



USCB's Quality  
Enhancement Plan  
Annual Report

— —  
**Academic Year**  
**2020-2021**



UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH CAROLINA  
**BEAUFORT**

# About Students Connected

The Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP) for the University of South Carolina Beaufort (USCB), Students Connected, focuses on improving students' learning through experiential education rooted in community issues.

Students Connected involves three tiers of courses throughout students' academic careers. Foundational courses include introductions to a discipline and general education where students begin learning their roles in the larger community by engaging with local issues. Traditional experiential courses, such as internships, field research, or service-learning courses, encourage students to explore an issue in more depth by

addressing it through their real-world experience. Community-partnered courses create collaborations between students, faculty, and local organizations where students study issues identified by the community partners, research possible solutions to them, and implement their solutions through work with these partners. Structured reflection and discussion are part of all levels of courses.

## Program Goals

1

Enhance and expand experiential research and service-learning opportunities for students across all disciplines.

2

Collaborate with local organizations to engage students in research that affects community-based project outcomes.

3

Integrate knowledge learned from these experiences into curricula and facilitate classroom and community-wide discussions.



# Leadership Team

The Students Connected leadership team includes faculty with experience, training, and expertise in experiential and service learning, community-based research, project development and execution, and higher education assessment. We are actively involved in teaching Students Connected courses, in addition to performing administrative functions for the program. Our leadership team reports to the Provost and Executive Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs, Dr. Eric Skipper and oversees the activities of the QEP ad-hoc committee of the Faculty Senate. Two major accomplishments of the leadership team in 2020-2021 were establishment of the Experiential Learning Teaching Certificate and a QEP mid-point review that brought together select faculty from across campus for an assessment retreat.

## Experiential Learning Teaching Certificate

On-going discussions with our Faculty Fellows highlighted their desire for more structured opportunities for becoming involved in Students Connected and learning about best practices in experiential learning. As a result, we launched a virtual certificate in experiential learning to provide an in-depth overview of the Students Connected program, highlight our goals, demonstrate resources we provide, and showcase faculty who have made significant contributions to experiential education at USCB,

## QEP Assessment Retreat

The 2020-2021 academic year marked the midpoint of the Quality Enhancement Plan process for SACSCOC. We wanted to take this opportunity to review where we were with accomplishing our goals. To that end, we held an assessment retreat with four faculty members from diverse disciplines in the early summer of 2021 to examine our data, make suggestions for the future, and help us brainstorm about the long-term goals of the Students Connected program.

## Caroline Sawyer, PhD

Co-Director,  
Community Partnerships



## Summer Roberts, PhD

Co-Director,  
QEP/ SACS Accreditation



## Murray Skees, PhD

Faculty Development  
Coordinator



Thank you to our Assessment Committee who provided valuable insights and development of action plans during the May retreat:

**Mac James** (Professor of History)

**Jo Kuehn** (Assistant Professor of Nursing)

**Volkan Sevim** (Associate Professor of Mathematics Education)

**Sarah Swofford** (Assistant Professor of English and Director for the Center for Teaching and Learning)

We would also like to thank Kevin Bessent, Office of Institutional Effectiveness and Research, for his assistance with collecting university-level data for this report.

# Students Connected Courses

## Foundational

- COMM B190: Introduction to Communication Studies (2 sections)
- COMM B250: Theories of Communication
- ENGL B101: Composition & Rhetoric (6 sections)
- ENGL B102: Composition & Literature (2 sections)
- NURS B201: Nursing Honors Seminar IV
- NURS B300: Sex, Sexuality, and Gender
- NURS B410: Professional Nursing Leadership (2 sections)
- SOCY B101: Introductory Sociology
- SOCY B313: Sociology of Aging

## Traditional Experiential

- BADM B429: Internship in Business
- COMM B255: Single Camera Production
- COMM B305: Television Studio Production I
- EDME B430P: Practicum in Teaching Mathematics in the Secondary School
- ENGL B428: African American Literature
- ENGL B461: Writing in the Health Professions
- ENGL B483: Secondary ELA Internship
- HMSV B290: Human Services Internship I (2 sections)
- HMSV B298: Human Services Internship II (2 sections)
- HMSV B490: Human Services Internship III & Capstone (2 sections)
- NURS B418: Community Health Nursing (6 sections)
- PUBH B390: Field Experience in Public Health
- SOCY B314: Applied Sociology
- SOCY B495: Internship in Sociology

## Community-Partnered

- COMM B306: Media 2.0
- ENGL B460: Professional Writing Workshop
- HIST B492: Applied Public History
- SOCY B498: Research Seminar

