



Fostering Student Development and Self-Efficacy through Personal Challenge

**Capstone Scholars Program
University of South Carolina**

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Capstone Scholars Program

Established in 2005

Invitation-only, two-year living and learning community that also is a key enrollment management tool

Capstone Scholars and SC Honors College recruit high caliber students

13/14 Freshmen cohort size 751

Mean SAT 1322, ACT 29.8

55% Female/ 45% Male

63% Out-of-State



Capstone Scholars Program Structure

Led by a faculty “principal”, three full-time staff, and two Graduate Assistants

Within the Division of Student Affairs and Academic Support

\$100 fee per semester

Required to take a Capstone Scholars section of University 101 with limited number of optional special classes such as themed English and Leadership

Focus is on outside the classroom educational enrichment such as Study Abroad, Research, Leadership, Service, etc.

Partner offices include: University Housing, Undergraduate Research, Study Abroad, Career Center, Admissions, Student Engagement



As a Capstone Scholar, we expect you to...

Dream Big! Impact the Community. Leave a Legacy!

To achieve this and remain in good standing with the program, we ask that you complete 4 basic expectations each semester:

Service:

Give some time to help others! Participate in 1 service event and submit verification.

Personal Challenge:

Step up & step out!
Accomplish one Personal Challenge and complete the online form.



Academic:

Attend 1 offered Conversation. Strain your brain and learn something new!

Social:

Attend 1 Capstone Social Event. Get to know other Scholars. We're all Gamecocks together!

Do you want to dream BIGGER, impact the community BETTER and leave a STRONGER legacy? Then...



Based on Fall 13 Experiences...

93% would recommend the Capstone Scholars Program to another incoming freshman

95% are more likely to take on a leadership role

62.7% are more likely to engage in research

74.7% are more likely to study abroad

75.8% are more likely to engage in service learning

78% are more likely to interact with faculty outside the classroom





Program Data and Research

Internal tracking indicates 92.54% retention rate between 1st and 2nd year for past 5 years (5.65% higher than overall University population at 86.89%) vs 77.1% national avg.

Internal tracking indicates 6-year graduation rate at 78.43% compared to University's rate at 72.81% (55.5% national avg.)

When students are meaningfully connected to their college community and are involved, they transition easier (Astin, 1984; Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005; Tinto, 1993)

Higher self-confidence eases the transition to college (Inkelas et. al, 2007)



Inception of Personal Challenge

Three Areas of Implementation

(Program-wide, Mentoring, Classroom)



Inception of Personal Challenge

Fall 2009

Inspired from experiences of Dr.
Patrick Hickey – Faculty Principal

Congruent with program pillars and
motto

Push students to challenge
themselves and realize their
potential





Importance of Personal Challenge

Mastery Goals – self-referential, directed toward personal performance (eating healthier, learning a skill) (Harackiewicz, Barron, & Elliot, 1998).

Achievement of these goals lead to self-efficacy and increased self-confidence (Harackiewicz, Barron, & Elliot, 1998)

Higher Education is crucial in helping to push students to venture outside their comfort zones with the goal of maturation and ethics development (Colby et. al., 2003)





Personal Challenge Guidelines



Required to complete a personal challenge each semester (4 total)

Personal challenge reporting and reflection through online survey

All University 101 instructors are encouraged to give their students a personal challenge worksheet and help them brainstorm



Modeling the Personal Challenge

Based on focus groups, students want their instructors to do a personal challenge as well

We share our personal challenges with the students and encourage their UNIV101 instructors to do so as well

Mud Run, Skydiving, Blood drive





BE A CAPSTONE FELLOW!

Earn at least **40 points** by the end of your sophomore year and

meet other minimum requirements listed on the Capstone website.

Academic Points	Social Points	Service Points	Leadership Points
Capstone Conversation +1	Attend Capstone Social event +1	Capstone Service Friday +1	Attend a leadership conference +1
News & Views +1	Certain Hall Government events +1	USC Service Saturday +1	University-recognized Peer Leader +1
Alternative Conversations +1	Hot Cookie Friday +1	Student.org project +1	Complete Personal Challenge form +1/semester
3.5 semester GPA +1	Eat Like a Pro +1	Greek philanthropy +1	Capstone Ambassador +1
Last Lecture Series +1	Capstone Tailgate +1	Alternative Break +3	Complete Emerging Leaders course +3
Certain independent lectures +1	2 Ambassador events +1	Service Learning course +3	Exec board leadership in recognized student org +4/semester
4.0 semester GPA +2	Approved cultural events +1	Hand Middle School +5/semester	Univ. Housing RM +4/semester
Complete Capstone UNIV290 +3	Welcome/End of Semester social +1	Independent service project +up to 5/semester	Hall Government +4/semester
Present at Discovery Day +3		Must report & be approved	

Or for 5 points each: study abroad for a semester, do undergraduate research, have a summer/semester internship

Don't wait! Start early and report your progress online!

