More and more, student affairs — and higher education as a whole — is a data-driven enterprise. For years, our division has analyzed data to yield discoveries that will improve our students’ satisfaction and encourage their persistence and graduation. Right now, though, I’m most proud of a different set of numbers.

1st
The first class of Gamecock Guarantee students graduated in May. The Gamecock Guarantee — the first program of its kind in South Carolina — promises that academically eligible, low-income, first-generation South Carolina residents will pay no tuition or technology fees from their own pockets. It’s been a remarkable success, and it’s a fitting expression of the university’s commitment to serving our state and its people.

40th
Our University 101 course is the model for first-year seminars around the globe. It’s a hallmark of the Carolina experience for students, has significant influence on the overall success of students who enroll and is a widely recognized best practice in higher education. And this year, we’re celebrating its 40th anniversary.

472,152
That’s the number of hours USC students, faculty and staff volunteered for local organizations and deserving communities around the Southeast. For the fifth-consecutive year, the university as been named to the President’s Higher Education Community Service Honor Roll, in part because of contributions like this.

You’ll find more about these stories and many others in this latest issue of “Essay.” I hope you enjoy it.
Instructor Leslie Haynsworth said she sees Gamecock Guarantee students in her freshman English class who have a “comfort level and a willingness to speak up” in smaller classes with students from similar backgrounds.

“They gain the confidence as freshmen to know they can succeed here,” Haynsworth said.

That’s been part of the reason for Kwade Channell’s success. Channell is a Gamecock Guarantee student who graduated this past May with a degree in accounting and finance from the Darla Moore School of Business. A native of Greenville, S.C., he will head to Pittsburgh after graduation for a finance and accounting internship with Eaton Corp.

“As Opportunity Scholars and Gamecock Guarantee students, we had smaller classes to start and had two or three classes with the same group. We got more one-on-one time with the professor, and we were able to form study groups and relationships,” Channell said. “It taught me the fundamentals, so when I got to other classes I had the study skills.”

Channell has also been an active University and Presidential Ambassador, leading campus tours for prospective students and helping host events on campus. He said he came to Carolina because of the strong business program along with service opportunities outside the classroom.

“I chose Carolina because I was looking for a school that would give me opportunities within the university and within the city,” he said. “I was accepted at USC, Clemson and the College of Charleston. USC did the most to help me afford a quality education, offering me scholarships on top of the Gamecock Guarantee.”

The Gamecock Guarantee covers the cost of undergraduate tuition and technology fees at USC, providing each participate a minimum of $2,500 a year. If the award combined with other grants and scholarships in the student’s financial aid package does not meet the cost of tuition and technology fees, then the Gamecock Guarantee will cover the difference. In other words, Gamecock Guarantee recipients who retain eligibility and graduate in four years will not pay any tuition or technology fee from their own pockets.

“That means students are leaving college with a degree and little debt.”

“I don’t have any debt coming out of undergraduate school,” said Shannon Schoultz. “I’m going to be stepping into some debt for law school, but this has made law school more affordable in a sense.”

USC leaders watched the first Gamecock Guarantee students graduate with plenty of Gamecock pride.

“It’s tremendously gratifying to see this first group of students graduate,” said Dennis Pruitt, vice provost and vice president for student affairs. “They are all bright, talented students, but many of them have said that without the Gamecock Guarantee, they wouldn’t have been able to attend college.

“With the program’s support, they’re not only attended, they’re thriving. They’ve taken advantage of every opportunity that Carolina has to offer — student organizations, undergraduate research, community service, study abroad and as such are now prepared to provide leadership to their university and their community.

“And now they’re graduating with the skills they need for lifelong learning and success. It’s an important milestone in their lives and in the history of the University of South Carolina.”

First class

Gamecock Guarantee graduates its first students

by Megan Sexton, News and Internal Communications

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1970 — In response to student riots against the Vietnam War, perceived social injustices and other campus issues, then-University of South Carolina President Thomas F. Jones charges a committee with finding a way to build trust and understanding and to open lines of communication between students, faculty, staff and administrators.

