



Chancellor's Corner



Chancellor Susan A. Elkins
USC Palmetto College

Thanks to the many dedicated faculty and staff across Palmetto college, this historical year of 2020-2021 has been a year of great strides across Palmetto College despite the COVID-19 pandemic. We are pleased to share the accolades below from across our Palmetto College Campuses and Palmetto College Online that have been achieved through your many dedicated efforts. We have more than 21 successes to share in 2021!

Fall 2020 Enrollment

In Fall 2020, Palmetto College Overall Headcount increased from 6,355 to a record high 6,522 (+167, 2.6%).

Palmetto College Campuses Headcount increased from 5,117 to a record high 5,146 (+29, 0.6%).

Palmetto College Online Headcount increased from 1,120 to a record 1,272 (+152, 13.6%). The following programs reached record highs in headcount: Business Administration (USC Aiken), Criminal

[Chancellor's Corner, continued on page 15](#)

2020-21 Palmetto College Excellence Awards for Scholarship, Teaching, Service announced

Each Spring, the Palmetto College Campuses Excellence Awards for teaching, scholarship and service are announced.

The **John J. Duffy Excellence in Teaching Award for Palmetto College Campuses** has been presented annually since 2009 to a faculty member who exemplifies excellence in and out of the classroom. The 2020-2021 Duffy Teaching Award was presented to **Fidele Ngwane**, associate professor of mathematics at USC Salkehatchie.

His dedication to his students and the profession



This year's recipients for Palmetto College Excellence Awards are: Fidele Ngwane (USC Salkehatchie), John J. Duffy Excellence in Teaching Award; Christine Sixta Rinehart (USC Union), Chris P. Plyler Excellence in Service Award; and Li Cai (USC Lancaster), Denise R. Shaw Excellence in Service Award.

is so great that when he was asked about teaching statistics to Salk students in 2017, he began taking classes toward a master's degree in applied statistics. More impressively, he earned

his second master's degree from UofSC Columbia in 2019 while continuing to teach full-time in Walterboro, Allendale, dual enrollment at high schools and online.

[PC Awards, continued page 7](#)

\$6 Million GEER Grant to fund eight community computer labs at Palmetto College Campuses, Benedict College

With the help of federal COVID-19 relief funding, South Carolina Governor Henry McMaster has [announced](#) the creation of eight free-to-use Apple computer labs across the state – including six at Palmetto College Campuses, with the broader goal of improving internet access in surrounding communities.

The \$6 Million grant from the Governor's Emergency Education Relief (GEER) Fund will allow USC Lancaster, USC Salkehatchie, USC Sumter and USC Union, along with Benedict College, the ability

to serve a large swath of South Carolinians who reside in broadband deserts – areas without reliable internet access. The necessity of reliable access has become ever more apparent during the current pandemic.

This grant will fund the infrastructure and staffing of eight Apple labs – including six that will be located within the Palmetto College campuses' service areas across South Carolina. Those locations include Allendale, Lancaster, Laurens, Sumter, Union and Walterboro. Options for nearby internet access are particularly significant

in areas with limited or nonexistent access in towns like Allendale (in which USC Salkehatchie is situated) and communities like Horatio in Sumter County (near USC Sumter). All of Palmetto College campuses are located within 15 miles of a broadband desert. These six Apple labs will have operating budgets of \$571,429 each.

"The pandemic has made it abundantly clear that internet access is not a luxury, but a necessity, for millions of South Carolinians," said Gov. McMaster. "The

[GEER grant, continued page 8](#)

Palmetto College faculty awarded RISE grants

The [Research Initiative for Summer Engagement \(RISE\)](#) program was initiated in 2012 to support summer research for faculty members at UofSC's system campuses. This program employs a competitive application process to provide money for summer salary, research supplies, travel related to research and undergraduate student support to bolster scholarship throughout the USC system. Along with helping faculty develop research programs, RISE also aims to equip regional and senior campuses to better serve their local communities as well as to support the larger university mission.

Ten Palmetto College faculty have been awarded RISE grants to support their summer research this year, including:

Lokendra Paudel
Assistant Professor of Mathematics
USC Salkehatchie
Valuation Overings of Polynomial Rings and Group of Divisibility

David Roberts
Chair of Humanities and Associate Professor of Philosophy
USC Lancaster
Individuation Gone Awry: The Cynical Therapeutic

Nahid Swails
Assistant Professor of Physics
USC Lancaster
Understanding and controlling the formation of surface defects in additive manufactured structures

Lukasz Szatkowski
Assistant Professor of Chemistry
USC Sumter
Influence of polyethylene glycol (PEG) on the enzyme reactions with phenol derivatives catalyzed by horseradish peroxidase (HRP). Substage I: Docking of PEG on the HRP and influence of PEG on the structure and dynamic of HRP

Brittany Taylor
Assistant Professor of Art
USC Lancaster
Native American Studies Contemporary Artist-In-Residence: An Opportunity for Non-Traditional Native American Artists

Marquita Watkins
Assistant Professor of Chemistry
USC Salkehatchie
Investigation of Pristine and Functionalized Carbon Nanotubes (CNTs) Adsorption on Select Persistent Organic Pollutants

Li Cai
Professor of Chemistry
USC Lancaster
New Synthesis of a Monophosphoryl Lipid A (MPLA) Derivative

Sher Chhetri
Assistant Professor of Mathematics
USC Sumter
Statistical Inference for Stochastic Climate Models with Levy Jumps

David Hatch
Associate Professor of English and Division Chair of Arts and Languages
USC Salkehatchie
Samuel Beckett's Dialogues: Three Dialogues/Three Exhibitions, Philosophy and Theatre

Justin Mogilski
Assistant Professor of Psychology
USC Salkehatchie
Testing the longitudinal validity and reliability of the Multi-partner Relationship Scale (MRMS)

Consult the [Palmetto College College Campuses COVID Dashboard](#) weekly to track cases within the communities surrounding the regional Palmetto College Campuses.



This Issue's Contributors

Jean Carrano, Jason Darby, Shana Dry, Bob Dyer, Susan Elkins, Stephanie Gruber, Mary Hjelm, Victoria Hollins, Alethia Hummel, Leah Kososki and Annie Smith.

Please submit all items for the Fall 2020 issue by Friday, Nov. 12, 2021.

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

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

USC Lancaster
Shana Dry – drysf @ mailbox.sc.edu

USC Salkehatchie
Stephanie Gruber – grubersi @ mailbox.sc.edu

USC Sumter
Alethia Hummel – alethiah @ uscumter.edu

USC Union
Annie Smith – alsmith @ mailbox.sc.edu

Palmetto College Columbia
Jean Carrano – carranoj @ mailbox.sc.edu

Palmetto College Central
Jason Darby – jdarby @ sc.edu

Military Affairs
Martha Daniels – daniels1 @ sc.edu

Palmetto College Faculty and Staff Notes



Majdouline Aziz, interim associate dean of academic affairs and associate professor of psychology at USC Union, was selected to receive one of the

[2021 Distinguished Research Service Awards](#) from the UofSC Office of the Vice President of Research.



Brook Bauer, assistant professor of history and Native American studies at USC Lancaster, was recently awarded the 2020 Anne B. and James

B. McMillan Prize for her manuscript, "Becoming Catawba: Catawba Indian Women and Nation-Building, 1540-1840." The prize is awarded annually to the manuscript chosen as Most Deserving in Alabama or in Southern History or Culture. Her central argument is that Catawba women played a key role in becoming and being Catawba during the period under study.



Marybeth Lee Berry, associate professor of theatre and speech at USC Lancaster, had a piece, "[On the Spectrum](#)," accepted and performed by the

Boulder International Fringe Festival in Colorado.



