Greetings from the Chief Academic Officer

To Alumni, Parents, Faculty, Students and SC State Stakeholders

At the 2009-2010 August Faculty Institute, I indicated that our new motto was, “Excellence without Excuse.” I further emphasized the need for each of us to strive for excellence in everything that we do, whether it is teaching, research or service. Moreover, I identified six academic priorities for South Carolina State University and the Division of Academic Affairs: (1) Reaffirmation of Accreditation; (2) Retention and Success for Students and Faculty; (3) Outreach and Engagement; (4) Internationalizing the Student Experience; (5) Developing Signature Programs; and (6) Strengthening and Expanding the Graduate Studies Program.

Since making the presentation on that humid August morning, countless faculty and staff have taken up the charge and tirelessly worked to help us achieve the six goals. As a consequence: (1) we believe SC State will receive a favorable ruling at the December meeting of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools; (2) the Office of Student Success and Retention Programs has been restructured in the Division of Academic Affairs and has developed several strategies to increase the retention rates of our students; (3) numerous faculty are engaged in outreach initiatives—largely focused on K-12 and local industry partnerships; (4) a new foreign language—Mandarin Chinese—will be offered in fall 2010 and more study abroad opportunities are available for students; (5) faculty have identified several signature programs for the University that will be developed over the next three years; and (6) major changes have been made in the School of Graduate Studies—changes that will improve the quality of academic offerings and expand the types of graduate degrees offered.

Working together as an academic community, this year we will formulate an academic plan and academic strategic plan, both based on institutional strategic programmatic strengths. This strategic planning process will guide us in developing a realistic understanding of what we should do in Academic Affairs and equally important, what we should not do.

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Student Success and Retention Returns to SC State

The Student Success and Retention Program (SSRP) has been realigned under the Division of Academic Affairs to ensure greater interface with all academic programs and to elevate the integration of classroom instruction with academic support programs and services. According to Dr. Carl E. Jones, Assistant Vice President for Academic Success and Retention Programs, “academic support services such as tutoring and academic advisement must operate in concert with classroom instruction. As such, both enterprises become more meaningful to students, and the yield is higher academic achievement.”

This process calls for increased communication between faculty and academic support staff in an effort to customize support services to be in alignment with faculty advice and students’ requests and needs.

To better reflect the mission of SSRP which is “to chart a course of success for each student from orientation to graduation,” effective fall semester 2010, the Academic Success Academy (ASA) will be added to complement SSRP. As such, both SSRP and ASA will be housed under the newly formed Office of Academic Success and Retention Programs. SSRP will continue to provide new student orientation programs, academic support services, quality assurance and the Black Males Project, and the components under ASA will be the General Education Curriculum (GEC), the Center for Teaching and Learning (CTL), and eventually Early College.

“This expansion will allow for the implementation of a comprehensive network of coursework, support programs, as well as services designed to increase student retention and graduation rates,” said Dr. Jones. He continued, “too often there is fragmentation between orientation and transitional services with coursework, teaching effectiveness and assessment of student learning outcomes. The Office of Academic Success and Retention Programs will minimize the fragmentation and foster continuity in service delivery.”

With this expanded enterprise, SC State University believes that it will provide an exemplary model for supporting student success and retention. Accordingly, the
Chief Academic Officer Appoints THINK TANK ADVISORY COUNCIL

Dr. Joyce Blackwell, the Vice President for Academic Affairs (VPAA), recently appointed a 20-member Think Tank Advisory Council – the first in the history of South Carolina State University. The primary purpose of the Think Tank is to provide advice on broad ideas and directions. It will serve in an information gathering capacity and, as a consequence, will not be limited by what issues it can raise.

The Chief Academic Officer will charge the Think Tank Advisory Council (TTAC) with providing valuable input, driven by data and analysis, on key academic issues. TTAC will be expected to begin with the goals, work through the trends, and then help develop broad strategic options. Moreover, the Think Tank team, in consultation with the VPAA, will develop detailed analysis and implications of options before they are shared with the faculty-at-large or other key stakeholders. Specifically, the TTAC will have four major roles:

- To review and respond to information presented to them in an effort to help interested and relevant persons to understand what is confusing, what questions people may have, and how some of the information might be framed for a public discussion.
- To identify external implications that may not have been considered for certain issues, including palatability of cost scenarios, concerns expressed by alumni, faculty, staff, students and administrators, and other issues.
- To help narrow or coalesce the range of options so that they can be forwarded to relevant stakeholders, agencies and/or organizations as well as those persons involved in the public deliberation process.
- To raise questions about the trends, issues and other implications that may be important for understanding questions and concerns.

