

The Investiture Address and First-Year Report of  
USC Upstate's Fifth Chancellor | 2021-2022







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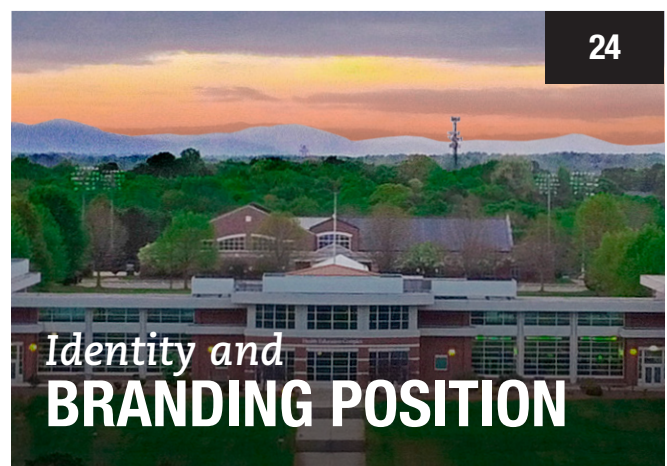
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## *Letter from* **THE CHANCELLOR**

It gives me great pleasure to share with you this Chancellor's Report for 2021-22. My first year as your Chancellor has been productive and encouraging as we have set course to Reimagine Upstate, even in a time of uncertainty in the world and in higher education.

As you will see in the following pages, one of our leadership team's first actions during my tenure was to craft a new, transformative value proposition for USC Upstate: "Education for all that inspires a thriving and just society." The five strategic priorities that grew from this aspirational statement direct our work and inform the impact we seek to have on our students, on Spartanburg County, the Upstate region, and beyond. Many of the year's achievements have grown directly from these priorities.

The year has not been without its challenges. Although campus life returned to some sense of normal as the year progressed, COVID still remains an ever-present and unpredictable influence. The unexpected Russian invasion of Ukraine has direct and indirect impacts on our people and operations. Higher education itself faces numerous headwinds in enrollment, the pace of change in the marketplace, and identifying innovative strategies that will attract and engage students in a post-COVID environment.

Throughout this first year, I have talked about the encouragement my mother gave me as a young man to approach each new situation or challenge with an "empty cup," receiving the counsel of others with humility and using that input to make informed decisions. Following her guidance has served and will continue to serve us well because the people of USC Upstate are the reason it is the No. 1 public regional university in South Carolina. Thank you for your interest and investment in this university. I am grateful to count you as a Spartan!

Sincerely,

Handwritten signature of Bennie L. Harris

Bennie L. Harris, Ph.D.  
Chancellor



# Bold & Effective LEADERSHIP

Chancellor Harris poses with the Chancellor's Ambassadors prior to his investiture ceremony.



## REIMAGINING UPSTATE

*The academic year started with a vision.*

Shortly after beginning his term as chancellor of USC Upstate, Dr. Bennie L. Harris held a retreat with his cabinet. Their goal: establish a transformative value proposition that reflected where they wanted the university to go, and what they hoped to achieve in service to students and the community.

The result was a succinct, yet powerful, statement: Education for all that inspires a thriving and just society.

In support of this principle, Harris encouraged his team, and the campus at large, to work collaboratively and across disciplines to promote positive student outcomes – to “reimagine” everything from administrative processes to events, and find new ways to elevate the university.



Chancellor Harris discusses leadership and higher education with former chancellors Olin B. Sansbury, John C. Stockwell, and Thomas F. Moore.

One immediate outcome was the revival of convocation to open the academic year. The event focused on instilling a sense of pride and belonging in new students. To reinforce the expectation of student success, convocation was held on the main quad, where spring commencement takes place every year.

Also in the fall, Harris convened the Reimagine Summit, which brought faculty, staff, trustees, and student representatives together to examine some of the challenges facing higher education, and then develop solutions for USC Upstate.

The ideas generated from the summit focused on ways to improve the student experience academically and socially, recruit and retain students, and increase awareness of USC Upstate in the region and beyond.



The process of shaping Upstate's path forward included the insights of past leaders as well. For the annual Founders Day celebration, moved to April this year to coincide with investiture week, Chancellor Harris welcomed three former chancellors – Olin B. Sansbury, John C. Stockwell, and Thomas Moore – to share their thoughts on leadership. Together, they reflected on what they saw as the greatest challenges facing USC Upstate today, and offered their knowledge and support.



Gov. Henry McMaster was a special guest at investiture.

## FRESH START

In April, USC Upstate celebrated the investiture of Dr. Bennie L. Harris as its fifth chancellor. The ceremony was an opportunity to not only highlight the university's impact over the past 55 years, but also envision what more it can achieve.

In his speech (see page 6), Harris celebrated USC Upstate's impact on the regional economy, with graduates in nursing, business, teaching, science and the arts filling important employment needs. But Upstate can have an even greater role, he said. Bachelor's degree attainment is below 30 percent in most of the Upstate region, and Harris said the university is committed to increasing that to 40 percent in Spartanburg County.

There are challenges ahead – tuition increases, enrollment declines, and a shift in the traditional higher education model since the pandemic are headwinds USC Upstate, and higher education in general, must face, Harris said. But he encouraged everyone to collaborate with him on reimagining “how we can make this education available and attractive to all.”

