In this issue

2  When Times talks, we listen
4  ACEs & Greeks
6  Good Guidance
10  Patterson Hall: a mother-daughter alma mater
12  New Digs: The transformation of Patterson Hall
14  It starts with you
16  Club Scene
22  University 101 finds winning ways
24  Home away from home
26  Trio: Changing lives

Student Profiles
5  Heather Meraw
9  Donald Bailey
25  Candra Chaisson
29  Tyler French
In the past 10 years, freshman applications have more than doubled, and the size of the freshman class has increased 76 percent. At the same time, the average SAT score has climbed nearly 90 points.

The third cohort of the Gamecock Guarantee Program enrolled 134 students in fall 2010. 89 percent of Gamecock Guarantee recipients remain enrolled at Carolina.

Parents Programs hosted 5,272 participants during Parents Weekend 2010, a 14 percent increase from 2009’s 4,626 participants.

Students submitted 193 national fellowship and scholarship applications, resulting in 41 national fellowship winners (totaling $1.1 million in value) and 4 internship recipients. Since the Office of Fellowships and Scholar Programs was established in 1994, Carolina students have won 531 national awards totaling more than $15 million for advanced academic study.

By the numbers 2010-11

76%

In the past five years, use of the Wellness and Fitness Center has increased by 20 percent, and group exercise participation has increased by 69 percent.

300%

The campus visit program has grown more than 300 percent in the past five years. 99.8 percent of Visitor Center participants report that their campus visit either met or exceeded their expectations.

134

Cross-campus advising appointments increased to nearly 600 in spring 2011 from 73 in spring 2010.

$365 million

The Office of Financial Aid and Scholarships processed more than $365 million in aid for more than 25,000 students — more than 85 percent of the student body.

In the past five years, campus participation in the MLK Jr. Day of Service has increased by 29 percent and the number of agencies served by 200 percent.

The Career Center forged a 92 percent increase in internship opportunities posted on the JobMate database, while fewer internship opportunities were the trend at most universities over the same time period.

25,392

In the past five years, appointments with Student Health Services have increased 41 percent—to 25,392 appointments in 2011 from 17,979 in 2006.

798 students enrolled in 54 sections of 43 service-learning courses from 10 colleges and schools.

200%

In the past five years, campus participation in the MLK Jr. Day of Service has increased by 29 percent and the number of agencies served by 200 percent.

5,272

Parents Programs hosted 5,272 participants during Parents Weekend 2010, a 14 percent increase from 2009’s 4,626 participants.

92%

The career center forged a 92 percent increase in internship opportunities posted on the JobMate database, while fewer internship opportunities were the trend at most universities over the same time period.

41

Students submitted 193 national fellowship and scholarship applications, resulting in 41 national fellowship winners (totaling $1.1 million in value) and 4 internship recipients. Since the Office of Fellowships and Scholar Programs was established in 1994, Carolina students have won 531 national awards totaling more than $15 million for advanced academic study.

1

$365 million

The Office of Financial Aid and Scholarships processed more than $365 million in aid for more than 25,000 students — more than 85 percent of the student body.

In the past five years, campus participation in the MLK Jr. Day of Service has increased by 29 percent and the number of agencies served by 200 percent.

5,272

Parents Programs hosted 5,272 participants during Parents Weekend 2010, a 14 percent increase from 2009’s 4,626 participants.

92%

The career center forged a 92 percent increase in internship opportunities posted on the JobMate database, while fewer internship opportunities were the trend at most universities over the same time period.

25,392

In the past five years, appointments with Student Health Services have increased 41 percent—to 25,392 appointments in 2011 from 17,979 in 2006.
when Times talks, we listen

Capstone Scholars enjoy opportunities to chat with New York Times journalists.

Capstone Scholars are accustomed to talking about The New York Times. In spring 2011, the scholars were talking to The New York Times.

In their Capstone Conversations program, students in the invitation-only Capstone residential learning community regularly discuss Times articles with USC faculty. To keep the program interesting and maintain students’ connection with current events, Capstone staff had the innovative idea to set up a series of Skype chats for students with Times journalists.

The program, called “Spring Times,” was a great match for Capstone, said Faculty Principal Patrick Hickey.

“The Capstone Scholars Program prides itself on its level of staff interaction with students and the facilitation of students’ relationships with professors and mentors,” Hickey said. “The Spring Times program fits perfectly as an extension of that philosophy.”

Officials at The New York Times said their journalists had never participated in such a project, but they were excited to try. And, in sophomore Julia Pribyl’s opinion, they were a hit.