Dr. Blackwell believes that the TTAC is “a unique way to allow faculty and staff to exercise the power that they already have and engage in shared governance through expertise.” She further adds, “a key goal of the Think Tank process is to find research support for what issues people have known to be true for a long time or think are true; in other words, to move from practical experience to theoretical validation, rather than the other way around. At the end of each Think Tank activity, white papers will be produced and made available to interested persons.” Dr. Blackwell also feels that “there are different ways for faculty and staff to participate in and contribute to governance and decision-making. The Think Tank will be one of many vehicles that can be used by faculty and staff to engage in shared governance.”

Members recently appointed to the TTAC represent various departments across campus.

Think Tank Advisory Council

- Dr. Barbara Adams, Interim Assistant Vice President for Academic Programs and Graduate Studies
- Dr. Stevo Bozinoski, Professor, Department of Engineering
- Mr. Terrence Cummings, Executive Director, Student Success and Retention
- Dr. Frederick Evans, Interim Dean, School of Graduate Studies
- Dr. Ghussan Greene, Chair, Department of English and Modern Languages
- Dr. Harriet Gregg, Professor, Department of Health Sciences
- Dr. Gloria Hayes-Smith, Associate Professor, Department of Education
- Dr. Carl Jones, Assistant Vice President, Academic Success and Retention
- Dr. Ethel Jones, Chair, Department of Family and Consumer Sciences
- Dr. James Keller, Chair, Department of Mathematics and Computer Science
- Dr. Casmir Kowalski, Professor, Department of Educational Leadership
- Dr. Arnold Murdock, Director, Office of Extended Studies
- Dr. Judith Salley-Guydon, Chair, Department of Biological and Physical Sciences
- Dr. Philip Scriven, Professor, Department of Human Services
- Dr. Cassandra Sligh-Conway, Interim Chair, Department of Human Services
- Dr. Charlie Spell, Professor, Department of Educational Leadership
- Dr. David Staten, Professor, Department of Human Services
- Dr. Susan Stein, Assistant Professor, Department of English and Modern Languages
- Dr. Larry Watson, Professor, Department of Social Sciences
- Dr. Yuanchang Xie, Assistant Professor, Department of Civil and Mechanical Engineering Technology

The THINK TANK ADVISORY COUNCIL will have its first meeting in August. For additional information about TTAC, please contact Dr. Joyce Blackwell at 803-536-7180.
Division of Academic Affairs to Host First Annual Women’s Conference at South Carolina State University

South Carolina State University will host its first Annual Women’s Conference from October 21-23, 2010. The Conference theme is, “Women and Popular Culture”. Conference participants will present scholarly papers that focus on one of the following four streams: (1) the new spaces that women are occupying in American culture; (2) the persistence of misogynist stereotypes (i.e. on television, in Hollywood, etc.); (3) prominent spokeswomen and their impact on popular culture (i.e. Michelle Obama, Oprah Winfrey, etc.); and (4) the state of Women’s Studies, Feminism, and Popular Writers.

BEVERLY GUY-SHEFTALL, Ph.D.

The keynote speaker will be Dr. Beverly Guy-Sheftall, who is President of the National Women’s Studies Association and Anna Julia Cooper Professor of Women’s Studies at Spelman College in Atlanta. As a young professor in the 1970s, Dr. Guy-Sheftall, who later became a leading scholar in Women’s Studies, set out to address an imbalance in the field. Her efforts have yielded two decades of scholarship dedicated to African-American women’s issues, a groundbreaking scholarly journal, and the creation of the highly regarded Women’s Research and Resource Center at Spelman College.

She is the founding co-editor of SAGE: A Scholarly Journal on Black Women. Dr. Guy-Sheftall also edited several influential anthologies by and about African-American women. Today, she is widely recognized as an authority on black feminist scholarship—or, as she puts it in Ms. Magazine, a practitioner in “the stunning tradition of black female intellectualism.”

Dr. Joyce Blackwell, Vice President for Academic Affairs at SC State, who charged Dr. Susan Stein and Dr. Margaret Felder-Wilson with organizing an annual conference on women, believes that they could not have made a better choice for keynote speaker. A women’s historian who has also published a book and several articles in the field, Dr. Blackwell is familiar with Dr. Guy-Sheftall’s work and reputation as a scholar.

