

Kasie Whitener ([00:03](#)):

All right, welcome into Moore Impact. I'm Kasie Whitener, your host, and with me today, Dr. Deb Hazzard, Associate Professor of management, and the Associate Dean for the Office of Access, Opportunity and Community Engagement. Thanks for being here, Deb. Awesome.

Dr. Deb Hazzard ([00:17](#)):

Thank you so much for the invitation, Kasie.

Kasie Whitener ([00:19](#)):

I'm excited to get to talk more with you about the work that you're doing, really important work at the Moore School. I wanna start with your journey. So tell us a little bit about your background, your education, career, and how you ended up at the Moore School.

Dr. Deb Hazzard ([00:31](#)):

Oh, sure. Well, I'll tell you that Columbia, South Carolina is actually home for me. So family and personal commitments and responsibilities really brought me back to South Carolina. Parents were aging, needed me to be here to really provide some support. So that's what brought me back. In terms of transitioning from public and private sector, where most of my career has been to education, it really is just about a love for education and a desire to try and make an impact on future generations. The opportunity at the Moore School presented itself. It was an absolutely amazing opportunity for me to really impact the lives of those future generations and those to come. And, and, and as a resident of South Carolina or a native of South Carolina, I really recognize the importance of being very intentional about ensuring that our local students and those within the state had access to the resources that someone or someplace as phenomenal as the Moore School, local students those in the state need to have that access.

Kasie Whitener ([01:40](#)):

I think the passion for bringing our South Carolina residents into the University of South Carolina has been there for a long time, but the Moore School's maybe been a little bit behind the curve. We've been really focused on international business. We've got a lot of out-of-state students, and we love our out-of-state students. But from a focus, a strategic focus in terms of looking internally to our South Carolina residents and helping them build businesses and helping them to staff businesses, yes. Here in our state, it's relatively new. So we're appreciative of the efforts that you've been putting forward. Talk a little bit about that that piece, that community outreach piece. Sure. What does it take to go out into the community and say, Hey, by the way, we're the Moore School and we're a top tier business school. Yes. Students in South Carolina, you should be applying here and attending here.

Dr. Deb Hazzard ([02:25](#)):

Well, I certainly appreciate and agree with what you're saying. Our focus has been quite frankly, mostly on international, and we hadn't really reached out as, as much as we should have to those within the state. I will say, however, that my predecessor, Dr. Alice Leary created one of our programs that was the first in our programming that was aimed specifically towards South Carolina resident students. And she did that in 2018. So, while we've sort of been silently trying to move in the direction of providing more resources and, and, and knowledge to South Carolina resident students, we really needed to scale that and be a lot more intentional and put more resources behind it. And you're absolutely right in that we're beginning to do that now, and we are reaping we're, we're having so much success in that way.

Dr. Deb Hazzard ([03:20](#)):

One of the things that we really do is we go out into the community and engage through business organizations, through nonprofits, anywhere that we can get the message out and, and share the, the knowledge with folks about all of the programming, all of the financial resources. You know, we are blessed to have quite a bit of funding that comes from individuals. It comes from foundations and also corporations that really enables us to be able to do the programming that we do for our South Carolina resident students providing access to academic information providing access to experiences that they wouldn't otherwise have. So it's just been an amazing run for us in terms of being able to go out and engage and, and help South Carolina see what other out-of-state students and what people across the globe have already known about the Moore School of Business. We're, we're helping to spread that message to local students.

Kasie Whitener ([04:22](#)):

One of those programs is through the South Carolina State Chamber of Commerce Business Week, which was a camp for high school students to come and stay on site as residents. Absolutely. And then they spent the entire week working on new business ventures. Yes. And trying to build those new ventures. And then Dominion Energy actually lent us their CEO for the keynote address on Thursday night. Absolutely. And the students all pitched their ideas, and I was so blessed to get invited to be part of that. Yes. And to be a judge on that final, it was tough. Those students came up with some really good business ideas. Yes. They're amazing. So that outreach with the Chamber is a statewide outreach. 'cause Those students came in from everywhere.

