the annual magazine of the university of south carolina division of student affairs and academic support

2009–2010

Division of Student Affairs and Academic Support
University of South Carolina
Columbia, SC 29208

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Dennis A. Pruitt ,
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International Programs

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Student Life

Student Success Initiatives

University 101 Programs and the National Resource Center for The First-Year Experience and Students in Transition

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connect with the division of student affairs and academic support in a way that is most meaningful to you … give.

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 or www.sa.sc.edu/development.

We'll be happy to help you make a gift in a way that is most meaningful and appropriate.
In the last year, the University of South Carolina has suffered historic reductions in state appropriations. During these difficult economic times, it becomes clearer than ever before just how important our programs are to our students, our University, and our state.

Through the Gamecock Guarantee, we’re helping students like Chadwick Devlin—South Carolina residents who have the ability but need an opportunity—to find the financial resources and sharpen the life-management skills necessary to earn a Carolina degree, the passport to a bright future.

Student-success programs, including our national award-winning University 101 and Academic Centers for Excellence, not only help our students perform better in the classroom and retain important scholarships, they prepare students to make smart choices about their academic and personal lives, keeping them on track to achieve their college goals and derive maximum value from their Carolina experience.

We offer students avenues through which to display their remarkable devotion to helping others and improving their communities. Their commitment to service is evident in each of their personal stories, in the account of the service-learning program in Jamaica and in the resounding success of the Healthy Carolina Farmers Market.

And despite the serious mood of the times, Carolina spirit remains alive and well, as you’ll hear from our students who glean marvelous experiences through participating in student organizations, taking on leadership positions, and cheering on our Gamecock athletic teams.

In this latest issue of “Essay,” you’ll find that even in the wake of the last year’s financial blows, Student Affairs and Academic Support continues to deliver on the promise we make to these students when they choose Carolina. But, we’re only able to do so because of those students—because of their enthusiasm for the University, their zeal for taking advantage of every opportunity available to them, and their hunger to improve themselves and the world around them.

Read on and see what I mean.

Dennis A. Pruitt
Vice President for Student Affairs,
Vice Provost, and Dean of Students
University of South Carolina
www.sa.sc.edu

from the vice president/vice provost

[Student profile]

Derek DeBruin

Following his interest in outdoor activities, Derek DeBruin began working at the Strom Thurmond Wellness and Fitness Center in the spring of his freshman year. Now a senior, DeBruin is on his way to a career in campus recreation.

In 2009 DeBruin, a Carolina Scholar and computer science major from Lexington, helped organize the first-ever climbing competition, which included students and community members. DeBruin planned, promoted, and oversaw the event, an experience that reinforced his career plans.

“Organizing the climbing competition was a really pivotal experience,” said DeBruin. “Being given the opportunity to organize and plan it was awesome. It was great for my development and was an experience I can take with me.”

DeBruin’s excellent work earned him recognition from the National Intramural Recreational Sports Association (NIRSA), which gave him the William N. Wasson Student Leadership and Academic Award at their annual conference.

Also at the conference, DeBruin landed a graduate assistantship with the campus recreation department at the University of Alabama, where he plans to earn his master’s degree in higher education.

Thanks to his experiences with Campus Recreation, DeBruin feels he’s found his way, and he offers advice to fellow students looking for theirs.

“In a campus with 20 to 30,000 people there is definitely going to be someone like you and something for everyone,” he said. “There’s a student or campus organization for everyone, and if there’s not then you can create your own. Class is great, but everything that makes your college experience happens outside of class.”

Michelle Gannon, graduate student, education
congratulations!

academic recovery program helps our university students bounce back

soehl wins first-ever martin luther king jr. day social justice award

student profile: brandon gates

parents weekend: signature carolina experience

preston residents and opportunity scholars learn and serve in jamaica

endless possibilities: “beyond the classroom”

student profile: laura musselman

no lines. full bleachers.

student profile: mohammed fatani

university 101: pioneering program again introduces “fresh ideas”

gamecock guarantee: giving university students the “resources to excel”

choose to lose

university names pam bowers assistant vice president for assessment, planning, and innovation

student profile: candance phillips

carolina’s farmers market

sarge frye family welcomes contributions toward scholarship in his honor

student profile: derek debruin
national resource center receives ASHE special merit award

The National Resource Center for The First-Year Experience and Students in Transition at the University of South Carolina received the 2008 Special Merit Award from the Association for the Study of Higher Education (ASHE) at the organization's annual conference in 2009. The ASHE Special Merit Award is presented to a person, group, or organization in recognition of influential leadership and contributions to the understanding and study of colleges and universities.

"We could not be prouder or more thankful for the center's collaboration on and stimulation of research, which has yielded tremendously useful information in advancing the work of educators and educational institutions," said University President Harris Pastides.

ASHE is a scholarly society with about 1,900 members dedicated to higher education as a field of study. It promotes collaboration among its members and others engaged in the study of higher education through research, conferences and publications. Past recipients of the prestigious Special Merit Award include the United Negro College Fund in 2006, Jerry Davis/Lumina in 2004, Clifford Adelman in 2001 and Jossey-Bass Publishers in 1992.

university honored for community service, service learning

The University of South Carolina has been recognized as one of the nation's leaders in community service and service-learning programs. For the third consecutive year, the University has been named to the President's Higher Education Community Service Honor Roll. The honor roll, which was launched in 2006, recognizes American colleges and universities that offer innovative and effective community service and academic service-learning programs.

