At-a-glance: new initiatives for 2007 – 2008
Division of Student Affairs and Department of Academic Support

Academic Support

The Sophomore Initiative (TSI) working group recently launched the new TSI Web site, www.sa.sc.edu/tsi, a comprehensive site to support the development and persistence of second-year students at the University of South Carolina.

First-year students in a new, ten-week (not-for-credit) seminar will gain skills and resources needed to successfully engage in undergraduate research at South Carolina. Details on “Discover: The First-Year Undergraduate Research Initiative” are online at www.sc.edu/our/discover.shtml.

The new Office of Academic Integrity will promote academic ethics and integrity through education and research. The office also will teach students, faculty, and staff about the new Honor Code and why ethical behavior is important at the global, local, and individual levels. Information is available online at www.sc.edu/academicintegrity.

New student exchange programs in Taiwan, the Netherlands and Australia will provide semester- and academic year-long study abroad opportunities for students in a wide variety of academic disciplines. New Capstone Abroad programs in Japan and Greece will be offered during the 2008 Maymester. For students participating in these and other study abroad opportunities, pre-departure orientation has been enhanced to include an online component.

This fall, the University will premiere a new documentary, filmed by art professor Laura Kissel, that chronicles the experiences of South Carolina students who participated in the 2007 Capstone in China Maymester program.

To enhance services for international students, walk-in advising will be available 1 – 4 p.m. on Fridays. Walk-in advising will supplement advising services offered by appointment.

To better serve international students who are sponsored by the U.S. or foreign governments, new international student orientation sessions have been added. In addition, a special session addressing cultural adjustment and settling-in concerns will occur after orientation. South Carolina currently enrolls students with Fulbright and Muskie scholarships funded by the U.S. Department of State, Bolashak scholars from Kazakhstan and a number of students sponsored by their countries' embassies and educational missions.

A new initiative to encourage collaboration among the various international student organizations and residence hall communities with international focus will begin this fall. The initiative will include meetings with and outreach to those groups about their needs.

In response to reports of college students nationwide graduating with an increased amount of debt, the University 101 program, along with the Carolina Collegiate Credit Union, has added "Financial Responsibility" to the required curriculum of the University 101 course. This presentation will be held as a large group session (6-10 classes attending at once) and will focus on debt management, responsible spending, avoiding financial pitfalls, credit card and personal credit management, deterring identity theft and other budgeting and money management topics.

A new Web-based supplemental student-success program using Goal Quest’s FYRe platform will be developed during the fall and launched in the spring. The program will provide interactive teaching and learning tools that engage students through technology, and it will highlight topics including time management, study skills, learning styles, mental and physical health, risk behavior, and personal effectiveness.

The new Creating Academic Responsibility (CAR) initiative provides a mechanism by which faculty can refer students who are in danger of failing due to excessive absences, disengagement in class, or failure to complete assignments. Faculty members teaching 100- to 400-level undergraduate classes can refer students to CAR through VIP, and the Student Success Center will coordinate communications and interventions with those students. CAR’s goal is to
help students get back on track academically while encouraging them to take responsibility for their choices leading to academic progress.

The Office of Veterans Services has now posted online the two most important documents for continuing VA Educational Benefit Recipients. Effective immediately, continuing students may submit their required, yearly requests for certification and report any changes by filling out and submitting these important documents online at www.sa.sc.edu/veterans.

Among other new initiatives, the Career Center is focusing on enhancing accessibility to services. During a recent transition to JobMate, an online system for managing job searches, posting resumes and scheduling campus interviews, the Career Center developed a funding source to eliminate the $40 student fee.

In an effort to further improve student engagement, the Career Center is collaborating with the College of Engineering and Computing to open a comprehensive satellite Career Center to be housed in Swearingen. The satellite office will include space for full-time and student staff, as well as six interview suites for employers to conduct on-site interviews.

The Capstone Scholars program introduces “Find My Classes,” a welcome event for new scholars. Capstone Scholars staff will be in the Capstone lobby on the afternoon of Wednesday, Aug. 22 to assist freshman scholars in locating their classrooms. For second-year scholars, the Capstone program will host “Talk and Eat,” an informal discussion session with refreshments. “Talk and Eat” will be held every two weeks in the South Quad lounge.

Pre-professional Advising will increase pre-law services, activities and general pre-law presence on campus. New initiatives will include a trip to the annual Law School Forum in Atlanta, a visit to the Charleston Law School, coordinated activities with pre-law University 101 instructors, and increased advertising targeting pre-law students.