Dr. Deb Hazzard ([04:59](#)):

Definitely. So the Chamber and I, and I have to just kudos to them because they've been doing that program almost 40 years, and they have it down to a science they reach out to. I would say their footprint is absolutely the entire state of South Carolina. They're able to get the best and brightest students and bring them here to Columbia. That program was held at another university in the past, but this is about our fourth or so year having it at the Moore School, and it's just phenomenal. As you can see, those students are absolutely amazing wise beyond their years. And once we have faculty like yourself come in and give them knowledge and insights about business and all of that. There, it really just, there's nowhere. They there's nothing they can't do once they have that level of knowledge and insight.

Dr. Deb Hazzard ([05:50](#)):

But that Chamber program is amazing. This year they had 110 students from across South Carolina that participated in that program. I will tell you that we learned quite a bit from the Chamber's model and designed pipeline programs ourselves, one of which is called Business Success Academy. So Business Success Academy is a bit different from the Chambers program in that their program tends to focus more so on the entrepreneurial side of business. Whereas in Business Success Academy, we give a much broader sort of focus on business content. So they do accounting, they do business analytics you know economics marketing business communication. So it's similar to Business Week, but different in that ours, what we've attempted to do is to just sort of give a much broader focus and not focus just on that entrepreneurial piece.

Dr. Deb Hazzard ([06:52](#)):

This year we had our first full scale launch of that program. We piloted it in '23 but in '24 this summer, we had a full scale launch. 40 students from across the state of South Carolina, some of the best and brightest, their average GPA was about 4.38. Wow. We are really intentional about getting the best and brightest because what we're hoping is that we're really providing an introduction to the Moore School to some students that are already capable and qualified. So this truly is about growing the pipeline where we're identifying those students, having them engage and making them comfortable at the Moore School, and really sort of deepening not only their interests, but the, the knowledge and insights they have around careers and business. So that program was an exciting one. And because of the funding that we have we actually are blessed to be able to provide a \$20,000 scholarship to every student that successfully completes that program, who goes on to to be admitted at the University of South Carolina as a declared business major. So there's, you know, a couple requirements there in addition to completing BSA, but if they complete Business Success Academy and they are admitted to the Moore School, admitted to the university as a business major at the Moore School, they will get that \$20,000 paid out, 5,000 a year for four years. And I'll say there's no cost of attendance for them to attend BSA because our funding allows us to cover all of the expenses associated with that week on campus.

Kasie Whitener ([08:31](#)):

Just fantastic. It's such great outreach. It's such an opportunity for the Moore School to show students what it could look like for them to be business majors. Absolutely. And I think it's so critical that our students, that potential students Yes. See themselves in the hallways and in the classrooms Yes. And up in front of the classrooms, and having that opportunity to envision what themselves as a business major might look like. That's it. That's really critical. We kind of skipped, jumped right into the programs conversation. <Laugh>, I, I'm sorry. I kind of led us that way before we really establish what the mission of the Office of Access Opportunity and Community Engagement really is. Like, can you talk us about how the office functions Yes. And what its purpose is at the Moore School.

Dr. Deb Hazzard ([09:15](#)):

Oh, absolutely. So, you know, even when you consider the name of our office Access Opportunity and Community Engagement, we truly are trying to provide access to those populations that have not been as well represented at the Moore School specifically South Carolina resident students, because as you mentioned sort of starting out the fact that we have trended more heavily out-of-state than in-state. And so again, we're trying to provide access to the in-state population because they have been underrepresented at the Moore School of Business. That's the access piece. The opportunity side is that we're out there trying to get resources, trying to build partnerships to ensure that when those students do come and when they become a part of our programs, we have opportunities or experiences that we can expose them to. You talked about them seeing themselves there, and I so love that.

Dr. Deb Hazzard ([10:14](#)):

That really resonates with me so much because we say that quite often. Students need to see themselves at the Moore School, see themselves in classrooms, in the building, engaging meeting with corporate executives. We provide all of those experiences. And so that's sort of the opportunity side of things. And then one of the things that really helps us spread the word and, and really ensure that these programs are robust and that there's attendance from across the state is the community engagement. Whether, again, it's with the business organizations, you know, corporations, if it's nonprofits local school districts things like that. So it is just it is imperative that we are out there engaging in communities and ensuring that we're first creating programming that can be impactful and can change

people's lives and trajectories. And then the other side of it is ensuring that people are aware of it. And we truly like to say that our mission is to change lives and trajectories through education,

Kasie Whitener ([11:23](#)):

Change lives, and trajectories through education. Absolute. I just love that. Absolutely. Yes. So one of the outreach projects that we had that sort of overlapped was our Maymester in Lake City, where we took entrepreneurs from the Honors College out to Lake City and spent some time looking at the entrepreneurial opportunities around Artfields. Absolutely. And what came out of that was really fascinating. And one of the people that we met while we were there was the district superintendent from Florence District Five. Is that right?