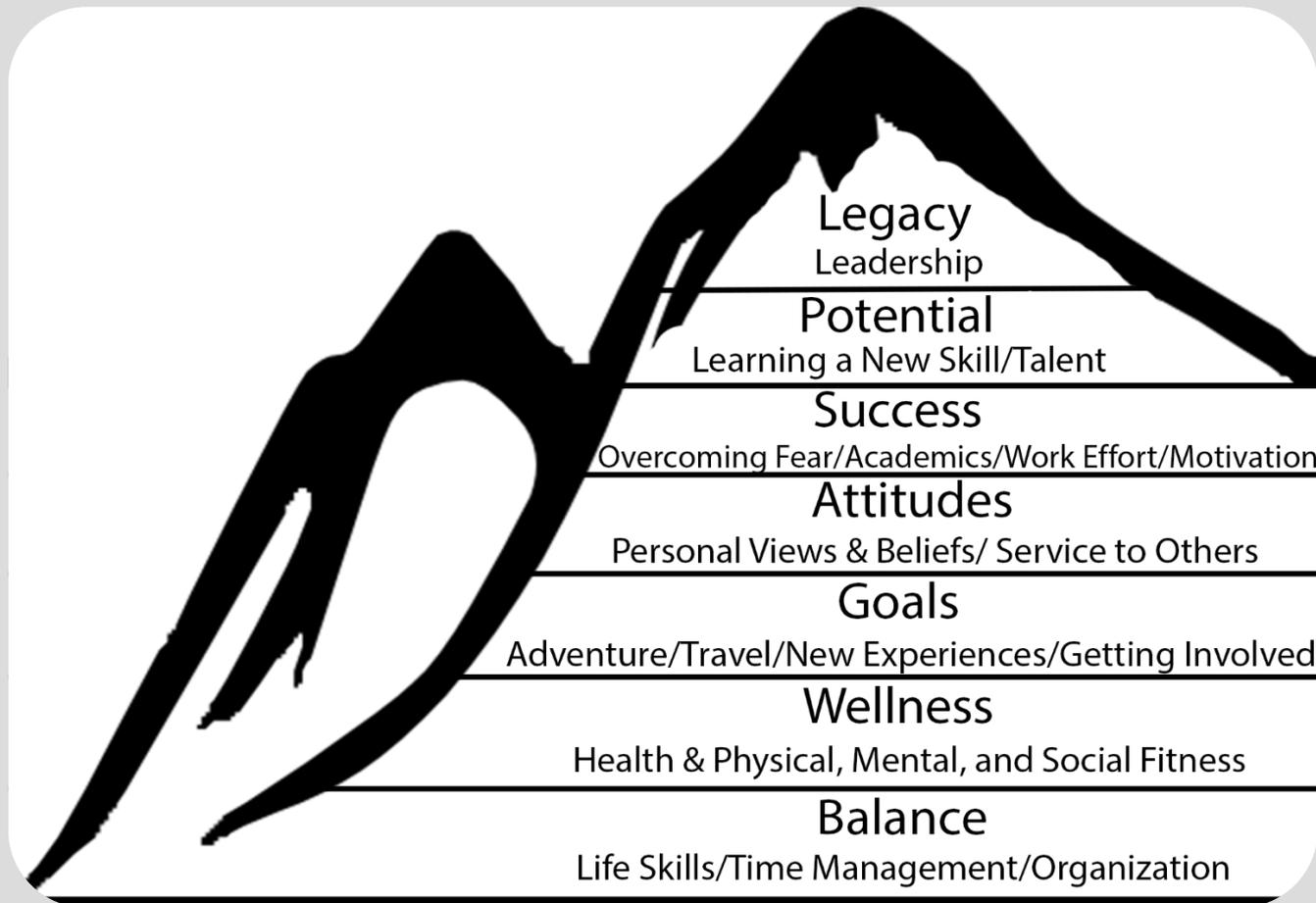
Fellows Benefits: transcript notation, stole at graduation, continuing eligibility for Passport Travel & Magellan Apprentice grants & the Capstone internship program, priority for living in the Fellows House

Incentivize

Ties in with our recognition system: Students get a “point” towards becoming a Capstone Scholar Fellow for completing a personal challenge



7 Summits of the Personal Challenge





4 years of Personal Challenge Data

Summit 1: Balance – 8.8%

Summit 2: Wellness – 27.6%

Summit 3: Goals – 12.1%

Summit 4: Attitude – 3.6%

Summit 5: Potential – 5.2%

Summit 6: Success – 30.2%

Summit 7: Legacy – 12.6%





Student Impact Statements



One of the main motivating factors in this whole experience was the fact I participated in my challenge with a large group of Capstone Scholars. **By being part of such a large group I felt supported and courageous.** My biggest challenge was my fear of heights. However, my fear was far outweighed by the thrill and enjoyment of skydiving.