The University's Community Service Programs initiative, which is celebrating its 20th anniversary, coordinates service projects that in 2008–2009 included the children's literacy initiative Cocky's Reading Express; Martin Luther King Jr. Day of Service; and Day for Dillon, a volunteer effort to assist the students and teachers in one South Carolina's poorest school districts. Through these and other programs, including service-learning courses, an estimated 16,334 students engaged in nearly 250,000 hours of community service that year.

student success center, group exercise program named best in country

The University of South Carolina's Student Success Center and group exercise program have won gold Excellence Awards from NASPA, the national organization for student-affairs administrators in higher education. The University's two gold awards are among only nine given each year to honor excellence, innovation, and effectiveness in student-affairs programs at colleges and universities.

"The awards are a testament to the success the University has had in providing our students with a superior educational experience in and beyond the classroom," said Dennis Pruitt, vice president for student affairs and vice provost. "The Student Success Center offers students the tools and guidance they need to achieve academically, and the group exercise program helps students create and maintain a level of fitness and well-being that advances their academic and personal success."

The Student Success Center won a gold Excellence Award in the "Enrollment Management, Orientation, Parents, First-Year, Other-Year, and related" category, and was the top student-success program recognized. Campus Recreation's group exercise program won a gold Excellence Award in the "Athletics, Recreation, Physical Fitness, Non-Varsity Sports, and related" category.
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Carly Benjamin’s first semester at USC in fall 2008 was rough. Adjusting to the University while managing rigorous course work along with sorority commitments—all at a distance of 800 miles from home—left Benjamin struggling. She missed the day-to-day structure that a high school schedule and parental supervision provided. Before long she realized that the missed assignments, class absences, and misplaced priorities had taken their toll. At semester’s end Benjamin found herself on academic probation.

After decades of enforcing a cumbersome formula based on “deficiency points,” the University revised its policy, which applies to new students enrolling in 2008 or thereafter, and applies to all students beginning in 2010. Under the new policy, students whose cumulative grade point average (GPA) falls below 2.0 are placed on probation. Eligibility for continuing on probation is based upon the number of credit hours the student has attempted at the University. This new policy raises the bar for student performance, and, all things being equal, was predicted to result in a greater number of suspended students after the first year.

To better provide first-year students with the skills and resources they need for success, and to reduce the number of suspensions, the new policy also includes mandatory academic coaching via the Academic Centers for Excellence (ACE). Every first-year student on probation after the first semester must attend at least one ACE session during the first six weeks of the second semester. Failure to do so results in a registration hold for the third semester.

ACE coaches are well trained graduate students and are available to meet individually with any USC undergraduate, not just those on probation. Coaching sessions are holistic;
focus on student strengths, and can cover any number of important topics, such as self-assessment, study skill development, time management tips, academic planning, and referral to other resources on campus. All ACE services are free, and students may meet with an ACE coach as frequently as they choose.

Of the 248 freshmen on probation after fall semester 2008, more than 80 percent completed the mandatory coaching session. Of those, 22 students opted to meet a second time with their ACE coaches, and 10 attended three sessions. The result? About 40 percent fewer students were suspended than predicted.

Although ACE has been in place for well over a decade, the services provided continue to evolve to meet the changing needs of students. ACE first opened in 1995 and offered students individual math tutoring and writing consultations in the residence halls. Ten years later, ACE began to offer students resources to enhance their study skills and practice effective learning strategies. Today, academic coaches are able to provide comprehensive academic support and help students navigate the many resources on campus. Students can visit ACE coaches in four locations on campus: Columbia Hall, Sims, Bates, and the Thomas Cooper Library.

ACE coach Chanta Pressley met with a number of probationary students last spring. Pressley is a counselor education master’s student, and she credits her counseling training as a helpful tool. “Twenty percent of students’ difficulties are academic; 80 percent are ‘other,’” says Pressley. She takes time to listen and waits for her students to feel comfortable sharing the source of their difficulties. “You would not be here if you weren’t capable,” she often tells her students. Pressley’s patience, encouragement, and understanding have fostered the meaningful personal connections that are critical to student persistence and success.

The probationary student comments about their experiences with ACE were overwhelmingly positive. One student remarked, “[My coach] got to know me as a person really well. I felt very comfortable talking to her about school and other situations going on in my life. She really encouraged me and let me know that help was and is always available.” Another wrote, “My ACE coach really helped me put together a clear cut plan for my success. She seemed to have a very genuine interest and concern on my behalf and I am very grateful for her tips and strategies.”

“Although it sounds ironic,” said Benjamin, “I believe that the affirmative side to my disaster was the fact that I hit rock bottom. I have faith in the fact that it was crucial for me to fail in order for me to realize that it takes hard work and motivation to get what you want in life.” And work hard she did. At the end of the spring 2009 semester, Benjamin earned a place on the President’s Honor List with 17 hours of perfect grades. “After seeing what I am capable of this semester, I believe that anything is possible.”

by Susan Weir, student success initiatives
soehl wins first-ever martin luther king jr. day social justice award

Cheryl Soehl, administrative coordinator for the Department of Student Life and liaison to religious workers, is the staff recipient of the University of South Carolina’s first-ever Martin Luther King Jr. Day Social Justice Award.

The award recognizes individuals who have exemplified King’s philosophies through random or ongoing acts of community service, social justice, or racial reconciliation. As a member of the University of South Carolina staff, Soehl was recognized for her accomplishments in community service, social-justice outreach, and racial reconciliation.

As the administrative coordinator for the Department of Student Life and liaison to religious workers, Soehl coordinates the annual University Awards Day ceremony and manages the Dobson Volunteer Service Program, among other duties. Soehl also serves as a member of the University Relationship Violence Task Force and Sexual Assault and Relationship Violence Work Group.

In addition to her work at the University, Soehl has worked in a variety of community service organizations. For 15 years, Soehl has been a Richland County court-appointed special advocate (volunteer guardian ad litem). Soehl also has provided individual and group domestic-violence advocacy services for abused women as a consultant and advocate for Sistercare, Inc.