Adam Biggs, instructor of African American studies and history at USC Lancaster, was invited to take part in a roundtable discussion hosted by the Harvard

Medical Center for Bioethics on Jan. 22, 2021. The title and subject of the event was "[If Racially Concordant Care is a Benefit for Black Patients, How Should Health Care Organizations Respond?](#)"



David W. Dangerfield, assistant professor of history at USC Salkehatchie, published an [April 1 op-ed](#) for *The Washington Post*'s "Made by

History" series that explored some of the struggles faced by Black farmers throughout U.S. history by discussing his research on free Black farmers in the antebellum South. He also published "[Just Beyond the Reach of Servitude: Free Person of Color Farmers in Antebellum South Carolina's Upcountry](#)" in *American Nineteenth Century History*. In addition, he has received notice of a manuscript accepted for publication: "Testing the Limits: Free Persons of Color and Antebellum South Carolina Law" in a forthcoming edition of the *Proceedings of the South Carolina Historical Association*. Dangerfield also presented papers at two regional conferences, including: "Fighting on the Line: Military Service, Citizenship, and Free Black Identity in Antebellum South Carolina" at the USC Beaufort Interdisciplinary (Virtual) Conference in February 2021; and "Soldiering and Citizenship: Free Persons of Color and Military Service in Antebellum South Carolina" at the South Carolina Historical Association (Virtual) Conference in March 2021.



Jason Darby, director of marketing and communications for USC Palmetto College, has been elected as a staff senator representing Palmetto College

Columbia in the inaugural UofSC Staff Senate. The Staff Senate represents all classified and unclassified, temporary,

temporary grant and time-limited staff employees on the UofSC Columbia Campus. In addition, he has co-authored a book chapter that has been accepted for publication in an edited volume on the history of the University of South Carolina that is scheduled to be published in late 2021.



Jennifer Emswiler, professor of art at USC Union, was recently accepted into an online art show on the website [A Contemporary Art Room](#). A finalist, a piece

from her collection *Composite Neurology: Lichens and Mental Illness* titled "Dichotomy of Brain Chemistry" was accepted to the show. The piece, composed of organic material suspended in epoxy resin, was accepted into the international virtual show, which was open-themed.



Olivia Gaines, first-year head coach of the USC Salkehatchie women's basketball team, was named [NJCAA Region X Coach of the Year](#). Her

team remained undefeated during the regular season and NJCAA Region X Tournament, claiming the conference championship title.



Fran Gardner, professor of art and art history at USC Lancaster, received an artist's project grant from the S.C. Arts Commission for her installation piece "The

Intersection Between Mark Making and Mark Leaving." The grant assisted with expenses related to the production of this piece. In addition, Gardner was

Palmetto College Faculty and Staff Notes, *continued from page 3*

recognized as "[NAWA Artist of the Day](#)" on April 7, 2021, by the National Association of Women Artists.



Kajal Ghoshroy, professor of biology at USC Sumter, and her student, Ngaru Ngom were awarded a grant from the Magellan Scholar Program. The funding will

help with their summer research project entitled, "Lead Uptake by Germinating Seeds of Mustard."



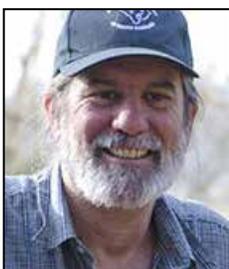
Kirsten Iden, assistant professor of English at USC Salkehatchie, presented a paper at the Society of Early Americanists national conference; had

a paper accepted to the Society for American Women Writers national conference; and participated in an eight-week digital "coffeehouse" meeting sponsored by the Omohundro Institute of Early American History and Culture. At the institute, she met with scholars from around the country and they discussed topics related to "Rethinking Historical Narratives: Slavery and Memory in the Atlantic."



Randy Ivey, senior instructor of English at USC Union, published two poems – "Night Reading" and "Geraldine Page" – in the March 2021 issue in the national

magazine *Chronicles: A Magazine of American Culture*.



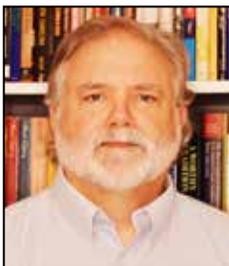
Christopher Judge, instructor of anthropology at USC Lancaster and Native American Studies Center assistant director and archaeologist, co-authored the

following reports: Remote Sensing at the Adamson Mounds Site (38KE11), Kershaw County, S.C., and the Interim Report on 2020 at Mulberry Site (38KE12).



Andrew Kunka, professor of English at USC Sumter, recently published a book chapter – Lords, Masters, Aces and Knights: Doug Moensch and the Advancement of

Comics in the 1980s – in [The Other 1980s: Reframing Comics' Crucial Decade](#), edited by Brannon Costello and Cremins and published by Louisiana State University Press.



Steve Lowe, professor of history at USC Union and director of the liberal studies and organizational leadership in Palmetto College Columbia,

presented a talk titled "The People and the Law: Civil Rights in South Carolina" in the April 15 session of the USC Union Research Colloquium.



Helen Maire-Afeli, assistant professor of chemistry at USC Union, was awarded a grant from the Center of Integrative and Experiential Learning to create

a new Chemistry course "Liberte,

Egalite, Cuisine: The Chemistry of French Food" for non-science majors in January 2021. She also reviewed third edition of a textbook "Forensic Chemistry" by Dr. Susanne Bell in January 2021. In March 2021, she presented a new pedagogical tool, Gimkit, to USC Union faculty. Also in March 2021, she was invited to talk about USC Union to the local French community, especially parents with children currently in high school. In addition, Maire-Afeli completed the certification for Global Learning Experience (GLE) via UofSC this semester and she just finished a Master Class Series: "Student Metacognition and How to Cultivate It" in April 2021.



Justin Mogilski, assistant professor of psychology at USC Salkehatchie, served on an expert panel on consensual non-monogamy at

the Society for Personality and Social Psychology (SPSP) Sexuality pre-conference in February 2021.



Santosh Nandi, assistant professor of management at USC Sumter, was named the 2020-2021 recipient of the Jean-Luc Grosso Award for Outstanding

Faculty Scholarship at USC Sumter. The award is presented to a faculty member for their accomplishments in scholarship, in the classroom, on campus, and in the community to honor the memory of past professor, Dr. Grosso. He also presented a paper – "The Role of Specificities and Complementarities in Crafting Useful Business Models: A GPS Industry Perspective" – at the Society for Advancement of Management (SAM) International Business Conference 2021.



Leigh Pate, clinical assistant professor of nursing at USC Lancaster, and

Ann Scott, clinical assistant professor of nursing at USC Lancaster, made a virtual presentation for a Sigma Theta Tau International conference this semester with Joan Creed, another faculty member in the UofSC Columbia



College of Nursing. The theme of the conference was “Creating Healthy Work Environments” and they presented and submitted a virtual oral presentation about Leadership in Academia During a Pandemic. They also had a manuscript accepted for publication to the *Journal of Nursing Education* in the education innovation section of the journal. They wrote about their experience during the initial start of the pandemic and how they transitioned from a face-to-face model to virtual online in a two-week period (this included all clinical experiences as well). They also discussed how students were still successful with graduation, passing boards, and progressing in the program.



Lokendra Paudel, assistant professor of mathematics at USC Salkehatchie, presented “The Group of Divisibility of a Finite Intersection

of Valuation Overings of Affine Domains” in the Southern Regional Virtual Algebra Conference (SRAC 2021) in March 2021.



Christine Sixta Rinehart, professor of political science at USC Union, has a book chapter – “Targeted Killing: The Constitutionality of Killing American

Citizens.” – accepted for an edited volume later this year; a peer-reviewed article – “Escaping Atonement in Sunni Islam: Death by Jihad for Deliverance” – published in *Expeditions* in May 2021; and two book reviews – “Homegrown: ISIS in America.” by Alexander Meleagou-Hitchens, Seamus Hughes and Bennett Clifford in *The Strategy Bridge* (forthcoming in 2021) and “Moral Responsibility in Twenty-First-Century Warfare: Just War Theory and the Ethical Challenges of Autonomous Weapons Systems.” by Steven C. Roach and Amy E. Eckert (Eds). *Perspectives on Politics* in June 2021.



Emily Smith Schafer, assistant professor of psychology at USC Union, received a \$4,000 grant from the [National SEED Project](#) (Seeking Educational

Equity and Diversity) to participate in leadership training that will bring the first SEED seminar to the state of South Carolina. This project will be in partnership with the local Carnegie library where the community conversations will be held monthly during the 2021-2022 school year.



