ¹⁰ was named Big South Golfer of the Week on Oct. 28. She led Upstate to victory at the Terrier Intercollegiate and claimed medalist honors (her first career victory). Nontarux also led the Spartans in a six-hole stretch to jump to the top of the leaderboard.

Suwarin Yord-in ¹¹ was named Big South Golfer of the Week on Nov. 10.



Delaney Suarez and Stephinee Roper



Jordan Eccleston



Allison Sykes and Sarah Woodfin



Sara Elise



Jarred Bradley and William Mathis



Upstate Upsilon Alpha



Upstate Alpha Sig



Maddy Simone



Upstate Zeta Phi Beta, Pi Rho Chapter



Upstate Zeta Tau Alpha



Guy Ellis



Emma Streetman and Avery Freeman



Sky Chappel



Mase Wither



Jarred Bradley



Deanna Calvert



Makayla Renae



Rea Davis and Madison Dougg



Zoe Oliphant



Michael Brewer and Sean Patton



Mackenzie Jolly and Diamond Cromartie



Makalla J.



William Mathis



Nijil Staley



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Passport to Adventure

Two students who attended this year's Global Career Forum came away with more than valuable job information. Jasmin Elizalde, a junior, and Malea Burns, a senior, were each awarded a \$2,500 travel abroad scholarship to cover program expenses.

"I've always wanted to study abroad, I just didn't know how I was going to get the money or if I was going to be able to have the opportunity," said Elizalde, who is considering France for her travels. "Getting this award really gives me a chance to explore that option."

For Burns, whose appetite for travel was whetted during a summer trip to Spain led by Maria Montesó, senior instructor of Spanish, the award is a chance to keep building her Spanish skills. "I feel like this is the opportunity I really needed to help with my Spanish major," she said.

Five other students received grants to cover the cost of a passport. The awards were a new feature of the Global Career Forum this year, and were made possible by event sponsors whose representatives led roundtable discussions with students and provided information about the companies.



Upstate Puts its Stamp on Carolina Day

A sea of green rolled into the state capitol last January, heralding a reinvigorated USC Upstate presence at Carolina Day and laying the groundwork for this year.

Chancellor Bennie Harris led a delegation of university leaders and 17 students to the annual event, which is organized by the University of South Carolina and enables representatives, friends and alumni of USC system schools to meet with lawmakers and advocate for higher education.

Members of the USC Upstate Student Government Association and other student groups had lunch with members of the Spartanburg and Greenville

county legislative delegations, during which they shared their personal stories and reasons for choosing USC Upstate. SGA President Arondè Stewart '22 also joined other student government presidents from USC campuses for a private meeting with Gov. Henry McMaster.

For this year's event on Feb. 14, USC Upstate is planning to expand its presence further, and Columbia-area alumni are invited to join the effort. More information about opportunities to participate will be communicated closer to the event, so watch for emails and social media posts in the coming weeks.

USC Upstate Foundation Welcomes New Board Members



Suzy Cole is an attorney and co-founder of Village Legal Hub, which works for charities across South Carolina. Cole received her undergraduate degree

in public relations from the University of South Carolina and her law degree from the University of South Carolina School of Law. She and her husband, Derham, are the proud parents of Derham III and Susannah.



Linda Hannon is currently district manager for Duke Energy. She is a native of the Upstate, and upon graduating from Clemson University, she joined

Duke Energy, where she has managed and led various departments throughout her career. Hannon and her husband, Ben, live in Greer.

2022 Alumni Award Honorees

Cyndi Waters '83 Distinguished Alumni Award

Cyndi Waters came to USC Upstate as a nontraditional student – a married mother of one. She appreciated being able to get a quality education at an affordable price. At Upstate she found professors who inspired and encouraged her. “I had been to a larger school for one semester, and at Upstate, I felt like a person and not just a number,” Waters recalls. “These professors were the reason for that.”

After graduating from Upstate, Waters taught for five years. During her last year, she met her best friend,



Spartanburg attorney Cathy McCabe. “Without getting my education degree from Upstate, I would probably never have made this lifelong connection,” she says.