Soehl earned her master’s degree in rehabilitation counseling, a certificate in psychiatric rehabilitation, and a certificate in alcohol and drug studies from the University of South Carolina. She earned her bachelor’s degree in English literature from New College in Sarasota, Fla.
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Parents Weekend, a tradition since 1985, has become one of the University of South Carolina’s largest and most widely anticipated campus events. Parents Weekend began as a simple lineup of a social, tailgate, and football game, but in recent years it has grown to include educational sessions, open houses, drop-ins, athletic events, and Friday classes open to parents.

In 2009 more than 50 colleges, schools, offices, and departments participated in Parents Weekend, which drew more than 4,600 participants representing 1,390 families. Melissa Gentry, director of parents programs, is excited that the weekend has become a true University-wide event.

“I think the families are really responding to all the things they can do while they’re here and the many opportunities that we’re providing them to learn more about Carolina, meet faculty and staff, and have fun at events with their family,” Gentry said.

Parents and families last year attended one of several Friday classes offered as part of the Parents Weekend activities, learned the ins and outs of the Carolina football frenzy, ate lunch at McCutchen House on the historic Horseshoe, met the first family at a reception hosted by President Pastides and Ms. Moore-Pastides, attended the Beach Bash at the Strom Thurmond Wellness and Fitness Center, and ran and walked in the Saturday morning 5K. For parents like Lynn Thompson, a member of the Parents Advisory Council, the highlight of the weekend was the pre-game tailgate and the competition between the Gamecocks and the Bulldogs of South Carolina State University.

“The spirit of Carolina really comes out when you see students, parents, and staff cheering on the football team,” Thompson said.

Another member of the Parents Advisory Council, Ken Peach, enjoyed the fun at the Beach Bash held at the Strom Thurmond Wellness and Fitness Center.

“It’s a great opportunity to meet other parents and University administrators,” said Peach.

Jerry Brewer, associate vice president for student life and development, has witnessed the growing impact of the weekend on the University community.

“The number of parents who choose to come to campus and participate in Parents Weekend continues to increase each year,” Brewer said. “The weekend has many social events which provide a taste of southern culture through food and entertainment, but the increase in opportunities to interact with faculty and the academic leadership has made the weekend very special. It is easy to have a wonderful weekend at Carolina: just arrange for the many quality faculty and administrators to meet our parents.”

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With that in mind, a spring break service trip to Petersfield, Jamaica, with the journalism service-learning course "Communication, Community, and Culture" led by Dr. Keith Kenney, fit the bill. Four Preston students and three journalism students enrolled, along with three Opportunity Scholars, students sponsored by TRIO Programs.

"The Jamaica project is very important to us," said Paul Beasley, director of TRIO Programs, an office that addresses the needs of low-income students at the University. "The partnership with Preston College, the opportunity for students to engage in study abroad and service learning all reflect the immersion into academic life that we expect of our students."

While in Jamaica, the students stayed with local families in three adjacent towns. The trip was the first study-abroad experience for Opportunity Scholar Erika Aparicio, and the immersion aspect of the home-stay was key to her experience.

"I stayed in a room with cinderblock walls and open windows," said Aparicio, a sophomore advertising major from Hilton Head. "I learned to appreciate what I have. It humbled me."

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The service-learning program was such a success that Preston College and TRIO Programs plan to send students on a trip again in 2010. "The journalism course has been a wonderful experience both in and out of the classroom," Beasley said. "It gives students the real world value of their academic learning, but equally as valuable is the opportunity to gain real friendships. It was clear [after the students returned] that the students had developed genuine friendships that will continue long after the project."

The students filmed a documentary chronicling their experience on the island while serving in various ways. The students did nearly 50 percent of the filming and editing. "We wanted to portray what we learned through video," said Aparicio.

They did everything from giving talks in schools and mentoring students to painting and working in gardens. Aparicio taught music to high school students and learned a few songs and dances herself. It was intimidating, she said, because she was the same age as many of the students, but she learned and grew from the experience. And she had a good time doing it.

"I didn't expect it to be so much fun!" said Aparicio, whose favorite experiences were sight-seeing and bonding with the other students and locals on the trip.

by Becky Wiens, graduate student, journalism and mass communications
endless possibilities

the "beyond the classroom" film series, now in its third installment, began in 2007 as the result of a fortunate coming together of ideas and opportunities.

Associate Vice President for International Programs Pat Willer said that the idea took shape when a history faculty member was making plans to lead a study-abroad program to China, while an art faculty member prepping a documentary about cotton in China began looking for a "first China experience." Simultaneously, International Programs was discussing ways to capture the special qualities of learning and knowledge-sharing that occur during a study-abroad program and decided film was a great medium to do so.

"We had an expert filmmaker who needed China experience and a group of students headed to China—it was a perfect collaboration," said Willer.

The students learned from participating in the filming, and the film captured those special qualities of the study-abroad learning experience. The film itself received a Telly Award, and the faculty filmmaker went back to China on a sabbatical and a Fulbright fellowship and completed her film about cotton.

Since 2007, two more films have been added to the series. In 2009, "Beyond the Classroom: Munich" captured the stories of journalism and mass communications students in Munich, Germany.

"It was unique in that the students did much of the work and produced news stories that are part of the film," said Willer.

"Beyond the Classroom: Jamaica" in 2009 followed Preston College and Opportunity scholars to Jamaica as part of a service-learning course. The film showed the 10 students doing work for the community of Petersfield, Jamaica.

The goal of the series, according to Willer, was to encourage and inspire students to study abroad.

"It's a great tool for showing students what they can accomplish and where they can go," Willer said. "Actually seeing other students in the act of international engagement is empowering to a student who hasn't yet had the opportunity."