## New Faculty Fellows



**Mollie Barnes**  
Associate Professor of English



**Chesanny Butler**  
Assistant Professor of Nursing



**Beth Hammond**  
Assistant Professor of Education



**Alice Holland**  
Assistant Professor of Nursing



**Jo Kuehn**  
Assistant Professor of Nursing



**Robert Landrum**  
Professor of History



**John Leadem**  
Human Services Internship Coordinator



**Sam Morris**  
Assistant Professor of English



**Diana Reindl**  
Associate Professor of Public Health

## Returning Faculty Fellows

Amy Leaphart, Instructor of English  
Lynn McGee, Business Administration Internship Coordinator  
Dawn Robinson, Assistant Professor of Human Services  
Sarah Swofford, Assistant Professor of English

Thank you for your on-going involvement!



# Faculty & Student Participation



Completed 1 Students Connected Course	Year 1 581 students 76 graduates	Completed multiple Students Connected Courses	Year 1 60 students 12 graduates
	Year 2 435 students 112 graduates		Year 2 79 students 25 graduates
	Year 3 515 students 119 graduates		Year 3 119 students 59 graduates
	Total* 1,342 students 269 graduates		Total* 371 students 76 graduates

\* The figures for each year reflect courses taken and graduates in that year only. As a result, totals are not a sum of the values from each of the three years, as students completing a course in Year 1 may have gone on to graduate in Year 3 (or take additional Students Connected courses in the next year).

Hours Contributed  
to the Community

20,512



Based on required/ estimated student participation in courses with a direct community-service or outreach component.

Note: Figures presented on these pages are based on class enrollment data for each academic year, graduation data through summer semesters, as well as surveys collected from faculty (N=9) and students (N=136) and focus groups with 9 faculty.

## Looking forward to 5 Year Achievements:

**Discipline Involvement Goal - 100%**  
**We've reached 60% participation**  
5 degree programs or minors offered  
Students Connected courses in Year 1.  
11 added courses over Years 2 and 3.

**Student Involvement Goal - 80%**  
**We reached 44% of graduates and 32% of students in Year 3**  
The pandemic slightly slowed our growth in student participation, but we saw a 56% growth in graduates who were participating in Students Connected from Year 1 to 2 and an additional 30% growth from Years 2 to 3!

Sa'lima  
Lazarus



G  
L  
D  
C  
E



Rion  
Duncan

Two USCB sociology majors completed Graduation with Leadership Distinction in Community Engagement (GLDCE) in the spring of 2021. Both participated in courses with linked projects, as they developed a literature review through a foundational course that provided the basis for studying challenges facing the growing aging population in Beaufort County for their community-partnered course. Sa'lima and Rion were also students in a traditional-experiential Applied Sociology class that involved a collaborative, student-driven research project to examine hunger on campus and in the community. Through this project, students in the class had the opportunity to work with Second Helpings and USCB Dining Services, survey the student body, and explore the process of food rescue in our local and campus food pantries. As part of earning GLDCE, Sa'lima and Rion compiled a portfolio documenting their leadership roles throughout the community and participated in multiple community presentations.

## SMART Student: Zharia McFadden

The Support for Minority Advancement in Research Training (SMART) program at the University of South Carolina allowed the Students Connected leadership team to work with a Communication Studies student on examine the value of preparing for community involvement in the summer of 2021. Zharia explored the literature surrounding best practices in experiential learning, community engagement, and Dr. King's philosophy of the beloved community; collected survey data on knowledge of these topics across our campus; and began analyzing data collected on the Beloved Community through Student Connected courses.



# Assessment Insights

Students Connected provides opportunities for our students to make tangible contributions to our community. Our assessment process examines whether they critically consider the purpose of the work they are doing and reflect on the how it contributes both to the community and their professional and career goals.