Sarah Hunt Sellhorst, professor of exercise science at USC Lancaster, recently won the inaugural South Carolina Academy of Science Two-Year Institution

Teacher of the Year Award.



Siara Shelton, first-year head coach of the USC Salkehatchie women’s softball team, led the team to win the NJCAA Region X Division I regular season and tournament

championships.



Kevin Torres, instructor of world languages at USC Union, was selected to serve a cohort of international students in the preparation of various

academic disciplines in agreement with the Republic of Panamá and Brenau University.

Still need to schedule a COVID-19 vaccine?

There are several resources that can be used to schedule an appointment to receive a COVID-19 vaccine, including: UofSC Columbia Student Health Services through [MyHealthSpace](#), the [CDC's Vaccine Administration Management System](#), [S.C. DHEC's vaccine locator tool](#), and [VaccineFinder.org](#).

USC Regional Palmetto Colleges announce Distinguished Teacher of the Year Awards



Phillip Parker, senior instructor of business, is the recipient of the **USC Lancaster Distinguished Teacher of the Year Award**.



Sherri Sullivan, instructor of music, is the recipient of the **USC Salkehatchie Distinguished Teacher of the Year Award**.



Damien Picariello, assistant professor of political science, is the co-recipient of the **USC Sumter Student Government Association Teacher of the Year Award**.



Austin Jenkins, senior instructor of biology, is the co-recipient of the **USC Sumter Student Government Association Teacher of the Year Award**.



Kevin Torres, instructor of world languages, is the recipient of the **USC Union Distinguished Teacher of the Year Award**.

Transitions

Several new faculty and staff have joined the Palmetto College family in the past few months. Others have changed positions or added to their existing responsibilities.

USC Lancaster

- **Eric Barnes**, Assistant Women and Men's Soccer Coach
- **Bobby Benson**, Building and Grounds Specialist
- **Stephanie Blackmon**, Admissions Assistant
- **Karlee Christian**, Senior Admissions Counselor
- **Samuel Farris**, Gallery Assistant
- **Vicki Hinson**, COVID Nurse
- **Christina Holz**, Assistant Women's Soccer Coach
- **Talay Jones**, Human Resources Specialist
- **Crystal Melton**, Visitor and Project Coordinator Assistant
- **Asheley Schryer**, Director of Student Success and Retention
- **Jacob Schubert**, Assistant to the Director of Athletics
- **Haley Sims**, Admissions Counselor
- **Ryleigh Waiters**, Director of Student Life

USC Salkehatchie

- **Dale Bacino**, Women's Soccer Coach
- **Willee Gant**, Recruiter/Admissions Counselor
- **Alexis Ivey**, Volleyball Coach
- **Jeremy Joye**, Director of Athletics
- **Holly McCrary**, STEM Program Manager
- **Siara Shelton**, Softball Coach

USC Sumter

- **Sandra Rhyne**, Registrar
- **Tina Simenson**, Nurse Administrator
- **James Bernard Washington**, Regional Admissions Representative
- **Judd Wisener**, Head Volleyball Coach

USC Union

- **Gale Ashmore**, Spanish Instructor

Palmetto College Columbia

- **Jacob Bratcher**, Student Success Advisor
- **Laura Carnes**, Academic Program Director
- **Chelsea Corbett**, Student Success Advisor

In addition to new faculty and staff joining Palmetto College during an unprecedented time, several long-time faculty and staff members have announced their retirement.

"Congratulations to those who have served Palmetto College and the Palmetto College Campuses as they embark upon their next chapter. Their contributions have been invaluable and their efforts have made us a stronger organization better able to fulfill our core mission," said Chancellor Susan Elkins.

- **Paula Epperson**, Executive Assistant to the Dean, USC Sumter
- **Carol Reynolds**, Administrative Assistant to the Executive Dean for Academic & Student Affairs, USC Sumter
- **Jane Luther Smith**, Instructor of Music, USC Sumter

Palmetto College Excellence Awards, [continued from page 1](#)

Years prior to the current COVID-19 pandemic forcing most classes online, Ngwane worked with the Center for Teaching Excellence (CTE) to complete the online teaching certification. He also developed and taught the first-ever hybrid Math 111 course among the Palmetto College campuses in 2017. His classes have also been offered in hybrid, flipped and two-way video formats as well.

As the pandemic unfolded, Ngwane was quickly able to adapt to meet the needs and learning styles of his students as courses moved to a completely online format. According to one student evaluation, he is “a professor who reaches out almost daily and pushes you to your best and understands that [what happens in] life outside the classroom is what makes a student more willing to learn.”

Ngwane previously received the 2019 USC Salkehatchie Faculty Organization Excellency in Teaching Award. He earned a Ph.D. in mathematics from Auburn University.

The **Chris P. Plyler Excellence in Service Award for Palmetto College Campuses** is presented to a faculty member who personifies excellence in service to the campus, university, community and profession. The award was first given in 2015. The 2020-2021 Plyler Service Award was presented to **Christine Sixta Rinehart**, professor of political science at USC Union.

Rinehart is heavily involved in service to USC Union, Palmetto College, the University of South Carolina System, her profession and her local community.

At USC Union, she currently serves as student advisor to approximately 10 associate program students. She also serves as chief faculty editor for the *Bantam Gazette* student newspaper and as a member of the campus's financial affairs committee. The financial affairs committee is responsible for doling out approximately \$40,000 in scholarships to USC Union students each year.

For Palmetto College, Rinehart's current service role include academic program assessment coordinator, chair of the Palmetto College Provost's Advisory Council and the immediate past chair of the Palmetto Colleges

Faculty Senate. In that latter role, she was the first senate chair to serve a two-year term.

For the University of South Carolina System and Columbia campus, she serves as chair of the UofSC System Chairs Council and faculty co-chair of the Provost's Advisory Committee on Women Initiatives on the Columbia Campus. In this role, she helped to plan the annual Women's Leadership Institute, a two-day conference that includes hundreds of women from around the state.

For her profession, Rinehart serves as a board member of the Foreign Policy Division of the American Political Science Association and as an editorial board member of *The Interdisciplinary Journal for Middle Eastern Studies*. She is one of the organizers of the APSA's Foreign Policy conference section and worked to bring the initial conference to fruition.

In her local community, Rinehart finds personal fulfillment as a painter and has a passion for the advancement of the arts. She is a member of Newberry Made, a local group of Newberry artists who encourage artist collaboration and scholarship in Newberry County, and she currently has artwork on display at Laurens Co-Op in Laurens, S.C.

Rinehart previously received the 2017-2018 Denise R. Shaw Excellence in Scholarship Award for Palmetto College Campuses. She earned a Ph.D. from the University of South Carolina in political science with a specialization in international relations and comparative politics.

The **Denise R. Shaw Excellence in Scholarship Award for Palmetto College Campuses**, first given in 2017, is presented to a faculty member who exhibits outstanding scholarship. The

2020-2021 Shaw Scholarship Award was presented to **Li Cai**, professor of Chemistry at USC Lancaster.

One of his most critical roles on the USC Lancaster campus is research in the form of mentoring undergraduate research students and disseminating research findings in the interest of promoting their future careers and eventual acceptance into graduate programs and future careers.

In fact, in just the past few years, Cai has served as mentor on three publications with undergraduate students, as well as two abstracts with undergraduate students who served as the presenting author at local or regional professional conferences.

During the past three years, his scholarly accomplishments have been diverse, and are related to carbohydrate chemistry, chemical glycobiology and chemical education. Maintaining multiple lines of research has allowed him to

maintain momentum with respect to dissemination of knowledge across academic years. Maintaining that momentum has resulted in funding of ten research grants totaling \$97,725 since 2018.

Within the profession, he serves as associate editor for Chemistry Africa – for which has handled 29 manuscripts, academic editor for the *International Research Journal of Pure and Applied Chemistry* – for which he has handled 25 manuscripts and an editorial board member for two other journals.