1972 — USC Faculty Senate adopts a proposal to create University 101, an educational experiment that was to be given a one-year trial. Students enrolled in the course earn three credits on a pass/fail basis, and the accompanying faculty development program aims to improve teaching for all undergraduates, not just first-year students.

1974 — University 101 is restructured as an academic department directed by the program’s creator, John Gardner. The first assessment of the program finds that though they had lower predicted GPAs, University 101 students ultimately earn higher GPAs than students who aren’t enrolled in the course. They also are more likely to be knowledgeable of university services and resources and seek assistance and to join co-curricular organizations.


1982 — USC hosts the first national conference on the first-year seminar, leading to a series of conferences on the first-year experience. To date, these conferences have attracted more than 67,000 visits from higher-education professionals.

National Guard troops fire tear gas on the Horseshoe in 1970.
1986 — The USC National Research Center for the Study of The Freshman-Year Experience is founded. The name is later changed to its current form: National Resource Center for The First-Year Experience and Students in Transition.

University 101 Programs co-hosts the first International Conference on The First-Year Experience.

2001 — U.S. News and World Report cites USC for its outstanding programs for first-year students. The magazine has named University 101 a “program to look for” for 11 consecutive years.

2008 — University 101 conducts an internal review of the first-year seminar to provide recommendations about the future direction of the course, including what the outcomes should be, how to best achieve them and how to ensure greater consistency across sections while still giving individual instructors the necessary flexibility to be creative and authentic.

2011 — NASPA, the national student affairs association, recognizes University 101 for its efforts to develop and support faculty. University 101 received the Gold Excellence Award in the Administrative, Assessment, Information Technology, Fundraising, Professional Development and related category. University 101 also is chosen from among the 10 category gold honorees for the Grand Silver Excellence Award.

2012 — University 101 celebrates its 40th anniversary. "There are very few innovations in higher education that are long-lasting, widespread and that become universally acknowledged best practices. This program is one of them," said Dennis Pruitt, USC’s vice president for student affairs, vice provost and dean of students.

2011 — University 101 programs for first-year students.

The current leaders of University 101 are, from left, Kevin Clarke, program coordinator for faculty development and assessment; Dan Friedman, director; Mary Elizabeth Sewell, associate director; Stuart Hunter, associate vice president; and Tricia Kennedy, program coordinator for peer leadership and administration.

1992 — Faculty Senate approves changing University 101 to a letter-graded course.

1994 — University 101 launches the Peer Leader Program.
Leading the way

Programs that foster leadership have been part of the fabric of the University of South Carolina campus for decades.

Each year, hundreds of Carolina students study in more than 50 countries, developing language skills, confidence, cultural appreciation and global perspective.

Students in the Magellan Scholar Program creatively explore their interests through research opportunities guided by faculty mentors.

Leadership Scholar Lauren Talley researched the effectiveness of an educational outreach program for low-income patients with diabetes.

Lindsey Rogers applied her enthusiasm and technical skills to help create the new Adaptive Recreation Program for students with disabilities.

Carolina is one of only 40 public universities to receive the Carnegie Foundation’s highest designation for research and service.

Ropes courses and a climbing tower at the Challenge Course foster teamwork and individual leadership.

Through its No. 1-ranked international business program for undergraduates, the Darla Moore School of Business prepares future leaders to make global contributions.

In 2011-12, the Carolina Community led efforts to provide the community with service and donations worth more than $9.2 million.

University 101 peer leaders take what they learn in their educational leadership course and apply it in the classrooms of this U.S. News-cited “Program to Look For.”

For more than 25 years, the Student Leadership and Diversity Conference has helped students develop and apply leadership skills to help the community.

Leadership Scholar Lauren Talley researched the effectiveness of an educational outreach program for low-income patients with diabetes.

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The Center for Nursing Leadership develops leaders to help improve patient care and shape the future of the field.

Students in Kirk Randazzo’s course “The Politics of Leadership” see leadership in action during a trip to Washington, D.C.

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What motivates you to serve?
I think it’s just my background. I grew up in a family where it was always, “Help others.” Before college, I volunteered a lot, primarily in a nursing home, sometimes 20 or 40 hours a week during the summer. After I began college, I did a lot of leadership activities. Then I found out about the internship with Community Service Programs, and I figured it was a good way to continue my involvement in leadership but also to give back to the community like I used to.