“Thanks to Drs. Stein and Felder-Wilson,” Dr. Blackwell maintains, “we are providing scholars of women’s experiences a forum in which to share their research and engage in meaningful dialogue with one another. This is also an opportunity to launch the Center (continues above right)
Child Development Learning Center

The vision for the Child Development Learning Center (CDLC) is to become a leader in the field of Early Childhood in the state of South Carolina and Orangeburg County. Its mission is to serve a diverse population of preschool age children by providing them with high quality, developmentally appropriate, educational experiences while giving college/university students opportunities to observe and work directly with preschool children, resulting in positive, productive citizens in a global society.

The Child Development Learning Center, a freestanding unit, is an integral component of both the Department of Family and Consumer Sciences and the Department of Education because they provide invaluable experiences for undergraduate and graduate students. The Center recently received its third five-year cycle of accreditation by the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC), and its license with the South Carolina Department of Social Services was recently renewed.

The Center offers a full-day program for children 2, 3, and 4 years old. Parents arrive at the Center at 7:30 a.m., some with excited children and some with sleepy children. A day’s experience encompasses the following: a nutritious breakfast; a ritualistic opening with pledges and a patriotic children’s song; and a large group activity with music and movement.

The transition song is “Open Shut Them” followed by a story which captivates children with animated voices and puppets. A snack usually follows small group activities. It is then work time. Children may choose to work in the house, block, art, computer, music, or toy area and the teachers facilitate this work using the SOUL approach learned in curriculum training. SOUL means to observe, understand, and listen before entering children’s play. Notes are taken about each child’s physical, social, cognitive, and emotional development. The day is not over until children go outside to develop those large muscles and vocal cords. After 45 minutes of swinging, sliding, running, and jumping, it is lunch time.

Afternoon activities include break time, lunch and nap. All is quiet until 2 p.m. when students wake up to the tune, “If you’re happy and you know it, clap your hands”. Additional activities complete the day.

Both the Child Development Center and Felton Laboratory School were initially organized as experiential laboratory programs. Beginning fall 2010, both schools and/or programs will align their mission with their original purpose. “In the process,” says Dr. Joyce Blackwell, “faculty and staff in both programs will work very closely with SC State students and faculty. College students will work with young students at both Felton and the Child Development Center while faculty will engage in research and assist when needed.”

SC State’s Chief Academic Officer Invited to Serve as U.S. Keynote Speaker at International Conference

Dr. Joyce A. Blackwell has been invited to serve as one of two keynote speakers from the United States at an international conference hosted by the Institute of Public Policy on the campus of Auckland University of Technology, in Auckland, New Zealand. The Globalization and Public Policy International Cross Cultural Research Exchange Conference will be held from August 6-14, 2010.


The Conference’s primary focus is globalization; and it is designed to provide a forum for dialogue and open a bridge for collaborative/cooperative research exchanges among professionals in academia/government from around the globe and to contribute ideas that inform participants’ understanding of public policy in an era of globalization.

“I hope to gain enough knowledge that can be used at SC State, as I continue to advance an academic agenda that focuses, in part, on internationalization and globalization,” Blackwell said. “It also provides me with an opportunity to serve as an ambassador abroad for South Carolina State University.”

Blackwell received a bachelor’s degree in History and Education from North Carolina Central University; a master’s degree in History and Education from North Carolina Central University; and a terminal degree in Women’s History and African American History from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

Prior to coming to SC State, Blackwell served as the vice president for academic affairs at Saint Augustine’s College in Raleigh, N.C. Her responsibilities were organized into the following categories: faculty governance and office management; curriculum and program development; faculty matters, student matters, communication with external publics; financial and facilities management; data management; and, institutional support.

Blackwell is author of the pioneer work, “No Peace without Freedom: Race and the Women’s International League for Peace and Freedom, 1915-1975.” She is the author of several articles and is considered as the first and only scholar in America who has researched and documented the peace and anti-war activism of African American women. She is currently completing a second book, “Transatlantic Sisters: The Making of an Africana Women’s Peace Movement.”
SC State Receives Approval To Initiate Honors College

SC State University will enroll its first class of students in the newly-organized Honors College in fall 2010. The Honors College emerged from the University’s Honors Program. Founded in 1988, SC State University’s Honors Program continues to be a guiding light for producing stellar academic scholars and leaders throughout the campus. However, there are certain attributes specific to an Honors College that the Honors Program did not provide.