Fellowships and Scholar Programs, along with the Offices of Undergraduate Research and International Programs, will relocate to Legare College later this fall. The move will allow for the enhanced student services.

This semester the McNair Scholars Association will launch a new lecture series. “Tea and Grits: A Southern Seminar Series” will recruit faculty to speak on topics related to the South, the University, or those with local/regional angles. The series kicks off at 7 p.m. Thursday, Aug. 23 with Dr. Walter Edgar and his lecture, "South Carolina's Love/Hate Relationship with External Authority." All lectures will be held in the Harper College Gressette Room, and details are online at www.sc.edu/ofsp/last_lecture_series.html.

This academic year marks the 10th anniversary of the McNair Scholarship. Created for academically-talented out-of-state students at the University, the scholarship boasts more than 90 alumni. The inaugural year of the scholarship saw only 10 entering scholars, but in 2001, the entering class of scholars was increased to 20. The University will mark this celebration with special events during the year. The McNair Scholarship is generously funded by Robert C. McNair, a 1958 graduate of the University. McNair, a North Carolina native, funded the scholarship to allow non-residents to enjoy the Carolina experience. For more information, visit www.sc.edu/spotlight/item.php?catid=3&sid=35.

Yoga is an age-old practice of unifying body and mind in a philosophical and physical discipline. Although it can be tough to find the scientific benefits of yoga in medical journals, Americans are increasingly finding yoga beneficial for overall health, increased flexibility and decreased stress, but also to help with joint and back pain, depression, and for the insight and balancing meditation brings. To this end, we feel that our high-achieving students can use yoga as a way to balance the challenges college brings—a way of coping when stress and anxiety kick in. On Sunday, Sept. 30, Scholars Programs will host a two-hour yoga workshop for scholars, and for the University faculty and staff that frequent the City Yoga studio.

Faculties throughout the University system have passed an undergraduate grade forgiveness policy. Beginning with Fall 2007 classes, undergraduates who earn grades of "D+", "D", "F" or "WF" may take up to two undergraduate courses for a second time, on the same campus, for the purpose of grade forgiveness. There are a number of restrictions. The policy, form, and FAQs are online at: http://registrar.sc.edu/html/grade_forgiv.stm.
Each USC faculty member is asked to review some basic information about the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) and to take a quick quiz before s/he accesses his/her class or grade rolls on VIP. FERPA training and certification for access is part of an ongoing effort to protect confidential student information at the University and the initiative has received considerable input from faculty leaders.

**Student Life**

All five recently constructed recreation fields, located adjacent to the Blatt P.E. Center and the Thurmond Wellness and Fitness Center, will be available for use this fall, allowing for an expanded schedule of intramural sports, including softball, soccer, and flag-football. And, for the first time, Campus Recreation will host intramural sports activities on Friday evenings, which will give students a safe, alcohol-free activity to enjoy during an otherwise high-risk time frame.

In partnership with Army ROTC, Campus Recreation will be hosting a climbing wall competition this fall. Teams will compete with each other in timed wall climbs. This program will introduce new climbers to the wall and will allow experienced climbers more opportunities to hone their skills.

The Office of Multicultural Student Affairs will hire an assistant director to develop and coordinate programs to address retention, persistence and graduation of multicultural undergraduates. The assistant director also will coordinate and advise the first-year Minority Assistance Peer Program (MAPP).

Mystudentbody.com’s online alcohol-education module will be available to undergraduate students beginning Thursday, Aug. 23. This online resource will educate students about alcohol consumption in an effort to reduce the risks associated with alcohol abuse and addiction. U101 instructors are encouraged to make this a required component for first-year students. Next fall, it will be required for all incoming students.

The new coordinator of Greek housing will be responsible for coordinating Greek Village contingency management and enhancing academic and retention initiatives within the Greek community.

The Office of Greek Life will be implementing a Personal Growth series targeted to all 2,700 members of sororities and fraternities. This online communication effort will focus on topics related to intellectual, physical, emotional, cultural, spiritual, and character development while providing discussion topics for chapter leadership.

WUSC-FM has completed its three-year conversion project to HD broadcasting. Digital transmitter, wiring, fiber optics and audio boards have been installed, providing WUSC with one of the cleanest sounds in the Columbia market. Students are being trained on state-of-the-art equipment that will prepare them for broadcast opportunities in commercial radio after graduation.

SGTV has secured funding for annual operations starting in 2007-08 thanks to the student activity fee increase approved by the Board of Trustees. SGTV has purchased a Leightronix programming system that will allow scheduling and customization of all programming on campus cable Channel 4 from SGTV headquarters in the Russell House. The equipment and fiber optics were installed this summer allowing the station to utilize these capabilities for the Fall 2007 program lineup.