Student Impact Statements



I have never really liked running, so I wanted to see if the more I trained for a 8K, the more I would like it. I was motivated to train because I knew I would not want to be one of the slowest people in the race on race day. I was also motivated because I did not want to gain any weight in college. It definitely contradicted how I previously felt about running. **I actually really enjoy it now and hope to do bigger and longer races in the future.**



Student Impact Statements



Obviously the thing that challenged me the most was my **deathly fear of heights**. I was also sick at the time so that created another obstacle. **The only reason I successfully made it through the ropes course is because I was going through it with my sorority sisters.** They pushed me and encouraged me the whole time. There were a few times where I just wanted to give up or I was too afraid to keep moving, but they refused to let me give up.



Student Impact Statements



I want to make this new place (USC) my home. It was tiring and rough because I felt all alone, but now I have a support system to calm me down when things do not go my way. I have grown so much over these 3 months. **I have slight OCD and anxiety issues so I was expecting a rough transition and a possible transfer after my first semester** here; however, this fall semester has made me the best version of myself so far. I have experienced things and learned from them. I am becoming more independent and holding myself responsible for my actions and mistakes.



Student Impact Statements



I knew I wouldn't get far in college if I was afraid to talk to people. I knew I needed to come out of the gate talking. So I did. And it's been great. I've met all sorts of people from all over the country, even the world. **Being an introvert is very limiting in college, so I tried and continue to try pushing myself out of my social comfort zone and talking to new people.** It's been tough and often uncomfortable (several people have cold shouldered my attempts at conversation) but for the most part rewarding. I'm learning to be more confident and sure of myself. I'm slowly growing socially and liking it.



Fall 13 Student Feedback



93.7% feel a greater sense of self confidence

94.6% have a stronger belief in their ability to complete a task

67.4% completed individually

32.6% completed with friends



Personal Challenge in a Middle School Mentoring Program

Personal Challenge in the Classroom



Personal Challenge in Mentoring

1st and 2nd year Capstone Scholars mentor 6-8th graders at Hand Middle School (less than a mile from campus)

66 Capstone Scholar mentors paired with 68 Hand Middle School mentees

Capstone Scholar student coordinator hired through a grant to train mentors and manage pairing

Leveraged previous relationship with USC Psychology department





Hand Middle School

Date:
Session #:

Personal Challenge Progress Report

My Name: _____

My Mentor's Name: _____

My Personal Challenge is to:

How close are you to completing your personal challenge goal?

<i>Not Complete</i>	<i>Somewhat Complete</i>	<i>Fully Complete</i>
10% 20% 30% 40% 50% 60% 70% 80% 90% 100%		

On a scale of 1-10, how happy are you with your progress?

<i>Not Happy At All</i>	<i>Somewhat Happy</i>	<i>Very Happy</i>
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10		

What are two things that you did to work towards you personal challenge goal this week?

1. _____
2. _____

What are two things that you will do this week to work towards your personal challenge goal?

1. _____
2. _____

How confident are you that you can reach your personal challenge?

<i>Not Confident</i>	<i>Somewhat Confident</i>	<i>Very Confident</i>
10% 20% 30% 40% 50% 60% 70% 80% 90% 100%		

Keep up the good work! 😊

The Capstone Scholars and Hand Middle School students met for an hour each week during school Hours

Weekly progress report



Hand Middle School Personal Challenges

Make all A's

Get the Honor Roll

Make track team

Meet new people

Bring my grades up

Study every night for 20 minutes

Get better at fishing

Set routine for after school

Read more





Hand Middle School Student Feedback

*As a result of completing
their personal challenge...*

97.67% said they are more
confident in themselves

95.34% said they feel better
about their ability to
complete a task





Capstone Scholars Feedback

Helped me realize the process I had to go through myself

Holding someone else accountable helped me be more responsible for my own

Showed me some goals don't happen overnight but is a step-by-step process

Takes constant effort

Teaches me the importance of motivation

CHALLENGES: Finding common ground the first few days, getting my mentee to communicate, finding a balance between pushing the mentees and being easy going





Personal Challenge in the Classroom

Service Learning section of University 101

Students were mentors to Hand Middle School students (17 total)

Three statistically significant gains from Pre and Post tests:

“I am concerned about local community issues”

“I find courses relevant to my outside life”

“I understand values of people different from myself”

Formulate assignments based on Personal Challenge



Challenges We Have Encountered

Focus attention on refining how we use the planning worksheet.

In Fall 13, 94.4% of students did not use our optional Personal Challenge worksheet

Despite Dr. Hickey meeting with all Capstone sections of UNIV 101 talking about Personal Challenge there are a small number of students in general sections who did not hear the message (not the only touch point though).



Future Direction

Personal Challenge being implemented in residential curriculum

Incorporating Personal Challenge into a UNIV 101 facilitator guide

The book “The Path to Student Success Starts with a Personal Challenge” – submitted for publication

Personal Challenge class “Personal Challenge: Leadership & Legacy in the Literature”





Closing Thoughts on Implementation

Little to no cost

Utilize campus and community resources

Leverage key campus partnerships and residential curriculum

Alignment of program and/or institutional goals

Promote success stories and listen to student feedback



Questions?