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*“The economic growth in Upstate South Carolina is driving one of the most transformational times in decades for our region. USC Upstate, under the visionary leadership of Dr. Bennie Harris, is poised to meet the educational and workforce needs required for upward mobility of our citizens. He is a collaborator at heart with a passion for mutually beneficial success of the individual student and the community.”*

## KAREN CALHOUN

*Principal, Business Development, McMillan Pazdan Smith Chair, USC Upstate Foundation Board of Directors*

*“As a commissioner whose responsibility is to support USC Upstate as an institution of higher learning that provides superior educational access while meeting the needs of employers in an ever-changing environment, I believe Bennie Harris’ visionary leadership in expanding programming and the brand, ensuring diversity and inclusion, being intimately involved with our communities, leadership and employers, while addressing funding and enrollment issues, will ensure a healthy and responsive USC Upstate. Dr. Harris exudes energy and passion for the work. USC Upstate is in great hands!”*

## CATHY McCABE

*Spartanburg County Commission for Higher Education*



# Investiture Address

Playwright George Bernard Shaw said, “Imagination is the beginning of creation. You imagine what you desire, you will what you imagine, and at last, you create what you will.”

Shaw’s equation is correct. Nothing can be created unless you first imagine it. But only when you add determination and commitment can imagination become creation. And yet, because we focus on what we can see, we often forget that imagination and will came first.

Do you recognize this quote? “That’s one small step for man, one giant leap for mankind.” Of course you do, because Neil Armstrong’s first steps on the moon were one of the greatest achievements in history.

But do you remember the imagination that led to that moment? In 1961, President John F. Kennedy said, “I believe that this nation should commit itself to achieving the goal, before this decade is out, of landing a man on the moon and returning him safely to Earth.”

Armstrong’s achievement – indeed, our national determination and commitment to achieve this goal – began with President Kennedy’s simple declaration to a joint session of Congress.

Now, let me be clear: I am not comparing my investiture today as the fifth chancellor of USC Upstate to humans landing on the moon. But the destination of every journey is conceived in a moment of imagination. Imagination becomes a bold vision, and with commitment and determination, vision becomes achievement.

My speech today will focus on four very brief chapters.



Members of North Georgia Pipes & Drums lead the procession.

## Chapter 1

My journey to this moment began with the imagination of my wonderful parents. I grew up on their 60-acre farm in the Mississippi Delta. For many kids in that area, the border of the farm was the limit of their world.

But my parents had imagination. They had vision. They would not accept mediocrity from any of us, nor would they allow us to see the property lines of the farm as the boundary of our aspirations. They inspired me to believe I could do anything – anything that I wanted to do in life and my dad



The Harris family, from left, Bria, Chancellor Harris, first lady Frankie Harris, Branden and Bennie II.

made this simple deal with me. Dad said, “Bennie, as long as you stay in school, you don’t have to come back and work on the farm.” That’s the reason I made a career in higher education!

Now, farming is a noble profession, and a vital profession. But even then, it wasn’t what I wanted to do with my life. So, I was motivated to do well in school and to pursue opportunities for leadership and service.

I was fortunate to have mentors and educators in my family and community who taught me about life and created opportunities for me to grow and to learn. You’ve already met Dr. Harvey Jackson, the minister from the church of my childhood. Every Saturday he would gather all the young people to clean the church building, to manicure the lawn and take care of the flowers. Believe me, that church lawn was immaculate!

He introduced so many of us to the study of biblical hermeneutics. He taught us how to exegete scripture, and how to tie a necktie or just open doors for the elderly. He reinforced the values of our parents. He was a young man who demonstrated and expected excellence and I saw him as a role model.

Mrs. Hemphill was one of my high school teachers. In a time when Mississippi schools were being integrated, many white teachers left, and students left, and Mrs. Hemphill



# April 15, 2022



stayed to teach in what became a predominantly African American school because she believed in her students regardless of their race.

For those of us who were determined to go to college, she took her planning period every day to prepare us for the ACT, or to teach us calculus and physics, because our school couldn't afford to teach those subjects.

She urged me to attend Mississippi State University – an overwhelmingly, predominantly white university – when I was considering a smaller university that had offered me a scholarship.

Mrs. Hemphill said, “Bennie, I need you to go to Mississippi State and show them that you are smart and have every right to be there.” And so, I went to Mississippi State. Sometimes it was intimidating, but I persevered.

At Mississippi State I met Dr. Ernestine Madison and her husband, Mr. George Madison. Dr. Madison cultivated my passion to lead and helped me find my purpose. And I'm so glad she's here today to celebrate this moment with me.

She also contrived an opportunity for me to meet a young lady named Frankie Woods because she knew Frankie liked me. And the rest is history. I earned my bachelor's degree in engineering; two years later, Frankie and I got married; and the decision to attend Mississippi State set me on a path that has led me to this ceremony today.

## Chapter 2

As I take on the mantle of chancellor, I stand on the shoulders of giants — founder G.B. Hodge, former chancellors Sansbury, Stockwell, Moore, and Kelly, the Spartanburg County Higher Education Commissioners, and a host of faculty, staff, and friends who have built this great institution.

I will ask again if our former chancellors and The Honorable Derham Cole, who served as an interim chancellor, would please stand. Join me in honoring them with a round of applause.

When Spartanburg Regional Hospital's nursing education program closed in the 1960s, Dr. Hodge was the first to imagine a new college that would energize the healthcare industry here. His imagination became a bold vision, and he willed the University of South Carolina Upstate into existence with determination, commitment, and hard work.