Is there a cause you’re especially devoted to?
I’m very family-oriented, and I love kids. I have 11 nieces and nephews. In my internship, I’m looking into children’s education and child development because I know that there are kids out there who need more help.

As executive director of the extended orientation program, you’ve served incoming students.
Getting involved in Pillars for Carolina has made a huge difference in my leadership. It was really the first time where people had enough faith in me to say, “Here’s this job, go with it.” It brought out the leader in me more than any other position did. I was the main person in charge. I had a staff of almost 20 people looking to me, expecting me to have the direction while we were still paving the direction. It’s one of the programs here at Carolina I’m most passionate about.

Community Service Programs intern Mitchell Hammonds, a junior from Greenville, S.C., said he’s the “odd one out” in a family of Clemson fans. But while he’s broken with his family’s football allegiances, he’s maintaining their tradition of service.

Mitchell Hammonds

The University of South Carolina has earned a place on the 2013 Military Friendly Schools list. The award honors the top 15 percent of colleges, universities and trade schools — 1,739 institutions — that excel in the recruitment and retention of students with military experience. The list, compiled by Victory Media Inc., was highlighted in the annual “G.I. Jobs Guide to Military Friendly Schools.” USC Sumter and USC Beaufort also are included on the list.

by Megan Sexton, News and Internal Communications
Healthy Carolina Farmers Market
one of nation’s best

Want to see what one of the 10 most impressive college farmers markets in the nation looks like? Come out to the University of South Carolina’s Healthy Carolina Farmers Market.

Named in May 2012 as one of the Top 10 college farmers markets in the nation by BestCollegesOnline.com, the Healthy Carolina Farmers Market shares the spotlight with those at Duke, Harvard and the University of California-Davis.

The market, hosted most Tuesdays throughout the year, offers the campus and surrounding community members fresh, healthy, locally grown produce and sustainable products. Vendors sell more than fruits and vegetables. Organic honey, fresh bread, goat cheese and milk, herbal tea, fresh seafood, lotions and soaps, vegetable-dyed yarn and knitted garment vendors are typically present at each market.

USC students and staff also participate, offering cooking demonstrations and food samples; distributing information about health, wellness and safety; and conducting free bicycle tune-ups and registration services.

A partnership between USC’s Healthy Carolina, Student Government and Parking Services and the S.C. Department of Agriculture, the market is dedicated to building a sustainable system of locally grown produce and locally crafted products.

by Nicole Carrico, Student Health Services

Muzna Alraiisi, a sophomore finance and international business major, traveled from her hometown of Muscat, Oman to attend the University of South Carolina. She’s describing that journey to students through the Thinking Globally program.

What is Thinking Globally?
It’s a program coordinated by International Student Services in which they take international students into different University 101 classes to talk about their countries. I’ve only done two presentations so far, but it’s been a great experience. I’m a chatterbox. I talked a lot, and the students seemed very interested, but I’ve had one or two embarrassing questions. They asked me: “Why do you have to cover your head?” We Arabs understand it, but it was difficult to explain it to Americans who are very liberal compared to us.

What did you learn about Americans from your presentations?
Americans are not very well educated about other cultures. I’m from Oman, and no one ever knew where Oman is.

Have you been treated differently here because of your veil?
Fortunately, no. I think that is because I don’t let my hijab rule my personality. I am very social and outgoing. I’ve had so many professors say that I’m just like an American teenager.

Do you see yourself as an “American teenager”?
I think I have a balance between Omani traditions and the Western lifestyle. I like to have fun and try new experiences, but I never cross the line. I know my boundaries as a Muslim woman, and that is a priority. When I go back home, I want people to say, “Oh wow! That girl studied in the United States, away from her family, and came back four years later with the same set of values.”

by Bader Almandeel, ‘13
Wall honors African-American contributions to USC

From Richard T. Greener, the first black graduate of Harvard University who taught at USC during Reconstruction, to the three students who integrated the University of South Carolina in 1963, African-Americans have contributed greatly to Carolina’s story.