The Honors College will contribute to SC State University’s strategic plan and goal of attracting and retaining talented students; create a community of scholars—both faculty and students; create a structured set of academic experiences designed to be a distinctive “honors pathway”; prepare students to compete successfully for national and international scholarships, as well as gain admission to graduate and professional schools; and recognize and accommodate the different ways in which students can demonstrate distinctively high levels of academic achievement.

A historic first for SC State University, the new Honors College will serve as a competitive magnet for: 1) increasing recruitment, enrollment and retention of academically superior students; 2) fundraising in attracting donations and contributions from major benefactors for scholarships, internships and other programs sponsorships and endowments; 3) raising the academic excellence profile of not just honors students but the entire campus; and 4) marketing of the Honors College as one of the premier academic programs on campus.

The Honors College will have its own dean and will come under the auspices of the Division of Academic Affairs. It will offer four years of an Honors College curriculum for its scholars. Honors sections of general education courses will be offered across academic disciplines and will also include Honors Philosophy Integrated Learning (HPIL) seminars as well as a senior capstone project. To obtain an Honors College designation on the final transcript and diploma, students must maintain at least a 3.25 GPA for scholarship and membership, earn at least 32 credit hours to include eight hours of honors seminars, two hours of honors thesis/capstone project, and 12 honors course hours in their respective fields. Students who meet these criteria will receive an Honors College seal on their final transcript and undergraduate diploma.

“The students will be the greatest benefactors. This Honors College will be a legacy built on the cornerstones of academic excellence, leadership and service. The Honors College is just the icing on the cake for many great things to come,” said Dr. Harriet Roland.

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Honors College (continues)

The Honors College will initially focus on several strategic areas of governance: administrative structure, faculty recruitment/selection, teaching standards, curriculum, housing and new programmatic initiatives. “I am excited about the Honors Program becoming an Honors College. This is a great time for transition so that we can offer even better opportunities and advantages for our students,” said Juan L. Maultsby, program manager for SC State University’s Honors Program.

For additional information about the newly initiated Honors College, contact Dr. Harriet A. Roland, at (803) 533-3790 or via email at rolandha@scsu.edu.

SC State Publishes Second Edition of University Journal

Dr. Angela Shaw-Thornburg and Dr. Shafiqur Rahman, editors of Plenum: A Journal of Interdisciplinary Research, will release the second edition of the University journal in August 2010. Plenum is a scholarly, refereed journal with an external editorial board. The second edition will include the following:

- A scholarly essay from South Carolina State professor Dr. Omari Dyson;
- A scholarly essay co-authored by South Carolina State professor Dr. Anne Rakip and Wake Technical College professor Dr. Patricia Pelletier;
- A scholarly essay by Rutgers University professor Dr. Daniel Echeverria;
- A scholarly essay co-authored by University of Wisconsin-Waukesha professors Dr. Tim Dunn and Dr. Ellen Lem;
- Poetry by Pennsylvania State University professor Dr. Noel Slo-boda; and
- Book reviews by Dr. Toulouse Filani, Chair, Department of Visual and Performing Arts at SC State; Dr. Cassandra Sligh-Conway, Chair, Department of Human Services at SC State; Dr. Thomas Cassidy, Professor, Department of English and Modern Languages; Dr. Reginald Williams, Assistant Professor, Department of Teacher Education; Dr. William Rampone, Assistant Professor, Department of English and Modern Languages; Dr. Diane Hulett, Assistant Professor, Department of English and Modern Languages; and Dr. Joyce Blackwell, Vice President for Academic Affairs.
- Art from Concordia University professor Dr. Kathryn Lipke, University of Western Ontario professor Dr. Geordie Shepherd and Princeton University professor Dr. Ann Agee.

According to Vice President Joyce Blackwell, the refereed journal is one of many examples of the University’s commitment to scholarly research by faculty. SC State is one of a handful of universities that publishes its own journals.
SC State Offers Mandarin Chinese in Fall 2010

The Modern Languages area of the Department of English and Modern Languages is delighted that through the Alliance for Language Learning and Educational Exchange (ALLEX) Mandarin Chinese 101 will be offered in fall 2010. Two sections of Elementary (Mandarin) Chinese will be offered on Monday, Wednesday, and Friday from 3:00–3:50 p.m. and Monday and Wednesday from 5:30–6:50 p.m.