“They have been genuinely interested in talking to us,” said Pribyl, a chemistry major from Broomfield, Colo. “They really want to express to us how passionate they are about their fields.”

Those passionate journalists included:
• John O’Neil, editor and architect for Times Topics, who kicked off the series and opened students’ eyes to Times resources they could use in their coursework
• Sam Tanenhaus, senior editor of The New York Times Book Review, who gave insight into the book selection and review process
• Mia Navarro, environmental writer, who shared her travel adventures and the challenges of quickly developing expertise on specific topics
• Bill Rhoden, sports columnist, who provided plenty of fireworks with a discussion on the pay-for-play proposals in college athletics
• David Carr, a media and technology columnist whose media savvy and lively personality fostered an immediate connection with the students
• Christine Hauser, news desk reporter, who capped off the semester with advice to Capstone Scholars students to live the program motto, “Dream Big!” and follow their true passions.

Discussions with the Times reporters resonated with Capstone Scholars, who said they benefited from the new program.

“It has a lot more impact than I think [the journalists] know,” Pribyl said. “They’ve all encouraged us—don’t go for the money, do what comes naturally. I really appreciate the perspective they gave me.”

By David DeWeid, assistant faculty principal, Capstone Scholars Program
At the University of South Carolina, students in Greek organizations typically graduate at a higher rate and achieve better grade point averages (GPA) than non-Greeks.

In recent years, an academic collaboration created to support a few lower-performing organizations has enhanced the personal and academic success of students in all Greek chapters.

The ACE (Academic Centers for Excellence)-Greek academic program launched in fall 2009 to determine whether targeted academic support could benefit underperforming Greek chapters. After one chapter increased its average GPA by several tenths of a point, program coordinators knew they were on to something.

The ACE-Greek partnership now includes all 38 Greek organizations participating at varying levels as determined by the chapters’ scholarship chairs and designated ACE coaches, said Ryan Williams, assistant director of Greek Life.

“What works for one organization might not work for all,” Williams said. “It is up to the scholarship chair and the ACE coach to look at the chapter as a whole in addition to its individual members and determine what is needed and what services will work best.”

ACE coaches — graduate students trained to work with undergraduates to develop academic plans and improve study skills and strategies — consult individually with each chapter’s scholarship chair to develop programs that match members’ needs. The scholarship chairs monitor their members and refer them to ACE as needed for individual coaching sessions.

ACE coaching helps students beyond the classroom, too. “Greek organizations are typically higher achieving, but the support we provide is not just about increasing grade point averages,” said Jane Arrowsmith, coordinator of ACE. “Greek organizations comprise more than 4,000 Carolina students—about 20 percent of the undergraduate student body.

“ACE is so beneficial for all students, but not all students take advantage,” Todaro said. “Partnersing with Greek organizations has led to more students making appointments on their own and seeking the help that they need.”

“Lower-achieving students increased grade point averages, and members that were already doing well academically gained time management skills and decreased their stress level with test-taking tips,” she said.

An added benefit of the program is that it promotes ACE services to a large number of students who might not have sought help otherwise, Arrowsmith said. Greek organizations comprise more than 4,000 Carolina students—about 20 percent of the undergraduate student body.

“ACE coaching helps students beyond the classroom, too.”

“Greek organizations are typically higher achieving, but the support we provide is not just about increasing grade point averages,” said Jane Arrowsmith, coordinator of ACE. Many Greek students are leaders in their organizations and are involved on campus, which can lead to busy schedules and packed calendars. Higher education and student affairs graduate student Anna Todaro, an ACE coach, said she saw many improvements in the chapter she worked with.

“Heather Meraw’s college career at USC, she looked for opportunities to succeed academically and to help others.”

What is your year and major?

I am a junior majoring in chemistry and marine science.

Tell us your experience as a Supplemental Instruction (SI) leader

I really enjoy being an SI leader because it is great to see others get it when they might not have otherwise. I was able to serve as a peer mentor to students, and it has been amazing to hear that others look up to me and have valued the help that I have provided them.

“I am thankful for the opportunity.”

Apart from being an SI leader, are you involved in other clubs and organizations?

Delta Zeta Sorority, Alpha Lambda Delta Honor Society, Sigma Alpha Lambda Honor Fraternity and the National Society of Collegiate Scholars.

What is your goal?

I hope to earn a doctorate in chemistry someday.

Any closing message to first-year students?