Upon leaving teaching, Waters entered the financial services sector. She was hired by C&S Bank to oversee the Upstate training department, a job in which she says her teaching experience was a plus. “This allowed me to get an idea of where I wanted to land for the long haul and after three years, I was

able to obtain a lending role,” Waters says.

She has now worked in the industry for 34 years, the last 15 of them as a commercial lender with Park National Bank, formerly Carolina Alliance Bank.

Waters has been active in community organizations and at her alma mater. She served on a phonathon at Upstate, was a member of the Alumni and Foundation boards, and even helped students move into dorms one fall. She is a member of Kiwanis of Spartanburg, where she has served as president and received the George Hixson Award. She was also the local and state president of Business and Professional Women. Other activities include serving on the Healthy Smiles board and various United Way committees.

Waters says it has been exciting to see USC Upstate grow into a metropolitan campus that serves the higher education needs of everyone. “It has always been a place for nontraditional students to call home, and because of that, I was able to complete my college education in a welcoming environment. For that, I will always be grateful,” she says.

Dione Williams '03 Outstanding Alumni Award

Dione Williams obtained her Bachelor of Arts in elementary education with a concentration in psychology. She credits stellar professors and academic advisers for laying the groundwork for her to succeed.

“USC Upstate serves as the foundation of who I am in the professional world today,” Williams says. “Coming from a small town, stepping onto the campus of USC Upstate was very intimidating for me. However, while on campus I cheered, pledged a sorority, joined the gospel choir, became a mentor, and participated in a number of other activities.”

At Upstate, she says she learned key lessons that have led to honors and

accolades and prepared her to serve in various roles. Williams went on to earn two master’s degrees, and for the past 19 years has taught in Spartanburg School District 7.

Williams has been a Teacher of the Year and received several leadership awards. Most recently, she was recognized on 107.3 Jamz radio station as an Upstate Black History Maker for being District 7’s first African American Odyssey teacher. Odyssey is the district’s program for high-achieving students.

In 2013, Williams was invited to serve on the USC Upstate Alumni Association board. She served two terms as secretary and volunteered at numerous commencement ceremonies, served on the homecoming committee, helped organize the USC Upstate Alumni Golf Tournaments, and volunteered with fellow Upstate employees and alumni at the yearly Criterion bike race tailgate in Spartanburg.

Williams also was president of the Spartanburg Alumnae Chapter of Delta Sigma Theta sorority from 2017-21, is a board member of BRUH Mentor, and served many times as grade level chair



at her previous school.

"USC Upstate provided me with opportunities to become immersed in a campus filled with a plethora of learning opportunities, promise, diversity, and lifelong relationships," she says. "I gained so much knowledge and insight about life and the world we live in while enrolled as a student at Upstate. However, the impact of Upstate's role in my life post-graduation surpassed my expectations in more ways than I could ever imagine."

Brooke Robertson '13 Young Alumni Award

Brooke Robertson says her experience at USC Upstate was integral to her career path. Jane Nodine, distinguished professor emerita, taught her to have high standards and to work hard. Rich Mack, assistant professor of graphic design, showed her how to use the tools of design and apply them with creativity and passion.

But her Bachelor of Arts in graphic design wasn't the only thing that empowered her. There were three specific classes that provided her with a direction for her drive and passion: Women and Gender Studies, African American Art History, and Environmental Science. The impact these classes had on her, Robertson says, is evident in her achievements.

Robertson currently serves as lead designer for Neue South Collective, a marketing agency based in Spartanburg. After graduating from USC Upstate in 2013, she worked as a graphic designer for Hubbell Lighting in Greenville. In 2016, Robertson joined the Spartanburg Area Chamber of Commerce as the director of marketing and designed the original OneSpartanburg campaign, which is now in its sixth year.

Robertson was also part of Neue South's promotional campaign for the 2020 Census, conducted in partnership with Spartanburg County Libraries and the US Census Bureau. The collective efforts around the census were awarded the John Cotton Dana Award, the highest PR honor from the American Association of Libraries.