The instructor, Ms. Jui-Ling Chiang, is eminently qualified to teach Chinese at the university level. When she comes to SC State, she will have completed the seven-week intensive Chinese language teacher training course at Ohio State University, the premier Chinese pedagogy program in the country.

Ms. Chiang’s qualifications include 18 graduate credit hours of Chinese language teacher training; a Master’s degree from St. Cloud University where her research focused on modalities of language learning; expertise in instructional design and curriculum development; and experience as an English language teacher in Taiwan.

SC State Professor’s Research Could Help with Oil Cleanups

An associate professor of molecular biology at SC State University on the front lines of research that could possibly help in the effort to clean up oil spills such as the disastrous one now plaguing the Gulf Coast.

Dr. Waltena Simpson, a 1991 graduate of SC State, is part of a bioremediation study for which she was awarded $300,000 by the university’s 1890 Research & Extension Program to conduct. Simpson is working on the study in collaboration with the Savannah River National Laboratory (SRNL) in Aiken.

In the study, microbes classified as Sphingomonas are being researched to remove or reduce the presence of polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons, or PAHs, in soil and — in the long term — saltwater.

PAHs are a group of more than 100 different chemicals that are formed during the incomplete burning of coal, oil, gas, garbage or other organic substances like tobacco or charbroiled meat. PAHs occur in oil, coal and tar deposits and are produced as by-products of fuel burning, whether fossil fuel or biomass. As a pollutant, they are of concern because some compounds have been identified as carcinogenic, mutagenic and teratogenic.

Simpson said she and her partner, SRNL engineer Dr. Robin L. Brignmon, are working with strains of the microbe Sphingomonas which were found in a mass of sludge contained in an old oil refinery in Poland.

“That oil refinery was once operated by BP. We had sludge removed from that oil refinery and found several bacteria. What has been demonstrated is that they are capable of degrading PAHs, which are produced when fossil fuels are refined and burned and things of that nature. What we are working on is trying to take a look at and identify specific genes in these organisms that give them this capability. And we’re trying to enhance the expression of those genes,” Simpson said.

With BP hastily working to develop ways to best remove oil from its leaking tank in the Gulf, Simpson is hoping the use of these microorganisms may one day hold the key in at least helping with that process. "While it’s a little too early to say that they can be applied to the spill -- as of right now we’re still studying them -- they do hold promise because they have been shown to degrade contaminants that are produced by a process such as oil refining," Simpson said.

What will be the impact on human and marine life? Simpson said that is being studied as well.

"We have to study the impact of how it will be used in saltwater, how well it will survive there and also the impact on humans. What’s good about it is that these bacteria are naturally found in soil, so we’re not introducing something that isn’t already found in soil," Simpson said. "And it would also be quite cost effective. A lot of the means that people utilize to try to clean up contaminants such as this are quite expensive, but this would be a natural, more eco-friendly way to do this and cheaper as well."

Bioremediation can be defined as any process that uses microorganisms, fungi, green plants or their enzymes to return the natural environment altered by contaminants to its original condition.

"That’s why this would be bioremediation," Simpson said. "You’re using microorganisms to clean up contamination. And that’s why it’s a preferred way because it’s natural and we’re using microorganisms that occur naturally and it’s most cost effective. So, usually there’s less of a negative impact on the environment and more of a positive one."

She said she and her research partner are trying to increase the rate at which the microbes degrade PAHs. "The questions are, can we enhance that? Can we make them more efficient in what they do?" Simpson said, noting that the mission of the 1890 Research & Extension Office includes improving the environment.

"This project falls right into that area. What I enjoy most about this work is being able to work on something that could have a positive impact not just on the immediate area, but can be seen in terms of having a positive national and even global effect. We have PAHs found worldwide because you have so many industrialized nations which are now refining fossil fuels," Simpson said. "I’m real proud to be a part of something that could have such a positive global effect and also being able to introduce students to something that can be so far reaching as well."

While Simpson said it may be several years before the research will be fully implemented, it is promising. "It should be. We are trying very hard to accomplish objectives. We know that there is a critical need for such organisms, and we’re trying very hard to produce that," she said. "We realize the positive impact we’re having, and we’re very anxious in trying to get these strains applied so that we can, hopefully, start removing PAHs from the soil and the environment."
SC State Reaches Out To Non-Traditional Students With New Programs

The Weekend College for Adult Learners Combines Powerful Distance Learning Technologies with a Convenient Saturday Course Schedule

South Carolina State University is proud to announce the development of the Weekend College for Adult Learners Program. This program is part of SC State’s effort to develop and expand programs to meet the needs of non-traditional students across the State of South Carolina. According to the National Center for Education Statistics, as much as 75% of today’s student body can be characterized as non-traditional, having jobs and other life responsibilities.