Take on what you can handle. Get involved with something that you can really contribute back to and become an active member, not just put it on your resume.

By Allison Toney, coordinator for student organizations
When Sneha Minisandram arrived at USC as a freshman two years ago, she thought she had found the perfect major — international business — that would make her and her parents happy.

She’s a first-generation Indian-American who can speak her parent’s Indian dialect, as well as German, and hopes to travel internationally one day.

“It seemed like the way to go as far as providing me with a career right off the bat that I wanted and that satisfied my parents,” said Minisandram, who also was impressed by the No. 1 ranking the Darla Moore School of Business has long enjoyed in undergraduate international business.

But then reality set in. When she began taking international business courses, Minisandram realized she was attracted to international rather than business aspects. The epiphany came when she took accounting, finance, and other number-crunching classes that “overall, just weren’t for me.”

Minisandram decided to change her major, but needed help making the transition. She found it in Dawn Traynor, USC’s coordinator of cross-campus advising in the Student Success Center. Traynor helped guide Minisandram into a double major of German and international studies that has turned out to be a perfect fit.

“I honestly couldn’t be anywhere else,” said Minisandram of her new academic track in which she will graduate on time and with plans to study abroad. “Dawn Traynor was unbelievably helpful.”

It’s an academic success story that is being repeated often following creation of the cross-campus advising program and Traynor’s appointment in 2010. The program is the most recent development in Carolina’s ongoing efforts to enhance academic advisement with a goal of helping students stay in school and graduate on time with a major that’s right for them.

“It’s one of those things we knew was needed and that students would make use of,” Traynor said. “Even after students talk with their individual academic advisors, they still want someone they can hash out these kinds of questions with and get feedback. That’s what we provide.”

USC’s efforts to continually improve academic advisement focus on the amount of time it takes students to complete their degrees and the ever-increasing price tag of a college education, said Dennis Pruitt, USC’s vice president for student affairs, vice provost, and dean of students. Most people think of a college degree as a four-year endeavor, Pruitt said, but nationally about 50 percent of students graduate after six years. It’s estimated that students accumulate about 60 percent of
Donald Alston Bailey, 23, crossed the graduation stage this past May as the first-ever graduate of the CarolinaLIFE program.

Initiated in 2008 by the College of Education and Office of Student Disability Services, the CarolinaLIFE program provides a collegiate experience to students with intellectual and cognitive disabilities. Participants attend regular Carolina classes and specialized CarolinaLIFE classes, and they receive one-on-one instruction and valuable internship experiences leading to job opportunities.

Where are you from?
I’m from M T. Pleasant, S.C.

Tell us what’s it like being the first CarolinaLIFE graduate.
It is pretty exciting. I enjoy taking classes, meeting students and learning.

Your focus was on sports & P.E. What classes did you take?
Basketball, archery, swimming, weightlifting and triathlon, which I won the class event. I also interned with the Office of Campus Recreation’s weight room at the Strom.
This past August, Linda Howard, ’88, moved her Class of 2015 daughter Mariah into the newly renovated Patterson Hall. Susanne Player, ’90, did the same with her daughter Lexie.

Parting was sweet sorrow, but both mothers could console themselves by remembering that they, too, had once lived in Patterson, their daughters’ new home away from home.

Mariah, a Chicago native who plans to major in chemistry and minor in English, makes her home on the same floor where her mother spent her junior and senior years.

“Patterson was actually my first choice. I was looking over all the dorms, and I was talking to my mom about it, and she said, ‘Oh, I used to live in Patterson,’” Mariah said. “And then when I noticed they were renovating it, I thought, ‘Wow, this would be great.’

“I’m in the first second-generation Gamecock in our family,” said Mariah, whose parents, aunts and uncles all attended USC. She said she knew USC was just where she was supposed to be, and her mother agreed.

“Initially, when Mariah mentioned USC to me, I think I probably thought that it’s a bit large,” Linda said. “But then when I thought about the Southern hospitality and how people are more open and more friendly, I thought, Mariah does have a Southern soul, I think she’ll fit in perfectly.”

Though her daughter’s family legacy at USC played an integral role in her decision to choose Carolina, Linda was careful not to pressure her daughter about her choice of schools.

“When she told me she was applying to USC, I was jumping up and down on the inside but not showing it,” she said.

“My mom is really supportive,” Mariah said. “She always makes sure I’m happy with where I’m going and what I’m doing, and she stands behind me in whatever choice I make.”