As for the future of the film series, Willer sees it heading all over the world. One priority for International Programs when discussing future offerings is having students involved in the filmmaking whenever possible, because it intensifies their learning experiences. Also, the past three installments have been filmed during short-term study abroad programs because of practicalities. Willer wonders, however, how much a student filmmaker could uncover by capturing an entire year in Russia or South Africa.

"There is no end to the possibilities," she said.

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Laura Musselman, a native of Fayetteville, Ga., said that she knew she wanted to come to South Carolina after her campus tour.

"When I came on campus, it felt like home," she said. "I am just amazed at the amount of opportunities the University has to offer."

Now in her second year as a University Ambassador, and as a Presidential Ambassador, Musselman helps other students get excited about Carolina.

"My favorite part about being a University Ambassador is helping prospective students and their families make one of the most important decisions of their lives through tours and answering their questions at the Visitor Center," Musselman said. "The Visitor Center was so helpful when I was a senior in high school, and the entire University has given me so much that I love giving back even just a little bit."

Musselman, a South Carolina Honors College student, is majoring in international business and marketing and minoring in Spanish. In addition to her studies and her responsibilities organizing tours and representing the University during presidential events, Musselman sings in the women’s a cappella group, Cocktails. Last year, the group flew to Miami to audition for the television show “America’s Got Talent.” Though they didn’t make it past the first round, Musselman said that the experience was still worthwhile.

"The best thing about going to audition for ‘America’s Got Talent’ with the Cocktails was representing that great things can happen here at Carolina," Musselman said. "It was so cool to meet all of the other acts there as well, and even though we didn’t make it, we still got to meet David Hasselhoff!"

by Michelle Gannon, graduate student, education
Director of Student Services Anna Edwards, who oversees the student ticketing system, said that the University started researching options for the system in 2007.

"Students felt they deserved more tickets than the student allotment, but the Athletics Department said 'you're not using the tickets we're giving you' because an average of 60 percent of the tickets distributed were being used each game. So we worked with them to explore options for a more equal distribution of tickets and a way for students to get points associated with their loyalty," she said.

TicketReturn offers fee-paying students an easy way to receive athletic tickets without the inconvenience of spending the night outside or the academic repercussions of missing class. Students simply visit www.ticketreturn.com/sc to request and claim their tickets. Students earn loyalty points for going to games, and those points factor into receiving a ticket when students request more tickets than are available.

Patrick Donovan, student ticketing coordinator, said that TicketReturn has increased student attendance at athletic events and is creating more loyalty, and therefore increasing the feeling of Gamecock spirit.

"For the first few games of football season, students might not want to go, but they know that to get a ticket for the big games like Florida and Clemson, they need to go to these games to build up their points, " Donovan said. "What it all comes down to is building loyalty to Carolina … it gives students a sense of pride when they receive the loyalty points."

During the seven games of the 2008 football season, 95 percent of students who requested a ticket received one. Of the tickets distributed, 88 percent were used by students, who had them scanned as they entered Williams-Brice Stadium. During the 2008–2009 basketball and baseball seasons, every student who wanted a ticket received one.

Chris McNamee, a senior political science major and director of the Student Ticket Advisory Committee, got involved when the system was being presented to a group of students for feedback.

"The idea of being able to get right into the heart of things and be able to change something for the better, something that I knew would be around for a while, is what really drew me in," he said.

Although he admits that it took the students a little while to understand the system, McNamee sees school spirit increasing among his peers as the number of students attending games continues to climb.

"TicketReturn has really increased Gamecock spirit, and people are going to games more," he said. "We especially saw that with basketball this past year. Seeing that student section full was awesome! I remember going my freshman and sophomore years, and I didn't know where the student section was, and we just sat wherever since there were so many empty seats. Now, it's a full student section and people are getting into it." McNamee is excited by the foundation that he and the other students on the committee, along with support from Student Life staff, have built with TicketReturn.

"It's expanding," he said. "It's something that we're building on, and we're trying to make sure this is a program that stays around and only gets better and never lets the students down. The feedback I've been getting is that students are happy and it's working. It's a success in my mind."

Gone are the days of “camping out” outside the Russell House University Union to get tickets for big games, skipping classes to stand in line, and wasted tickets from students who decided not to attend the games for which they picked up a ticket. Now, this loyalty-based online system allows students to request, claim, and print their student athletic tickets from any computer, 24 hours a day.

by Melissa Gentry, Parents Programs
Director of Student Services Anna Edwards, who oversees the student ticketing system, said that the University started researching options for the system in 2007. “Students felt they deserved more tickets than the student allotment, but the Athletics Department said ‘you’re not using the tickets we’re giving you’ because an average of 60 percent of the tickets distributed were being used each game. So we worked with them to explore options for a more equal distribution of tickets and a way for students to get points associated with their loyalty,” she said.

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Pioneering program again introduces ‘fresh ideas’

University 101 Programs launched new goals, learning outcomes, and course requirements beginning with its fall 2009 courses. These updates were the result of more than a year of work by the University 101 staff and a dedicated cadre of volunteers from all areas of the University. The process began when Program Director Dan Friedman started meeting individually with instructors after beginning the position in 2008.

“In my interview process and in meeting with instructors and administrators on campus, it became clear that many of them felt that the program needed fresh ideas and a new approach,” Friedman said. “I think that all courses on a campus need to change as society changes and culture changes. That is especially true for a freshman seminar.”

The purpose of the University 101 course is to help new students make a successful transition to the University of South Carolina, both academically and personally. While the course aims to foster a sense of belonging, promote engagement in the curricular and co-curricular life of the University, Friedman said it also strives to articulate to students the expectations of the University and its faculty while helping students develop and apply critical-thinking skills as students continue to clarify their purpose, meaning, and direction.

