President’s Newsletter
Fourth Quarter | 2018
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Dear friends,

As 2018 draws to a close, Spartanburg Community College reflects on another year of helping students achieve their dreams and find employment in rewarding career fields. As an institution, SCC also looks to the future, planning for ways to enhance the student experience and offer programs that will train workers in high-demand occupations for years to come.

At SCC, 98.5 percent of our students are South Carolina residents, and the vast majority choose to live and work in the Palmetto State after completing their educations. Our instructors and faculty also work with students to align their interests with their educational and career goals. That translates to 85.5 percent of our graduates being placed in a job related to their field of study or continuing their studies and furthering their educations.

In order to continue providing excellent educational services to these and future students, SCC has begun making changes to the Central Campus. Today, many students spend large portions of their days on campus, taking numerous courses. These students need locations to study and socialize between classes. To that end, the new exterior Campus Green offers students, faculty and members of the community a place to gather and hold events. The new Student Center, which opened in October, is already buzzing with activity.

SCC plans to continue improving the student experience and adding much-needed programs with the proposed construction of an Academic/Student Services Classroom Building on the Central Campus. This building would enhance our math and science labs, and provide a central location for student services and academic affairs. As part of the proposal, SCC has requested $25.7 million in capital funding from the S.C. Legislature in the upcoming year.

In addition to physical changes, SCC also is examining new fields of study. A new Cyber Security Program has been embedded into a Networking Degree. SCC is exploring potentially offering a Bachelor of Applied Science in Advanced Manufacturing, a degree program in which some Upstate companies have expressed interest. Other potential new programs include Mechanical Engineering Technology, Practical Nursing and a Plumbing Certificate, as well as many others.

All of these proposed changes in 2019 are designed to keep SCC’s students at the forefront, helping to further the institution’s mission of training workers for the Upstate economy.

Sincerely,

Henry C. Giles, Jr.
President, Spartanburg Community College

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SCC unveils Center for Sustainable Agriculture

Spartanburg Community College is growing its focus of sustainable agriculture. In September, SCC unveiled The Center for Sustainable Agriculture, located on the Fairforest Road side of the Central Campus.

Thanks to the support of the Mary Black Foundation and the Dominion Foundation, SCC’s Horticulture Department constructed the center, which consists of a red, barn-style building, raised planting beds and more than an acre of planting space. The first of three classes were held this summer from May to July at the center.

Jason Bagwell, SCC’s department chair of Horticulture, said a certificate program includes classes such as production, permaculture and sustainable agriculture. The program is designed for individuals employed or interested in the production of agronomic crops in a sustainable environment, preparing them for jobs in the agribusiness and food systems industry.

During the summer, a 10-week sustainable agriculture course, however, attracted a variety of students, from traditional students and alumni to retirees and those interested in various aspects of the agricultural process, such as food origins and farming methods. “So it is extremely diverse, as far as who takes the class and what their goals are,” Bagwell said.

One of the students in the first class was attorney and Spartanburg County Councilman Michael Brown. “I try to eat as healthy as possible,” said Brown, who eats a plant-based diet and wanted to learn more about the food landscape, food policy, organic foods and harvesting systems. “I got much more than what I anticipated,” he said. “By far it’s one of the most fascinating things I’ve been involved with.”

Since completing the course, Brown has applied his skills to growing a variety of crops, such as squash, sage and tomatoes. Participating in the program has also fueled an even greater desire to learn more about public policy related to food systems, such as issues surrounding food insecurity.

Incorporating the community is a critical part of the center’s mission. By working with nonprofits, food grown at the center has helped feed more than 1,000 people in 2018 through the Spartanburg Urban Mission and its Northside and Cleveland Heights interns and neighbors. Incubator space is available for those interested in starting an agribusiness. And the center is working with partners such as Clemson Cooperative Extension and local school districts.
Campus Highlights

SCC Central Campus

The new Student Center celebrated its grand opening on Oct. 15 on the SCC Central Campus and has already become a popular spot for students to relax, socialize with classmates and study. The space features a pool table, ping pong and foosball, as well as board games, cornhole, TVs, food vendors and a PlayStation 4. Andi Moose, Student Life Coordinator, said the center has become a one-stop shop for students. “It’s a great space, and our students are really enjoying it,” Moose said. “They didn’t really have a space that was just their own. This is really just their space, and they feel very comfortable.” Located in the C Wing of the Powers Building, the center also will be used for student life events.

SCC Cherokee County Campus

The Cherokee County Campus has completed two important projects designed to facilitate student activity between the Cherokee County School System’s Institute of Innovation and SCC. A new sidewalk stretches from the Harvey S. Peeler, Jr. Academic Building across campus to Highway 11, passing by the Institute of Innovation. The other project cleared the area around the campus pond to make the space between the Harvey S. Peeler, Jr. Academic Building and the Institute of Innovation more open and inviting, and to improve the overall health of the pond.