Lexie, a S.C. Teaching Fellow from Rock Hill, S.C., spent most of the spring waiting to hear which among her top choices — College of Charleston, USC and Winthrop — would award her a fellowship.

Though the Teaching Fellow program tries to match students with their first choice of schools, each institution has a limited number of fellowship positions per year, and Lexie was holding out for the College of Charleston or USC. Usually applicants hear in the late spring, around prom time, she said, so when graduation neared and she still hadn’t received a letter, she grew anxious.

“One night I was eating out Chinese with a friend, and I got this fortune cookie that said I would receive a large sum of money from an unusual source,” Player said. “I called Mom and got her to check the mail, and I had gotten the fellowship!”

Lexie has been following in her mother’s footsteps for quite a while. When she was about 18 months old, her parents bought the house that her mother, Susanne, had grown up in, and the Players have lived there ever since. As a result, Lexie was raised in her mother’s family home and attended the same schools her mother did.

“It’s kind of neat that she’s going on to USC and is going to be living in the same dorm that I lived in — a nice continuation, I think,” Susanne said.

“It’s just been a nice experience watching her grow up in my footsteps.”

by Mary Franklin Harvin, graduate assistant, University Housing
In its renovation of Patterson, Garvin Design Group, a Columbia-based architectural firm, attempted to give the building an updated feel while still preserving its architectural heritage.

“One of our goals was to pay homage to the mid-century modern era, when the building originated, while incorporating a state-of-the-art facility for the 21st century,” said architects Scott Garvin, Scott Lambert and Steve Layne.

Inside, Patterson feels more like an upscale apartment building than a residence hall.

“The directors of University Housing and the Garvin Design team sought to make this high-rise building feel more ‘like home’ than a typical commercial or institutional environment,” said Kim Bendillo, an interior designer for Garvin.

The lobby is an interesting mix of organic and industrial: the interior walls are earth-tone stucco and have a billowy shape that creates a natural flow from room-to-room, but the exterior windowed walls and brushed-metal fixtures give the space a hip, urban feel. “The residential floors have deep, rich tones you would expect in a high-end residential loft, with accents of ‘fun’ contemporary colors, which are integrated in the walls, carpet patterns and furnishings,” Bendillo said.

Though Patterson might not look like a regular residence hall, its design is no less student-centered than its more traditional-looking brethren. Garvin made student satisfaction central to the renovation by employing student focus groups to get a feel for student likes and dislikes about pre-renovation Patterson and other residence halls.

“My favorite aspect of designing for students is involving their input, and incorporating fun, current materials and colors,” Bendillo said. “It will be exciting to see what the former residents think of the new Patterson Hall, because the building has such a long history on campus.”

by Mary Franklin Harvin, graduate assistant, University Housing

New Digs: The transformation of Patterson Hall

Going for silver

Patterson Hall is striving for LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) Certification. Building features include:

- bicycle storage and shower station inside
- laundry room with high-efficiency washers and dryers
- first floor roof terrace on south side of building
- lots of natural lighting
- recycled materials in interior finishes
- energy recovery units that reduce humidity and reduce energy use
- water-conserving dual-flush toilets
- low-flow faucets and shower heads
- low volatile organic compounds on interiors to improve indoor air quality
- pervious pavers in driveways to reduce storm-water runoff.

by Mary Franklin Harvin, graduate assistant, University Housing
Professional Development, It Starts with You," was the theme of the 2011 IdeaPop conference, presented by the Division of Student Affairs and Academic Support. The annual conference, which brings together great minds in student affairs from across the campus and the country, is the preeminent event sponsored by the division’s professional development (PD) team.

This team, a dedicated group of 10 professionals from departments throughout the division, facilitates programs and opportunities for division staff to develop themselves personally and professionally and provides outlets for networking and community-building to ensure the division attracts, retains and nurtures exceptional staff.

Finding and developing talent are among the primary ways the division ensures its success, said Dennis Pruitt, vice president for student affairs, vice provost and dean of students. “The professional development program creates a learning organization in which we can help each other learn and share information because what we don’t know is the problem in this knowledge-based society.”

The success of the division and the success of students at the university go hand-in-hand with the quality of staff that the division sustains, Pruitt said.

“We must have broad knowledge and a holistic understanding of the trends and issues in higher education,” he said. “In this new age, we must be as competent as our students, and we cannot be complacent.”

The division always has supported the professional development of its staff, but in the early 1990s when travel budgets were tight, division leadership sought to provide opportunities in more cost-effective ways. They founded our students, and we cannot be complacent.”