The Daily Gamecock produced the largest newspaper in its nearly 100-year history. August 17’s Welcome Back issue will be 68 pages.

**Student Development & University Housing**

Student Judicial Programs will develop a Behavioral Intervention Team (BIT) Web site and intake reporting form.

Undergraduate Assignments has designated coordinators for learning communities and special populations to improve the initial housing advisement process for students and parents. Daily group housing-information sessions will be conducted through the Visitor Center, beginning in the spring. And, to help students manage their housing assignments, the office has developed an instant-alert notification to students when a change is made in their
housing assignment (e.g., notice of new roommates or change in room assignment). The **UCchoose roommate finder options also have been expanded** to allow new freshmen to continue searching for potential roommates within their assigned building between May 1 and August 1.

Students in residence halls will enjoy **nine new Gamecock Cable television stations**, including HBO and Country Music Television (CMT). They’ll also have access to **Ruckus, the free music downloading service** for students that offers a library of more than 2.1 million songs.

Housing’s facilities management area has developed plans to more efficiently and effectively deal with maintenance issues, inclement weather, and emergencies. An **In-house Emergency Response Team** will handle weather-related problems and emergency situations such as fire and flooding. The department’s **work-order system will move to an all-online program**, which will permit students to enter their own maintenance or custodial work orders.

In partnership with the Student Success Center, Residence Life will train **residence assistants (RAs) to perform early interventions**. Residence Life also will **revamp components of its summer conference program**, including standard operating procedures, marketing, training, and client relations.

The **Residence Hall Association will launch a reorganized executive board** focused on developing learning outcome-based programs to each residence hall. A **new visitation policy** will allow students living in buildings with certain visitation plans to vote at the end of the fall semester to change those plans.

**Supervision documents for live-in student staff** will focus on learning outcomes, continual performance assessment, and growth in multicultural competence. The **Source, a newly redesigned time management and employment tool for student staff mentors**, was developed and distributed this fall.

In addition to the initiatives mentioned above, **University Housing** will do the following:

- Launch the full-campus access control and video surveillance program
- Begin construction on the Honors residence hall
- Begin conceptual program and design for a new residence hall
- Develop conceptual plans for a new university housing office
- Add stand-up computer kiosks by the Capstone Campus Room as an amenity to meeting guests
- Refurbish the Capstone Campus Room, including the addition of technology for presentations
- Begin doing smaller refurbishment projects during occupied times in the residence halls

This fall, Healthy Carolina will kick off a variety of research-based activities to increase knowledge and awareness of health-related issues and to promote healthy behaviors. A new **social-norming campaign** will begin this fall, first focused on the National College Health Assessment (NCHA) data on alcohol use by students. A variety of **NCHA data will be featured in a brochure** that will be published and distributed to faculty and staff in August. Later this fall, a **report on the faculty/staff health-assessment results** will be published. A **health-marketing campaign** also will begin this fall and will highlight nutrition and other healthy lifestyle options. Healthy Carolina also will partner with the School of Public Health to assess minority students’ use of on-campus health services.

In January, Healthy Carolina plans to introduce an **online fitness and weight management program, a fitness path map of campus, and an online “fitness buddy” program**, similar to UChoose for housing roommates.

The **Green Learning Community** is a new, experimental community of 25 students who will help define what sustainability means for future generations. Students in the community will take the initiative to experiment with the personal, cultural, and environmental changes required to create a more sustainable society. They’ll participate in special programs, including field trips to places and events of interest, a food co-op and garden, occasional community meals, informal meetings with faculty members and visiting scholars and activists, as well as ongoing research projects. These activities are included in UNIV 290, the one-credit course members of the Green Learning Community will enroll in each semester.

The **Green Quad Community Garden Project** is a collaborative project with the landscaping department and University Housing. The garden, which will open in the fall, will provide a resource for explorations in the areas of food production, giving participants an opportunity to learn about bio-diversity, organic gardening techniques, native plant species, permaculture design, edible landscaping, and composting. A part-time permaculturalist will help with...
design and work with students in the initial stages of the garden, with the idea of gradually allowing the students to take on as much responsibility for operations as possible.

Thanks to a grant from the College of Arts and Sciences, a new two-course seminar sequence for first-year students on "Green Exploration/Green Engagement" will be offered. The purpose is to create an interdisciplinary experience for first-year students that will also strengthen our offerings in environmental studies and create a structure within which faculty can collaborate on teaching and research within the area. The grant provides for student field trips, faculty research funds (for collaborative projects with students), and a full-time graduate teaching assistant. The courses will be part of the Learning Center for Sustainable Futures' offerings for Fall 2007 and Spring 2008.