Other projects Robertson has worked on are fundraising collateral for the city of Spartanburg's Southside mural; the



penny referendum; and the Seeing Through Their Eyes project, a collaboration with USC Upstate, Spartanburg Area Conservancy and the Spartanburg Science Center.

She recently worked with Together SC, South Carolina's chamber of commerce for nonprofits, on designing and developing the 2022 Nonprofit Summit in Spartanburg.

"I am proud of the journey that my experience with USC Upstate has provided, and I look forward to elevating the experience of other students. Hopefully I can inspire them to stay in their community and find a passion for serving Spartanburg County as I do," Robertson says.

London Robinson '16 Young Alumni Award

London Robinson currently works as an integrated digital specialist at WSPA 7 News and Nexstar Media Group. In this role, she manages the Nexstar Digital advertising revenue within the company's account executive sales team.

Robinson holds a bachelor's degree in communications and started at WSPA in 2017. She had no previous experience in the field, but since her arrival, Nexstar Digital's ad revenue has increased more than sevenfold. In 2019, her team set the record for the largest Nexstar Digital advertising sale, a multimillion-dollar account. "We also became the No. 1 property in the company for Nexstar Digital ad revenue in 2021," she says. "This significant growth in the past five years has allowed for our digital department to grow from two team

ADVANCEMENT


members to six."

Robinson credits her education at USC Upstate for the successes she has achieved so far. "USC Upstate taught me the required skills I needed to transition into the professional I am today," she says. "My career requires me to be an excellent communicator, presenter, and critical thinker. I identify client needs for a digital advertising strategy and excel at building meaningful business relationships."

She credits Carolina Webber, associate professor of communication studies, for providing critical career mentorship.

"True leaders create more leaders, and that's what Dr. Carolina Webber did for me," Robinson says. "Dr. Webber saw me as a leader before I saw it in myself."

Robinson recalls Webber assigning her a leadership role in her small group communication class, even though Robinson felt unsure about taking it on. "She helped me build that confidence with one-on-one time with me, and the constructive criticism necessary for me to develop those skills," Robinson says. "That experience led to my continued growth as a leader in my field."

Robinson has returned to campus several times as a guest speaker, and says she enjoys talking to students and sharing how her education paved the way to a rewarding and meaningful career. 





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at uscupstate.edu/homecoming



USC Upstate celebrates its
**Spartanburg County Teacher of the Year honorees for
 2021-22 and 2022-23**



**District 3
 Summer
 Carling**, '04, has been a teacher for 23 years and currently teaches biology, physics and the AVID elective at Broome High

School. She says the best part of teaching is building confidence in young people. "I am ultimately trying to grow successful people who work hard, are kind to others, and make our world a better place no matter what profession they go into," she says. "If I can light a spark of inspiration in the hearts of my students, my hope is that they will continue to push themselves to achieve whatever goals they set for themselves."



**District 4
 (also state finalist)
 Jami Guker**, '02, has taught math at Woodruff Middle School for all 21 of her years in the classroom. What she loves most

about teaching is connecting with her students and forming relationships with them that often last a lifetime. "My goal as their math teacher is to empower them with knowledge," Guker says. She particularly enjoys changing the mindset of students who don't think they're good at math and showing them they can do anything. Guker adds, "I also love my job because I have the opportunity to encourage my students to never give up and to become the best individual they can possibly be. As stated in the book 'Change Your World,' I may not be able to change the entire world, but I can change someone's world."



**District 2
 Marissa Drake**, '12, is a third-grade teacher at Mayo Elementary School. She has been in the classroom for nearly 10 years, and has taught at

Mayo since 2019. She says the most rewarding thing about being a teacher is being able to create memorable learning experiences for her students. "Whether I'm dressed up as magician because they worked hard on a particular mathematics skill and are now 'math-magicians,' or learning how to sing a song in another language to celebrate diversity, I'm always engaging with my students," Drake says. "I want my students to enter our classroom as their authentic identities, and celebrate who they are as a person, not just as a student."



