

# carolina ties

A NEWSLETTER FOR UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH CAROLINA PARENTS

leadership scholarship tradition service community communication intellect communication creativity exploration creativity imagination partnership development www.sa.sc.edu/parents

## Partnering With Parents for Academic Success The Student Success Center

As a parent, you want to see your student learn and grow, develop a strong sense of self, make healthy and responsible decisions, and practice the skills needed to fulfill his or her potential. The University of South Carolina is committed to fostering an environment that promotes this level of student learning and success both in and outside the classroom. This commitment is demonstrated through the extensive array of educational initiatives and involvement opportunities that enrich the student learning experience at Carolina, as well as through the support mechanisms in place to help students make a successful transition to the campus and progress effectively towards graduation.

One specific way in which the University has demonstrated its dedication to its students is through the recent establishment of the Student Success Center, a component of the Department of Academic Support. Opened Fall 2006 in the Thomas Cooper Library, the Student Success Center is a one-stop-shop housing a variety of programs and services intentionally designed to support your student in developing a roadmap for success at Carolina. We believe that every student has the potential to succeed



in pursuing her or his academic, personal, and professional goals at USC, and our mission is to guide students through this process.

Why is the issue of student success so important to university administrators and educators? First, institutions have a moral imperative to provide essential support mechanisms that contribute to students' academic achievement, personal development, and professional preparation. Second, colleges and universities are also responding to the need to be more accountable in structuring the campus environment in such a way as to intentionally promote student learning and achievement.

Although student learning and achievement is a holistic concept, it is commonly measured by freshman to sophomore retention rates and 6-year graduation rates. Currently, USC's first to second year retention rate is right at 86 percent, and its 6-year graduation rate is slightly over 62 percent. These rates compare favorably with our peers; however, we know that we can, and should, strive to do better.

In his 2006 Vision Report, President Andrew Sorensen has outlined his goals for the University. He states that, "The University of South Carolina is

running a marathon, and everything from campus planning to student life to information technology is following a road map we have crafted for this institution. We have started our journey as a very good university; our goal is to become a great one." In our drive to become a great university, we have set ambitious goals related to student success as measured by retention and graduation rates. For the academic year ending 2010, USC's retention rate goal is 90 percent, and its 6-year graduation rate goal is 70 percent. Although we are bringing in the "best-ever academically prepared freshman classes," we realize that our students can still experience obstacles that

serve as stumbling blocks to their success at Carolina. We believe that all students can benefit from a clear roadmap that outlines what they need to do in order to fulfill their goals, as well as supportive resources that promote academic success and personal well-being.

And this is where we want to partner with you. Believe it or not, our students tell us that their parents play a key role in influencing their decision-making! We know that you are invested in your student's success, and that there are some key ways in which you can encourage her or him to make the decisions that are critical to success at Carolina.

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*Carolina Ties* is published twice a year by the University of South Carolina's Office of Parents Programs and mailed to the parents of undergraduate students.

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Division of Student Affairs



# From Our Home to Yours

Dear Parents,

This year has been another great one for the University of South Carolina, which has garnered national attention for its excellence. The Wall Street Journal recently highlighted USC's significant academic progress, citing the university as one of eight "up and comers" in the nation. USC's University 101 and undergraduate international business program took top honors in the U.S. News & World Report rankings.

Now, with spring approaching, many students are preparing for graduation in the Colonial Center, while others in high school are anxiously waiting to begin their first year as Carolinians. We've received a record number of applications for admission to the university, proof that USC's stellar reputation is spreading, thanks to our current students, parents and alumni. We're grateful to you for this, and we hope you'll continue to help us promote all the great things USC has to offer.

Congratulations to those of you nearing the end of your child's freshman year! For some students, these can be the most difficult months of college, so be especially proud of their accomplishments. To parents of graduating seniors, thank you for helping your students achieve such an important goal in their lives. And, if you are a parent of a returning student, we commend you on your continued dedication to supporting your student through these challenging and exhilarating years.

