

USC Lancaster — A Historical Note

“Formed in Partnership, Forged in Service”

Established in 1959 as the Lancaster Extension Center — a partnership between the Lancaster County Commission for higher education and the University of South Carolina to bring higher education to the area — USC Lancaster is the oldest of the University of South Carolina’s four Palmetto College campuses. Since then, the campus and student body have grown, but our mission remains the same. USC Lancaster is devoted to preparing students to continue their education in the university and throughout life.

The new extension began by offering six courses taught by four commuting professors, and 50 students enrolled for the first semester. Over the course of the next decade, a proper campus began to take shape as Hubbard Hall officially opened in 1965 and Starr Hall opened in 1969. Growth continued throughout the 1970s: the Medford Library was completed in 1974, student enrollment continued to increase steadily, and a major fundraising campaign was started and led to opening of the Gregory Health and Wellness Center in 1981. By 1984, enrollment topped 800.

USC Lancaster’s largest expansion period occurred during the 1990s and 2000s. In 1990, the John Morrison White Clinic, a cardiopulmonary rehabilitation center, was established through community funding. Plans for a new arts and sciences building began in 1992 with the awarding of \$2.7 million in state-appropriated funds for a new classroom/auditorium facility. In 1996, Lancaster began its “Building on a Tradition of Excellence” campaign, which raised more than \$8 million — the largest amount ever raised by a USC system regional campus — and it culminated in the opening of the James Bradley Arts and Sciences Building in May 2000. In 2003, the campus completed another major building project with the expansion and renovation of Medford Library. In 2005, the buildings and grounds of the former University Baptist Church were donated to USC Lancaster and renovated using funds donated by the Carole Ray Dowling Foundation.

In late 2012, the Native American Studies program moved to Main Street in Lancaster, South Carolina. The extensive Native American Archives and Pottery Collection provides educational programming for students, faculty members, visiting scholars and the general public. A campus location in Indian Land, South Carolina, was added in August 2018 and began full-day operations in renovated space soon thereafter. The current campus is approximately 150 acres and includes nearly 300,000 square feet of classroom and office space.

Since its beginning more than 60 years ago, the University of South Carolina Lancaster has been purposefully positioned to be the choice for higher education in the community. The campus has become a comprehensive learning center that enrolls more than 1,800 full- and part-time students from the region. Through a broad commitment to equity, an extensive scholarship and financial aid program, and a variety of weekday and evening course offerings, USC Lancaster strives to provide an accessible and affordable student-centered educational opportunity and to enrich the regional community through a strong commitment to public service.