Student Profile

Third-year student Mohammed Fatani, from Jeddah, Saudi Arabia, didn’t just find a niche on campus, he created one.

Despite his full schedule as a biology major and chemistry, business administration, and neuroscience minor, Fatani made time to help found the Saudi Student Association (SSA) two years ago. In 2009, he served as president of SSA and helped develop programs to encourage Saudi and other international students to get involved in the Carolina community. That year, SSA held the first Saudi Arabian Cultural Night, which attracted more than 350 students, faculty, staff, and community members.

“I tell international students to get involved with their country’s [student] organization or create their own if there isn’t one,” said Fatani. “The organizations are a chance to teach American students about your culture, which helps you make friends and makes the homesickness disappear.”

In addition to serving his student organization, Fatani assists International Student Services as a Thinking Globally presenter and as a volunteer on the International Student Advisory Council.

“I try to help as best I can,” Fatani said. “I believe they have helped me and other international students so much since I arrived in 2005. I don’t think I can ever repay them, but I try to give back as much as I can.”

After graduation, Fatani hopes to continue his education in medical school, and he’s grateful for all the assistance he’s had to help him achieve his goals.

“I really appreciate everything that the government of Saudi Arabia has offered me and thousands of Saudi students,” Fatani said. “South Carolina is an institution that develops many skills and aspects of students. The University wants you to be a better person by providing you with strong academics and opportunities to be a leader and get involved.”

by Michelle Gannon, graduate student, education
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“We started with learning about student needs. We wanted to paint a portrait of the University’s first-year students today and how that has changed over the last 20 years.”

The goals and learning outcomes were carefully formulated to ensure a relevant, sustainable, and dynamic course design. The learning outcomes and common course requirements were designed to provide a degree of consistency across sections, while allowing instructors to customize their classes. Friedman said that one of the overarching principles of the broad nature of the outcomes signifies that there is no single approach appropriate for all sections or all students. The hope throughout the design of the outcomes was that the content, topics, and methods to achieve the outcomes would be tailored to the needs of the students in a given section and to the strengths and expertise of the instructor.

“We started with learning about student needs. We wanted to be sure that all groups with a stake in the course were asked to give their take on which of the topics was most applicable and relevant to the students.”

Campus Recreation Intramural Sports Director Lauren Martini, a third-year instructor, said she appreciates the addition of the learning outcomes because it clearly spells out what the students she teaches should expect to get from the course.

“I feel like it is giving me more of a focus and more of an idea of what University 101 and USC want the students she teaches should expect to get from the course.”

While it has created the focus for me, it has allowed me to be more creative because I know what I need to focus on,” she said.

Another change implemented for the Fall 2009 semester was the expectation of all University 101 students to attend required presentations. In the past, these presentations dealing with topics such as sexual health or financial management were held in large-group settings in the Russell House theater. As students were held in large-group settings in the Russell House theater. As students.

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“We wanted to be sure that the content for a particular class had what that class needed. We want students to have a small-group experience, so we found that having large group lectures on a topic was not the best way to learn,” Friedman said. “With 18 to 22 students in a class, you can really talk about the issue in terms of how it relates to the students in that class. It also helps the instructor continue a coherent thread of lessons throughout.”

While she has chosen to continue using some presentations from campus partners in her class, second-year instructor Alicia Bervine said that the flexibility has been beneficial to the overall structure of her class. Bervine is responsible for more of the instructors to do something a certain way, leaving the best way to get there up to the instructor,” Friedman said. “If we force an instructor to do something a certain way, they don’t buy in and are not as effective in reaching the student. We feel that we can be explicit about what the course is intended to do while allowing instructors to decide which outcomes to focus on more than others,” he said.

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“I’m still using a good bit of the presentations, but have been able to schedule them so that they don’t break up the flow of my class,” Bervine said. “Having more control over the design of the semester as a whole with the curriculum as a guide makes sense. For example a larger module on career planning isn’t broken up with a mandatory presentation.”

Ultimately, Friedman said, the changes to the structure of the course will be measured by the overall impact it has on the students in the course. After piloting the program in Spring 2009, and fully implementing it in Fall 2009, Friedman said that positive evaluations of the course increased greatly. In addition to growth in 12 of 15 factors on the first-year initiative survey, Friedman said that there was significant improvement in the reported value of the course to the student.

“More students reported that the course was valuable and worthwhile and that they would recommend it to another freshman. That shows me that it had value,” Friedman said. “Those are the two specific metrics that I look to. You get the uplifting things like parent calls and student visits, but the data gives you the confidence of knowing we’ve made this a better experience for more of our students.”

by Rico Reed, The National Resource Center for the First-Year Experience and Students in Transition and University 101 Programs
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“We started with learning about student needs. We wanted to be sure that the content for a particular class had what that class needed. We want students to have a small-group experience, so we found that having large group lectures on a topic was not the best way to learn,” Friedman said. “With 16 to 22 students in a class, you can really talk about the issue in terms of how it relates to the students in that class. It also helps the instructor continue a coherent thread of lessons throughout.”

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The University of South Carolina launched the Gamecock Guarantee in 2008 to make attending the University more affordable and getting a South Carolina degree more attainable. The first need-based scholarship program of its kind in South Carolina, it is a financial- and academic-support program for academically qualified residents of the state.

The Gamecock Guarantee promises to cover each eligible student’s tuition and technology fee for up to four years providing the student meets academic, financial and participation criteria. Since fall 2009, there is a minimum financial award of $2,500 for all recipients. That award can be used to pay for books or other expenses, said Associate Vice President for Administration Stacey Bradley, and it gives students extra motivation to work hard.

“Without the Gamecock Guarantee, it would have been difficult to attend a University at all,” said Devlin. Devlin, a criminal justice and criminology major, said that the $2,500 award was especially helpful this year because it replaced some of the non-renewable scholarships that he received his freshman year.