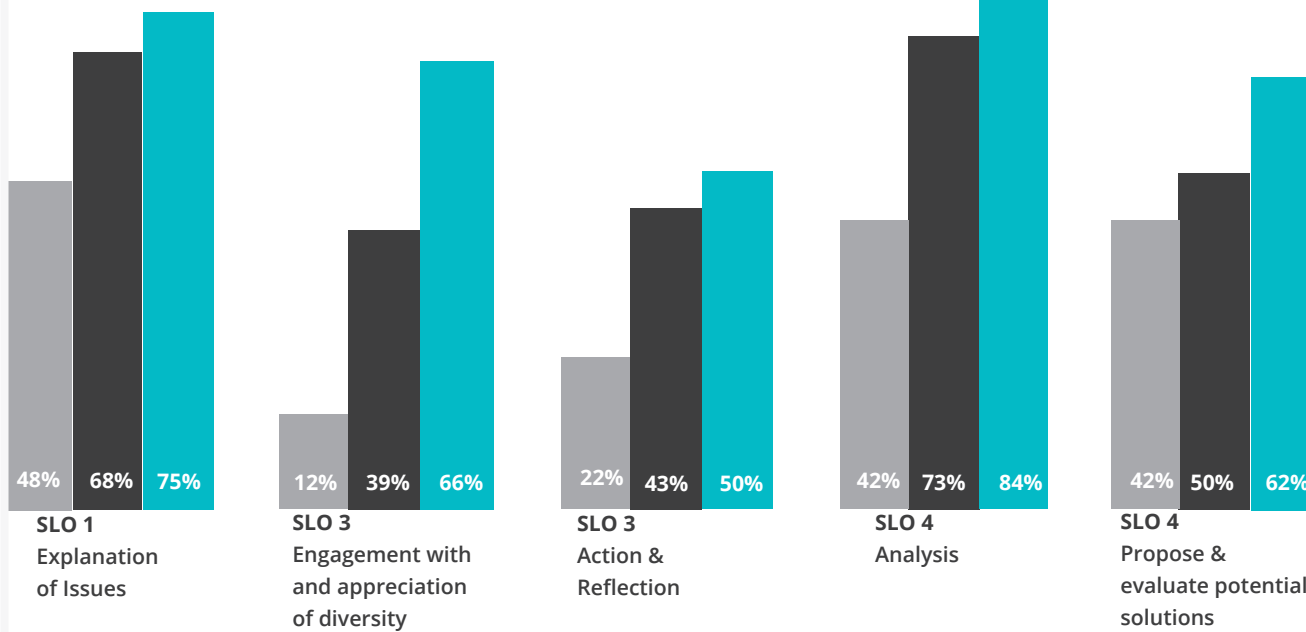
Each year, we collect assignments from Students Connected courses and assess them using rubrics adapted from the Association of American Colleges & Universities. The data presented in the next pages reflects our Year 3 assessments and comparisons with Years 1 & 2.



### SLO 2: Collaborate with Others

The most significant stride we made with regard to assessment data in 2020-2021 was more fully recognizing how our students are engaging in collaborative activities with others. Several courses integrated practices where students engaged in reflective work on how they not only contributed to projects through individual efforts but also supporting each their classmates' work.

### Assessment Growth across Years 1, 2, & 3



Figures reflect combined percentage of students achieving Milestone A and the Capstone in criteria with consistent growth. Year 1 reflected with light gray bars, Year 2 reflected with dark gray bars, and Year 3 reflected with teal bars.

Assessment performed on submissions by at least 10% of students in each course, based on random selection of the available artifacts. Below are data notes on courses, total students enrolled, and number of artifacts assessed for each student learning outcome (some courses included multiple artifact submissions per student).

SLO 1: BADM B429 (4 students, 3 assessed), COMM 190 (36 students, 10 assessed), ENGL B101 (88 students, 18 assessed), NURS B300 (10 students, 10 assessed), NURS B410 (40 students, 14 assessed),

SLO 2: COMM B305 (15 students, 13 assessed), EDME B430P (1 student, 1 assessed), ENGL B483 (1 student, 1 assessed), SOCY B101 (23 students, all assessed), SOCY B314 (7 students, all assessed), SOCY B498 (7 students, all assessed)

SLO 3: ENGL B428 (10 students, 8 assessed), ENGL B483 (1 student, 1 assessed), HMSV B290 (29 students, 5 assessed), HMSV B490 (35 students, 11 assessed), SOCY B495 (2 students, 2 assessed)

SLO 4: COMM B306 (25 students, 24 assessed), SOCY B314 (7 students, 5 assessed), SOCY B498 (7 students, 7 assessed)

SLO 5: HMSV B490 (35 students, 16 assessed), NURS B201 (11 students, 8 assessed), SOCY B314 (7 students, 4 assessed), SOCY B495 (2 students, 2 assessed)

## Student Learning Outcomes Assessment Data

The below assessment data reflects students' achievements of each criteria within the rubrics used to evaluate our Student Learning Outcomes. Percentages reflect students achieving each level of the listed SLO based on assessment of a corresponding artifact/ course assignment.