“In today’s economy, people have to work as much as possible to make ends meet. This should not keep them from going back to school,” said Dr. Arnold Murdock, Director of SC State’s Office of Extended Studies, which coordinates the Weekend College program. “SC State’s Weekend College program is designed for working adults who already have completed most of the general education curriculum,” explained Dr. Murdock.

SC State has been working to put into place a number of powerful distance learning technologies. Courses within the Weekend College program will combine these technologies with a convenient Saturday class schedule to offer students a flexible program. For each class, students will attend six Saturday class sessions at either 8:00 a.m.–12 p.m. or 1:00 p.m. – 5:00 p.m. In addition, students will complete online activities between class meetings. “Our distance learning capabilities are second to none. We have in place all of the components necessary to extend our academic programs all across the state and beyond. In addition, SC State faculty have the experience to design and deliver high quality online learning. That is what really makes this program possible,” said Dr. Murdock.

Dr. Joyce Blackwell, Vice President for Academic Affairs, concurs with Dr. Murdock. She was quite surprised to learn that SC State did not have a program for adult learners when she arrived—especially in today’s economic climate. “So many adults have been terminated in the last two years from their jobs and are returning to school to earn either their first degree or another degree. They realize the need to change careers instead of waiting to see if their former employer is going to rehire them. Many colleges and universities realize the need and have begun offering a program of study for these individuals. SC State has now joined its peer institutions.”

SC State will begin the Weekend College program in fall 2010 and it is expected to grow over time. Within the first two years, the degree programs will include the Master of Arts degree in Rehabilitation Counseling, Master of Business Administration, and Bachelor degrees in Accounting, Criminal Justice, and Social Work. Additional degree programs will be offered as they are developed.

For more information about the Weekend College for Adult Learners program, please contact the Office of Extended Studies at SC State University in Orangeburg at (803) 516–4931.

SC State Inaugurates Communications Major

The Department of English and Modern Languages is offering a major in Communications with concentrations in journalism and broadcasting beginning fall 2010. This major was developed in response to student demand.

In addition to numerous internship opportunities, SC State’s communications majors will be able to use SC State’s 80,000 watts powerful, NPR member public radio station, WSSB-FM; the student newspaper, The Collegian; the University’s Public Relations and Marketing Office and Digital Media Lab; and the Communications Program’s Electronic Newspaper and Video Labs in order to do practicums and to enhance hands-on skills.

The Communications Program and the University are currently working on establishing an Audio-Visual TV Production and Broadcasting Lab for use by 1890 Research and Extension as well as students who choose the broadcast concentration.

Students interested in the Communications major should contact Dr. Ghussan Greene (ggreene@scsu.edu), Professor and Chair, Department of English and Modern Languages, Turner Hall, Room 201, or Dr. Shafiqur Rahman (srahman@scsu.edu), Professor and Coordinator, Communications Program, Turner Hall, Room 275, A-Wing, South Carolina State University, Orangeburg, SC 29117. Telephone: 803-536-7016 or 803-536-8787.

SC State’s Continuing Education Program To Offer Online Courses

SC State University Develops Partnership with Education To Go (http://www.edzgo.com) to offer online continuing education courses.

South Carolina State University is proud to announce it has partnered with “Education To Go,” a leading provider of non-credit online learning. “A partnership with Education To Go will allow SC State to offer high quality online learning to working professionals,” explained Dr. Arnold Murdock, Director of SC State’s Office of Extended Studies that coordinates the continuing education program. “Education To Go has a great reputation in the online learning market and we are happy to partner with them,” continued Dr. Murdock.

Very soon, SC State will offer online continuing education courses in a number of areas, including computer applications, PC networking and security, basic computer literacy, web and computer programming, database management, computer graphics, multimedia design, Internet applications, accounting, business management, legal services, sales and marketing, and health care.

In addition, SC State’s Office of Extended Studies is working to develop a number of continuing education programs for local businesses and individuals. For more information about the continuing education program, or to speak with someone about scheduling training for your business, contact the SC State University Office of Extended Studies at (803) 516–4931.
Greetings from the Chief Academic Officer  
(continued from page 1)

The strategic and academic plans will clarify our vision and define our aspirations and goals for the next five years, and they will chart the path to their achievement.