Students who qualify for the Gamecock Guarantee benefit from a coordinated network of offerings that help to enrich their Carolina experience. All Gamecock Guarantee students benefited from additional services from the South Carolina Honors College, Capstone Scholars Program, or Opportunity Scholars Program.

“We have a comprehensive system of support services,” said Bradley. “While other institutions just offer need-based financial aid, we offer a comprehensive approach to the student’s overall experience and to graduation.”

The University enrolled 120 Gamecock Guarantee students in 2009, up from 93 in 2008. With increasing enrollment and a remarkable retention rate, Bradley feels that the program has been successful.

“The changes we’ve made have moved us toward the eventual goal, which is a guarantee of no student debt,” said Bradley. “The feedback from the students the first year helped. We’ve learned a lot, and it has enabled us to be more effective.”

by Becky Wiens, graduate student, journalism and mass communications

To make a gift to support worthy students in their efforts to earn a University of South Carolina education, visit www.sc.edu/giving or call Polly Laffitte at 803-777-3236.
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“The $2,500 award in addition to the tuition guarantee is tremendously significant since it provides a financial incentive for students to work hard to maintain their other scholarships and aid,” said Bradley. “The change in the program positions a student to take ownership for his academic success and to be rewarded financially for doing so.”

Chadwick Devlin, a sophomore from Pendleton, chose to attend the University of South Carolina because of the Gamecock Guarantee.

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For many of us, eating right and exercising is at best something on our to-do lists and at worst a hated chore. However, it’s never too late to build healthy habits. To assist University of South Carolina faculty and staff, Campus Wellness has a variety of programs and services designed to help them develop those habits.

During the 2008–2009 academic year, the office launched Choose to Lose, a weight management program designed to help people get into a habit of eating well and exercising regularly. According to former Campus Wellness Program Coordinator and Choose to Lose co-facilitator Julie Hutt, the purpose of the program is to provide prevention education in nutrition and exercise.

“Participants receive practical exercise options and alternatives,” said Hutt. “They also get regular feedback and support to assist in achieving their nutrition and exercise goals in an effort to create behavior change and improve their quality of life.”

Over the course of the six-week program, Choose to Lose participants experience gains in healthful eating and exercise habits while losing body fat, inches, and weight. They keep detailed exercise and food logs and receive feedback from program facilitators, who give encouragement and personalized suggestions for improvement.

Organized exercise opportunities and weekly weigh-ins keep participants motivated and accountable.

While Choose to Lose participants all want to get into regular healthy habits, they come to the program for different reasons. For Marcella Boyd-Yed of University Technology Services it’s all about family. “I am a 42-year-old mother of a 10-year-old daughter and a three-year-old son,” she said. “They are my driving factors. I want to be around for them. I want to set an example by letting them see me making good food choices and practicing a healthy lifestyle.”

David Hunter, director of academic and student-support services for System Affairs and Extended Campus, used the Choose to Lose program as a chance to take control of his future health. “Quite frankly, some of [my motivation] is fear-based,” Hunter said. “I realize that I have to do all I can to keep healthy in order to head off as much illness as possible … the only ‘power’ I feel I have is to look after myself as best I can.”

The 2005 Dietary Guidelines for Americans recommend a diet that:

- Emphasizes fruits, vegetables, whole grains, and fat-free or low-fat milk and milk products;
- Includes lean meats, poultry, fish, beans, eggs, and nuts; and
- Is low in saturated fats, trans fats, cholesterol, salt (sodium), and added sugars.

The program offers benefits well beyond its official end, said Linsey Myers, an education specialist candidate. “The Choose to Lose program was a big piece of the motivation I have,” said Myers. “Although it’s only a six-week long program, I still meet with [Campus Wellness Program Coordinator and Choose to Lose facilitator] Marci Torres to plan new workouts and to do body measurements, and I still meet with Deb Zippel [Campus Wellness registered dietitian] to talk about nutrition. Both of these women are extremely supportive and willing to work with students on a long-term basis.”

Torres said that Myers isn’t alone. “We have many participants who continue with Choose to Lose, even though their session is over,” she said. “Some participants just come to weigh in weekly and check in. That accountability keeps them motivated to work towards their goals.”

So what motivates the Campus Wellness staff?

“The number of participants that have shared their personal success story,” said Hutt. “It’s gratifying to hear that I’ve made a difference in someone’s life.”
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The American College of Sports Medicine and the American Heart Association in 2007 issued Physical Activity and Public Health Guidelines that recommend:

- At least 30 minutes of moderately intense cardiovascular activity 5 days per week; and
- 8 to 10 strength training exercises, 8 to 12 repetitions of each 2 days per week.

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by Marguerite O’Brien, Campus Wellness
Pam Bowers has joined the University of South Carolina as assistant vice president for assessment, planning, and innovation.

The former director of university assessment and testing at Oklahoma State University, Bowers leads strategic planning and assessment efforts for the Division of Student Affairs and Academic Support.

“The increasing importance of assessment and improvement, strategic planning, and transparent accountability in higher education cannot be overstated,” said Dennis Pruitt, vice president for student affairs and vice provost. “We are fortunate to have Dr. Bowers, with her wealth of expertise, leading our division’s efforts in these areas.”

Bowers earned a bachelor’s degree in journalism, a master’s degree in student personnel and guidance, and a doctoral degree in applied behavioral studies in education from Oklahoma State University. An active member of NASPA, the professional association for student-affairs administrators, Bowers has made presentations at conferences throughout the United States.