The Learning Center is expanding its "green living" initiatives to introduce students to more ways they can adopt a more sustainable lifestyle. Partnerships with Healthy Carolina, the Counseling Center, and Campus Wellness Promotion will contribute to initiatives including a food co-op, cooking classes, grocery store tours, nutrition consultations, a mini health fair, a smoking cessation class, and workshops on conflict resolution and effective communication.

The Green Quad will have several new visiting faculty this year. The first is Alfred Nordmann, who is visiting from Germany and will be teaching a course in the Learning Center, "Science, Technology, and the Environment." Later in the semester we are planning to have our first environmental-artist-in-residence.

Other new student-engagement initiatives include the following:

- Implementing a residential learning communities mini-grant research program. Twenty-four grants of $500 each will be available for students to use with proposed research projects to support the broader undergraduate research initiative on campus
- Creating learning community study-abroad programs for Preston and Green Quad, as well as one for service learning
- Developing plans for learning communities, not necessarily residential, around linked courses
- Developing more formal plans for use of e-portfolios across campus
- Expanding service learning in all residential learning communities
- Working with various departments with co-curricular programs to develop learning outcomes that link with the general education requirements

The Thomson Student Health Center’s (TSHC) new Electronic Health Record (EHR) will offer an array of benefits. Entering medical information, including medical records, consultants’ reports and lab/x-ray results, into the EHR will decrease transcription costs, improve the speed and efficiency with which records can be retrieved, and reduce paper usage, waiting times, and documentation errors.

A Student Access Portal (SAP) will be purchased and implemented, allowing students to enter and update their medical histories, make appointments online, and access a vast amount of medical information and frequently asked questions. It also will be possible to link a student’s diagnosis for a particular visit to health information that can be sent to the student electronically.

TSHC’s peer-review system will be revised to ensure documentation that complies with accreditation standards, to identify potential problem areas in diagnosis and treatment and to provide feedback to the providers. New quality-improvement methods will identify problem areas, define studies and provide documentation of improvement.

At least one M.D. healthcare provider from the TSHC will serve on each of the committees that will address concerns about obesity, smoking and drug use and will evaluate problems and plan and implement solutions, interventions and programs.

Design of a new student health center will begin, and a proposal on a mandatory student health-insurance policy will be submitted to the University.

Under a South Carolina Tobacco Collaborative grant, Student Health Services will implement a new protocol to better identify and refer smokers to the smoking cessation program. Student Wellness Promotion will be working extensively with the Green Quad Learning Community to promote a tobacco-free environment. Additionally, a social-marketing campaign to decrease tobacco use among University students will be pilot-tested this spring.
A new director of the THSC’s Women’s Care Center will begin in January. New initiatives of the women’s clinic include offering ultrasound diagnostics and, in collaboration with the School of Public Health's Cancer Prevention and Control Program, education on human papilloma virus (HPV) transmission and prevention, as well as promotion of the Gardasil vaccine.

Student Health Services staff were present at each freshman orientation session, where they reviewed health documents and administered necessary immunizations. Much of the work to inform students of the new meningitis-vaccination requirement was done “up front.” As a result, compliance with the requirements prior to Orientation was increased from 30% last year to 85-95% this year.

The TSHC will expand physical therapy hours and add treatments, including iontophoresis, a tool to fight some types of tendonitis.

Sexual Health and Violence Prevention and Research is working with a psychology doctoral student to develop a new assessment process that will be used with survivors of interpersonal violence (IPV). In another collaborative venture, they’ll partner will the Department of Physical Education to offer a women’s self-defense course.

The Counseling and Human Development Center (CHDC) has introduced the Suicide Prevention Program to raise awareness of and prevent suicide and to recognize, understand and respond to students who show signs of depression. CHDC staff will offer training to University students, faculty and staff, as well as members of the nearby communities, to help them know how to approach and talk to someone who may be contemplating suicide, as well as how to refer that person to mental-health services. The Suicide Prevention Program is funded by a grant administered by the Substance Abuse Mental Health Services Administration, a division of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

Student Disability Services will establish an assistive technology center that will feature e-text and Braille conversion capability, among other technologies. They’ll hire an LD/ADD specialist to support the growing number of students with these disabilities and will explore the potential of becoming a designated Employment Network for disabled students who’ve graduated from the University. This designation will be obtained through the Social Security Network’s Ticket to Work program.