



September 15, 2025

Every classroom, every lab, and every lecture hall on our campus connects directly to the world of work. The knowledge and skills we teach don't stay within our walls. They shape lives, fuel industries, and strengthen communities.

That connection between education and labor is at the very heart of our mission, and it's especially fitting to reflect on it during September, when we observe Labor Day.

We recently celebrated that long weekend, maybe with barbecues and pool parties. But Labor Day is really a celebration of the American worker and the labor movement. The first Labor Day was celebrated in 1882 in New York City, and by 1894 it had become a federal holiday.

It was the labor movement that fought for the 40-hour workweek, safer workplaces, and protections for fair wages. The holiday reminds us that progress is built on the skill, determination, and dignity of workers who have shaped our communities and our nation.

Today, work is evolving faster than ever. The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics projects that health care occupations alone will add more than 2 million jobs by 2032, while technology and advanced manufacturing continue to expand well above the national average. Here in the Upstate, our regional economy is among the fastest growing in the Southeast, with strong demand in health care, logistics, education, and business services.

That is where USC Upstate plays a vital role. Education is one of the most powerful ways to ensure opportunity in this changing landscape. We continually align our academic programs with the needs of the workforce, so our students are prepared not just to succeed, but to lead.

Consider this:

The Mary Black College of Nursing has produced more than 4,000 graduates who now serve on the front lines of healthcare in South Carolina and beyond.

The School of Education, Human Performance, and Health prepares teachers and educational leaders to address the shortage of qualified educators in South Carolina classrooms.

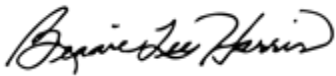
The College of Science and Technology partners with industry leaders to equip students in fields such as engineering, data analytics, cybersecurity, and biotechnology.

Programs in business, social sciences, and the liberal arts emphasize communication, leadership, and problem-solving, the skills employers consistently rank as most important.

This intentional focus on connecting learning to labor is why more than 99 percent of our graduates are employed or enrolled in graduate school within three months of graduation. It is also why USC Upstate is recognized as one of the most impactful drivers of social mobility and economic vitality in our 10-county region.

As September continues, let's remember that education and labor are inseparable. The labor movement sought dignity and opportunity for all workers. Education remains the most effective way to achieve that vision. At USC Upstate, we honor this legacy by preparing students to build stronger futures for themselves, their families, and their communities.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Bennie L. Harris". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Bennie" being more prominent and the last name "Harris" following in a similar style.

Dr. Bennie L. Harris

Chancellor