Those contributions now are told through the new African-American Presence Wall, a series of panels that use words and pictures to trace African-Americans’ history and leadership at the university from 1801 to the present.

On Feb. 29, 2012, the final day of Black History Month, the university unveiled the eight panels mounted on the wall outside the Russell House Ballroom. Speakers included former and current students and USC leaders.

“We hope people will be educated about the things African-Americans did at the university in the past and the things they are doing now,” said Rodrick Moore, former director of multicultural student affairs at USC.
Workshops help faculty, students develop Mutual Expectations

Often, students just don’t understand faculty, and faculty don’t understand students. To respond to this challenge, the Office of Student Engagement hosted three Mutual Expectations workshops during the 2011-12 academic year to bring faculty, staff and students together to discuss how to enhance communication and support in and outside the classroom. Jimmie Gahagan, director of student engagement, believes these conversations “shape and enhance the learning environment at USC by creating a shared responsibility for teaching and learning between instructors and students.”

by Kevin Clarke, University 101 Programs

Job fair a virtual success

The University of South Carolina was among 22 universities that participated in the inaugural SEC/ACC virtual job fair in April. Of the more than 5,000 students who participated, 340 were from Carolina, earning USC sixth place for student participation. Laura Durfee, a master’s candidate in human resources, said, “The convenience and value of something like this cannot be emphasized enough. It was free, and I had the option to log in and chat with employers in between work and classes.”

by Erica Lake, Career Center

Charlie Otten, a senior from Louisville, Ky., has learned a lot from his international studies major, his time as a University Ambassador and his stint as an EMPOWER diversity-education peer leader. Perhaps his most valuable lessons, however, have come from an unexpected source.

Did you come to college knowing you wanted to be in a fraternity?

Before USC, I was actually leaning against it because of all the stereotypes. But during my second semester, Beta Theta Pi re-colored my看法. They were playing their ‘Men of Principle’ initiative and offering a well-rounded experience, not just a drinking club, and being a re-founding father, I’d have the chance to shape the fraternity, that really attracted me to it.

What made you want to be Beta president?

It just came back to being able to shape the fraternity the way I envisioned it. There were things I thought we could do better, and some things I thought we could plan ourselves to do. I kind of felt like I could get us there, so that was my big motivation.

What have you gotten out of the experience?

I feel like I’ve learned more in my time as president than I have as an undergraduate as far as real-life skills: public-speaking skills, management skills, conflict resolution, how to work with a budget, how to represent the organizations to different parties, networking. I’ve dealt with a lot of things, I’ve talked to my dad about it, and he said, “Wow, I didn’t have to deal with that until I was a 30-year-old manager.” So I feel like I have a head start. It’s been extremely rewarding for me, as much as I’ve put into it, I feel like I’ve gotten out more.

Growing interest in campus gardening

Last spring, Campus Recreation’s Outdoor Recreation program broke ground on the Carolina Community Garden. With 20 raised-bed plots, students, faculty and staff had the opportunity to literally and figuratively grow. Departments and organizations from across campus signed up to plant gardens of their own in the heart of campus, and Outdoor Recreation’s knowledgeable staff assisted.

By mid-semester, the plots were blooming with peppers, tomatoes, greens, eggplants and herbs. With weekly educational sessions and daily pruning, the gardeners were taught what to plant, how to plant, how often to water, how to trim, when to harvest and, thanks to the Community Garden Potluck, different ways to eat the bounty.

Senior Rebecca Marasco, a sociology and environmental studies major, said working in the garden “has been a fantastic experience. The gardens not only cultivate fresh, organic vegetables but open communication about food and green-thumb advice among students, faculty and staff in the Carolina community.”

by Lauren Martini Olson, Campus Recreation

by Kevin Clarke, University 101 Programs

by Erica Lake, Career Center
USC named Bicycle Friendly University

The Abandoned Bike Project, sponsored by the Office of Outdoor Recreation, is just one of the reasons USC was named a Bicycle Friendly University at the bronze level by the League of American Bicyclists. USC is the only school in South Carolina and the Southeastern Conference to receive the designation, which recognizes colleges for promoting and providing a bicycle-friendly campus. USC also won the designation for excelling in its master bike plan, its future initiatives and the diversity of its bike advisory committee.
Visits to Supplemental Instruction sessions increased by 129 percent to 4,493 visits in fall 2011, up from 1,172 in fall 2009.