From that foundation to the work we're doing today, consider USC Upstate's impact:

- Of all the public regional schools in South Carolina, we are ranked No. 1 by U.S. News and World Report.
- We're No. 1 among the best regional colleges for veterans. Would our veterans please stand? Please give them a round of applause.
- And we're the No. 1 public regional university in South Carolina for social mobility.
- We have nearly 6,000 students and more than 1,100 employees.
- We have more than 50 undergraduate and graduate programs in the liberal arts and sciences, business, nursing, and education.
- We have 15 NCAA Division I sports teams. Would our coaches and student athletes please stand?
- Overall, USC Upstate's economic impact on the state of South Carolina is a half-billion dollars.



Students from all five USC Upstate colleges were represented in the investiture procession.





Chancellor Harris and Gov. Henry McMaster are joined by University of South Carolina trustees, interim USC President Harris Pastides and the chancellors of Palmetto College and the Beaufort and Aiken campuses.

Now, think about the direct impact our university has on the Upstate region.

If you need medical care, chances are you'll meet a registered nurse from USC Upstate. Nearly 4,450 licensed, active nurses in South Carolina have degrees from USC Upstate. The Mary Black School of Nursing produces more than 250 new nurses every year. More than 90 percent of them remain in the Upstate to serve the region's healthcare needs.

Students in Spartanburg or Greenville County schools will probably have a teacher who graduated from USC Upstate's School of Education, Human Performance and Health. Nearly 3,000 USC Upstate graduates are certified and working as teachers in South Carolina schools. About 1,500 of those work in Spartanburg and Greenville counties – nearly 20 percent of the teachers in those counties.

Students in history, English, art, or Spanish may have a teacher who was co-trained by our College of Arts, Humanities and Social Services.

Our journalism alumni keep us informed, theater and music alumni entertain us at venues across the Upstate,

our criminal justice graduates protect us, and sociology and psychology graduates protect our children.

In the George Dean Johnson Jr. College of Business and Economics, our Master of Science in Business Analytics is the first program of its kind in South Carolina. In a first for the university, this program received a generous commitment from Zillow Corporation to fund six graduate research assistantships. Will Roslyn Francuz-Harris, national head of tech and early and emerging talent recruiting for the Zillow Corporation, please stand? Please help me thank her and the Zillow Corporation for their generous commitment.

JCBE also encourages entrepreneurs, especially from underserved populations, through programs like Start:ME Spartanburg, a partnership with Northside Development Group; One Million Cups, a partnership with the Ewing Marion Kauffman Foundation to break down barriers that stand in the way of starting businesses; and through its own Center for Entrepreneurship and Innovation.

University College impacts the non-profit sector through its non-profit administration program. It was also responsible for developing our university-wide QEP, our Quality Enhancement Plan. This program embeds necessary career competencies throughout all academic curricula and co-curricular activities. This prepares students for early career success and further elevates USC Upstate's reputation for producing highly prepared talent for the region and beyond.

The College of Science and Technology offers our new undergraduate program in Cybersecurity. You may know that's important when it comes to protecting your personal data, but our graduates will also be on the front lines of protecting critical infrastructure like national security, water, and electricity.

Last year USC Upstate received an \$8 million allocation to create state-of-the-art student engagement and library space, thanks to our General Assembly.

It's amazing to see what imagination and will can achieve.



<sup>1</sup>2022 Trends in Higher Education, Hanover Research, Arlington, Va.

<sup>2</sup>United States Census Bureau Statistics, 2020



### Chapter 3

To quote Bob Dylan, “the times, they are a’changin.” Higher education in America faces significant headwinds, and USC Upstate is not sheltered from that storm.

The first challenge is enrollment. Since 2019, postsecondary institutions in the United States have lost more than 1.2 million students. Obviously, the COVID-19 pandemic has had a big influence. Many students had to go to work to help support their families. Even at USC Upstate, where 75 percent of students work at least 30 hours a week so they can afford to go to school, students had to leave so they could help their families.

But COVID is not the full story. Over the last decade, the national decline in postsecondary enrollment is nearly 3 million. We know that cost is a big issue, as tuition increases have combined with state funding decreases that shift more of the burden to parents and students. Also, we live now in a society that wants to know, “What will this do for me right now.” So, we compete with job opportunities that appear to pay well, even if they do not provide a career path or the potential for economic growth.

A second challenge is the pace of change in the marketplace. New technologies and workforce needs are constantly emerging. Higher education’s task is not just to keep up, but to anticipate and prepare for these advances. Third is the post-pandemic reality that nothing will ever be the same as it was. A recent study by Hanover Research<sup>1</sup> said this:

“Colleges and universities will not revert to pre-pandemic models of enrollment, classroom education, and revenue generation, even after COVID-19 recedes. The higher education landscape, long rooted in decades-old practices, must continue its rapid assessment and innovative strategies that attract and engage students without sacrificing educational quality or financial stability.”

So, what do we do? *It’s time to Reimagine Upstate.*



Jessie L. Harris, Dr. Harris’ brother, shares some affectionate anecdotes about his sibling.

### Chapter 4

We must write a new chapter in the legacy of imagination and will that has propelled USC Upstate forward for 55 years. This chapter begins with our new transformative value proposition: “Education for all that inspires a thriving and just society.”



Following the ceremony, attendees gather for the dedication of a tree in Dr. Harris' honor in the Chancellor's Grove on the Main Quad.



Within that value proposition is this bold vision:

- Expand enrollment and achieve the region's goal to increase four-year degree attainment.
- Focus on student success and preparing students to transition from college to career.
- Establish our identity and brand position in the higher education marketplace.
- Elevate regional economic development and innovation.