“I am very happy to be a part of the University of South Carolina,” Bowers said. “Student Affairs and Academic Support contributes significantly to the educational experiences of Carolina students, and it is a pleasure to be among such a dedicated and innovative group of professionals. I was attracted to Carolina, in part, because of the high level of collaboration within the division as well as with faculty and academic administrators. Many universities aspire to create these strong connections and mutual support, but few achieve it. It creates a wonderful learning environment—for students, staff, and faculty!”
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Phillips is a coordinator for cultural awareness for the Association of African-American Students, a member of the multicultural press council, and a Minority Assistance Peer Program (M.A.P.P.) counselor.

"Being a M.A.P.P. counselor is great because I am able to give freshmen a person to talk to," said Phillips. "When I was a freshman it was so overwhelming, and I had so many questions. I want to be there for students to answer all their questions. It’s so important to have these mentors, especially for minority students, so we don’t just get here, but stay here."

Phillips’ work with the Homecoming committee has become increasingly important to her. Last year she helped bring back the Step Show, an event she said people were excited to see return.

"The Step Show was something else that made Homecoming more exciting; it was one more thing for students to get involved with," Phillips said. "Homecoming is important because it gives alumni a chance to come back and see the school and their friends, and it is one week where everyone comes together and celebrates one thing. Students and alumni come together and make connections."

by Michelle Gannon, graduate student, education
Ask Healthy Carolina Director Michelle Burcin why she worked to bring a farmers market to campus and she will begin by citing the social benefits of the market. Burcin saw the market as a way to introduce the campus to the health benefits of fresh produce.

“A farmers market provides an opportunity to purchase and eat nutritionally dense food—that is, food rich in vitamins, fibers, and phytochemicals,” Burcin said. “We as a culture have become fixated with the calorie—eating food that is calorie-dense—but calories only feed our body’s need for energy, whereas nutrients feed our body’s immune system, digestive systems, our cell structures ... all of our body’s needs.”

It is an idea that reflects the interconnectedness of our decisions and how a simple decision about what to feed our bodies can have powerful repercussions to our overall health and well-being.

This theme of interconnectedness also emerges when talking about the environmental impacts of the farmers market. Robbie McClam, market vendor and owner of Columbia’s first “urban farm,” called City Roots, sums up these effects.

“Organic growers start with an idea that life generates life, and health generates health, so when we grow food we start by building healthy, living soils and water sheds,” said McClam.

An architect by trade, McClam is accustomed to designing projects from a systems-wide approach, and so it’s no wonder that City Roots is working toward a goal of zero waste—that is, all of the waste streams will eventually become nutrient streams for another part of the farm.

“We’re currently utilizing waste streams from the greater Columbia community,” said McClam. “We collect food scraps from local kitchens and mix those with wood chips from local tree services and the whole thing becomes a rich compost, saving these nutrient-rich resources from entering the city landfill. It’s really a form of recycling that keeps nutrients cycling back into the community.”

The economic impacts of the market? Holly Harring, the market manager, points to some indicators, but says that it would be very difficult to capture the entire picture.

“This season saw total per-market sales anywhere from $3,600 to $13,500,” she said. 

Harring emphasized that although these numbers capture the potential as well as the fluctuations that make this particular market unique (abiding both the seasonal and academic calendars), these numbers don’t reflect the fact that money paid directly to the farmer has a fairly high chance of being spent back in the communities where they live. In this case, those are the same communities Carolina students call home.

Harring also boasts about the percentage sales of fresh produce and the percentage of customers who attend every market—both above 60 percent. This means that folks are anticipating and planning for this opportunity to buy healthy foods from their neighbors, an act that has repercussions beyond the purely economic. It means that the market and the food is becoming part of the culture—a culture where simple choices can have a positive social, environmental and economic impact.

Now that sounds like a Healthy Carolina!

by Jason Craig, West (Green) Quad Learning Center
Ask Healthy Carolina Director Michelle Burcin why she worked to bring a farmers market to campus and she will begin by citing the social benefits of the market. Burcin saw the market as a way to introduce the campus to the health benefits of fresh produce. “A farmers market provides an opportunity to purchase and eat nutritionally dense food—that is, food rich in vitamins, fibers, and phytochemicals,” Burcin said. “We as a culture have become fixated with the calorie—eating food that is calorie-dense—but calories only feed our body’s need for energy, whereas nutrients feed our body’s immune system, digestive systems, our cell structures ... all of our body’s needs.” It is an idea that reflects the interconnectedness of our decisions and how a simple decision about what to feed our bodies can have powerful repercussions to our overall health and well-being. This theme of interconnectedness also emerges when talking about the environmental impacts of the farmers market. Robbie McClam, market vendor and owner of Columbia’s first “urban farm,” called City Roots, sums up these effects. “Organic growers start with an idea that life generates life, and health generates health, so when we grow food we start by building healthy, living soils and water sheds,” said McClam. An architect by trade, McClam is accustomed to designing projects from a systems-wide approach, and so it’s no wonder that City Roots is working toward a goal of zero waste—that is, all of the waste streams will eventually become nutrient streams for another part of the farm. “We’re currently utilizing waste streams from the greater Columbia community,” said McClam. “We collect food scraps from local kitchens and mix those with wood chips from local tree services and the whole thing becomes a rich compost, saving these nutrient-rich resources from entering the city landfill. It’s really a form of recycling that keeps nutrients cycling back into the community.” And what about the economic impacts of the market? Holly Harring, the market manager, points to some indicators, but says that it would be very difficult to capture the entire picture. “This season saw total per-market sales anywhere from $3,600 to $13,500,” she said. Harring emphasized that although these numbers capture the potential as well as the fluctuations that make this particular market unique (abiding both the seasonal and academic calendars), these numbers don’t reflect the fact that money paid directly to the farmer has a fairly high chance of being spent back in the communities where they live. In this case, those are the same communities Carolina students call home. Harring also boasts about the percentage sales of fresh produce and the percentage of customers who attend every market—both above 60 percent. This means that folks are anticipating and planning for this opportunity to buy healthy foods from their neighbors, an act that has repercussions beyond the purely economic. It means that the market and the food is becoming part of the culture—a culture where simple choices can have a positive social, environmental and economic impact.