Cai previously received the 2017 UofSC Breakthrough Stars Award and the 2020 UofSC Distinguished Research Service Award. He earned a Ph.D. in organic/bioorganic chemistry from The Ohio State University.

Fidele Ngwane
USC Salkehatchie

John J. Duffy Excellence in Teaching Award

Christine Sixta Rinehart
USC Union

Chris P. Plyler Excellence in Service Award

Li Cai
USC Lancaster

Denise R. Shaw Excellence in Scholarship Award

\$6M GEER Grant funds community Apple labs, [continued from page 1](#)

strategic placement of these labs will bolster South Carolina's premier workforce training efforts by giving our communities and people access to resources they need to expand participation in our state's growing economy."

During a March 30 press conference, McMaster said the initiative was part of a project aimed at expanding broadband internet access across the state. He also said he is working with the state's congressmen to secure additional funding for broadband expansion.

"As the state's flagship institution, the University of South Carolina is committed to enhancing statewide economic and workforce development initiatives," said USC President Bob Caslen. "By providing access to Apple's coding curriculum and emphasizing creative learning, this partnership is a game changer for our state. The

educational programs and training at these learning centers will give South Carolinians relevant skills that are in high demand in today's economy. We are proud to partner with Governor McMaster, Apple and Benedict College in this mission by investing in underserved communities across the state."

"We thank South Carolina Governor Henry McMaster for recognizing a need and creating a pathway for our state's citizens," said USC Palmetto College Chancellor **Susan Elkins**. "We look forward to being able to better serve the communities in our USC Palmetto College Campuses' service areas in narrowing the digital divide."

"We are pleased to partner with the University of South Carolina to expand educational technology access to communities around the state," Benedict College President

Roslyn Clark Artis said in a statement. "Benedict College remains fully committed to narrowing the digital divide for underserved communities in our state. This is a tremendous step in the right direction." There will be one lab located in Columbia's BullStreet District and another at Benedict College. Those facilities will have a combined operating budget of \$2 million.

The labs are free to use by members of faculty, staff, students and community members. Availability will be advertised in each community. Some facilities are anticipated to be up and running within the next 90 days. The labs will be paid for through the CARES Act, which was a coronavirus aid package passed by Congress in March 2020. Each state received money for emergency education relief spending which the governor may direct. South Carolina received \$48 million.

USC Union opens student food pantry

USC Union opened a student food pantry on campus in March 2021. The food pantry was made possible by the Lutz Foundation of Chester, S.C. The nonprofit foundation was established in 1995 with the purpose of endowing a foundation that would help to fund many community needs.

Groceries, rent, and meals can be expensive, and having a student food pantry will give the students the comfort of knowing they will not miss a meal while attending college. The USC Union student food pantry will provide access for food and other items in a free and confidential way.

"We are very excited to see this new campus food pantry on our campus in Union, made possible by generous grant funding from the Lutz Foundation and a number of private donors. This will create a means of student support that has not previously been available to them here, designed to serve all of our students in a most critical way. This type of resource is especially timely given the unique circumstances that so many of our students face during the current pandemic and variety of other economic challenges resulting from it," said USC Union Interim Dean **Randy Lowell**.



With the enrollment growth at USC Union, the pantry idea was presented at an ideal time for students who might find themselves food-insecure. Nonperishable food items and a variety of toiletries will be available for students. Anyone that is interested in donating items or funds to the food pantry can contact **Annie Smith**, USC Union marketing and development director.

USC Salkehatchie, others celebrate innovative Allendale broadband pilot project

USC Salkehatchie's West Campus in Allendale, S.C., will serve as one of three public Wi-Fi hubs in the town to better provide internet service in the community. This is part of a broadband project launched by the S.C. Office of Regulatory Staff (ORS) and USC Salkehatchie along with other state, local and private-sector partners that will bring Wi-Fi access to 1,000 homes where no access existed before in rural Allendale County.

Beginning in November 2020, the ORS partnered with SCETV, the S.C. Department of Education, USC Salkehatchie, Allendale County School District, the Allendale Hampton Jasper Regional Library, the Town of Allendale, the Southern Carolina Alliance and Revolution D Inc., to launch the [Allendale Broadband Pilot Project](#).

"We did two things for Allendale County, we provided free public Wi-Fi," said Jim Stritzinger, ORS broadband director, at the May 7 press conference on the USC Salkehatchie West Campus. "The second thing we did was we installed the first private LTE network in South Carolina."

"We are going to have a big, massive broadband program and it all started here in rural South Carolina," said U.S. Rep. Jim Clyburn (SC-6), who also serves as Majority Whip in the U.S. House of Representatives. Clyburn recently introduced a \$94 billion spending bill – the Accessible, Affordable Internet for All Act – to build high-speed broadband infrastructure in unserved and underserved communities to close the digital divide and ensure Americans have internet connectivity to learn and work from home, access telehealth services and stay connected

to loved ones.

"The results of this effort will make a difference and they will be transformative to Allendale and for our students," said USC Salkehatchie Campus Dean **Chris Nesmith**. "In our world today, broadband internet is a vital component of our economy and our infrastructure. It is a necessity not a luxury."

The project establishes multiple public Wi-Fi hubs and simultaneously deploys residential broadband service for families with K-12 students in Allendale County. Using local contractors, these hubs were set up at three different locations: USC Salkehatchie, Allendale Hampton Jasper Regional Library and Allendale Elementary School.

"Access to the internet is fundamental in improving student achievement. It opens doors to a wealth of information," said Allendale County School Superintendent Margaret Gilmore.

"Only thirty percent of the students in the entire school district were connected (to internet) with laptops," Clyburn said.

Now that is no longer the case. This project is a model for future communities in South Carolina, as well as the nation, to look toward improving broadband infrastructure.

"This is an example of many products and many services that can be provided

to bridge the digital divide that exists not only in South Carolina, but throughout the rest of the Country," added Nanette Edwards, ORS deputy director.

With this broadband infrastructure, Allendale County is now more connected than ever. Opening the doors for their community to access Education, Telehealth care, and much more. It is the beginning of progress

to decrease the digital divide that is prevalent in rural communities throughout South Carolina and the nation.

As part of the Broadband Infrastructure Program (BIP), the Allendale pilot project helped aid the expansion of broadband infrastructure with emphasized services

to rural communities and communities with a high prevalence of COVID-19 or with demographic characteristics consistent with risk factors for COVID-19.

The \$2.2 trillion Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security or "CARES Act" was passed by Congress to help provide relief to the United States economy from the COVID-19 pandemic. The South Carolina General Assembly passed Act 142 authorizing the ORS to expend up to \$50 million for broadband initiatives related to COVID-19. Included in this \$50 million was funding to expand broadband access through the BIP.

"In our world today, broadband internet is a vital component of our economy and our infrastructure. It is a necessity not a luxury."

*– Dean Chris Nesmith
USC Salkehatchie*

Distance learning classrooms' upgrades set for Summer 2021

A \$431,278 Rural Utilities and Services Distance Learning and Telemedicine (RUS DLT) Grant was awarded in 2020 by the U.S. Department of Agriculture to finish classroom upgrades for Palmetto College's two-way video conferencing classrooms.

These upgrades include the latest video conferencing equipment from Poly, a new projector, new cameras, and larger in-room TVs. Palmetto College received the funding to upgrade select classrooms in Columbia, Allendale,

Walterboro, and Lancaster. Once these upgrades are completed, all Palmetto College rooms will have the latest video conferencing technology.

Installation for the 1600 Hampton classroom on the UofSC Columbia Campus was completed during the week of May 10. Scheduled installation locations and dates on Palmetto College Campuses include: Salkehatchie East Campus on May 14-19, Salkehatchie West Campus on May 20-25 and Lancaster Campus on June 22-25.

Castaneda earns 2021 Burggraf Award for highest GPA among adult student learners

Miriam D. Castaneda, a recent organizational leadership graduate who completed her program from USC Union's Laurens location, is the 2021 recipient of the **David L. Burggraf Award for adult student learners**. The award is given annually in recognition of a student – 25 years of age and older – with the highest grade point average in Palmetto College's Liberal Studies and Organizational Leadership programs or in UofSC Columbia's Elementary Education online and hybrid bachelor's degree completion programs.