Applications for freshman admission increased 20 percent to 21,311 for fall 2011, up from 17,694 for fall 2009.

In 2011, 3,691 students enrolled in University 101, a 27 percent increase from fall 2009's 2,916 students.

In 2011-12, Student Disability Services proctored 1,360 tests for students with disabilities, a 382 percent increase in two years.

Cross-campus advising appointments jumped 132 percent to 1,192 in fall 2011, up from 513 in fall 2009.

Parents Programs hosted 6,277 participants during Parents Weekend 2011, a 36 percent increase from 2009’s 4,626 participants.

In 2011-12, the Russell House University Union hosted 1,576,667 visits.

The number of registered student organizations grew 32 percent to 373 in 2011, up from 283 two years earlier.

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The university’s FY 2010 two-year cohort default rate is just 1.9 percent, well below the national average of 9.1 percent.

Registered users of the Off-Campus Student Services website increased to 5,669 in fall 2011 from 1,085 in 2009, an increase of 422 percent.

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Student Health Services treated 14,971 patients in 2011-12, about half of the Columbia campus student body.

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Division of Student Affairs and Academic Support employees overwhelmingly believe in their contribution to the division and their supervisors’ commitment to their well-being.

Employees also strongly believe the division is committed to diversity. These aren’t just theories: they’re results from a work climate survey conducted within the division last fall.

Student Affairs and Academic Support and the Division of Human Resources worked together in fall 2011 to create, disseminate and analyze the survey, which compiled employees’ opinions about their workplace environment.

Answering 59 questions on a scale of strongly agree to strongly disagree in addition to seven open-ended questions, 52 percent of the division responded to the survey over a three-week period.

The results weren’t exactly surprising to Stacey Bradley, associate vice president for administration for Student Affairs and Academic Support. The work climate survey reinforced that “Student Affairs employees have a very positive work climate, supervisors and leadership that care about them, and they understand how their roles fit into the big picture,” Bradley said.

This is the first work climate survey the division has participated in but not the first for Nathan Strong, business process consultant with Human Resources. Strong has administered more than 40 work climate surveys for various organizations, businesses and governmental agencies, though this was his first in higher education.

Strong, who helped customize the survey, said the Student Affairs and Academic Support results were the most positive he’s ever seen.

“The division has a positive organizational culture in terms of it believes in what it does and believes in itself and the ability to get things done,” he said. “To achieve that kind of culture, you have to be well-managed for a considerable amount of time.”

But with the survey results comes opportunities for improvement, Bradley said. A work climate steering committee featuring one representative from each of six major functional areas, along with Strong, began synthesizing data and developed four focus areas for improvement.

These areas include supervisory training, performance/management reviews, sharing knowledge about other areas within the division and an employee recognition program.

Steering from the survey, division administrators, in conjunction with Human Resources, began offering supervisory training through employee management workshops during the fall 2012 semester.

They’re also hosting Employee Performance Management System workshops and have shifted the entire division to a universal review date model to better ensure employees are regularly reviewed.

The workshops were immensely helpful, said Cassandra Pope, assistant director for campus visits for the university Visitor Center. Pope attended both the Managing Employee Performance and the Situational Leadership: Basics and Beyond workshops.
Key responses to the work climate survey:

Ongoing Success
93 percent feel their job is important to the success of the organization
95 percent agree the organization is committed to diversity
86 percent think their manager cares about them personally

Room for Improvement
37 percent are unsure or doubt whether supervisors accurately evaluate employee potential
49 percent have not received an evaluation in at least two years
54 percent think there should be an increase in internal communications
45 percent feel their good performance goes unrecognized

“I learned a great deal from both workshops,” she said. “However, I certainly was able to better hone into developing my supervisory skills as a first-time supervisor and how to effectively develop attainable goals within the organization for those that I supervise to comply with our new guidelines.”