Thank you, also, to the families that pledged to support the 2006 Parents Annual Fund. With your generosity, we successfully implemented Dinner Dialogues, a new program that provides funding for faculty to host their students for dinner in their homes. The program was well-received and will again be our program of choice for the 2007 calling campaign. If you are considering a donation, I hope that you will take this opportunity to do so – you'll make a positive difference in the lives of your students and the Carolina community. Look for more information about the Parents Annual Fund inside.

This edition of Carolina Ties will focus on the academic achievement of our students. With the opening of our new Student Success Center and the continued growth of our Academic Centers for Excellence, Supplemental Instruction program and Residential Learning Initiatives, the Division of Student Affairs and Department of Academic Support are making every effort to help your students achieve great success. We're sure you'll enjoy reading about some of the programs and services we're offering, and we hope you'll learn how your student can get the most out of our academic-success resources.

I hope to see you and your family at Parents Weekend, October 19 - 21. This weekend of fun and excitement offers you a chance to visit your student's new "home" and has become a Carolina tradition we know you won't want to miss. So until then, I offer you best wishes for a wonderful summer!

Sincerely,



Dr. Dennis A. Pruitt  
Vice President for Student Affairs  
Vice Provost for Academic Support  
Dean of Students

# Campus Happenings

## Lead of Innovista Hired

On February 1st, John B. Parks, executive director of the University of Kentucky's Coldstream Research Campus, became the first executive director of Innovista, USC's emerging 500-acre research district in downtown Columbia. The first structure, a research center for the Arnold School of Public Health, opened in fall 2006, and four additional buildings, two at the Horizon Center and two at Discovery Plaza, are under construction and slated for completion in 2008.

## First Response: USC Student Team

When students dial 911 for any emergency on the University campus, not only will a Richland County EMS unit arrive within minutes, but also the University's own first response team. The team is made up of students who have completed basic training as emergency medical technicians and are based in the Thomson Student Health Center. Student members undergo a rigorous training and screening process and only take calls when they are not in class.

## Carolina Cares

While preparing for the end of the fall semester, Carolina students made time to help families in need through "Carolina Cares," a university-wide holiday drive. Students bought and stuffed more than 1,200 stockings with toys for children, a collaboration with the Salvation Army. In addition, the students, with the help of faculty and staff, provided needed items to families through an Adopt-A-Family project with the Nurturing Center, ensuring that the families of 53 children were adopted by someone in the university community.

## Climbing for a Cause

Since 2001, Patrick Hickey has been on a personal quest to climb the highest mountain on each of the seven continents in seven years. His goal is to bring attention to the nursing shortage. With Hickey doing the climbing, his college has joined the crusade by establishing the Summit Scholarship Program that will fund nursing scholarships for students. Dr. Peggy Hewlett, dean of the College of Nursing, said the college has set a modest goal of \$29,035, which is \$1 for every foot of Mount Everest. Hickey has topped six summits and will attempt to complete his last of the seven with Mount Everest in late May 2007.

# student Success Center

University of South Carolina

The purpose of the Student Success Center is to coordinate a comprehensive array of resources and initiatives to promote student success, with the goal of enhancing learning and satisfaction, as well as retention and graduation rates. In order to accomplish these goals, the Student Success Center collaborates with academic and student affairs units across campus to:

- Coordinate personalized educational experiences (roadmaps for success) for students.
- Provide intentional academic and personal support mechanisms, such as Supplemental Instruction, tutoring, programs for scholastically deficient students, and mentoring programs for out-of-state and transfer students.
- Monitor students' progress and intervene if problems arise through such programs as the Early Intervention Initiative, which addresses excessive class absences.
- Create effective communication channels through such initiatives as the First Year Call Center.
- Demonstrate USC's care for students.

The Student Success Center is located on the top floor of the Thomas Cooper Library at the Columbia Campus., and more information about programs and services provided can be found on page 6.

## Partnering With Parents

Here are a few ways you can play a role in fostering your student's success:

**1** Emphasize the importance of going to every class session, even if the professor does not require class attendance. Research (and our own observations) indicate that students who attend class regularly earn significantly higher grades, are less likely to withdraw from classes, and are more likely to stay in school and graduate.