“We must have broad knowledge and a holistic understanding of the trends and issues in higher education,” he said. “In this new age, we must be as competent as our students, and we cannot be complacent.”

The division always has supported the professional development of its staff, but in the early 1990s when travel budgets were tight, division leadership sought to provide opportunities in more cost-effective ways. They founded the PD team to bring national speakers to campus and to share the expertise of university staff and faculty to help division staff learn, grow and excel without leaving campus.

Over the years, the team and division have grown, and the purpose and mission of the PD team have evolved. What was once a replacement for out-of-town conferences is now a valuable supplement to the professional development that division staff obtain off campus. And, said Jami Campbell, co-chair of the PD team, professional development plays a pivotal role in helping connect national and institutional issues to the daily demands of individual staff members.

“PD events connect the larger goals of the administration — to help explain the big picture to multiple levels of employees and how trends and issues apply to those folks,” Campbell said, “because you can’t do the best job without seeing how it fits into the big picture.”

The team has experimented with a variety of programs to meet the diverse needs of division staff, hosting events from a cookie bake-off to a monthly reading club. The team provides monthly division meetings featuring local and national speakers; an annual holiday social; graduate and new employee orientations; a spring employee recognition event; and the one-day IdeaPop conference. These events help division employees learn about emerging trends and new opportunities that enhance their work. In addition, the programs develop a sense of camaraderie, foster collaboration and increase understanding and appreciation of colleagues.

Effectiveness of programs is determined by continuous assessment and analysis. “We assess staff to see their needs and identify trends and issues, and we share information,” Pruitt said. “Some things have worked, some things haven’t worked, but we keep trying.”

Due in part to the assessment-driven nature of the professional development offerings, the team has twice been recognized for program excellence by NASPA — Student Affairs Administrators in Higher Education.

Not content to rest on past accomplishments, however, the PD team strives to improve the ways in which it helps division staff make connections between their work, larger trends and student needs, in turn supporting the University of South Carolina as it continues to fulfill the promise of a world-class education.

For more information, visit http://studentaffairs.sc.edu/pd.
The world is full of big-name clubs—the Sierra Club, Club Med and Oprah’s Book Club to name a few—but none can match Carolina’s student clubs and organizations for life-changing impact. USC’s wide assortment of clubs provide an enriching experience that plays a vital role in shaping students outside of the classroom and preparing them for life beyond graduation.

“Student organizations and clubs form the core of student involvement, social activity, and opportunities to learn leadership skills and perform service,” said Jerry Brewer, USC’s associate vice president for student life and development. “They’re the essence of the co-curricular program on campus. It’s where students can come out of the classroom with the skills they’re learning, put those skills into practical application, and hone them for future job placement or opportunities to build on their resumes. There are very few students who aren’t involved in at least one organization, and many others are involved in several and have a great experience at it.”

From skydiving and a capella singing, to religious, political and environmental advocacy, USC’s student clubs and organizations provide a wealth of opportunity for students to learn and mature.
Rugby Team

Founded in 1967, the Carolina Men’s Rugby Club is the oldest club sport at the university. This year, it began competing in the newly revised Southeastern Conference Rugby League with some of the nation’s most competitive teams.

Habitat for Humanity

In addition to sawing and hammering, students in Carolina’s Habitat for Humanity chapter learn about the social issues created by a lack of affordable housing in their surrounding community.

Today’s students can choose from a dizzying array — 346 clubs and organizations at last count — including MOKSHA, which exposes students to Indian dance and culture; Anglers at USC, which approaches fishing as serious fun; and the Flying Gamecock Skydiving Club.

Then there’s Cocktails, the women’s a cappella singing group; Off-Off Broadway, the musical theater club; the Saxophone Association; and SAGE, Students Advocating for a Greener Environment.

Students sign up for club activities for different reasons, said Kim McMahon, director of campus life and the Russell House University Union, but the end result of their involvement boils down to a process of “building lives of character and purpose, not just learning hard skills to make money or to do well, but to be good people.

“We do our best to help students find something that already exists, but if they have a niche that isn’t quite represented on campus, there is a process by which they can become active and thrive in that area and recruit others who might have similar interests to form a club,” she said. “The number of student organizations flows, sometimes based on the strength of the leader, and when that person graduates the group might graduate, too. In others, the concept of the club catches on, and it sticks around for 50 years.”

Though club involvement at USC reinforces passions, interests and values, there is a large body of literature that shows how such beyond-the-classroom activities also increase academic performance, support students’ success in other areas, and help with retention, said Jimmie Gahagan, USC’s director of student engagement.

