



## USCB HISTORY

December 2021

**THE UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH CAROLINA BEAUFORT** is a “new institution,” dating back to 1795 when the South Carolina General Assembly voted to provide for a College in Beaufort. That college became a two-year regional campus of the University of South Carolina system in 1959, but soon it was clear that the people of the southern Lowcountry needed and deserved more. With no four-year baccalaureate degree-granting institution in Beaufort, Jasper, Hampton, or Colleton Counties, USCB won its hard-fought petition to become a full four-year comprehensive university in 2004. In 1959, the university enrolled 82 students. From 2005 to 2017, it was **the fifth fastest-growing public university in the US** according to *The Chronicle of Higher Education*. USCB remains in the top ten – with more than 2,000 students on **three vibrant campuses: Bluffton, Beaufort, and Hilton Head Island**.

USCB offers specialized instruction in **39 areas of study within 19 Bachelor’s degree programs, two Master’s degree programs, and two Associate’s degree programs** in the liberal arts, the sciences, and professional disciplines as well as robust life-long learning opportunities through on-site, online, and hybrid modalities. In 2018, the university launched Beaufort College Honors with cohorts in Nursing, Biology, and Lowcountry Studies. In 2019, USCB launched its first graduate program: the M.S. in Computational Science. In 2020, it launched the M.Ed. in Literacy and expanded Honors with a Business cohort. In 2021, USCB launched a cybersecurity concentration after winning a US Department of Defense grant that names USCB as one of the collaborative partners for the new South Coast Cyber Center.

A hallmark of USCB’s academic excellence is a focus on experiential learning. Collectively, the university’s students are an integral part of southern Lowcountry economic development. They are expected by their faculty, staff, and fellow students to be valuable contributors to the success of the communities around them. In 2020, USCB students logged **78,000 volunteer and experiential learning hours valued at \$1.9 million to local communities**. Further, USCB’s Lowcountry and Resort Islands Tourism Institute conducts student-led survey research of visitors across the region to understand what discerning guests expect and value most when selecting vacation destinations. Surveys (more than 125,000 since 2005) are collected routinely at festivals, events, and “hot spots” across the region, and the outcomes and analytics are shared with industry to provide a roadmap for continuing regional success.

In 1998, USCB assisted with the development of Island Ambassadors, a program for hospitality employees (many of whom are seasonal and not native to the region). The curriculum is designed to promote understanding of the Lowcountry’s rich social and cultural history and attractions – a base of knowledge that equips ambassadors to be more effective at customer service. In 2012, USCB’s Center for Event Management & Hospitality Training was established in partnership with the Town of Hilton Head Island, to administer the program, which has more than 2,000 graduates (since 2012) and has expanded, by invitation in 2019, to the Town of Bluffton.

USCB is a cultural hub for the southern Lowcountry, bringing together people from disparate backgrounds, both residents and tourists, for cultural and educational experiences from athletics and the arts to lifelong learning. **USCB Sand Sharks compete in nine varsity sports** – baseball, softball, soccer, golf, cross country, and indoor and outdoor track & field – with the rallying cry: “Fins Up!” In a 2021 joint press conference with the Peach Belt Conference, USCB announced its conference move – a step in **the university’s 2022**

**application for NCAA Division II membership.** The Center for the Arts in Beaufort is a bedrock of cultural programming for adults and children, and USCB's Chamber Music Series, which celebrated 40 years of excellence in 2020, enjoys a robust patronage. The university's communications studies faculty and students co-produce *By The River, an in-depth interview program featuring Lowcountry authors and poets, which began airing regularly on SCETV in 2018. The program has won numerous awards and has become a nationally televised program on PBS for its 2022-23 season.* USCB is home to an official Osher Lifelong Learning Institute (OLLI), which occupies dedicated spaces on all three campuses for its nearly 1,800 members, who are a testament to USCB's priority on inter-generational interaction as a driver for greater understanding (IQ), empathy (EQ), and, therefore, greater lifetime success.

Through the **Institute for the Study of the Reconstruction Era**, USCB faculty consulted on a new app called *Free & Equal*, which guides walkers and drivers through historic tours of sites in Beaufort, Port Royal, and St. Helena Island. And, for the fifth year, the National Endowment for the Humanities has funded the Institute's three-week summer program – *America's Reconstruction: The Untold Story* – which convenes K-12 teachers from across the country to learn best-in-class methodologies for teaching this critical part of US history.

USCB's dedication to regional growth and development is matched by its commitment to cultivating global perspectives for campus communities. Most USCB students are from South Carolina, yet their USCB experiences go the distance. USCB has been recognized for the last three consecutive years as a **Top Producer of Fulbright Scholars, ranking 13<sup>th</sup> among all baccalaureate-degree granting colleges and universities in the US.** Multiple faculty members and USCB's chancellor have been selected along with the university's first Student Fulbright Award in 2020. Additionally, USCB's Assistant Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs/International Programs Coordinator has been selected for the official roster of Fulbright Specialists for a four-year term.