**2** Encourage your student to take advantage of the academic success resources available on campus, including Supplemental Instruction, tutoring, and the academic coaching offered through the Academic Centers for Excellence (ACE). Students are more likely to succeed when they have developed effective academic-related skills, higher levels of academic self-confidence, and clearer academic goals. These programs address these needs and are available at no cost to students.

**3** Reiterate the importance of allotting sufficient time to studying and class preparation. Typically we recommend two hours of studying for each hour in class; so if a student is enrolled in 15 credit hours, we suggest that he or she allots at least 30 hours a week to studying (reading texts, reviewing notes, writing papers, conducting research, meeting with study groups, etc). Research indicates that students who put more time

and energy into the activities that matter to their education – inside and outside the classroom – learn more and are more likely to stay in school. However, our data indicate that 70 percent of our first year students spent five or fewer hours per week studying their senior year in high school! Many of them do not realize how different the academic rigor is in the university classroom and that they will need to dramatically alter their study habits in order to earn the grades needed to remain in good academic standing, as well as retain scholarships and stay in their academic program of choice.

**4** Encourage your student to get involved in activities outside of the classroom that serve to connect them with other students and find their niche at the University. Research indicates that students who are involved in student organizations, community service, and on-campus work experience higher levels of satisfaction and academic achievement. USC offers a vast array of such opportunities, and the Student Success Center currently offers excellent programs for out-of-state and transfer students. This is the key to making friends, developing leadership skills, and preparing for a fulfilling career.

We invite all students to take advantage of the valuable resources and programs described in this newsletter, and we look forward to working with your student to maximize his or her educational experience and provide the tools necessary for lifelong learning, growth, and success!

Chrissy Coley, Ph.D.  
Director of Retention and Planning



# Supplemental Instruction and Tutoring Programs

**Supplemental Instruction (SI)** is a learning enhancement program designed to help students in classes which historically have a high percentage of students who earn below a C or withdraw. These are often taken during the first year or as a “gatekeeper” class to upper division major courses. SI Leaders are undergraduate students who have previously taken these courses and excelled. SI Leaders hold three sessions each week in which students actively participate by integrating what to learn with how to learn. Since its inception at USC in fall 2005, students who attend SI regularly earn on average a half-letter grade higher than students not attending. Courses offered this semester with specific session locations and times are listed online at [www.sa.sc.edu/supplementalinstruction/](http://www.sa.sc.edu/supplementalinstruction/).

**Tutoring** is another academic support resource offered through the Student Success Center. Tutoring for individual courses is available for students enrolled in historically difficult courses, including Biology, Chemistry, Foreign Languages, Math, and other select 100, 200, and 300 level classes. Tutoring is done on a drop-in basis; however, students may make appointments with specific tutors if they wish. Tutors are well qualified in their areas of study and must earn a B+ or better in the courses they tutor. The tutors also complete an extensive training program to ensure the highest quality tutoring services are being offered at the Student Success Center. The center has private study rooms for tutoring and SI sessions, as well as a spacious study area available to all students. For more information on tutoring availability and hours, please visit [www.sa.sc.edu/ssc/tutoring.htm](http://www.sa.sc.edu/ssc/tutoring.htm). The tutoring program is constantly evolving, and the center looks forward to expanding course offerings and hours for the fall semester. --Julie Holliday, Coordinator of Academic Success Initiatives-

# Early Intervention Initiatives and First Year Call Center

The **Early Intervention Initiatives and First Year Call Center** are in place to help students create a sense of academic responsibility and prepare for a successful first year, using identification and referrals.

“Hi, my name is \_\_\_\_ and I am calling from the First Year Call Center.” No, it’s not a telemarketer calling to sell something or ask for donations. It’s the First Year Call Center wanting to hear what your student has to say and answer his or her specific questions. The program calls all first year students, via cell phone, twice a semester to “check in” and see how things are going. When the FYCC reaches your student, it’s his or her chance to tell USC what’s happening and get answers to specific questions. The hope is that students take advantage of this opportunity and allow callers to provide the answers needed for success.

