



March 1, 2024

Dear campus community,

I am delighted to introduce Don Bent, former chief operating officer for Oshkosh Defense, who will be serving as executive in residence and distinguished professor of practice for industry partnerships and engineering programs. In his new role, Don will help guide the development of an undergraduate engineering program and will foster strategic partnerships with regional manufacturers. His first day is today.

Don comes to us after 14 years with Oshkosh Defense, where he was responsible for ensuring successful execution of programs and attracting new business, while also overseeing procurement, manufacturing and quality/continuous improvement. He served as vice president of operations for Oshkosh Defense and Oshkosh Finishing Services before becoming COO. Prior to joining Oshkosh Corp., Don led lean manufacturing transformations at General Motors, BorgWarner and Amcor Packaging.

Don's extensive experience in engineering and manufacturing, his strong leadership skills, and his deep knowledge of the Upstate manufacturing ecosystem will be a tremendous asset to USC Upstate as we develop new programs and partnerships that create robust college to career pathways for our students. He brings a wealth of connections to industry leaders in the region, and will be key to ensuring USC Upstate offers courses and training that keep pace with technological developments and regional needs. Don also is known as a caring mentor invested in developing the next generation of leaders, and I know our students will benefit immensely from his talent.

Please join me in welcoming Don to the Spartan community.

Sincerely,



Dr. Bennie L. Harris

Chancellor