Educational attainment is associated with economic outcomes such as employment, earnings, and access to health care and mobility. The National Center for Education Statistics reports that for persons aged 25 to 34 who hold a bachelor's degree or higher and work full-time, median earnings are 59 percent higher than for those with a high school diploma or equivalent. Yet in Spartanburg County, only 25 percent of persons aged 25 and up have earned a bachelor's degree. Our goal is 40 percent.

In the Upstate region, only Greenville County is over 30 percent. And the remainder of our counties range from 13 percent to 26 percent. You might say, "But Spartanburg County is growing and prospering," and that is true. Spartanburg County has grown by more than 15 percent in the last ten years. Many people have moved here for the robust job market. A couple of weeks ago, Spartanburg was named the number two job market in the nation.

OneSpartanburg reported that from 2010 to 2019, there were nearly 15,000 new jobs here and a capital investment of \$6.9 billion — all of which are opportunities for USC Upstate. New jobs will continue to come to Spartanburg if we can provide an educated workforce. And new jobs will also be created by an educated workforce.

Despite the growth and prosperity, nearly 48,000 people still live at or below the poverty line in Spartanburg County.



Henry Lee Harris, Chancellor Harris' father, stands to be recognized behind a seat decorated with a white ribbon honoring the late Charlie Mae Harris, the chancellor's mother.

Some 210,000 people live in poverty in the ten-county Upstate region. That is not acceptable.

Can the bachelor's degree attainment rate make a difference in the economic health and well-being of our city, our county, and the Upstate region? You bet it can. And that's part of the void that USC Upstate is committed to addressing.



Dr. Harris greets members of the Spartanburg County Commission for Higher Education prior to the processional.



### **The Empty Cup**

In my conclusion ... On the very first row is an empty chair with a beautiful white ribbon. My father is in the seat just behind that chair. The empty chair represents the spiritual presence of my mother, Charlie Mae Harris. My mother passed away twenty-one years ago.

There were moments when I was a young man that I acted like a know-it-all. In those moments, my mom would say to me, "Bennie, you need to live life with an empty cup. Approach every situation with an empty cup, so people can pour into your cup and you can receive it.

"If your cup is too full, no one can add to your cup. You don't have to drink it all ... you can always pour out what is not useful after you've left that situation. But you have to approach every situation with an empty cup." It was my mother's way of telling me to listen, to receive the counsel of others with humility, and to use that counsel to make informed decisions.

As you leave today, you're going to receive an empty cup with my mother's advice imprinted on it. Each time you drink from that cup, I want you to think about how USC Upstate is filling your cup.

- I want you to imagine how we can make this education available and attractive for all.
- I want you to reimagine our four-year degrees in ways that will better serve our students and their employers...
- To reimagine how we can improve social mobility and elevate the economic well-being and health outcomes for citizens of the Upstate region and the state of South Carolina.
- I want you, when you look in that cup, to reimagine how a diverse community of students, staff, and faculty come together and model shared values that lead to a more united Upstate, a more united South Carolina, a more united America.

Each time you drink from that cup, I want you to think about how USC Upstate is filling your cup to inspire a thriving and just society. Thank you.





## EXECUTIVE LEADERSHIP TEAM

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**Dr. Tierney Bates**, vice chancellor for student affairs. Bates, an award-winning students affairs professional, most recently served as assistant vice chancellor for special projects and interim executive director for university career services at the University of North Carolina Chapel Hill.



**RJ Gimbl**, vice chancellor for advancement and executive director of the USC Upstate Foundation. Gimbl, an accomplished advancement professional, was previously associate vice president for university advancement at Winthrop University.



**Kesha Boyce Williams**, associate vice chancellor for strategic communications and marketing. Williams served for nine years as the public information director for Clemson University prior to coming to USC Upstate.



**Dr. Pam Steinke**, provost and senior vice chancellor academic affairs. Steinke served as USC Upstate's interim provost and senior vice chancellor for academic affairs since November 2021. She joined USC Upstate in April 2018 as vice provost and associate vice chancellor for academic affairs.



**Donette Stewart**, vice chancellor for enrollment services and director of admissions. Stewart has nearly 30 years of experience in admissions and enrollment services at USC Upstate, in addition to being an Upstate alum.



**Sheryl Turner-Watts**, vice chancellor for finance and administration and chief financial and operations officer. Turner-Watts' responsibilities include all facets of the budget planning process and ensuring the design, implementation and maintenance of systems of control/compliance.





**Daniel Feig**, vice chancellor of intercollegiate athletics and director of athletics. Feig joined USC Upstate in May 2018, after previously serving as executive associate athletic director at Southern Mississippi.



**Adam Long**, vice chancellor information technology and chief information officer. Long previously served as USC Upstate's director of institutional research and business intelligence.



**Christopher Taylor**, vice chancellor for external affairs and chief of staff in the Office of the Chancellor. Taylor previously served as assistant vice president and campaign director at Morehouse School of Medicine, a role he held since 2016.





# Student SUCCESS

USC Upstate has one of the most diverse college student bodies in the region, with a 2021-22 freshman class that was 48% non-white and 31% first generation college students. The university's commitment to meeting all learners where they are and elevating their aspirations means creating opportunities for students to explore new and developing fields. Innovative programs that give students career-relevant experiences and that support retention are a priority for student success.