Dr. Deb Hazzard ([11:54](#)):

District three, Dr. Laura Hickson.

Kasie Whitener ([11:56](#)):

Yes. Yes. She is fantastic. She's amazing. And she immediately said to me, do you know Deb Hazzard? I was like, yes, I do. <Laugh> <laugh>. I was like, absolutely. She's fantastic. She's a rock star. She's awesome. And she just had heaped praise on you and talked about the relationship that you have with them. Talk about forging that relationship with Florence District Two and what it means to go into some of these communities where, again, people don't necessarily see themselves as college bound and, and the work that you're doing there. Help us with that.

Dr. Deb Hazzard ([12:22](#)):

Yeah, it is. I'll tell you, I get you may not be able to see it. I, I have goosebumps all over, but it's because this work is it really means a lot. It's near and dear. So, Florence Three we really were seeking an opportunity to expand one of our other pipeline programs. It's a high school pipeline program, and it's called the Power Forward High School Pipeline Program. Dominion Energy is one of the funders, and we have others that help us ensure that, that, that we can make opportunities available to others across the state as well. But that high School Pipeline program, we piloted it in 2021, and we've been blessed to just see it grow and, and be extremely successful ever since. So the pilot initially was with Richland School District One and District Two, and we, and we've been working with them diligently, but we knew it was time to move beyond the Midlands and start really reaching out into areas of our state where, you know, there are rural students, many of which were lower income and just had totally different experiences and didn't see themselves ever being able to to be at a place like the Darla Moore School of Business.

Dr. Deb Hazzard ([13:39](#)):

And so we began to think about it. And through some community engagement we came across Dr. Hixson and everything that she's doing in Lake City. The thing that was we felt also made it a really strategic alignment is that that's the home of Lake City High School and, and where Darla Moore hails from. So what better place to start expanding and reaching out to that area? And I'll tell you that for quite a while, as my team were really trying to figure out where the next place would be, when we expanded the program, we began to look at what many people refer to as the corridor of shame. Mm-Hmm. <affirmative>. Right. And from the, from the very moment we saw that, we said, you know what? We are not gonna refer to it as the corridor of shame.

Dr. Deb Hazzard ([14:30](#)):

Right. It's the corridor of opportunity. There you go. And so we started engaging around how can we begin to move that way and impact those areas. So I, I'm kind of giving a little bit of insight, but as we begin to expand, what we're really looking to do is to see how we can get a little bit closer to start to really engage those students and those institutions that are located in that corridor of opportunity that some you know, choose to refer to as a corridor of shame. But the, the, the fact of the matter is, Florence School District Three under Dr. Hickson's leadership is doing absolutely amazing things. And when we began to interact and engage with them, Kasie, we realized that this was, this was much more than coincidence. This was like divine intervention. And so we went in there, we started having conversations about how we could expand that Power Forward high school pipeline program to Lake City.

Dr. Deb Hazzard ([15:34](#)):

And it's, it's, it's amazing Match made in Heaven. So we've been working through things. We just seeded 25 of their high schoolers from the two different high schoolers. So J Paul, True Luck is their Creative Arts Magnet School and also Lake City early College high school. We've got a total of 25 students scholars is what we refer to our, our students in our program as, but they will be joining or have joined our Power Forward High School Pipeline program. And I'll tell you, 'cause this is super exciting, this Thursday evening, August 1st at 6:00 PM we will be hosting more than 250 scholars and families and dignitaries and school district officials and school board members. The mayor from the City of Columbia, the mayor of Lake City, all of them will converge at the Pastides Alumni Center for our Power Forward kickoff celebration. At the beginning of every year, we do a kickoff celebration. And what is so amazing about this one is that this is the first year we will welcome our Florence School District three scholars, all of their families. Dr. Hixson has a, a charter bus that will bring them all in to ensure that they all have access, that they have the opportunity to experience that and see themselves here at the Moore School of Business.