**South Carolina
 School for the
 Deaf and the
 Blind
 Leslie Borton**, '19, has been a teacher for three years and an administrator for two. She is currently lead

teacher at the South Carolina School for the Deaf and the Blind, and previously taught at Cedar Springs Academy. She says her favorite part of her job is the support and camaraderie from administration and fellow teachers. "Everyone looks out for each other," she says. "This creates an optimum learning environment, which allows students to thrive and grow."



**Spartanburg
 Preparatory
 Tara
 Williamson**, '02, is in her sixth and final year of teaching. She previously taught fifth grade at Berry Shoals Elementary

School in District 5 and fourth and second grades at Spartanburg Prep. Currently teaching first grade, Williamson said she loves her class. "I have all girls and we have a blast learning."



**Spartanburg
 Preparatory
 Jessie Self**, '18, is in her fourth year of teaching at Spartanburg Preparatory School, where she has worked since graduation. "By far my

favorite part of teaching is my relationships with students," Self says. "I love having a small part in their journeys and hope that I foster a love of being a lifelong learner in them."

Class Notes

1979

Steven “Skip” Frye, the longtime cross country and track and field coach at Broome High School, was honored by the school and Spartanburg School District 3 by having the track named after him.

1992

Darlene Oulla Lovette and her husband celebrated the marriage of their son Noah on January 10, 2022.

1993

Robert Woodson Byers has two granddaughters, ages 2 and almost 1.

1999

Clayton Moton is principal at Dutchman Creek Middle School in Rock Hill, South Carolina, and was recently inducted into 100 Black Men of the Upstate.

2000

Farrell Thomas is principal of Gray Court-Owings Elementary & Middle School in Gray Court, South Carolina.

2003

Karen Laverne Meadows-Rogers was a middle school counselor at E.P. Todd School in Spartanburg in the previous academic year. This year she is at Cleveland Academy of Leadership. She has been in Spartanburg School District 7 for 16 years and has worked for Spartanburg School District 3 for two years. Karen has six grandchildren.

2004

Sharon King Austin, B.S. '19, began her fourth year of teaching at Thomas E. Kerns Elementary School in Greenville

this year. She says she loves working with elementary students again after teaching middle school for three years.

Erin Ank Mehaffey married J. Paul Mehaffey in 2012, and they have a daughter, Alana, who was born in 2016.

Jolitha Wright Richardson is married to Jason Richardson and has two teenagers. She works from home for Verizon in learning and development.

Chiquila Suber Valentine is married with two children, Amos and Averi.

2006

Ashley Young is a major in the South Carolina Army National Guard, where she has served for 21 years. She is a proud veteran of Operation Enduring Freedom in Afghanistan, and received the Meritorious Service Medal for her service and dedication to the mission. She served as an administrative specialist for eight years prior to commissioning through the Palmetto Military Academy in 2010. She was assigned to the University Readiness Center at USC Upstate from 2018-2021.

2007

Trey Furman Arrington recently was hired as the associate vice president for information technology at Wofford College. He was previously the vice president for operations at Spartanburg Methodist College. He completed his MBA at Louisiana State University at the end of August.

Melissa Cooper is a certified North

Carolina K-12 administrator and won the 2021 Metro Atlanta Women's Entrepreneurship Initiative's December (Tech) Tip Off pitch competition. She also completed the 2020 Metro Atlanta Teach for America Social Innovation Fellowship. Currently she is co-developing and co-launching a professional design summit to support trainers and designers in the area of synchronous and asynchronous adult learning.

Lontisha Blanding Smith opened her own business, First Responders Healthcare Services, in September 2021. Located in Spartanburg, the business provides in-home care services and health care staffing for facilities. First Responders just celebrated its first anniversary and the grand opening of its new location. Lontisha is a member of the Spartanburg Lions Club and OneSpartanburg, Inc. She has two daughters, 19 and 13.