Castaneda is a native of Monterrey,

Mexico, who came to the United States 14 years ago. A married mother of a 16-year-old son, she began working towards a Bachelor of Arts in Organizational Leadership at age 32.



“Being a second-language learner, I faced many challenges in the pursuing of this career; however, with the help of my academic advisor, staff members, and fellow students I am about to reach my educational goals,” said

Castaneda. “During my time at UofSC, I have had achievements in the form of awards and scholarships.”

Castaneda received a \$500 scholarship and was recognized at

the April 15 University Awards Day Ceremony on the Horseshoe, as well as the Alpha Sigma Lambda Honor Society virtual induction ceremony on April 20. She was inducted as a member of the honor society for adult student learners in 2020. Castaneda graduated in May 2021. Because helping others has always been a great reward for her, she plans to continue her education and complete her law degree to become an immigration attorney to help others in her community.

The David L. Burggraf Award is named for the former director of Adult Student Services who devoted most of his career to the success of adult students at the University of South Carolina.

Virtual Alpha Sigma Lambda induction ceremony honors adult student learners

USC Palmetto College Campuses, Palmetto College Columbia and online programs have many adult learners – those 25 years of age and older – who attend classes during the day, in the evening and online. To honor those dedicated nontraditional students who adroitly handle life responsibilities while still achieving and maintaining high scholastic standards, [Palmetto College held a virtual April 20 induction ceremony](#) for membership in its chapter of the Alpha Sigma Lambda National Honor Society for adult learners.

This year's student inductees to the Upsilon Zeta chapter of Alpha Sigma Lambda included: **Chris Archibald**,

Jessica Baumeister, Kaegan Chavis, Sally Dillon, Sarah Duckworth, Cheryl Felder-Washington, Chelsea Kuehler, Missy Melton, Wende Miller, Haley Montgomery, Patience Nkyesiga, Mary Taylor, Marlena White, Sandra Williams and Lindsay Young.

Each year, a few Palmetto College faculty and staff are selected for induction as honorary members of the chapter. Among this year's honorary inductees is University of South Carolina President **Bob Caslen**. Other honorary inductees representing the Palmetto College Campuses and Palmetto College Columbia included: **Bridget Blackwell**, director of financial

aid for USC Palmetto College; **Ricky Boyd**, director of Shaw Air Force Base Programs from USC Sumter; **Danelle Faulkenberry**, Palmetto College coordinator at USC Lancaster; **Jessica Goodwin**, librarian, at USC Salkehatchie's East Campus (Walterboro); and **Steven Lownes**, assistant professor of world languages at USC Union.

Founded in 1945, [Alpha Sigma Lambda honor society](#) recognizes the academic success of adult students. Today, there are more than 300 chartered chapters throughout the United States.

Palmetto College Spring 2021 survey results

In March 2021, surveys were conducted across the Palmetto College campuses to assess the progress in meeting the needs of students, faculty, and staff during the ongoing pandemic.

The surveys were distributed across three groups: (1) students, (2) faculty and instructional staff, and (3) non-

instructional staff. Tremendous and necessary insights were gained from your input on how the Spring 2021 semester has unfolded during the pandemic and 556 responses were received, up from 540 respondents for the Fall 2020 semester.

The responses were overwhelmingly positive and many cited good

communication and campus support.

All three groups were generally satisfied with mask usage, social distancing, and cleaning. In addition, most respondents agreed that courses seemed more challenging and that students had a harder time attending and completing assignments on time.

USC Lancaster Players garner multiple awards at 2021 SCSTA virtual college theatre festival

Under a “new normal,” the **USC Lancaster Players** participated in and won many awards at the South Carolina Speech and Theatre College Festival – which was held in a virtual format in March 2021.

The [USC Lancaster Players](#) participated in the South Carolina Speech and Theatre Association's Annual College Festival on Saturday, March 20. Colleges and universities from across the state competed in three categories: Theatre, Public Speaking, and Performance.

While the festival is normally held in-person and hosted by a different member institution every two years, it pivoted to a virtual platform due to COVID-19. USC Lancaster served as host institution for this year's virtual festival. Teams from Clafflin University, Lander University, Newberry College and Northeastern Technical College competed as well.

The students competed in and earned awards in several categories. For technical design, **Tanner Groves** and **Mary Mac Adamson** earned second-



The USC Lancaster Players hosted the South Carolina Speech and Theatre Association's Annual College Festival in March. Colleges and universities from across the state competed in three categories: Theatre, Public Speaking, and Performance. USCL students won awards for technical design, duet acting and a triathlon award.

and third-place awards, respectively. For the duet acting category, **Kayla Caulfield** and **Jacob Moore** were awarded first-place, and **Jada Cannady**

and **Abbey Hunter** were awarded second place. Adamson also earned the triathlon award.

USC Sumter students win high honors at SAM International Business Conference Championship

USC Sumter was named runner-up in the overall team competition for the Society for Advancement of Management (SAM) International Collegiate Business Skills Championship in the Associate's Division at the [76th Annual SAM International Business Conference](#). This annual series of competitions, reaching back over 40 years, is organized by the Society for Advancement of Management and provides an opportunity for students to showcase existing skills and further develop fundamental skills for business success.

The USC Sumter team included students **William Barrineau**, **Sydney Blass**, **Tykeem Glisson**, **Lindsay Lew**, **Demetrius Mack** and **Christopher Rembert**. The team was mentored by **Santosh Nandi**, USC Sumter assistant professor of management.

Other awards the Sumter team earned included first place for their



Written Case Study and second place for their Presentation Case Study. Individual awards included first place in Extemporaneous Speech for Barrineau,

second place in Extemporaneous Speech for Lew, first place for Business Knowledge Bowl for Barrineau and third place for Business Pitch for Barrineau.

USC Sumter earns 2021-2022 “Military Friendly” school designation

USC Sumter has once again attained the [Military Friendly School designation](#) for 2021-2022. Institutions earning the Military Friendly School designation were evaluated using both public data sources and responses from a proprietary survey. Over 1,200 schools participated in the 2021-2022 survey with 747 earning the designation.

The 2021- 2022 Military Friendly Schools list has been published in the May 2021 issue of *G.I. Jobs* magazine and can be found at www.militaryfriendly.com.

Methodology, criteria, and weightings were determined by *G.I. Jobs* publisher, Victory Media, with input from the Military Friendly Advisory Council of independent leaders in the higher education and military recruitment community. Final ratings were determined by combining the institution's survey response set and government/agency public data sources, within a logic-based scoring assessment. Victory measures the institution's ability to meet thresholds for student retention, graduation, job placement, loan repayment, persistence (degree advancement or transfer) and loan default rates for all students and, specifically, for student veterans.

“USC Sumter is honored to once again receive the Military Friendly designation,” said USC Sumter Campus Dean **Michael Sonntag**. “Our faculty and staff are dedicated to helping all students succeed, and with our Education Office at Shaw Air Force Base and our campus military services

counselor, we are able to assist our military students and their dependents with their unique needs.”

“Military Friendly is committed to transparency and providing consistent data driven standards in our designation process. This creates a competitive atmosphere that encourages colleges to consistently evolve and invest in their programs. Schools who achieve designation show true commitment and dedication in their efforts. Our standards assist schools by providing a benchmark that promotes positive educational outcomes, resources, and support services that better the educational landscape and provide opportunity for the Military Community,” said Kayla Lopez, national director of military partnerships for Military Friendly.

The Military Friendly® Schools list is created each year based on extensive research using public data sources for more than 8,800 schools nationwide, input from student veterans, and responses to the proprietary, data-driven Military Friendly Schools survey from participating institutions. The survey questions, methodology, criteria and weighting were developed with the assistance of an independent research firm and an advisory council of educators and employers. The survey is administered for free and is open to all post-secondary schools that wish to participate. Criteria for consideration can be found at www.militaryfriendly.com.