SCC Downtown Campus

In partnership with First Citizens Bank, SCC launched a Professional Speakers Series in October at the SCC Downtown Campus. Designed to introduce students and community residents to local business professionals active in the Spartanburg community, the first event featured local entrepreneur, John Bauknight, and was held on Oct. 24. Bauknight is president and co-founder of Longleaf Holdings USA. Held on Nov. 7, the second First Citizens Professional Speaker Series event featured Spartanburg native Molly Cashman, chief marketing officer at Blue Moon Specialty Foods.

SCC Tyger River Campus

At a recent Tyger River Campus Advisory Committee meeting, Philip J. Riddle, President & CEO, and Noel Bylina, senior systems engineer of SeeDaten, Inc., introduced an innovative teaching platform for nursing and mechatronics students. SeeDaten is a new client at the Spark Center SC, and mechatronics is a recent addition to the Tyger River Campus’ offerings. SeeDaten’s platform converts processes into learning and training modules. The technology utilizes optic recognition, process verification and International Organization for Standardization documentation. The platform combines Industry 4.0 and Internet of Things (IoT) solutions.

SCC Union County Campus

In September, Jack Timken, president of the Timken Foundation of Canton, Ohio, and his wife, Joy, a trustee of the foundation, visited the Union Campus. The Timken Foundation continues to be a strong supporter of Union County, granting more than $2 million to the area since 2003, including $135,000 to the Union County Campus for equipment for its Mechatronics class. On Oct. 26, more than 2,000 students from grades 6-12 participated in the annual Opportunity Fair, which Union Campus Director Isaac McKissick initiated in 2000 in partnership with Union County Schools.
Leaders In Our Community:
Jeff Horton leaves legacy of leadership: Chairman stepping down after 24 years on County Council

For nearly a quarter century, Jeff Horton has shaped the future of Spartanburg County by improving infrastructure, creating a fertile environment for the economy of innovation, and championing Spartanburg Community College.

After 24 years on Spartanburg County Council, including the last 16 years as chairman, Horton will preside over his final council meeting in December, but his impact will be felt for generations of residents to come.

Horton was instrumental in the creation of the Spark Center SC. Now in its 11th year, the center has become an economic engine, serving more than 93 domestic and international companies and supporting the development of 34,600 jobs. The center’s clients include many of the largest economic announcements in the Upstate during the last decade, such as Toray Carbon Fibers, Kobelco Construction Machinery, Rite Aid and Brose Spartanburg.

SCC’s Downtown Campus might not have happened without Horton. The chairman was the driving force behind a building swap that led the former high school in downtown Spartanburg to be renovated into the Evans Academic Center, an historic property that is easily accessible for those living near downtown.

Horton’s involvement with SCC stretched into programming partnerships, as well. In 2015, a conversation between Chairman Horton, SCC President Henry Giles and Major Neal Urch, who then served as director of jail operations at the Spartanburg County Detention Center, spurred Operation Educate. Through the program, inmates can earn their general education development certificates and work toward vocational certificates in areas such as manufacturing. In 2016, Operation Educate earned the Barrett Lawrimore Memorial Regional Cooperation Award, which is presented annually by the S.C. Association of Counties.

"Jeff has been steadfast in his support of Spartanburg Community College and has always understood the transformative power of education to not only improve the lives of residents, but to increase the overall economic prosperity of a community," said SCC President Henry Giles. "Jeff’s leadership and vision have guided Spartanburg County for nearly a quarter century, and we as a community, and as a college, are certainly grateful for his service.”
Spartanburg Community College is seeking nominations for the 2019 Economic Visionaries Gala, which is planned for March 21, 2019 at the Spartanburg Marriott. As part of the annual celebration, four companies from Spartanburg, Union and Cherokee counties are named Economic Visionaries for transforming the Upstate business community. Next year’s keynote speaker will be Mark Bellissimo, managing partner of Tryon Equestrian Group, LLC, which operates the Tryon International Center (TIEC) in Mill Springs, N.C.

In preparation for the 2019 event, Upstate business professionals and community residents are invited to submit nominations of exceptional companies to be considered for the Economic Visionaries award. Nominations can be made through Feb. 8, 2019 via the event website www.sccsc.edu/nominate. Selected winners will be notified in early February and announced at the March 21 event through a celebratory video showcasing the winning company’s accomplishments. Sponsorship opportunities for the 2019 event are available on the Economic Visionaries website (www.sccsc.edu/sponsor-ev), and individual tickets will be available for purchase beginning Feb. 1.