And it pays dividends as students grow and develop into adulthood while pursuing careers with employers who are looking for skills that include problem solving, teamwork, leadership, followership, communication skills and analytical thinking.

by Marshall Swanson, University Magazine Group

STEM

Members of Carolina’s STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Mathematics) Club explore the Four Corners Swamp near Harleyville as part of the club’s objective of promoting STEM careers and helping transfer students transition into life at USC.
A campus concert sponsored by the student-run Carolina Productions is always cause for celebration. The organization presents programs that encompass the ideas, issues, and interests of the Carolina community as well as opportunities for social, cultural, intellectual and leadership development.

Members of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority and Omega Psi Phi Fraternity joined forces for Hip Hop Wednesday on Greene Street, part of Creed and Diversity Week sponsored by the Office of Multicultural Affairs.

Anglers at USC competed in the Walmart Bass Fishing League tournament at Lake Murray in February where Jake Hostetter showed off the day’s catch, which would later be released after the tournament weigh-in.

Carolina students help out at the Harvest Hope Food Bank in Columbia during Service Saturday, which provides opportunities each academic year to spend half a day of volunteer work in the Columbia community.

The Gamecock Disc Golf Club finished 18th overall in the 2010 Disc Golf National Championships. The team also competed in the Southeast Collegiate Open where it finished No. 4 overall and won an automatic seed into the 2011 National Championships.
For USC’s University 101, the accolades keep coming. The program, which pioneered the first-year seminar more than 25 years ago, won a 2011 gold Excellence Award in its category from NASPA, the national organization for student affairs professionals in higher education.

Competing against the gold winners of all other categories, University 101 also earned the overall 2011 Grand Silver Award for Excellence. To top it all off, University 101 is celebrating its 10th consecutive year as one of U.S. News & World Report’s “Programs to Look For,” as cited in the annual college rankings issue.

To what does University 101 owe its success? Instructor development earned the recognition from NASPA, and it’s the foundation of the course, said Dan Friedman, director of University 101.

“The course is only as good as the instructor, so the best of the best are recruited to teach,” Friedman said. “We help prepare the instructor and offer ongoing support, but then we get out of the way.”

To accomplish this, Friedman and his University 101 staff developed a comprehensive and cyclical professional-development plan that incorporates active and face-to-face engagement along with a plethora of resources that can be accessed at any time. To determine the effectiveness of the course, the staff constantly and consistently evaluates the student and instructor experience, and they base all program changes on what the assessment data indicate. The instructor-development plan includes five active phases:

- **Teaching Experience Workshop** Before teaching their first University 101 course, all instructors must attend a multi-day workshop. Held in January and May, the intensive, interactive workshop teaches the history of University 101, education theory and active-learning strategies, and it allows new instructors to learn from fellow instructors, both new and veteran.

- **Syllabus-Preparation Workshop** All instructors attend a syllabus-preparation workshop in April. In this workshop, University 101 staff introduces instructors to material new for the fall. Instructors receive a copy and overview of the First-Year Reading Experience book, and they meet with their graduate or peer leaders. Additional time in the workshop is focused on developing syllabi and having instructors and graduate/peer leaders set expectations of one another.

- **Building Connections Conference** Held after the conclusion of the spring semester, the most recent conference gave instructors the opportunity to see new program models that could be adapted for their classes. Instructors also heard from Constance Staley, professor of communication and director of the freshman seminar program at the University of Colorado in Colorado Springs. Her keynote address, “Academic Fitness: Building Muscle, Discipline and Endurance in Today’s First-Year Students,” challenged instructors to find new and creative ways to help give students their best shot at succeeding at the institution.

- **Summer Workshop Series** Throughout the summer, University 101 partners with instructors from across campus to offer the Summer Workshop Series. Each week, veteran instructors and other campus partners lead sessions on topics that instructors can use in their courses. Most breakout sessions from the Building Connections Conference are repeated so that participants have a chance to attend them all. Sessions from summer 2011 ranged from student engagement planning to working effectively with peer leaders to financial literacy.

- **Fall Faculty Meetings and Lessons From the Road** The fifth and final phase of the active learning cycle brings faculty together in two ways. Fall faculty meetings unite University 101 instructors and staff for updates and discussion. The newly developed “Lessons from the Road” series puts instructors in the role of first-year students. In these sessions, instructors experience a lesson plan implemented from start to finish by a seasoned instructor or a University 101 staff member.