## EXPLORING NEW PATHS

Twelve USC Upstate students formed the first cohort of the Er(UP)t summer research program last year, gaining important skills under the mentorship of seven Upstate faculty members while also receiving a stipend. Participants were chosen from an applicant pool of 42, most from underrepresented minority or economically underserved groups.

The program, delayed a year due to the COVID-19 pandemic, is funded by grant from the South Carolina IDeA Networks of Biomedical Research Excellence. Directed by Josh Ruppel, a professor of chemistry, Er(UP)t allows students to work on research projects as a path toward graduate school or a career in the biomedical sciences. The stipend ensures students can focus on gaining career-relevant skills without having to work another job during the summer.

USC Upstate's Career Management office also offered workshops throughout the eight-week program to help students with resumes, interview tips and other career-relevant skills. The workshops and periodic group gatherings provided opportunities for students to interact with their peers and build a support network.

The program continued this summer, this time with 15 students participating due to additional support from the Office of the Provost.



**“Er(UP)t put into practice all the skills I learned in class. And I not only practiced them, but honed and refined them, and learned how to properly apply them. Getting that experience and enjoying it as much as I did really convinced me this is what I want to do, and to push forward and keep going with my goals.”**

### TIGRÈ PRESSLEY '22

*a participant in the inaugural Er(UP)t summer research program. Pressley accepted an endowed fellowship at the University of California Davis, where he will begin his doctoral program in chemistry this fall.*





## WE'VE GOT GAME

In October, USC Upstate launched its esports program to attract prospective Spartans and enrich the student experience by creating a thriving gaming community on campus.

A varsity program will debut this fall under new head coach Nick Thomas. Additionally, USC Upstate is leading the way in creating the Big South Esports Conference, and conference play is expected to begin in the 2022-23 academic year.

According to the NCAA, e-gaming is the fastest-growing sport on American college and university campuses. Its popularity cuts across gender lines, with 97% of teenage boys, and 83% of teenage girls, saying they play video games, according to a 2018 Pew Research study. This makes esports an attractive recruitment

and retention tool, particularly for young men, who make up a declining share of college students nationwide.

Esports is located in a 1,600-square-foot gaming center within the university's Health Education Complex. The center can feature up to 45 gaming stations, each equipped with a state-of-the-art computer by Alienware.

The varsity program will initially compete in three games: "League of Legends," "Valorant" and "Rocket League." A range of other games will be available to club players, and the university plans to continue to grow those options over time.

The rec team got off to a strong start in spring, competing in the NIRSA Rocket League Tournament and making it to the semifinals.



## CAUSE FOR CELEBRATION

May commencement was an occasion for a few firsts this year. It was the first time in two years that graduates were back on the Main Quad (rain forced a change of venue in 2021), and the first May ceremony to be presided over by Chancellor Bennie Harris.

But the Class of 2022 also represented USC Upstate's largest graduating class to date, with more than 800 undergraduate and graduate students receiving a degree.

In his remarks to the graduates, Chancellor Harris acknowledged the dramatic changes students had experienced over the past four years, including a pandemic, a fractured society, and war in other parts of the world. "Yet for every challenge that emerged, every barrier that seemed insurmountable, you adapted and persevered," the chancellor said. "Today, you've achieved this milestone, and you should be deeply proud."







**Greg Castillo '22**, from Chesnee, S.C., graduated cum laude with a B.A. in Spanish. Castillo, a first-generation college student, was a champion for USC Upstate in the many roles he held at Upstate. He began working in the Chancellor's Office as a sophomore, where his enthusiasm and conscientiousness led to him being named a Chancellor's Ambassador. He served as vice president of the Student Government Association during his senior year, while also holding down an off-campus job. Castillo plans to teach in the Upstate.

He says, "My favorite memory of Upstate was when I walked in the front doors of the admissions office and immediately felt as if I were home."



**Irene Biganzoli '22**, from Cittiglio, Italy, graduated summa cum laude from USC Upstate with a near-perfect GPA and a B.A. in communication with a concentration in mass media. She was also a double minor in French and business and entrepreneurship. Biganzoli came to the United States as a high school student and speaks four languages. She will attend graduate school this fall at the Parsons School of Design in New York to pursue a career in the fashion industry.

"I chose USC Upstate for its international background and warmth in both teaching and professor-student relationships," she says. "I always felt welcome and listened to in every single class."



**Katherine Tran '22**, from Spartanburg, graduated magna cum laude with a B.S. in experimental psychology. She will be attending graduate school this fall to pursue a Ph.D. in industrial and organizational psychology. While a student, Tran was a research assistant for Assistant Professor Justin Travis, and was awarded first place for her poster at the 2021 S.C. Upstate Research Symposium. She also co-presented a paper at the 2022 symposium.

"What I love most about Upstate is how encouraging and intellectually curious our professors are," Tran says. "Each of my professors in my department have been very supportive of my work; they are so kind and encouraging!"



**Tyone Archie '22**, from Columbia, S.C., graduated with a B.A. in communications. As a sophomore, Tyone was identified as a superstar by then-Chancellor Brendan Kelly, who brought him in to work in the chancellor's office. He was a much-valued staff member for his willingness to pitch in wherever needed and problem solve independently. Archie plans to look for a job where he can help improve the college experience for students, and will also be returning to school to further his criminal justice minor and become a paralegal.

"My favorite memory about USC Upstate is meeting my late friend Rodderick Sparks," Archie says. "Throughout my college experience, he always pushed me to be my best self."



## SPORTS STANDOUTS



USC Upstate softball ended its 29th season under head coach Chris Hawkins as regular season Big South champions.