Additionally, through the Early Intervention Initiative, professors reinforce the relationship of class attendance and study habits to academic success by referring students with excessive absences to the Coordinator for Early Intervention Initiatives. The Coordinator, along with a dedicated group of responders, then attempts to make contact with the student to talk about these issues. The goal of the meeting is to point the student in the direction of a program most closely designed to help. One program specifically designed to meet the needs of students struggling with attendance and class participation issues is the Class Absence Reflection (CAR) group. This program, run through the Counseling and Human Development Center (CHDC), allows students the opportunity to “think out loud” about their specific circumstances, academic goals, priorities, and habits. Students will explore issues blocking the path toward success at USC and will create strategies to improve their performance. --Katie Lynch, Coordinator of Early Int. Initiatives

## New Focus on Special Student Populations

The University of South Carolina’s Retention Committee, along with other faculty, staff and students has recognized the needs of several special populations on campus. Making the transition into college and becoming adjusted to a new institution can be difficult and may bring about unforeseen challenges.

Most college students experience similar challenges when entering college, such as leaving friends and family behind, finding new friends, and getting adjusted to a new place. This process can be somewhat more challenging for **Out-of-State Students**. It can be difficult for students who are not from South Carolina to find their place, which is why many opportunities, services, and programs exist specifically for this population.

- Out of State Student Mentoring Program
- Out of State Student Blackboard Community
- Workshops on the Out of State Student Experience
- Out of State Student Socials
- Out of State Student Road Trips
- Out of State Student Informational Guides

Additionally, there is information available about southern culture, area attractions, homesickness and tips on adjusting to a new environment.

Transferring to a new institution can be exciting and difficult all at the same time. The Student Success Center provides programs which help ease the transition for **Transfer Students**. Getting involved and becoming engaged in a new learning environment are both extremely important steps for transfer student success.

- Transfer Student Mentoring Program
- Transfer Student Blackboard Community
- Transfer Student Socials
- Transfer Student Success Seminars
- Transfer Student Information Guides

In Fall 2007, programs and services will also be offered for **Students of Color, Sophomores**, and **Students Who Lose Their Scholarships**. For more information on program details and a schedule of events, please visit: <http://www.sa.sc.edu/ssc/initiatives.htm>

--Angela Street, Coordinator of Initiatives for Special Student Populations



## Student Speak: Supplemental Instruction

The SI sessions are extremely beneficial for freshman and sophomore students, especially in the business school. Some of the first and second year core classes (Phil 110, Acct, etc) can be tough and could possibly lead to a student dropping the class, and in the end switch their major, which brings down retention

rates of that major. The SI sessions are great because they are small classes with in-depth knowledge of the subject. The instructors are previous students of the class so they know what they are doing and what the student in the SI session may be going through. The university has done a great job of increasing the amount of SI sessions for more

classes, but a few more definitely wouldn't hurt! SI sessions are amazing; they helped me get a great grade in one of the toughest freshman classes!

~ John Swanson  
Sophomore Business Major  
Medfield, MA



## Smart Gamecocks Use ACE! University Housing's Residential Learning Initiatives Offer Something for All USC Students

At the University of South Carolina, we encourage students to be Smart Gamecocks and do their best academically by taking advantage of a variety of academic success initiatives. University Housing plays a large role in this support system with their Academic Centers for Excellence (ACE), annual Academic Excellence Reception, academic interventions, Out to Lunch program, residential learning communities, and more.

ACE provides several services for all USC students. Located in three residence halls (Bates House, Columbia Hall, and Sims) as well as the new Student Success Center in the Thomas Cooper Library, ACE offers academic success coaching, math tutoring, and after-hours Writing Center consultations.

Academic Success Coaching is growing in popularity with USC students. Graduate students who are trained as ACE academic success coaches work individually with students to develop strategies to improve study skills, time management techniques, and setting goals. With their ACE coach, students can learn tips on preparing for exams, taking notes, reducing distractions and more.

For the students who have worked with an ACE coach last fall, the sessions made a big difference in their academic performance and outlook.