Arras Foundation, USC Lancaster announce joint virtual summer internship program

Intern experiences to focus on diversity, equity, inclusion and access work within local community

This summer, the [Arras Foundation and USC Lancaster will introduce a joint virtual internship program](#).

Designed by both organizations to foster community growth and learning, the virtual internship will provide college students or recent graduates the opportunity to work and learn with local communities in the area of diversity, equity, inclusion, and access. Interns will research, learn, and work with local business, nonprofit, public, and private partners and residents to foster a healthy community that prioritizes inclusivity and appreciation for all people.

“We are ready for this experience

to learn alongside our interns as they help us imagine a more inclusive community,” said USC Lancaster Campus Dean **Walter P. Collins III**. “In joining with our partners at the Arras Foundation to create this robust program designed for young people, we believe the resources and opportunities for community growth and learning are limitless.”

The joint internship is a paid, eight-week experience beginning June 2021. Interns will work virtually with both organizations and will engage with community members, University and regional experts to build a platform for studying and learning together as

we explore the topic of diversity as a community strength.

“In 2016, the Foundation made a commitment to community engagement – supporting and lifting all voices to build a healthier community. That same year, we launched a summer internship program to specifically listen and learn from young people,” said Susan DeVenny, president and CEO of the Arras Foundation. “This summer, together with USC Lancaster, our hope is that these young leaders will help us deepen our community capacity for empathy, understanding, and ultimately building a more inclusive future for all who live here.”



Leadership Salkehatchie announces graduation of Class of 2020

USC Salkehatchie and SouthernCarolina Alliance proudly announce the completion of its 2020 **Leadership Salkehatchie** class, a program that empowers participants with the economic development knowledge and skills needed to cultivate progress within the Salkehatchie Region; the program completion was delayed due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic.

Leadership Salkehatchie's 20th class consists of business leaders, educators, political leaders, and law enforcement representing Allendale, Bamberg, Barnwell, Beaufort, Colleton, Hampton and Jasper counties. This year's graduates are: Karissa Ulmer (Colleton), Letitia Dowling (Bamberg), Sarah Lyn Tuten (Hampton), Dolton Williams (Beaufort), Amye Stivender (Colleton), Kathleen Barnes (Hampton), Cliff Warren (Colleton), Joshua Rowland (Jasper), Katrina Riley (Allendale), Jon Pye (Allendale), Chantsie Pickelsimer (Barnwell), Marcus Rivera (Barnwell), Mike Beasley (Barnwell), Ladson Fishburne (Colleton) and Bill Goodson (Allendale).

"SouthernCarolina Alliance has sponsored the regional leadership program in partnership with USC Salkehatchie for more than 20 years because the development of strong leaders is paramount to the future of

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

Participants of the Leadership Salkehatchie Class of 2020 attended monthly leadership workshops with topics in leadership, economic development, criminal justice, civic engagement and regional services. Participants also developed and presented capstone group projects they felt could improve the quality of life for

the citizens of the Salkehatchie Region. These included youth leadership, youth mentoring, litter and beautification and promotion of the region through virtual field trips. Each project was unique and provided avenues for the participants to showcase their leadership skills.

"We can all make a difference. It may be something small or even something grand, but we can all contribute," graduate Bill Goodson said.

The Class of 2020 will be recognized for their achievements at the next SCA Annual Event which has not yet been scheduled due to COVID restrictions. They will also be invited to attend a trip to Washington, D.C., in 2022 to meet with government leaders with the next cohort.

The program was facilitated by USC Salkehatchie Dean Emerita Ann Carmichael, who has over 30 years of leadership experience. She is a graduate of the Furman University Riley Leadership Institute. Most recently, Dr. Carmichael received the S.C. Department of Commerce 2019 Rural Leadership Award at the 29th Annual South Carolina Rural Summit.

The next group of emerging leaders will participate in Leadership Salkehatchie this fall. For more information about Leadership Salkehatchie, please visit uscsalkehatchieleadership.org.



Follow Palmetto College on social media.

USC Union receives scholarship donation from DOES civic organization



USC Union interim Campus Dean Randy Lowell accepts a scholarship donation from the Benevolent, Patriotic Order of DOES #148 of Union, S.C.

For more than 20 years, the Benevolent, Patriotic Order of DOES #148 of Union has presented a scholarship to USC Union to support higher education. The scholarship is awarded annually to one male and one female incoming freshman student. Larissa Horne and Carson Nance were the 2019-2020 recipients; Hayley Palmer and Robert Kennington are the 2020-2021 recipients.

The Benevolent, Patriotic Order of DOES #148 was established in Union, S.C., in November 1957. The DOES promote social activities among members, promote generous work in the community and they are active with their charity and social projects. During the year, the Does have bake sales and other campaigns to raise funds for Meals on Wheels, American Cancer Society, Union High School Fellowship of Christian Athletes, Union Miracle League, Ronald McDonald House and even more philanthropies. They also donate gifts to residents at Heartland Health Care during the holidays.

Formed nationally in 1868, the DOES work in harmony with the Benevolent and Protective Order of Elks and are organized along similar lines.

D. Lindsay Pettus Scholarship Fund announced at USC Lancaster

USC Lancaster recently announced the establishment of the **D. Lindsay Pettus Endowed Scholarship Fund**, which will be awarded to USC Lancaster students who live in Lancaster or Chester counties.

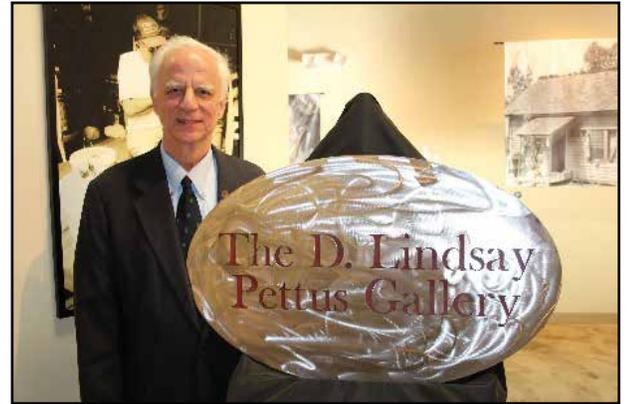
The award is named for Lancaster historian and conservationist **David Lindsay Pettus (1940-2020)**, who not only leaves a legacy of supporting USCL, but also a legacy of helping establish USCL's Native American Studies Center, both of which will continue to benefit students for years to come.

"It is impossible to quantify the influence that Mr. Pettus' generosity has had on the USC Lancaster campus," said Dr. Walter Collins, USCL campus dean. "We are grateful for his long-standing support, acts of kindness and philanthropic benevolence that have had and will continue to have tangible impacts on the work of students and faculty."

Pettus was instrumental in acquiring one of the Center's most significant collections of Catawba and Native American culture, serving as the catalyst for the development of the Native American Studies academic program and the Native American Studies Center itself. The collection consists of around 1,000 pieces of Catawba pottery from around

88 potters, the largest collection of Catawba pottery in the world, as well as 65 Pamunkey and 37 Cherokee pots.

"Mr. Pettus was a strong supporter of the Native American Studies Center from the very beginning, and he



visited us several times a week," said Christopher Judge, center archaeologist and assistant director. "His donated collection of some 85 pieces of Catawba pottery includes some artists underrepresented in existing collections as well as some unique pieces."

Some of these donated pieces can be seen in the permanent exhibit, "The Story of Catawba Pottery," located in the Native American Studies Center's D. Lindsay Pettus Gallery. While the center is temporarily closed due to safety concerns regarding current COVID-19 considerations, viewers can take a virtual tour of the exhibit.

Palmetto College virtual town hall events provide invaluable COVID-19 updates

During the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, the No.1 priority of USC Palmetto College has been ensuring the health, safety and well-being of students, faculty, and staff of the Palmetto College Campuses.

To make certain that the lines of communications remained open, two **Palmetto College Virtual Town Hall** events were held on Feb. 2 and April 29, respectively, to hear the concerns

of faculty and staff, answer other questions and present the action plans resulting from the Fall 2020 and Spring 2021 surveys that were completed by many students, faculty, and staff.