The team also set a Division I program record for wins in a single season, with 48. Hawkins was voted Big South Coach of the Year for softball, while freshman Peyton Darnell was named Big South Softball Player of the Year.

Women's golf finished runner-up at the Big South championship in the spring, while redshirt sophomore Preaw Nontarux was an individual runner-up at the event.

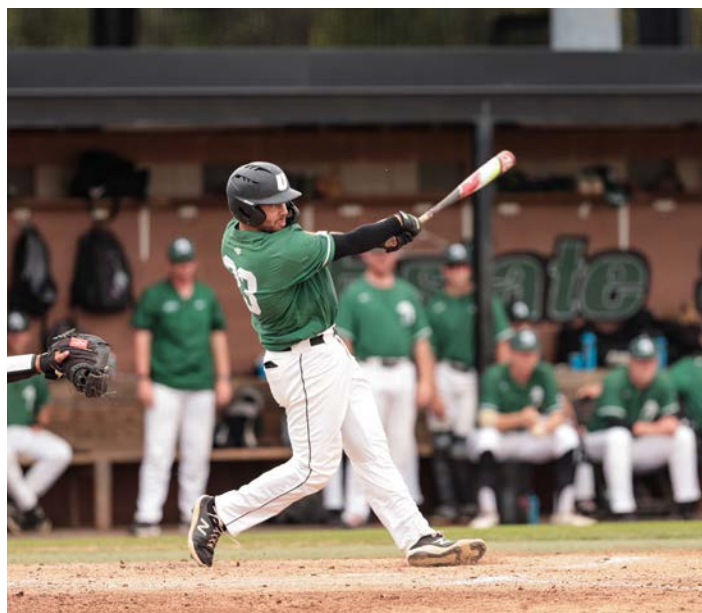
For the first time in the Division I era, women's basketball matched its record for number of victories – 22 – in a season. The team also welcomed a new head coach, Jason Williams, who previously spent nine seasons as head coach at Belmont Abbey College in North Carolina.

Volleyball player Kelly Wiedemann was awarded the George A. Christenberry Award for Academic Excellence by the Big South Conference. She

is only the second USC Upstate athlete in the Division I era to receive the honor, which recognizes student-athletes who attain the highest GPA during their undergraduate careers.

Tony Auguste was the conference champion in weight throw at the Big South Indoor Track & Field Championship in February, and Bryce Ravenell and Channing Ferguson represented USC Upstate at the NCAA East Preliminaries in long jump and high jump in May.

USC Upstate baseball had one of the most successful seasons in program history, establishing a program record for wins in



consecutive seasons. The 72 victories tops the previous record of 71 set by the 1987 and 1988 teams.

Overall, USC Upstate finished the 2021-22 year with a second straight Top 5 finish in the Big South's George F. "Buddy" Sasser Cup Trophy rankings. Its fifth-place ranking marked the best two-year stretch since the Spartans moved to Division I. Last year Upstate finished fourth out of the Big South's 12 schools. Regular-season and tournament finishes in each of the league's 19 championships are used to determine rankings.

## MOLLY COLEMAN



Molly Coleman '22, of Adelaide, South Australia, graduated summa cum laude with a B.S. in exercise and sport science.

Coleman was a two-year starter for the women's basketball team, and was recognized for her academic and athletic achievements by being named to the Big South Conference All-Academic Team. Her post-graduation plans include playing for the Norwood Flames in the NBL1 Central League and continuing her studies in physiotherapy at an Australian university.

*"After graduating from Upstate, I feel confident in my ability to enter the workforce and apply my knowledge of exercise and fitness to help members of the community," Coleman says. "The thorough coursework, knowledgeable instructors, and hands-on learning I have experienced here will also help me in my pursuit of post-graduate education."*



# College to CAREER

USC Upstate supports OneSpartanburg's goal to improve the county's four-year degree attainment rate to 40%, and the Greenville Chamber of Commerce's goal to boost advanced certificate and degree attainment in Greenville County to 60%. USC Upstate graduates are a vital talent source for regional health care systems, schools and companies, and connecting students' skills and experiences with professional opportunities ensures graduates are prepared meet workforce needs in the region.

## WORKPLACE READY

USC Upstate proudly celebrated another 10-year reaccreditation in March following an on-site visit by an accreditation team from the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC). The team's recommendation came with no conditions, a recognition that the work of faculty and staff met the highest standards of excellence.

As part of the reaccreditation process, USC Upstate developed a Quality Enhancement Plan. This five-year initiative reflects and affirms the university's commitment to enhancing its effectiveness by focusing on an issue that's important to improving student learning outcomes and success. The focus of the current QEP, Moving UP, is career readiness.

"USC Upstate provides students with transferable skills, knowledge, and experiences that enable them to maximize their potential, personally and professionally," says Chancellor Bennie Harris. "We are very excited about this QEP, as we see the potential it has to further enhance not only our already strong impact on social mobility, but to create a culture of success that will make USC Upstate a destination of choice."

The goal of Moving UP is to support students as they develop a customized career plan and acquire the necessary skills to prepare for their professional path. Career readiness is infused throughout all aspects of academic life to enable students to connect their strengths, skills, knowledge and experiences with professional opportunities, regardless of major or academic year.

"We want to make sure every USC Upstate student is an employer's first choices," says Kim Purdy, QEP director and dean of University College. "Our students know how to solve problems. They know how to work. Through this QEP, the community will start to know that our students are career-ready as a result of the competencies woven into the classroom experience."