At the center are resources that can be accessed by instructors anytime, anywhere. The faculty resource manual features 538 pages describing everything from the history of the program to sample lesson plans and tried-and-true activities to use in the classrooms. The manual is organized according to the University 101 learning outcomes and is updated yearly as the program and institution grow.

On the SharePoint website for instructors, the program’s entire system of resources is accessible. The SharePoint page is the central hub for instructors and is updated yearly according to the University 101 learning outcomes and is updated yearly as the program and institution grow. On the SharePoint website for instructors, the program’s entire system of resources is accessible. The SharePoint page is the central hub for instructors and is updated yearly.

All this attention on instructors yields direct benefits for students, said Lee Pearson, a longtime University 101 instructor and director of the S.C. Public Health Institute.

**University 101 students were significantly more likely to report that they would choose to attend USC again if they had it to do over.**

*(2009 National Survey of Student Engagement)*

“U101 is one of the few classes in the first semester where freshmen are not a number; they have a sense of connectivity,” Pearson said. “They also learn that we care about them — about their success, their needs and their concerns. The value of this program really transcends what you see in a master schedule.”

by Kimberly Dressler, coordinator, student engagement
How did you get involved on campus?
I got a lot of support from TRIO Programs, and by my sophomore year, I held seven positions on campus, ranging from Carolina Service Council monthly programs director to University 101 peer leader to sandwich-maker at the café in the Honors Residence Hall.

How did you get to the conference?
Julie Morris in the Office of Undergraduate Research encouraged me to apply to the McNair research program. I filled out the application just to see what would happen. I do not think there was an application I have come across that I haven’t filled out.

What was your research about?
I studied epigenetics, the environmental factors that affect genes. One of the professional researchers at the conference liked my study so much, she’s going to continue it.

More than 70 percent of USC students call off-campus rentals home, but Off-Campus Student Services gives students a reason to call campus their home away from home.

Established in 2008 by the Department of Student Life, the office offers resources including housing fairs, a merchant fair, an online housing locator, University 101, the Good Neighbor Program and a new lounge especially for off-campus students.

The office was started to help students meet one of their basic needs—a comfortable place to live, said Jami Campbell, assistant director of student services. To do that, the office’s popular online housing locator connects students to available Columbia rentals. A sort of Craigslist just for Carolina students and employees, the website allows renters to select their desired location, cost and amenities and generates a list of properties that fit those specifications.

Even though many students live off campus, the hope is that they will remain connected to campus life, so Off-Campus Student Services also seeks to help students engage in the Carolina and Columbia communities.

Just as on-campus students are offered development, social and education programs in residence halls, Off-Campus Student Services brings these same types of programs to those living in apartment communities. The office coordinated a cooking demonstration for residents at one apartment complex and partnered with Carolina After Dark to offer late-night bowling at another community.

The university police department has visited apartment complexes to provide property identification engraving for students’ laptops, iPods and other valuables.

The new off-campus student lounge in the lower level of the Russell House West Wing invites off-campus students to stop by between classes and activities. The 500-square-foot space features a flat-screen TV, refrigerator, microwave, computers and comfortable furniture. Students work on assignments, catch up on the news or favorite TV shows, read for class, prepare lunch or socialize with friends.

Through the Good Neighbor Program, the office encourages students to build positive relationships with and be good citizens of the Columbia community. The university police department helps Off-Campus Student Services plan neighborhood welcomes, visiting students in their residences and distributing information on community resources and good-neighbor tips.

Through these and other programs, the Off-Campus Student Services office ensures that all students feel at home at Carolina, whether they live on or off campus.
TRIO students at the University of South Carolina are going farther, literally, than they ever have before.

Thanks to new programs aimed at encouraging study abroad and undergraduate research, the first-generation college students are participating in such activities at a much higher rate than before. Althea Counts, associate director of TRIO Programs, said program staff have expanded their resources and services since her arrival in 2002. "With an increase in staff, funding and support from collaborating departments, we are able to accommodate the increase in student interest and awareness of the possibilities in study abroad and research," Counts said.

TRIO staff have brought in community partners for workshops on study abroad and research and included presentations in TRIO sections of University 101.

"As each student would come back from a trip, he or she would share their experiences, encouraging others to decide to explore study abroad opportunities," Counts said.

Scholarships and financial aid are a significant factor in making it possible for TRIO students to participate in these life-changing activities.