Kasie Whitener ([16:58](#)):

I love everything about that. The Pastides Alumni Center is such a beautiful venue. It is. And to have the opportunity to bring those students here and see, and especially if they're coming in from a, the rural area like Lake City is absolute, some of them may have never been to Columbia Absolutely. To the state capitol. That's, and so getting a chance to come in and see this kind of really putting out all those, all the, the nines, right. See everybody in their suits and their dresses, and it's gonna be a really formal, beautiful experience. By the time this airs and people have are getting a chance to listen to it, this will have already occurred. So I'm just gonna go ahead and congratulate you in advance for what I'm sure is gonna be an amazing evening for families. You really are gonna be changing lives, I think, on Thursday night. That's just so amazing.

Dr. Deb Hazzard ([17:38](#)):

We agree. We agree.

Kasie Whitener ([17:39](#)):

What has been happening over the summer. So most of the time our Darla Moore School shuts down over the summer, <laugh>, everybody flees campus, and we all go about doing our own thing. But your office has been really busy. We mentioned the Chamber of Commerce programming. Yes. now you're

talking about the Power Forward. You guys working on recruiting for this. Yes. What, what is the summer your busiest time of the year?

Dr. Deb Hazzard ([17:58](#)):

All year is our busiest time of the year, but I can tell you it does not slow down in the summer. So certainly the Business Week program, we help collab with them on that. That's their thing. And they are amazing. They handle most of it, but we're there to support the Business Success Academy. We held that this summer in last week of June. So I will tell you, one of the things that my entire team did was moved into Campus Village for a week along with those 40 high school students, and helped to administer that program. So it was life alter, life altering for me as well.

Kasie Whitener ([18:36](#)):

Did you, did you seriously move into Campus Village?

Dr. Deb Hazzard ([18:38](#)):

Absolutely. I moved into Campus Village, my whole team did. Oh,

Kasie Whitener ([18:41](#)):

That's fantastic. My whole

Dr. Deb Hazzard ([18:42](#)):

Team, because for us it's about walking, walking the walk. Right. And, you know, so so we absolutely did. And it was, it was an experience. I think my body is still trying to recover from that experience.

Kasie Whitener ([18:54](#)):

<Laugh> from sleeping in a dorm bed. Yeah. Oh, come on Now, I imagine <laugh>. Yes.

Dr. Deb Hazzard ([18:57](#)):

Yes. <laugh>. So, but you know, we, our programming continued and, and as a matter of fact, it's super busy for us because what we're really ensuring is that when the fall comes, that we're ready to welcome our students and ready to get right into our programming. So between working on Power Forward and getting ready for that expanded cohort, that will include Florence School District Three to rolling out Business Success Academy first full scale residential launch. It was five day residential living on at Campus Village. It was absolutely amazing. But that's what we did. And then, you know, we've mentioned gosh, so many other things. Our Rising Scholars Program. Okay. So Rising Scholars Program is actually a program that is a cohort style program that is just full of what is deemed as high impact learning practices. But we structure it that way because those high impact practices have been found to help underrepresented students be successful when they engage in environments that can be a bit intimidating.

Dr. Deb Hazzard ([20:05](#)):

And again, there are a lot of false narratives out there about what underrepresented means. It's always context specific. So in this instance, underrepresented students at the Darla Moore School of Business are South Carolina resident students. Mm-Hmm. <affirmative>, because there is much less representation there. So we are trying to ensure that they have the resources that they need. We have

academic mentors for them, professional mentors. We've even done faculty mentors in the past, but we really engage with those students. We bring them in as a cohort because that's one of the high impact practices as well. It helps to build community, and they're more likely to persist and see their way through to graduation if they build that community very early on. So we've been helping with roommate matching and making sure that everything is straight for rising scholars as they come in. I'll tell you, many of our rising scholars, or several of them actually participated in our Business Success Academy. So they have even deepened their level of knowledge and they feel like they're ready to go. You know, so it's just, it's super exciting. Summer is very, very busy for us, but it's it's a labor of love and the, and we just see the the impact. It just, just tremendous impact for the benefit of our students.

Kasie Whitener ([21:26](#)):

I love the cohort idea and bringing people in before they've really come on campus, helping them get to know people. Absolutely. So they're not walking into a room full of strangers, so they don't feel alone. And I like the proactive learning strategies, right? Yes. So a group studies and those kinds of things, and we've seen that research bears out that individuals who study by themselves are not nearly as successful as studying in groups and studying in pairs. And so I love that you guys are facilitating that for our underrepresented students. Yes. So what's happening in the fall? What do you guys have coming up?