The plan includes beefing up the Office of Career Management and the Center for Academic Innovation and Faculty Support. It supports a renewed commitment to professional advisors who see students early in their collegiate career, and the implementation of the Upstate GROW program, which focuses on enhancing the professionalism of student employees by working with their supervisors to rethink student employment as a high-impact practice.



Edita Aleksik interned in the spring with the law firm of Ryan Langley and Charles Hodge.



**Stephen Cole Scott '22**, of Greer, South Carolina, received his B.S. in logistics and supply chain management. He is currently works at RDI-USA as an inventory control analyst and hopes to pursue a master's degree.

"Some of my best memories come from freshman year in University 101," Scott says. "I had a great teacher in Hannah Terpack and most of my classmates are some of my best friends to this day."



**Jennifer Marquez '22**, of New Haven, Connecticut, graduated with a B.S. in marketing. In 2019, she stepped away from full-time work to complete her degree. She was active in many student groups and served as chair of the

dean's student advisory board, all while raising her young son. Marquez says, "The professional events at USC Upstate, the genuine support, and advice from professors all helped prepare me for my career."



# Economic Regional DEVELOPMENT & INNOVATION

USC Upstate continues to develop new programs that are market-driven and that anticipate future needs. Responding to critical workforce shortages in nursing and education with new degree offerings, and serving the community through programs that elevate working professionals, are among the ways USC Upstate contributes to the health and growth of the region.

## MBCON GRANTS TO ADDRESS SHORTAGES IN NURSING PROFESSION

A pair of grants to the Mary Black College of Nursing (MBCON) will help increase the number of nursing faculty and nurses in South Carolina, addressing critical shortages in the profession.

The first grant, announced in February, will provide full scholarships to Master of Science in nursing students over the next four years to help bolster the pipeline of qualified nursing instructors in the state.

"Elevating the health and well-being of the Upstate is central to our vision as a university," said Chancellor Bennie Harris. "Before we can increase the number of nursing graduates, we must first solve the shortage of nursing faculty in our state."

According to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Health Resources and Services Administration, South Carolina is estimated to have the fourth worst nursing shortage in the nation by 2030. Concurrent with that is an expected loss of instructors, with 54% of the state's faculty above 50 years of age, according to data compiled by the University of South Carolina. The university's report found the state loses an average of 60 educators a year due to retirements or leaving the profession.



New grants will expand the Mary Black College of Nursing's impact on health care in South Carolina.

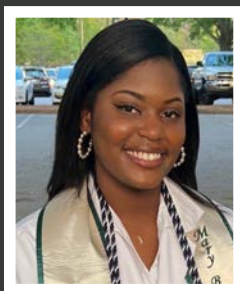
"The faculty shortage is real and it continues to threaten our ability to graduate more nurses who are ready to enter the workforce and provide care," said Shirleatha Lee, dean of MBCON and project director. "More than 90% of our graduates remain in South Carolina, so the ability to educate more nursing students will greatly help our community."

A second grant, announced in June, will establish an endowment at MBCON to support nursing education and workforce development efforts in partnership with Prisma Health. The Prisma Health Nursing Scholars will focus on graduating nurses interested in employment with Prisma. Funding will support scholarships, stipends, and additional educational needs for students.

The endowment will also allow the hiring of a recruiter/liaison to attract potential students and help current ones identify career

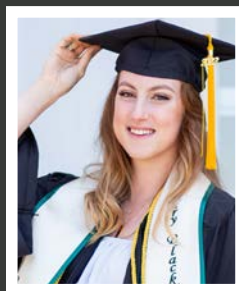
opportunities at Prisma Health during and after their college years.

"Our goal is to increase the percentage of USC Upstate nursing students employed by Prisma Health, upon degree completion, from 13% to 40% by 2026," said Lee. "Therefore, we aim to recruit, enroll, and support nursing students by raising awareness of nursing and Prisma career opportunities, while concurrently addressing the nursing workforce shortage."



**Ja'Bria Harley '22**, from Dillon, South Carolina, graduated with a B.S. in nursing and is working on a medical-surgical/telemetry floor at Spartanburg Regional's Mary Black campus. As a student, Harley was a peer mentor and chapter president of the Tri-Alpha

Honor Society for first-generation students. "Through various post-graduate workshops, career services, and all the faculty and staff, I feel that I am prepared to succeed beyond my college years here at USC Upstate," she says.



**Haley Brakefield '22**, from Asheville, North Carolina, graduated with a B.S. in nursing. She landed her dream job in the cardiovascular intensive care unit at Prisma Greenville Memorial Hospital, one of only three students to be selected for

the residency program there. "The most valuable part of my Upstate experience has to be the relationships I built with my professors and advisors," Brakefield says. "Faculty are available and determined to help you succeed."



## UPSTATE CRIME ANALYSIS CENTER FILLS RESOURCE NEED IN REGION

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. That job of reviewing 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 also 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."

The center will also be a valuable 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. Classes are offered entirely online through Upstate's Greenville campus, and this fall will also be open to non-students as a certificate program. Covington says the latter option could be particularly attractive to those in law enforcement seeking additional training.

Thanks to partnerships with top vendors in the crime analysis field, UCAC will be equipped with powerful software tools when the center officially opens this fall. An open house will be held in September as part of Covington's community outreach efforts.



Above, Dr. Michele Covington works with student intern Kaelyn Scurry at the Upstate Crime Analysis Center. At right, a recent training symposium hosted by the center.