Regarding the response to employees wanting more information about other areas within the division, Bradley said they are now providing updates at monthly division meetings from different areas to enhance collaboration.

In November, the division meeting’s topic focused on internal updates on key initiatives. Bradley also encouraged employees to read Stay Informed, the division’s weekly e-newsletter.

The fourth initiative rendered from the survey results is an employee recognition program to acknowledge employees in a more timely manner. Bradley said they are meeting monthly beginning last summer, the committee, composed of 10 employees from various departments, aims to develop a program that meets the needs of all staff and looks at smaller recognition opportunities as well as larger, more formal ones, said Ed Short, committee member and associate director for Russell House operations.

Currently they’re working on promoting the program and are discussing ideas, such as writing someone a complimentary note or Tweeting about their accomplishments, he said.

“People are very motivated by being recognized for things they do,” said fellow committee member Michelle Wright, assistant director for training and outreach for the Office of Student Financial Aid and Scholarships. “For others to know what people have accomplished is a good thing as well.”

Student Affairs and Academic Support administrators will continue using the results of the work climate survey, Bradley said. The survey and its subsequent programs “remind people that we care,” she said. “It also tells people we listened — we asked and we listened. The worst thing to do is ask and not respond.”

The division will likely follow up with another work climate survey in a few years after they’ve implemented the new programs and given them time to have impact, Bradley said.

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University 401 offers insights into careers in higher education and student affairs

Twelve students entered the new UNIV401b one-credit seminar, “Preparing for a Career in Higher Education/Student Affairs,” hoping to explore possible career paths within the field and receive information and advice about the graduate school application process.

Many of the students found a career to be passionate about. Caroline Carter, Class of 2012, signed up for the course already knowing she was applying to graduate programs. The class reaffirmed her decision to apply.

“This individualized attention and conversations in and out of class with the co-instructors provided support and resources for my specific needs,” she said.

She also learned more about the variety of opportunity in student affairs. “You can make it your own,” Carter said. “You are not beholden to any one area.”

Cody Teague, Class of 2013, found advice from graduate and professional staff panels valuable as he began applying to graduate schools. “The people I met acted as sounding boards when making important decisions, whether it was deciding which conferences to attend or what schools to apply to,” Teague said.

Kevin Clarke, University 101 Programs coordinator, was co-facilitator of the course. At its heart, Clarke said, “the class provides a support network during a time when students are making difficult decisions for their future.”

How did you get your start in baton twirling?
I started twirling basically at birth. My mom teaches and has her own program in my hometown, Ho-Ho-Kus, N.J. It allowed us to become really close because she was my coach through middle school. Once I got to high school I started looking at twirling for college, and I knew it was for me. Competitive twirling is great, but twirling for your school is priceless to me.

What led you to Carolina?
I applied to a lot of schools that had twirling and the academic subjects I was interested in. But when I set foot on the Carolina campus, I just knew that I was home. I just loved everything about campus and the opportunities the University of South Carolina could offer.

Tell me about some of those opportunities.
I’m involved in a lot of different organizations. My freshman year I joined a service sorority, Epsilon Sigma Alpha, which is great because it allowed me to help the Carolina community and our main philanthropy, St. Jude’s Children’s Hospital, which I love. I was active in Preston residence hall and was a Preston Ambassador. This year I became a U101 peer leader, and it’s one of the best decisions I’ve ever made. It is so much fun helping a group of freshmen, guiding them through decision making and showing them the way.

As an active, involved journalism major, junior Catherine Ramirez juggles coursework, a part-time job as a Statehouse tour guide and roles in student organizations. As the featured baton twirler for the university, she twirls fire.
Aaron Marterer is USC’s new registrar

Aaron Marterer, the USC’s associate registrar since 1999, was tapped to be the new registrar in January 2012. The university registrar is the chief student academic record official and data steward and has broad responsibility for maintaining the accuracy and integrity of registration and academic records for all universities, colleges and campuses of the USC system. Marterer earned his bachelor’s and master’s degrees from USC and his doctorate from the University of North Florida. He formerly served as registrar at USC Beaufort.