The only overarching principle that drives us is academic excellence. This is our fundamental value and goal, and it will be pursued with vigor. SC State University is first and foremost an academic institution, and academic issues are what we are all about. Academic excellence is the very core of our institution and is the basis for our broader mission as an 1890 land grant university.

Academic excellence may be broadly defined. It is the moment of intellectual connection in the classroom between a student, his professor, and a new concept; it is that moment of electric revelation that takes place between a scholar and his text. It is the researcher sharing her laboratory discoveries with her peers across the country; it is the new artist displaying his canvas for the first time. It is the SC State University alumnus applying his knowledge and expertise to strengthen the community in which he lives. Academic excellence is our university’s reason for being, and the highest manifestation of our purpose as a university. It is the thrilling vibrancy and diversity of our entire intellectual community in action, and it is the outstanding impact that SC State’s contributions have locally, regionally, nationally and internationally.

We have faced many challenges this academic year. Despite these challenges, faculty have continued to excel in teaching, research and service—demonstrating their commitment to the institution, quality academic programming and providing students with the best education possible. For example:

• Dr. Angela Shaw-Thornburg and Dr. Shafiqur Rahman managed to complete another edition of *Plenum: South Carolina State University*’ Interdisciplinary Journal.

• Dean Kenneth Lewis, Dr. Judith Salley-Guydon, Dr. Stanley Ihekweazu, Dr. Hasanul Bashier and Dr. James Keller made us proud by receiving extremely positive feedback from the Accreditation Board for Engineering and Technology (ABET) who will determine whether their programs will be reaccredited. This team also garnered hundreds of thousands of grant money—some of which will be used to provide students with much-needed scholarships.

• Dr. Ann Winstead was instrumental in bringing several prominent persons to campus to speak to students as part of the Executive Leadership Program in the Business department. Furthermore, the Business program was reaffirmed by the Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business (AACSB), its accrediting agency.

• Dr. Gwendolyn Wilson, who recently ended her tenure as President of the National Speech Language and Hearing Association, has developed one of the best Speech and Hearing Programs in the nation.

• Dr. Arnold Murdock, the recently hired Director of Extended Studies, has developed capabilities for online instruction as well as a Weekend College for Adult Learners.

• Dr. Robert Grenier had an article included in the historical collection of the Vatican Library.

• Drs. William Hine and Stanley Harrold’s groundbreaking work, *The African American Odyssey: A History of African Americans*, was re-published with comments from former President William Clinton. This work has been ranked by historians as comparable to John Hope Franklin’s *From Slavery to Freedom*.

• And many faculty, like Dr. Cassandra Sligh-Conway and Dr. Hasanul Bashier, presented papers at professional conferences and published articles and books.

My purpose here is not simply to recite a litany of faculty who have made major contributions this past academic year, although I do take great pleasure in contemplating the astonishing people whose achievements have made this one of the best Historically Black Colleges and Universities in America (HBCUs). However, these faculty, like so many others, are our unsung heroes and heroines whose great works are overshadowed by the negativity that has become so commonplace at the institution. These are the individuals who have helped to make this University great and who continue to provide our students with the best education possible. They have great intelligence, drive, and intellectual courage; they have found at SC State an environment that nourishes their remarkable talents and let them thrive; and they have sent, and will continue to send back out into the larger world the fruits of their distinguished labors.

But for the University, what ultimately matters is not this great moment or that but the strength and durability of the institution, its capacity to sustain the highest levels of creativity over the long haul and to enable strong units to reinvent themselves continuously. We must do so if we are to survive and remain competitive in the new millennium.

The challenges of the new century will require new forms of engagement and leadership from SC State acting in concert with the broad array of partners and stakeholders with whom its interests are deeply intertwined. Fashioning this new compact, which is in the best spirit of our traditions, can help the University to increase public support and develop new levels of private assistance to realize its goal of even greater excellence.

I believe that SC State does not toot its own horn enough. We must recognize and share with the community our remarkable strengths and qualities as one of the nation’s best universities. I am honored to be a part of this great place.

This Newsletter provides you with some of the many initiatives that we have begun this academic year. As always, we welcome your comments and support.

Best,

Joyce Blackwell, Ph.D.
Vice President for Academic Affairs