USCB was **one of only six institutions in the country selected for the French Embassy's prestigious 2021 Transatlantic Mobility Program**, which seeks to double the numbers of French and American students studying abroad in each country by 2025. The university enjoys other study-abroad relationships with HZ University in the Netherlands, Woosong University in South Korea, Hebei Normal University and Changzhi University in China as well as Goa University, Amity University Mumbai, Nagindas Khandwala College, Kohinoor International Management Institute, and the Vidyalankar School of Information Technology in India. The university community is excited to grow these and future collaborations through which students and the region will be enriched greatly.

In spring 2020, like institutions around the world, put the health and well-being of its campus communities – students, faculty, staff, alumni, life-long learners, and others – before all other considerations in its response to the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic. To the credit of a talented and committed faculty and staff, in short order, the university transitioned to online course delivery, closed residence halls and dining service, closed campuses to all but essential personnel, and refunded \$1.8 million in unused housing and dining fees to students and their families. In collaboration with sister institutions in the USC system and across the state as well as experts from SCDHEC and the CDC, USCB's public health team devised and implemented rigorous mitigation protocols that allowed the reopening of campuses safely, successfully limiting spread of the virus among students and personnel to 228 total cases – never more than 17 at one time and, blessedly, no fatalities (as of December 15, 2021). After a widespread information campaign, which encouraged but did not require vaccinations for Sand Sharks, **USCB's vaccine rates are: 75% for employees, 55% for residential students, and 48% for all students** (self-reported as of December 15, 2021).

Further, Sand Sharks have been an integral part of mitigation and information campaign strategies for people across Beaufort County. All three **campuses have been hosts to COVID testing, COVID and flu vaccine clinics, and relief services**, including food distribution for those in serious need. More than 30 volunteer vaccinators and 30 volunteer assistants from USCB helped to operate two Mass Vaccination Clinics for the public on March 5<sup>th</sup> and April 2<sup>nd</sup> in Beaufort County. And student researchers are analyzing wastewater, looking for signs of COVID – a process which may help public health officials pinpoint outbreak locations and contain the virus.

**USCB CHANCELLOR AL M. PANU, PH.D.** envisions USCB – in its 227-year tradition of service to the southern Lowcountry and for centuries to come – as **a place of first choice for students, faculty, and staff, who have the capacity to be any place they choose**. He describes USCB as “an institution that gives any student – no matter who they are, where they are from, or how they have been prepared – the opportunity to fulfill their greatest potential.” Not a cookie-cutter hierarchy of potential “but rather **the understanding, commitment, and pedagogical talent to meet students where they are and take them to their particular heights**.” More than half of USCB Sand Sharks are first-generation university students, and 46 percent are Federal Pell Grant-eligible. Many are graduates of USCB’s two-year college partners, who want access to the doors that a Bachelor’s degree can open. They are 68 percent women, 40 percent people of color, and a growing number of working adults, who understand the value of education as a key to mobility. Finally, **USCB students are 100 percent amazing, motivated, creative, well-prepared, and ready to take on the world**.

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**THE MISSION OF THE UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH CAROLINA BEAUFORT** is to respond to regional needs, draw upon regional strengths, and prepare graduates to contribute locally, nationally, and internationally with its focus on teaching, research, and service. The curriculum promotes knowledge acquisition and the intellectual dispositions and skills that encourage depth of understanding and individual accountability. The culture embraces equity, inclusion, accessibility, and understanding with intentionality. USCB proudly serves a diverse population of students, faculty, staff, alumni, donors, community partners, and friends in the southern Lowcountry.

**THE MISSION OF THE SAND SHARK SOCIETY**, the Alumni Association of the University of South Carolina Beaufort: We are a community of people, who share the USCB experience. We come together to support each other as we work to achieve our goals and navigate the world. We celebrate the bond we share: USCB's enduring positive impact on our lives. We proudly carry our education and values with us in everything we do. We demonstrate, through our every interaction, how USCB elevates lives. We strive to inform, inspire, and lift up future generations of Sand Sharks. We give back to keep doors of opportunity open wide, investing in the future of our community, our region, and our world.

**THE MISSION OF THE UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH CAROLINA BEAUFORT EDUCATION FOUNDATION** is to support the University of South Carolina Beaufort in all of its educational, instructional, scientific, literary, research, service, charitable, and outreach endeavors and to maximize private-sector opportunities and support, thereby, empowering the university to provide a margin of excellence beyond what is achievable with state, county, and municipal funds alone.

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  - <https://www.islandpacket.com/opinion/opn-columns-blogs/david-lauderdale/article236914153.html>
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