"This semester I achieved a 3.192, the highest semester GPA I've ever had...I did better on my papers, exams and time management. I would like to thank [ACE] for helping me get back on the right track." – quote from junior English major at USC.

Similar coaching services are available in the private sector but could cost up to \$100 per hour. At USC, Academic Success Coaching sessions are free and students may choose to come in for multiple appointments throughout the year. Please encourage your student to schedule a coaching session by visiting the ACE web site ([www.housing.sc.edu/ACE](http://www.housing.sc.edu/ACE)).

In addition to ACE, University Housing also sponsors several other initiatives that promote students' academic success. The Academic Excellence Reception, held in February, honors students living on campus with cumulative GPAs of 3.75 or higher. This spring, over 1,600 students were eligible for this honor (26 percent of the students living on campus).



While the average GPA of students living on campus for Fall 2006 was 3.19, there were some students whose GPAs were considered academically deficient. University Housing professional and graduate staff met with these students through their academic intervention process to discuss strategies for improvement and to share campus resources.

The Out to Lunch program, which invites students to take their professors to lunch on campus for free, is another great resource. Meal tickets are available at any University Housing area office or ACE location. Residential Learning Communities also provide students with the opportunity to interact closely with professors in their major, as well as live in an environment with peers who share similar interests.

For more information about Academic Centers for Excellence and all of University Housing's Residential Learning Initiatives, please visit [www.housing.sc.edu/RLI](http://www.housing.sc.edu/RLI).

## Updates...

Recently announced through the parents listserv, our office is proud to unveil our renovated web site! We have the same address, but have updated our look and added important resources created specifically for Carolina parents. Our initiatives are represented through the following four areas: Communication, Partnership, Events, and the Parents Annual Fund.

Please visit this site frequently: [www.sa.sc.edu/parents](http://www.sa.sc.edu/parents)

Speaking of the listserv, this service is just one of the communication tools available to members of our USC Parents Association. This dues-free opportunity is available to all parents of current USC undergraduates who wish to be engaged with the university. Simply provide your contact information through our online form, found under the Partnership heading on our web site. You will continue to receive a copy of *Carolina Ties*, our bi-annual newsletter, as well as our monthly electronic newsletter and e-mail updates.

Expanding on this partnership, we have we have identified several volunteer opportunities for parents to assist USC. Through on-campus events, regional activities, and tasks you can do from your own home, we hope to utilize your enthusiasm for the university.

Members of our Parents Advisory Council have been asked to jumpstart these initiatives. As this group provides feedback, we will begin increasing our volunteer pool. If you are interested in serving as a volunteer, please contact our office: 1-800-868-6752



Director of Parents Programs, Laura Page, with Craig and Susan Graham of Orlando, FL. The Grahams are members of the Parents Advisory Council and are the proud parents of Rob, a current USC sophomore.

## Announcing dates for Parents Weekend 2007 October 19-21



### WELCOME CAROLINA PARENTS & FAMILIES!

The University of South Carolina will celebrate Parents Weekend 2007 with an array of activities for students, parents, and family members. The Office of Parents Programs coordinates the weekend with collaboration from departments across campus. We are looking forward to meeting many parents of Carolina students!



The events of this annual tradition continue to draw large numbers of excited Carolina parents! So much planning goes into this truly special weekend where we welcome back old friends, as well as introduce new families to our wonderful campus. A blend of social and educational activities are intentionally scheduled to give parents an "up close" look at their students new home away from home.

Parents Weekend is a great opportunity for parents to interact with faculty, staff and administration through a variety of activities. Parents Weekend 2006 included:

- Reception hosted President and Mrs. Sorensen
- Campus tours, including a historical tour leaving from Rutledge Chapel
- Beach Bash held at our Strom Thurmond Wellness and Fitness Center
- 5K run and walk
- Pre-game tailgate complete with the marching band, cheerleaders, and of course, COCKY!

Thank you to all of our families for participating and we hope you will be able to join us this fall! Look for package details and registration information on our web site later this spring.

# PARENTS ANNUAL FUND

## *A partnership for support*

Several years ago, the Parents Annual Fund was created to give Carolina parents the opportunity to "give back" to the university. The generosity has been overwhelming year after year!