Dr. Deb Hazzard ([21:55](#)):

Oh, wow. So Power Forward launch, or I would say, I say launch, but it's not technically a launch. It's where we are expanding with Florence Three. So the way we do that Power Forward program, there are some engagements that take place in the individual districts. We usually have monthly touch points in their districts. So we'll go to Florence Three for some of that programming. We'll go to Richland One and Richland Two. What we also do we try and do it at least once a month, is bring those students to the Moore School. Now I will tell you that there are some months that what we do is have them at that we either engage with them at their district or we engage with them at the Moore School, because we're very intentional about limiting their out of classroom time.

Dr. Deb Hazzard ([22:43](#)):

Right. but everything that we do with them is ensuring that we provide content knowledge about business majors, about the college process. Financial literacy is an integral part of everything we do. Because we have to ensure that these, these scholars understand that the only way to accumulate wealth is to save and invest more than you spend. They have to know that. And, and, and so I think in the past people have had a tendency to make assumptions that everybody knows that, but that's not everybody's reality. That's not everybody's experience. Right. And so, depending on how they've been raised, what they have observed, they may not know basic things. From a financial literacy perspective, we build it into everything because that is the way that you change lives and trajectories, but also you, you help build legacies of wealth creation and wealth accumulation.

Dr. Deb Hazzard ([23:43](#)):

And that's something that's important when you're talking about these families that are lower income or rural or less resourced. They need to understand that piece as well. So these are all of the things that we're doing. Our programming goes into high gear. We've got a number of other really exciting things that we're, we're looking to do. We just received some funding that has been really life changing. So

we'll use that to really help boost our efforts in our, in our programming. We're hoping that we'll be able to incorporate a study abroad component for our Rising scholars.

Kasie Whitener ([24:22](#)):

That would be amazing.

Dr. Deb Hazzard ([24:23](#)):

Yes. So the funding will allow us to do it. We've just gotta make it happen. So I've already told my team, we've gotta get on this, we've gotta get on it. So it's, it's absolutely amazing.

Kasie Whitener ([24:34](#)):

I love the growth of this program. Yes. And the, the impact that it's having on the Moore School in general. Yes. But then certainly on these individual lives. Yes. So, how can students who are interested in participating in some capacity with your office, how can they reach out to your office or, or contact somebody to learn more about what y'all do and maybe where there might be a fit for them?

Dr. Deb Hazzard ([24:54](#)):

Oh, certainly. I appreciate you asking. So the very best way is to email us the email address is engagement, just the word engagement at Moore. Dot. SC dot edu. Again, engagement@moore.sc.edu. That's the very best way. We are located on the third floor of the Darla Moore School of Business. So if they're in the building for class and wanna come, we're not that far from the Dean's suite. They can, you know, drop by let us know what their interest is and we'll kind of go from there. But we do our very best to try and engage our current students. They're the best ambassadors when we're trying to go out and build pipelines in the community with high school students. They wanna know what it's like. They wanna understand that journey. And the current students can tell that much better than I as a 56-year-old <laugh>.

Kasie Whitener ([25:48](#)):

Despite your recent experience in the dorms. Yeah. Ooh.

Dr. Deb Hazzard ([25:53](#)):

Yes. I can tell that part. <Laugh>.

Kasie Whitener ([25:57](#)):

So for our community members and our alumni who might be listening, what's a good way for them to engage with your office? It would be the same to send an email or you want them to give you a call?

Dr. Deb Hazzard ([26:05](#)):

I think sending an email would be best because we really are able to track that information and manage it much better than just the phone calls. So emailing us engagement@moore.sc.edu would be absolutely amazing. We are open to collaborations. That's what makes this successful. And, and as I share with my team all the time, teamwork makes the dream work. And so we have team members internally and externally, stakeholders who are interested. We are more than willing. And we welcome them to participate with us.

Kasie Whitener ([26:39](#)):

This work is so valuable and I'm so grateful to you for being on More Impact and letting us know a little bit more about your office. Thank you. And the work that you're doing, it's just really valuable. Well, thank

Dr. Deb Hazzard ([26:48](#)):

You for the opportunity. Thank you for seeing us, because that's important.

Kasie Whitener ([26:52](#)):

Absolutely. Deb. This has been Moore Impact. When you learn more, you know more. And when you know more, you do more. Thanks for listening.