2008

Todd Earles Long began a new job as dean of student life at Olivet College in Olivet, Michigan, on July 18, 2022.

2010

Candace Lamb earned her doctorate in 2021 from the University of Texas – Austin.

2013

Detria Graham, along with USC Upstate adjunct instructor Jed Dearybury, was chosen as a creativity ambassador for Crayola and the National Art Education Association. Detria is currently pursuing a master's in art administration at Goucher College in Baltimore. She is also a visual arts teacher at West View Elementary School in Spartanburg School District 6.

Daniel Alexander Jones married his wife, Karis, in February 2022.

Chloe Thomas Pellot recently married, Aaron Pellot, and now works in Singapore as the dean of student life at the Singapore American School.

New baby? New business? New degree?
Share the news with your fellow alums!
Fill out the form at uscupstate.edu/updatealumni and we'll include your updates in the next issue of the magazine.

2014

Lanie Whitaker Carter married Meghan Carter on November 11, 2021. Lanie is the president and founder of Arrowhead Design in Spartanburg, and recently celebrated the grand opening of Burg Apparel right off the Mary Black Rail Trail in Spartanburg.

2015

Krista Louise McMullen lives in Wilmington, North Carolina, and teaches special education at a Title I school.

Paige Snyder Warner recently was hired as a neuro ICU nurse manager at Greenville Memorial Hospital.

2017

Will Angelich is the terminal manager at the South Carolina State Ports Authority's inland port in Greer.

2018

Hannah Chumley Burress returned to her alma mater in September 2021 as an advising specialist and administrative support for the Center for Interdisciplinary Studies. Prior to that, she received a master's from Clemson University and worked for a tech company. She says she jumped at the chance to work at Upstate, and "absolutely loves" her job. The month after starting, she married her husband, David, who is a 2017 alum.

Samuel Reid Johnson recently opened WaveRoom Yoga in Spartanburg, SC.

Daboyous Bernard Mosley graduated from Washburn School of Law in May 2022.

Destini Anderson Pratt married James Cameron Pratt, who she met at USC Upstate, on New Year's Eve 2021. She had a judicial clerkship with a 13th Circuit judge in the Upstate prior to accepting a position as an associate attorney with her current firm, Gallivan, White & Boyd.

2019

Meredith Shirlese Jack teaches social studies at Spartanburg High School. She was selected to participate in the NEH Landmarks workshop, "The Legacy of

Early African-Americans and the Gullah-Geechee People." She also participated in the Landmarks workshop at USC Upstate this past summer, "Fabric of the Past."

2020

Scott Tyler Dunn is teaching English in South Korea.

Katelyn Payne Eberly married her high school sweetheart a month before graduation. She taught full time as a substitute teacher in Spartanburg for a semester, and now has a full-time position as a professional recruiter.

2021

Jarred Bradley is the social media manager and graphic designer at Arrowhead Design Group in Spartanburg, and was the creator of the Morgan Square Madness mark for USC Upstate.

Allison Dunlap is an English teacher at Spartanburg High School and received a Crystal Apple Award in August in recognition of being a standout first-year teacher at the school.

Jackie Lee-Von Harkey is currently attending graduate school at Charleston Southern University, where she is pursuing an M.S. in human resource management. She has an HR internship with the Charleston County Aviation Authority.

Ramonte Smith is a seventh-grade social studies teacher at McCracken Middle School in Spartanburg and in August received Spartanburg District 7's Crystal Apple Award honoring the district's most outstanding first-year teacher.

2022

Mckenna Haley Wood graduated with honors in May and has been accepted into the doctoral program for occupational therapy at Concordia University in Ann Arbor.



Tameca Brown '07 to Serve as Alumni Council Chair

Tameca Brown was recently named the chair of the USC Upstate Alumni Council. She is the executive vice president of human relations at LifeMd, a telemedicine healthcare company. Prior to that, Brown was vice president, senior HR manager at TD Bank. She has also served as global senior HR manager at GE Power.