[View a recording](#) of the Feb. 2 Town Hall.

[View a recording](#) of the April 29 Town Hall.

Hampton County Chamber of Commerce honors Salk alumna Erin Long as “Educator of the Year”

Each year the Hampton County Chamber of Commerce strives to go the extra mile to make a difference for its county and citizens and to honor those in the community who share the same vision and mission. On Wednesday, Feb. 17, the Chamber recognized USC Salkehatchie alumna **Erin Long**, Wade Hampton High School Media Specialist, as its “Educator of the Year.”

If you ask Erin, her favorite part of her job is working with students. She enjoys helping them plan for their future. Long's official title at Wade Hampton High School is media specialist, but she also wears many other hats.

Since starting at Wade Hampton, she has been their website supervisor and social media director; she also took over as graduation coordinator after Mrs. French retired. In the last year, Long

has been named Wade Hampton High School Teacher of the Year, Hampton District One Teacher of the Year, and students voted her “Most Likely to be able to Fix Anything!”

Long helped lead Wade Hampton through a formal graduation during the pandemic and has assisted in live streaming various events put on by the school so that the community can still see all the wonderful things happening at the school over the last few months. She does all this while handling computer distribution and repair, co-teaching college prep lessons, and being part of the leadership team.

Long is a Wade Hampton High School graduate. She went on to attend USC Salkehatchie and received

her bachelor's degree in elementary education from USC Aiken. She has taught at Allendale Middle School and Hampton Elementary School. In

2017, she took a position at Wade Hampton as its media specialist and, in 2019, earned a Master of Information Science from UofSC Columbia.

Outside of her career, Long enjoys spending time with her family. They like to travel, go camping and hike. Her plan for the future is to continue

helping the students of Hampton County prepare for college and enjoying life with her family.

Reprinted in part from an article appearing in [The Hampton County Guardian](#).



Chancellor's Corner, [continued from page 1](#)

Justice (USC Upstate), Engineering Technology Management (USC Upstate), Health Informatics (USC Upstate), Hospitality Management (USC Beaufort), Information Management and Systems (USC Upstate), Organizational Leadership (UofSC Columbia), Public Health (USC Beaufort) and Special Education (USC Aiken).

Spring 2021 Enrollment

In Spring 2021, Palmetto College Overall Headcount increased from 5,731 to a record high 6,047 (+316; +5.5%).

Palmetto College Campuses Headcount increased from 4,538 to a record high 4,691 (+153; +3.4%).

Palmetto College Online Headcount increased from 1,076 to a record high 1,237 (+161; +15.0%). The following programs reached record highs in headcount: Business Administration (USC Aiken), Criminal Justice (USC Upstate), Engineering Technology Management (USC Upstate), Health Informatics (USC Upstate), Hospitality Management (USC Beaufort), Public Health (USC Beaufort) and Special Education (USC Aiken).

More Accomplishments

Other accomplishments this academic year include: \$3.4 million of a \$6 Million GEER grant courtesy of Governor McMaster to install community Apple computer labs in “Broadband Deserts” surrounding Palmetto College Campuses across the state; a \$431,278 federal Rural Utilities and Services Distance Learning and Telemedicine Grant provided upgrades and improvements for all video conference rooms; total financial benefit to system institutions from Palmetto College transfers equals \$101.3 million to date since FY13; a successful visit from the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools' Commission on Colleges; Palmetto College Campuses salary study implementation resulted in pay increases for 91 faculty and staff; all campuses have a three-month fund balance for emergencies; 541 overall campus and online graduates in Spring 2021, up 15.4% compared to 2020; Dual Enrollment Students across all campuses of 2,993 in Fall 2020 and 2,821 in Spring 2021; total Palmetto College tuition revenue is \$4,404,646; and a Palmetto College overall student success rate of 71.3%.

Fundraising

Finally, 2021 has been a great year from a fundraising perspective as well. With over a month left in the academic year, Palmetto College has received nearly \$1.5 million in new donations to projects ranging from the renewal of USC Sumter's auditorium, to the completion of our new nursing training and clinical simulation labs, to the creation of food pantries intended to help feed our students in need. This figure, an amazing team effort, marks the second highest fundraising total since Palmetto College was established in 2013!

We are most grateful for the outstanding work of those on our regional Palmetto College campuses at USC Lancaster, USC Salkehatchie, USC Sumter and USC Union, as well as our Palmetto College Online partners at USC Aiken, USC Beaufort, UofSC Columbia and USC Upstate.

Again, thank you for your continued pursuit of excellence and the resulting accomplishments that would not have been possible without your dedicated efforts during this most difficult year. I hope you enjoy your summer!

Salkehatchie softball team wins NJCAA Region X title

USC Salkehatchie's softball team has won the Region X Division I Regular Season and Tournament Championships and begins play in the district tournament on May 14 in Alexander City, Ala. The team won all three games in which they played in the tournament, defeating USC Sumter in the championship game 6-4.

First-year head coach **Siara Shelton** is excited about the team's accomplishments.

"As a first-year coach, I could not be more proud and pleased with this team. Any coach wants to win the regular season and the tournament, but being a first-year coach, it means a little more," Shelton said. "Any team has its fair share of ups and downs, and we did, as well. But, we pulled together as a family when it was needed most. I'm so happy for these girls. Ninety-five percent of them have never played in a college tournament because of COVID last year. So, to come in and just play and win – it all means a lot. We're all excited, but we're not finished bringing home hardware."

Pitcher **Bree Wilson** was named Tournament MVP while teammates **Maddy Gwin, Ali Sarman, Essence Champion** and **Lauren Wexler** were named to the All-Tournament Team.

"Bree Wilson was named All-Tournament MVP for her grit and tenacity on the mound. During the season, Bree went 4-1 against these teams, so I knew she could do it. She started Game 1 and Game 2, and closed Game 3. After having the lead in Game 1, I asked her if she wanted to



The USC Salkehatchie softball team, which finished the regular season 21-18, won both the NJCAA Region X regular season and tournament championships.

come out to save her arm. She looked at me and said, 'No, coach. I want the ball.' When you have a pitcher on the mound who wants the ball and wants to win, it makes a difference," Shelton said.

The team, which finished the regular season 21-18, is not short on talent with the Region X Player of the Year, several players on the All-Region Teams and Academic All-Americans.

"Abriana Berry or AB, was named Region X Player of the Year because she is a great all-around player. She's a true catcher who I stuck at shortstop and she ran with it. She led Region X in homeruns (ten), RBIs (54), and was third in batting average (.463). Not only

did her stats prove her to be Player of the Year, but my argument for her was also being a true catcher being moved to shortstop. She told me she would play wherever was best for the team and would try her best and she did," Shelton said.

USC Salkehatchie members of the NCJAA Region X All-Region Team include First Team All-Region: **Abriana Berry, Shea Zweifel, Ali Sarman** and **Ryanne Yarborough**; Second Team All-Region: **Essence Champion** and **Lauren Wexler**; and Honorable Mention: **Bree Wilson** and **Maddie Poston**.

Three players were named Academic All-Americans: **Ally Hardee, Ryanne Yarborough** and **Ivy McCall**.

USC Sumter tennis teams compete in national finals



USC Sumter athletic teams have had an outstanding year. Both the men's and women's tennis teams qualified for the NJCAA National Championship and **Chloe McGuire** of the women's golf team qualified as an individual for the NJCAA National Tournament.

This was the second appearance for the men's tennis team and the women experienced their first trip to a national championship.

"Our teams are very excited for the opportunity to compete on the national level," said **Adrienne Cataldo**, USC Sumter athletics director. "All of our athletes have been working hard during an unprecedented season and I feel they are prepared to perform at a competitive level with the other teams they will be facing."



USC Sumter Fire Ants eSports Team lauded for gender equity in Associated Press study

In a March 2021 [Associated Press article](#), USC Sumter was highlighted and recognized for fielding an eSports team that has a 50 percent female and 50 percent male ratio.

According to the AP study, nearly 90 percent of scholarships nationwide go to male players. [Sumter's Fire Ants eSports team](#) is an outlier, and sets a national example.