Katie Spell wins New Professional Advisor award

Katie Spell, assistant director of fraternity and sorority life, received the New Professional Advisor of the Year award at the 2012 Southeastern Panhellenic Conference. The award recognizes a professional with three or fewer years of experience who exemplifies the ideals of the Greek community and fosters a learning environment on his or her campus. Spell received the award from Jane Sutton, chair of the National Panhellenic Conference.

Dawn Traynor named Outstanding New Professional

Dawn Traynor was chosen by the American College Personnel Association’s Commission for Academic Support in Higher Education (CASHE) as the 2012 Outstanding New Professional. Traynor is the former coordinator of cross-campus advising at the University of South Carolina Student Success Center. CASHE’s awards recognize members for their assistance to students and promotion of the profession. Under Traynor’s supervision, cross-campus advising appointments increased to nearly 600 in spring 2011 from 73 in spring 2010.

Kirsten Kennedy, named ACPA Emerging Scholar

Kirsten Kennedy, executive director of University Housing, was named an Emerging Scholar for the American College Personnel Association in 2011. The award was based on a history of scholarship but also required a new, original research project to be presented at the national conference. Kennedy’s research examined the effect of using Twitter in learning communities with the purpose of furthering student engagement in the residence halls. She presented her paper with the four other emerging scholars in March 2012 in Louisville, Ky.
congratulations

Choose to Lose, Campus Wellness’ most popular program for faculty and staff, received the 2011 Outstanding Wellness Program for Higher Education Professionals award from the American College Personnel Association. Choose to Lose is a free, eight-week weight loss program that addresses nutrition, exercise, support networks, motivation and attitude. While participants must meet a weight requirement to participate in the program, many are motivated by the desire to lower cholesterol, blood pressure or blood sugar, or to improve sleep quality, mobility or mood.

by Nicole Carrico, Student Health Services

Online system for student organizations wins national award

The University of South Carolina’s online management system for student organizations won a bronze 2012 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 student organization system, which simplifies and standardizes tasks including recognition and budget requests and assessment, won the award in the Administrative, Assessment, Information Technology, Fundraising, Professional Development and related category.

by Heather Young, University Housing

United Way of the Midlands honors USC for community service

United Way of the Midlands gave the University of South Carolina a 2011 Community Impact Award for its contributions to a local service agency. Nearly 700 Carolina students, faculty and staff served almost 2,000 hours to help the hungry. Working with the Harvest Hope Food Bank, they sponsored food drives, collected 17,000 pounds of food, sorted locally grown produce, packed boxes of food and raised $21,000 for the nonprofit regional food distribution center. Students and professors also analyzed data on clients, agencies and donors and created maps showing areas of greatest need and places to find potential donors.

by Heather Young, University Housing

Honors Residence garners state awards

The Honors Residence received the Merit Award and COTE Citation Award in October 2011 from the American Institute of Architects, S.C. Chapter. The Merit Design Award recognizes projects that exhibit design excellence and sensitivity to the client’s program requirements. The COTE Award recognizes well-designed projects that featured environmental, technical and aesthetic excellence. Housing 537 residents in the South Carolina Honors College, the Honors Residence was designed by Garvin Design Group, a Columbia-based architecture and design firm, and opened in fall 2009.
The Gamecock Guarantee program brought senior Trevor Gilchrist from Lake View, S.C., to the University of South Carolina. His initiative, talent and confidence took him around the world.

Describe your study-abroad experience. Through USC, I traveled out of the country for the first time ever. I went with the Preston College Learning Community on their community service spring break trip to Jamaica in 2010. When I came back to the United States, I came back a changed person.

But you didn’t stop there. I was fortunate to earn scholarships and awards to fund more travel. I studied for a full semester at a college in Dublin, Ireland, in a program just for J-school students, and I got to film it for USC’s “Beyond the Classroom” documentary series. Then, I got an internship in Copenhagen.

What kind of internship? The internship was in online marketing for the diversity department of the Denmark International Studies program. I interviewed students from different backgrounds, including first-generation students, LGBT students and students of color, for the diversity blog.

You’ve done it all! Not only am I the first in my family to go to college, I am the first to study abroad and show my family and friends how important it is to take advantage of every opportunity!
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.