



Welcome,

On behalf of the University of South Carolina Upstate, I’m pleased to welcome you to the third-annual Upstate Talent Forum, the region’s leading event for workforce development and collaboration.

This forum is a powerful example of what we can achieve when education, business, health care, government, and community partners work together to prepare our region for the future of work.

This year’s theme, “The Rising Storm,” reflects the rapid changes our students and our industries are experiencing in technology, demographics, and workforce needs. These shifts bring new challenges while also opening doors for innovation and growth.

To help weather the storm, we at USC Upstate are focused on building strong connections between education and industry, ensuring our students and graduates are ready to meet the demands of today’s employers.

We have introduced new degree programs in engineering and advanced technologies, strengthened partnerships with leading companies, and received national recognition from the U.S. Department of Education for our commitment to student success and career readiness. Our graduates are making a difference across the Upstate, serving in hospitals, schools, businesses, and community organizations.

With this event we can make these connections and outcomes even stronger, turning ideas into action. Through presentations, breakout sessions, and collaborative work groups, you will hear from thought leaders and practitioners who are shaping the future of talent development in South Carolina. You will have the opportunity to connect and share strategies with students and peers from health care, education, manufacturing, hospitality, tourism, banking, finance, government, and other key sectors.

We are grateful for the support of our community stakeholders, industry partners, and legislative leaders. Your participation and investment are essential as we work to identify, measure, and address the talent needs of the Upstate.

Thank you for joining us. Together, we can build a stronger future for South Carolina, one where education and industry work side by side to help our people and our communities Reach Greater Heights.


Bennie L. Harris, Ph.D.
Chancellor
USC Upstate

#1
COLLEGE FOR VETERANS



#2
PUBLIC
REGIONAL COLLEGE



#7
SOCIAL MOBILITY



#7
REGIONAL COLLEGE



Upstate Talent Forum
Spartanburg Marriott
Day 1: Monday, October 20, 2025

8:30 AM	Welcome Remarks • Bennie L. Harris, Ph.D., Chancellor, USC Upstate
8:45 AM	Opening Convocation • South Carolina Lieutenant Governor Pamela Sue Evette
9:30 AM	Keynote Speaker • Louis Stewart, NVIDIA
11:00 AM	Breakout 1: Successful Strategies for Economic Development – Talent Demographics Moderator: Dean Hybl, Ten at the Top Panelists: Katherine O’Neill, OneSpartanburg, Inc.; Latokia Trigg, readySC ; Max Stewart, GADC; Sam Konduros, GCEDC
	Breakout 2: Successful Talent Development Strategies for the Manufacturing Sector Moderator: Paul Sinanian, BMW Manufacturing Co., LLC Panelists: Ottilia Dill, Ed.D., Milliken; Don Bent, USC Upstate; Ryan Faught, Milo’s Tea Company; Tim Ventimiglia, Landrum Workforce Solutions
	Breakout 3: Successful Talent Development Strategies for the Hospitality Sector Moderator: Billy Dunlap, OneSpartanburg, Inc. Panelists: Crystal Hendrickson, Pinnacle Hospitality; Monigo Saygbay-Hallie, Denny’s; Tim Jarrett, BNG Hospitality
12:00 PM	Lunch
1:00 PM	The Rising Storm • Ron Hetrick, Lightcast
2:00 PM	Breakout 4: AI for Workforce Development • Mike Carroll, Trek.AI; Sudeep Kesh, S&P Global Ratings
	Breakout 5: Successful Talent Development Strategies for the Healthcare Sector Moderator: Jim Howe, Landrum Workforce Solutions Panelists: Octavia Amaechi, M.D., ReGenesis Health Care; Jonathan Gleason, M.D., Prisma Health; Phil Feisal, Spartanburg Medical Center, SRHS
	Breakout 6: National Strategy on Talent – Transportation Sector Moderator: Jody Powell, JodyPowellSpeaks.com Panelists: Kelly Dawsey, GSP International Airport; Michelle Pearson, JAS Worldwide; Sadie Battle, South Carolina Ports Authority
3:15 PM	Talent is the Currency of Economic Development • Kara Bloomberg, Landrum, Inc.
4:15 PM	Closing Remarks • Michelle Seaver, United Community Bank