Now that sounds like a Healthy Carolina!

by Jason Craig, West (Green) Quad Learning Center
When legendary University of South Carolina athletics groundskeeper Weldon “Sarge” Frye passed away Sept. 3, 2003, due to heart complications, his family was a bit unprepared for how best to honor his legacy.

After years of consideration, they decided the best way was to establish a need-based academic scholarship, since Sarge didn’t have a chance at a Carolina education but wanted the opportunity for others. The result is the Sarge Frye Scholarship Endowment Fund created by one of his daughters, Nancy Wolff, and her daughter, Deborah Smith. They are inviting scholarship support from donors who would like to contribute in Sarge’s memory. The scholarship is coordinated by the Division of Student Affairs and Academic Support.

Before Sarge passed away at age 90, he appeared very fit and the family thought he had many years left, Nancy said. Despite having “retired” during the 1996-1997 academic year, Sarge still visited Carolina baseball coach Ray Tanner and other friends at the Athletics Department nearly every day. Responsible for football field, baseball field, and other athletic site upkeep during a 50-year association with Carolina, Sarge even worked as a basketball arena timekeeper.

Although her father had two successful careers—the first in the Army as a master sergeant and decorated war hero during World War II and the Korean conflict, the second his 50-year commitment to Carolina—Sarge had one “regret.” Born in Medon, Tenn., to a family of modest means in a farming region, he was unable to attend college.

Sarge’s one “regret” in life provided the chance to honor him, Nancy and Deborah said. A few years ago, they began the process of endowing the Sarge Frye Scholarship Endowment Fund for needy students. Their view, taking into consideration Frye’s belief in higher education, is that ability to succeed in college—not the ability to pay for it—should determine who receives a college education.

“We wanted his legacy to live on and honor him in some way, so that his memory will be kept alive,” Nancy said. Added Deborah, “We feel that he would strongly approve of an academic scholarship named for him.”

The Sarge Frye Scholarship Endowment Fund is nearing the minimum endowment level required on the Columbia campus. The family welcomes any contributions toward their effort. Those who wish to contribute may contact Polly Laffitte, director of development for the Division of Student Affairs and Academic Support (http://www.sa.sc.edu/development/contact.htm).

by Larry Di Giovanni,
Development Communications

‘sarge’ frye family welcomes contributions toward scholarship in his honor

“At left: Sarge Frye’s daughter Nancy Wolff, her son, Eric Stiehr, and daughter, Deborah Smith.
In the last year, the University of South Carolina has suffered historic reductions in state appropriations. During these difficult economic times, it becomes clearer than ever before just how important our programs are to our students, our University, and our state.

Through the Gamecock Guarantee, we're helping students like Chadwick Devlin—South Carolina residents who have the ability but need an opportunity—to find the financial resources and sharpen the life-management skills necessary to earn a Carolina degree, the passport to a bright future.

Student-success programs, including our national award-winning University 101 and Academic Centers for Excellence, not only help our students perform better in the classroom and retain important scholarships, they prepare students to make smart choices about their academic and personal lives, keeping them on track to achieve their college goals and derive maximum value from their Carolina experience.

We offer students avenues through which to display their remarkable devotion to helping others and improving their communities. Their commitment to service is evident in each of their personal stories, in the account of the service-learning program in Jamaica and in the resounding success of the Healthy Carolina Farmers Market.

And despite the serious mood of the times, Carolina spirit remains alive and well, as you'll hear from our students who glean marvelous experiences through participating in student organizations, taking on leadership positions, and cheering on our Gamecock athletic teams.

In this latest issue of “Essay,” you’ll find that even in the wake of the last year’s financial blows, Student Affairs and Academic Support continues to deliver on the promise we make to these students when they choose Carolina. But, we’re only able to do so because of those students—because of their enthusiasm for the University, their zeal for taking advantage of every opportunity available to them, and their hunger to improve themselves and the world around them.

Read on and see what I mean.

Dennis A. Pruitt
Vice President for Student Affairs, Vice Provost, and Dean of Students
University of South Carolina

Following his interest in outdoor activities, Derek DeBruin began working at the Strom Thurmond Wellness and Fitness Center in the spring of his freshman year. Now a senior, DeBruin is on his way to a career in campus recreation.

In 2009 DeBruin, a Carolina Scholar and computer science major from Lexington, helped organize the first-ever climbing competition, which included students and community members. DeBruin planned, promoted, and oversaw the event, an experience that reinforced his career plans.

“Organizing the climbing competition was a really pivotal experience,” said DeBruin. “Being given the opportunity to organize and plan it was awesome. It was great for my development and was an experience I can take with me.”

DeBruin’s excellent work earned him recognition from the National Intramural Recreational Sports Association (NIRSA), which gave him the William N. Wasson Student Leadership and Academic Award at their annual conference.

Also at the conference, DeBruin landed a graduate assistantship with the campus recreation department at the University of Alabama, where he plans to earn his master’s degree in higher education.

Thanks to his experiences with Campus Recreation, DeBruin feels he’s found his way, and he offers advice to fellow students looking for theirs.

“In a campus with 20 to 30,000 people there is definitely going to be someone like you and something for everyone,” he said. “There’s a student or campus organization for everyone, and if there’s not then you can create your own. Class is great, but everything that makes your college experience happens outside of class.”

by Michelle Gannon, graduate student, education
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 or www.sa.sc.edu/development. We'll be happy to help you make a gift in a way that is most meaningful and appropriate.