Salk women's basketball competes in national tournament

The USC Salkehatchie women's basketball team defeated Catawba Valley Community College to remain undefeated during the regular season to claim the NJCAA Region X Championship. The team advanced to the NJCAA Division II Tournament in Hickory N.C., in late April, making it to the quarter finals in this year's national tournament.

"I couldn't be prouder of this team and the work they put in. Winning this region championship means the world to me," Coach **Olivia Gaines** said. "It was a challenging year – adjusting to being a head coach, learning to deal with every aspect of a program and finding ways to motivate the women in academics, living situations, life situations as well as basketball and all the adjustments caused by COVID. But it was all worth it. From day one I knew we had enough talent to make things happen, but I questioned our mental toughness. They answered my question. They are mentally tough."

Earning additional honors this season were: **Mariah Igus** as Region X Player of the Year and First Team All-Region; **Antwanique Walley** as First Team All-Region; and Coach Gaines as Region X Coach of the Year.

The women's basketball team entered the national tournament ranked tenth in the nation and undefeated during the regular season. Freshman guard Mariah Igus ranked first in the nation in points scored per game. As a team,



The USC Salkehatchie women's basketball team remained undefeated during the regular season to claim the NJCAA Region X Championship before advancing to the NJCAA Division II Tournament, making it to the quarter final round..

USC Salkehatchie was first in the nation in points scored per game and field goals made per game and second in the nation in three-point shooting percentage and steals per game. The team also ranks in the Top Ten nationally in seven other categories.

Director of Athletics **Jeremy Joye** is excited about the accomplishments of this team.

"I am extremely proud of the work that these ladies have put in and all that they have overcome as a team this year. Seeing them grow and mesh together

on the court has been quite remarkable and I was blessed to have a front row seat to their accomplishments," said Joye. "Coach Gaines has led them in a way that has made USC Salkehatchie very proud, and she has accomplished so much this year as a first-time head coach."

This is the first year that the USC Salkehatchie women's basketball team has been led by Coach Gaines, a former Gamecock who played under Coach Dawn Staley.

USC Union Bantam Athletics debuts new website

The USC Union Bantam Athletics program has launched a new athletics website – www.uscunionathletics.com – in late January 2021.

“Our athletic department and players are super excited about this site. It will help to highlight our athletes and what they do throughout the season,” said **Zach Simmons**, Bantam athletics director and men’s soccer coach.

In recent years, the athletics department has expanded to include men’s soccer, men’s baseball, and women’s softball. These teams compete in the National Junior College Athletic Association (NJCAA). Women’s volleyball, added in the fall 2020 semester, will compete in the club level and will move to NJCAA by 2022. Also competing at the club level are the bass fishing, esports and rifle teams.

“We’re excited to highlight the achievements of our student-athletes on this great new website, Go Bantams!”



said **Randy Lowell**, interim campus dean.

“Our athletic department continues to grow and it was past time to reflect that growth and our student-athletes,”

said **Annie Smith**, marketing and development director. “The new website has capabilities to quickly access teams’ rosters, schedules, stats and more.”

USC Sumter, USC Aiken partner to offer BSN degree

Through conversations with local healthcare providers, USC Sumter discovered the need for additional Baccalaureate of Science in Nursing-prepared nurses in the Sumter community. [As a result, USC Sumter, in partnership with USC Aiken, will begin offering the Bachelor of Science in Nursing \(BSN\) program during the fall 2021 semester.](#) USC Sumter will be the first institution in its community to offer such a degree. The goal of the program is to not only educate and train our future nurses, but also encourage these nurses to stay in the Sumter community where there is a high demand for nursing professionals.

Designed to prepare students for a career in a variety of health care settings, the nursing curriculum at USC Sumter will provide students with the knowledge and skills necessary for success in the rapid and ever-changing healthcare environment. A BSN program graduate will also earn the necessary pre-requisite work required to continue learning for post-graduate nursing education. The USC Aiken at



Sumter Nursing Program is approved by the South Carolina State Board of Nursing and is fully accredited by the Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education (CCNE).

To facilitate the learning needs associated with the new program, the campus has renovated space in

the Anderson Library where students will experience an active learning environment with redesigned nursing classrooms, dedicated study space, a nursing skills lab, and a state-of-the-art high-fidelity simulation lab.

Salk nursing students assist at COVID vaccination clinic

Twenty USC Salkehatchie nursing students volunteered at COVID vaccination clinics hosted at USC Salkehatchie's Allendale campus in partnership with Allendale County Hospital. While senior nurses administered the vaccines, other students helped with registration and logistics. Approximately 600 doses of the vaccine were dispensed at the clinics held March 16 and 23.

April Cone, nursing academic program manager for the USC Salkehatchie Rural Nursing Initiative, understands the importance of the nursing program's partnership with the community.

"We are excited that our nursing students have the opportunity to provide their expertise and assistance in such a significant community health endeavor. This experience not only enhances their clinical nursing skills, but also allows them to realize the true impact nurses have in a community," said Cone. "As a rural and medically underserved area, it's encouraging to see the partnerships of local healthcare and education organizations that are making it possible

for Allendale County residents to access this essential public health service."

USC Salkehatchie hosted additional clinics in April, and Dean **Chris Nesmith** hopes that the opportunities provided by the clinics will help accelerate a return to normalcy.

"We are pleased to be able to host the vaccination clinics for the Allendale community and to support everyone's health and safety. It is great to see so many taking advantage of these opportunities, and we hope clinics like these will bring us closer to moving past the pandemic," Nesmith said.

The clinics are sponsored by Allendale County Hospital along with



USC Salkehatchie nursing students volunteered at COVID vaccination clinics hosted at USC Salkehatchie's Allendale campus in partnership with Allendale County Hospital.

multiple community partners including Low Country Health Care System, USC Salkehatchie, USC Salkehatchie Nursing Program, Allendale County, S.C. National Guard, Concerned Citizens for Allendale County, Georgia Famuliner and Healthy Learners.

Mascot "Lance" supports USC Lancaster vaccination efforts



USC Lancaster mascot **Lance** delivered breakfast to the hardworking S.C. DHEC team that provides free COVID-19 testing to the community, Monday through Friday, rain or shine. We are very grateful for all the frontline workers for their dedication to our community and to keeping us safe!



USC Lancaster recently launched a campaign to encourage students to get vaccinated. The graphic was created by USC Lancaster alum Blake Brewer.

Palmetto College Online alum, spokesman completes MBA

Andrew Verma, '15, '21, earned a Master of Business Administration degree this May from USC Aiken. One of Palmetto College Online's earliest students, he completed a Bachelor of Science in Business Administration degree online from USC Aiken through Palmetto College in 2015.

Back in 2013, Verma was working at Wells Fargo in Columbia, S.C., and needed a bachelor's degree to advance his career.

"I wanted to really advance my career at Wells Fargo, but at the same time I wanted to get my undergraduate degree. I couldn't do that because you usually have a set class schedule, and at work I have to be flexible," said Verma. "I wanted to have the best of both worlds: go to school to get a degree and also progress with Wells Fargo. When Palmetto College was launched, I was really happy — ecstatic — because graduating with the business administration degree wouldn't have been possible if Palmetto College

wasn't there."

Earning that bachelor's degree indeed allowed him to advance.

Today, he serves as an AVP and Customer Success Team Manager in Consumer and Small Business Banking Operations for Wells Fargo. In this role, Verma and his team support thousands of customers each year nationally from Charlotte, N.C., one of the financial institution's largest cities for banking operations.

Earning an MBA from USC Aiken to complement his bachelor's degree was the next step in his professional and educational progression.

"I am so grateful that Palmetto College helped me have the opportunity to pursue and complete an MBA," said Verma.

In celebration of Palmetto College's fifth anniversary in 2018, Verma was one of five alumni featured in a [video discussing their educational journeys](#), and he also appears in [15-second](#) and [30-second](#) commercials for Palmetto College Online that were broadcast



on cable television and as digital pre-roll video on websites and streaming television between 2019 and 2021.

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