## PUTTING PROMISE INTO ACTION

USC Upstate launched a new effort in the spring designed to make a four-year degree affordable for local students. The Spartanburg Promise Scholarship Program will provide 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 will have the balance of their tuition covered after all other grants and scholarships have been applied. Promise Scholars must have earned a South Carolina LIFE Scholarship, which is \$5,000 for freshmen, 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," said Chancellor Bennie L.

Harris. "Our objective is simple: help the county retain its most talented individuals by encouraging them to learn, then eventually live and work, in this community."

The inaugural Promise Scholars cohort is funded by a \$2.5 million dollar investment. USC Upstate intends to raise additional funding that would allow the program to extend beyond its pilot year.

The program is designed to provide opportunities for at least 10 graduates from each of the county's nine public high schools with an initial cohort of 90 students. 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.



## STUDENTS AND LEADERS SHARE UPSTATE PRIDE ON CAROLINA DAY

Chancellor Bennie Harris led a delegation of university leaders and 17 students that participated in Carolina Day at the state capitol in January. The annual event, organized by the University of South Carolina, enables representatives, friends and alumni of UofSC 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 UofSC campuses for a private meeting with Gov. Henry McMaster.



# FAST FACTS

## STUDENTS *Fall 2021*

**4,949**

UNDERGRADUATE

**456**

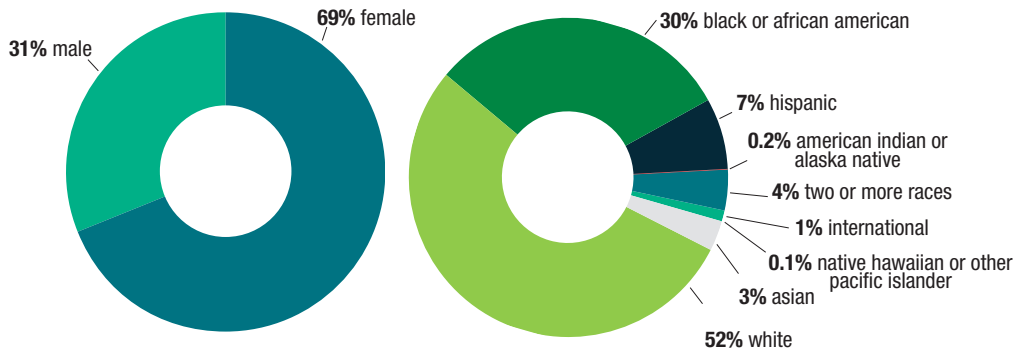
GRADUATE

**1,067**

DEGREES CONFERRED  
UNDERGRADUATE

**121**

DEGREES CONFERRED  
GRADUATE



### GRADUATES

**95%**

of graduates are employed or continuing their education within three months after graduating

**90%**

of those employed three months after graduation are working in their field

### UNDERGRADUATES

**70%**

of undergraduates receive some form of financial aid (federal loans, state scholarships, institutional scholarships)

**55**

undergraduate and graduate programs

**15:1**  

Student : Faculty Ratio

**31%**

First Generation

**\$500 million**

USC Upstate's economic impact on South Carolina

**30,000+**

Alumni

## GEOGRAPHICS



46 out of 46  
counties in SC



15 countries



30 states

## FACULTY & STAFF

**223**

full time faculty

**303**

full time staff

**353**

student employees

**196**

part time faculty

**144**

part time staff



# GREATER HEIGHTS



«« TYPOGRAPHY

## Identity and BRANDING POSITION

### REACHING 'GREATER HEIGHTS'

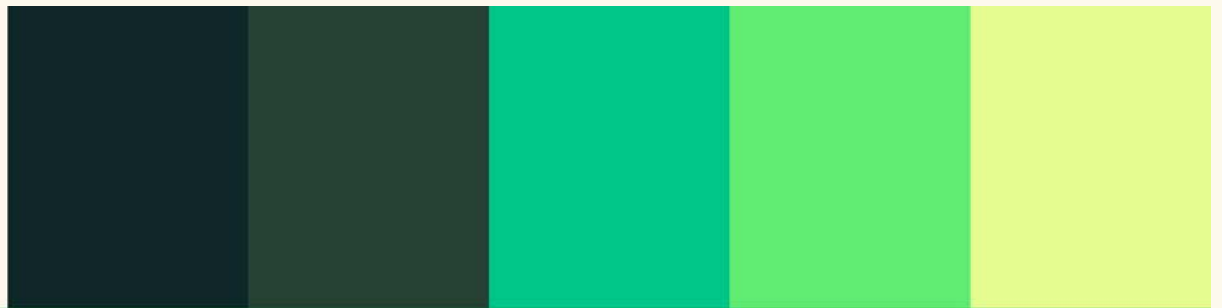
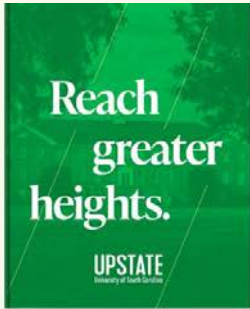
USC Upstate began rolling out a new brand campaign over the summer designed to elevate and strengthen the university's visibility and position in the region. As part of the effort to "Reimagine Upstate," the campaign focuses on the theme of "Greater Heights."

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 concepts: 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. The messaging encourages students to dream big and pursue the opportunities available to them. With language and visuals that suggest achievement and upward mobility, "Greater Heights" assures students they will be supported as they strive to reach their goals.









*Thank you*