Upstate Talent Forum
Spartanburg Marriott
Day 2: Tuesday, October 21, 2025

8:45 AM	Welcome Remarks • Bennie L. Harris, Ph.D., Chancellor, USC Upstate
9:00 AM	Recruitment & Retention Of Upstate Businesses • Tiffany Tate, Upstate SC Alliance
9:30 AM	Talent Gap Analysis - Upstate SC • Hunter Hill, Lightcast
10:30 AM	Introduction of Talent Working Groups • Jeff Stinson, Ph.D., Dean, George Dean Johnson, Jr. College of Business and Economics
10:50 AM	Talent Working Groups Discussion • Jeff Stinson, Ph.D., Dean; Sam Cooper, Ph.D., Director, CBACR
11:30 AM	Lunch
12:00 PM	Corporate Culture Presentation • Leah Blanton, Find Great People
12:15 PM	Talent Working Groups Wrap-Up • Jeff Stinson, Ph.D., Dean; Sam Cooper, Ph.D., Director, CBACR
12:45 PM	Statewide Talent Strategy and Policy Moderator: Laura Cox, SC Department of Employment & Workforce Panelists: William Floyd, SC Department of Employment & Workforce; Brad Neese, South Carolina Technical College System; Jeff Perez, Ph.D., SC Commission for Higher Education; Lilla Mandsager, SC Department of Education
1:30 PM	Higher Education’s Continuing Relevance Moderator: Larry Miller, Ph.D., President, Greenville Technical College Panelists: Jack Bourla, Ph.D., President, Sherman College; Julio Hernandez, Clemson University; Darryl Owings, Ed.D , Ph.D., Spartanburg Academic Movement; Craig Wilson, J.D., Ph.D., Chancellor, Palmetto College
2:30 PM	Closing Keynote: Power of Partnerships • Allen Smith, OneSpartanburg, Inc. • Carlos Phillips, Greenville Chamber of Commerce • Katie Collins, Greater Greer Chamber of Commerce
3:15 PM	Closing Remarks • Bennie L. Harris, Ph.D., Chancellor, USC Upstate

Co-Conveners



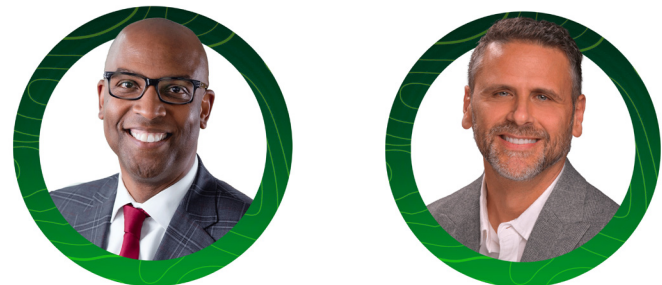
Bennie L. Harris, Ph.D.
Chancellor
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Allen Smith
President & CEO
OneSpartanburg, Inc.

Carlos Phillips
President & CEO
Greenville Chamber
of Commerce

Katie Collins
President & CEO
Greater Greer Chamber
of Commerce

Keynote Speakers



Louis Stewart | NVIDIA
Head of National Ecosystem
Strategy at NVIDIA

Ron Hetrick | Lightcast
Senior Labor Economist and
Vice President of Staffing
Product at Lightcast

Special Guest



Pamela Evette | Lt. Governor of SC
93rd Lieutenant Governor of South
Carolina and the first female Republican
Lieutenant Governor

A Moment To Say Thanks

As we gather for the Third Annual Upstate Talent Forum, I want to thank you for your partnership and commitment to advancing workforce readiness and economic mobility across the Upstate. This year’s theme, The Rising Storm: How Are You Preparing Now for Your Talent Tomorrow?, highlights the importance of collaboration and innovation as we prepare for the future together. I appreciate Barbara Fowler’s significant contributions to both the planning and execution of this event, as well as the valuable support provided by Taylor Dement, Ron Garner, and Hank Hyatt. Together with leaders and partners from business, education, healthcare, manufacturing, hospitality, finance, and government, we are shaping a resilient, inclusive, and opportunity-rich Upstate. Your engagement and collaboration exemplify the collective spirit that drives our region forward.

Facilitator



Christopher Taylor
Chief of Staff and Vice
Chancellor, External Affairs

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Upstate

TALENT FORUM



THE RISING STORM

HOW ARE YOU PREPARING NOW
FOR YOUR TALENT TOMORROW?