Brown has a dual Master of Arts in HR management and HR development from Webster University, and a Bachelor of Science in business administration (accounting) from University of South Carolina Upstate. She also is an entrepreneur, and is the owner and creative director of Villas10, a boutique interior design firm in Greenville, South Carolina. Her interests and hobbies include interior and floral design, mentoring, travel and dining at places frequented by locals, and doing life with her husband while being a true girl mom to her three daughters.

Alumni Council

Tameca Brown '07	Evan Carr '09
Kelly Gillespie Tam '97	Gary Coats '04
Justin Travis '08	Savannah Sutton '18
Kaylee Madison Ghent '21	James Parham '19
Bennie Gallman '10	Zane Gray '18
Audria Chandler '12	Lordwin Neal '16
Mason Turner '17	Angie Omer '07
Ronald Wayne Garner '94	Seth Blanton '02
Sharan Ravishankar '21	Ryon Smalls '14
Aronde' Stewart '22	

20 Questions with

Ugena Whitlock

Dean of the College of Education, Human Performance and Health



Where were you born?

Russellville, Alabama

What did you dream of being when you were a child?

A CIA Agent

Who was your favorite teacher, and why?

I have four favorite teachers: my second-, fourth-, sixth-, and ninth-grade algebra teacher—Mrs. Fowler, Mrs. Wimberley, Miss Renwick, and Mrs. Mansell, respectively. Each of them believed in me and could see what I could achieve even when I didn't know what to dream of. They had the gift of

being able to show me the big, wide world from Littleville, Alabama. They are why I am here today.

What was your first job?

Burger King

What's a talent you wish you had?

I wish I could play the piano and dance—but not at the same time.

What book is on your nightstand right now?

“Mobotuaries” by Mo Rocca and “The Advantage: Why Organizational Health Trumps Everything Else in Business” by Patrick Lencioni. As you can see, I have eclectic tastes.

What's your favorite way to unwind?

Retail therapy and television.

Do you have any pets?

I have 2 cats, Spike and Trevor, and 2 dogs, Duncan and Caroline. Spike has her own social media presence (@SpikeFeline).

What three albums would you want with you on a desert island?

Hotel California by the Eagles; Sam Cook: Portrait of a Legend; Elvis Presley, The 50's Masters

What's your favorite vacation place?

New York City

What or who inspires you?

My family inspires me. In spite of challenges, obstacles, and hardship, they keep striving.

Favorite TV or streaming show?

“House of the Dragon” and documentaries

What 3 people, alive or dead, would you invite to a dinner party?

Franklin D. Roosevelt, Elvis Presley, and Flannery O'Connor

What five items (not counting pets) in your possession have special significance for you?

Robert F. Kennedy campaign materials from 1968, my 1958 Smith Corona Silent Super typewriter, gifts my children made me, my mother's Thermos bottle, my family's ceramic Christmas tree

Tell us about something on your bucket list.

I don't really have a bucket list. I want to travel and maybe spend tons of time in a beach house somewhere.

What's your guilty pleasure (food, music, TV or movie)?

Andy's Frozen Custard and “Married at First Sight”

Do you prefer the mountains or the beach?

The beach

What's your favorite holiday and why?

I like Memorial Day because it is the official beginning of summer holiday.

What's your favorite thing about USC Upstate?

I love the beautiful campus, and that it is small enough to get to know the people here. Upstate is a great place to work!

What's something most people don't know about you?

I saw Elvis in concert in 1975, and I went to seminary to study for the ministry. 📖

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- **A gift of appreciated stock** you have held for more than one year provides a tax-wise personal benefit.
- **A gift from your IRA** can be beneficial if you are age 70½ or over. Contact us for details, including annual limits.
- **A grant from a donor-advised fund (DAF)** to USC Upstate impacts our work immediately, and it comes from funds you have already set aside for reaching charitable goals.
- **A gift that you plan now and complete later**-whether a gift in your will or living trust or a charitable beneficiary designation-is a comfortable way to meet your goals while keeping lifetime control of the gift assets.

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Contact us with questions or for additional gift planning ideas.

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