The Office of Parents Programs has the unique challenge of determining which area of campus could best use the funds generated from parents, and the gratification of seeing those funds benefit students. Parents are very interested in the fact that their individual gifts combine to make a significant impact. To state it simply: your student benefits from your donation.



The 2006 Parents Annual Fund branched in a new direction. Through our interactions with students, parents, and faculty, a reoccurring theme began to emerge. Instead of choosing a one-time project, our office decided to create something brand-new. An initiative that would make this large campus seem that much smaller and has the potential to reach every undergraduate student, no matter their major.

Dinner Dialogues strengthens student and faculty engagement. By providing funds for faculty to host a class dinner in their home, students have the opportunity to interact with their instructor in a completely new environment. In a survey of all instructors who took advantage of this program last fall, 100% reported that the class dinner resulted in them knowing their students better. The entire group also indicated they would participate in this program again and will recommend it to their colleagues.

The future of this program relies solely on donations to the Parents Annual Fund...please consider giving during the 2007 campaign!

## Parents Making A Difference at the University of South Carolina!



The Division of Student Affairs Study Abroad Program recently received a major gift for the Study Abroad Vienna Program. This endowed gift was given by Darlene and Ludwig Krammer, parents of Andreas Krammer, a USC sophomore business major. The endowed gift will fund travel expenses for students majoring in business to spend a semester or year in Vienna, Austria.

Darlene and Ludwig are members of our USC Parents Advisory Council. Their company BUCOM, based in Chicago, Ill, provides business event planning for companies worldwide.

"It is a pleasure for us to support the University of South Carolina, a place we love and are proud to be a part of. As parents we have a unique opportunity to contribute to our child's college experience as well as his peers at USC. This gift is our way of making the University of South Carolina the best living and learning environment for all students."

### Support the Parents Annual Fund and the University of South Carolina today...

1. Make an online gift. A simple, reliable, and timely option. Look for the "make your gift online" logo on the lefthand side of the parents web site: [www.sa.sc.edu/parents](http://www.sa.sc.edu/parents)

2. Complete the following information and mail along with a check to: Office of Parents Programs  
1400 Greene Street Suite 115  
Columbia, SC 29208



Last

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*All gifts to University Foundations are used to support the University of South Carolina. Gifts may also be made to the USC Treasurer's Office; these gifts are managed by the State of South Carolina. All gifts qualify as tax deductions under appropriate laws.*

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## USC Football 2007 SCHEDULE

(White indicates HOME game)

September 1	vs. Louisiana-Lafayette
September 8	at Georgia (Athens, Ga.)
September 15	vs. South Carolina State
September 22	at LSU (Baton Rouge, La.)
September 29	vs. Mississippi State
October 4	vs. Kentucky
October 13	at UNC (Chapel Hill)
October 20	vs. Vanderbilt
October 27	at Tennessee (Knoxville)
November 3	at Arkansas (Fayetteville)
November 10	vs. Florida
November 24	vs. Clemson

**Cheer on the GAMECOCKS!!!**

## Calendar Spring, 2007

<b>January 9</b>	Residence halls open at noon
<b>January 15</b>	Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Day of Service (no classes - campus offices closed)
<b>January 16</b>	First day of Spring semester classes
<b>January 22</b>	Last day to change/drop a course without a grade "W" recorded
<b>February 5</b>	Last day to apply for May graduation
<b>February 12</b>	General housing sign-up begins
<b>February 26</b>	Last day to drop/withdraw from a course without a grade "WF" recorded
<b>March 5</b>	Midpoint in the Spring semester
<b>March 10</b>	Residence halls close at 10am for Spring Break
<b>March 12-16</b>	Spring Break - no classes
<b>March 18</b>	Residence halls open at noon
<b>April 30</b>	Last Day of Classes
<b>May 1</b>	Reading day (no classes)
<b>May 2-9</b>	Spring semester final exams
<b>May 11-12</b>	Commencement exercises
<b>May 12</b>	Residence halls close at 10am
<b>May 13</b>	Residence halls close for graduating seniors at noon