"These students are brave to experience a new culture, a new language and leaving family and friends while they are away, but they truly appreciate their time abroad," Counts said.

With help from the Ronald E. McNair Post-Baccalaureate Achievement Program and the Gilman Scholarship, Erika Aparicio from Bluffton, S.C., traveled nearly 10,000 miles to Melbourne, Australia.

"The sites I was able to see and the people I met and spent time with changed me in the best ways possible," Aparicio said. "Being able to live out my dream gave me the extra confidence that I needed to get me to my senior year."

"Coming into USC as a first-generation college student, I had little to no guidance about the ins and outs of being a college student. Though my parents are very supportive emotionally, I am very much alone when it comes to finances and guidance. Thanks to TRIO, I found the support I needed both in and out of the classroom."

Study abroad is not the only beyond-the-classroom experience making an impact on TRIO students. Many are now engaging in undergraduate research through the Magellan Guarantee Program, which provides research opportunities for select freshman and sophomore students with direct mentoring from faculty.

From communicable diseases to childhood cancer and racial disparities in education to the internationalization of terrorism, the students’ research is evidence that they can make a positive impact while learning and advancing their own knowledge and experience.

Kwade Channell, an Opportunity Scholar and accounting and finance major from Greenville, S.C., combined his passion in his majors in a research project titled “Revenue Recognition: Convergence and its Potential Effects of Corporate Governance.” He first got involved in undergraduate research after hearing about it from past participants and mentors.

“My research mentors helped me focus my topic and improve my writing abilities," Channell said. “I am an undergraduate who fell in love with his education and gained a passion for continuous learning."

TRIO’s mission includes maintaining a strong commitment to educational success for a diverse student population. "With a dedicated staff and ambitious students, participation in study abroad and research enriches the lives of all participants."

by Stefanie D. Burke, program advisor, Leadership Programs and Women’s Student Services
Chicken bog, cornbread and pickles. Junior Tyler French, a Carolina Scholar from Greenville, S.C., has successfully incorporated all of these ingredients into his education at the University of South Carolina.

What was your research project and how did you get it started?

I love to cook and to eat, so I guess that’s where the project started. I wanted to somehow include one of my non-academic passions with research, and I got a mini-grant from the Office of Undergraduate Research. My project took a look at the differences between Southern food prepared traditionally and food made from mass-produced ingredients.

Did you actually do some cooking?

William Knapp, executive sous chef of McCutchen House, helped me prepare three dishes: chicken bog, cornbread and pickles. We did each of them two ways. Then I asked patrons at the Healthy Carolina Farmers Market to taste samples and give us their reactions.

And the results?

People like the quality of local food but the convenience of the supermarket. But the entire process was wonderful. I was able to combine something I love with a cause I am passionate about while working through the steps of original research. I don’t think I could ask for anything more!

Hannah Costanza, student assistant, Student Affairs and Academic Support
Like other leading public institutions, the university relies increasingly on private support to achieve excellence in programs for which state dollars are either unavailable or insufficient.

Guided by integrity, engaged in collaboration and committed to success, Student Affairs and Academic Support is at the core of the student experience at Carolina. You can make a difference by investing in the division, in the hundreds of programs it leads and in the tens of thousands of students it supports.

Consider making your gift online at www.sc.edu/giving or contact the Student Affairs and Academic Support development office at 803-777-3236. We’ll be happy to help you make a gift in a way that is most meaningful and appropriate.
The University of South Carolina’s publication, “Dealing with Distressing Student Behavior,” won a bronze 2011 Excellence Award from NASPA, the national organization for student-affairs administrators in higher education.

The annual NASPA awards honor excellence, innovation and effectiveness in student-affairs programs at colleges and universities across the United States. The winning publication outlines steps faculty can take to address or report concerning behavior and describes the university’s resources for assisting students in distress and faculty and staff who have witnessed such behavior.

Academic affairs and student conduct staff as well as the university’s law enforcement division used the publication in their efforts to educate employees about addressing and assisting students in distress.

“The ‘dealing with distressing student behavior’ folders have been the most well received and effective tools we have ever used,” said Chris Wuchenich, associate vice president for USC’s Division of Law Enforcement and Safety. “It has provided the necessary information in a unique and creative way, which effectively informs our community not just of the ways to make notifications but of the warning signs and types of resources that are available on campus.”

“Dealing with Distressing Student Behavior” won the bronze Excellence Award in the Violence Education and Prevention, Crisis Management, Campus Security, and related category. This is the university’s sixth NASPA Excellence Award in three years.