SLO Criteria	Capstone	Milestone A	Milestone B	Benchmark
SLO 1: Consider the Issue (N=99)				
1: Explanation of Issues	15%	50%	26%	9%
2: Selection and use of evidence	6%	29%	43%	21%
3: Acknowledgement of context and assumptions	0%	36%	53%	11%
4: Presentation of position	8%	39%	37%	15%
5: Discussing conclusions, limitations, consequences	6%	25%	52%	17%
SLO 2: Collaborate with Others (N=195*)				
1: Contribution in meetings	70%	18%	8%	4%
2: Facilitation of the contributions of others	64%	29%	5%	2%
3: Individual contribution outside of meetings	72%	21%	3%	3%
4: Fostering constructive climate	72%	21%	4%	3%
5: Response to conflict	74%	17%	4%	4%
SLO 3: Commit to Participation (N=32)				
1: Engagement with and appreciation of diversity	22%	44%	22%	13%
2: Bridging academic and community engagement	6%	38%	47%	9%
3: Communication	6%	38%	44%	13%
4: Commitment	6%	38%	47%	9%
5: Action and reflection	19%	31%	34%	16%
SLO 4: Conceive of a Solution (N=37)				
1: Define problem	41%	32%	27%	0%
2: Review of the literature	3%	73%	24%	0%
3: Research design	3%	73%	24%	0%
4: Analysis	27%	57%	16%	0%
5: Propose & evaluate potential solutions	54%	8%	21%	5%
SLO 5: reConsider in Light of Experience (N=30)				
1: Connections to experience	20%	47%	33%	0%
2: Connections to and across disciplines	10%	30%	53%	7%
3: Transfer outside classroom	13%	57%	20%	10%
4: Integrated Communication	7%	60%	30%	3%
5: Reflection and self-assessment	27%	40%	33%	0%

\* Data for SLO 2 included multiple peer assessments for most students, resulting in a larger N.



# Course Highlights

Dr. Caroline Sawyer, USCB's Breakthrough Star and producer of the award-winning SCETV show By the River, continued to engage students in her Communication Studies Television Studio Production courses throughout the pandemic, providing valuable insights on how to adapt creation and delivery of media to current events.



Nursing majors played leading roles in many of USCB's responses to the pandemic, including students who volunteered to provide vaccines and created public service campaigns for local clinics through Community Health nursing courses.

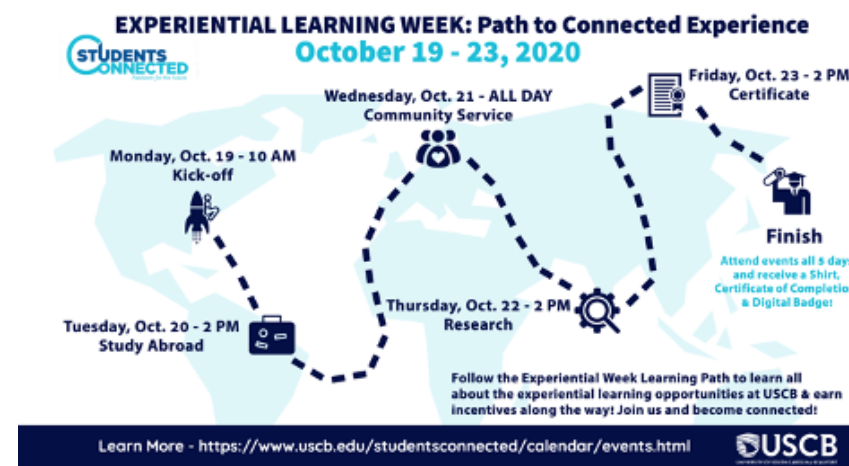


Students in Applied Sociology took time away from researching issues of food insecurity in the community to experience the process of food rescue from local grocery stores and stocking the pantry in Hardeeville.



## Program Developments in Year 3

The third year of the Students Connected program saw the launch of the first multi-disciplinary community-partnered courses working on the same project within a single semester. Students in Applied Public History, Professional Writing Workshop, and Media 2.0 contributed to the development of social media, literature, and educational tools for the Reconstruction Era National Historical Park in Beaufort, SC. Using multiple courses for a single project enabled students to learn from faculty expertise in a particular discipline in contributing a unique focus for meeting the community-partner's needs.



2020-2021 also included the launch of Experiential Learning Week, an initiative that featured an Internship Fair hosted by Career Services and talks on International Programs, in addition to workshops with Students Connected faculty and community service opportunities sponsored by the Students Connected Leadership Team. The end of the week also featured the kick-off for the Teaching Certificate in Experiential Learning, which 9 faculty - Amy Leaphart, Beth Hammond, Carmen Farrell, Diana Reindl, Jo Kuehn, Libby Ricardo, Lukasz Pawelek, Mac James, and Sam Morris - went on to earn by the end of the academic year.





Please contact Summer Roberts with any questions regarding this report.



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