

# USCB™ SHARK TALES

Vol. 7 • No.1

Celebrating Stories of USCB Student and Alumni Success

FALL 2025

## Celebrating Stories of USCB Student Success

The University of South Carolina Beaufort is proud to recognize the accomplishments of its students, whose hard work and determination continue to shape the spirit of our campus.

Last semester, Sand Sharks embraced new opportunities for growth—earning internships, pursuing competitive scholarships, and exploring study abroad experiences that broaden their perspective and strengthen their academic journeys. Their curiosity and drive were also evident in research projects, creative work, and hands-on learning across every discipline.

USCB students continue to make a meaningful impact both inside and outside the classroom. Through leadership, service, athletics, and campus engagement, they bring energy, compassion, and innovation to our university community.

As we reflect on Fall 2025, we celebrate the dedication and resilience of our students. Their achievements inspire us all and reaffirm the bright future they are building here at USCB.

**Dr. Kim Dudas**  
Provost & EVCAA

**Dr. Angela Simmons**  
Vice Chancellor for Student Development

## STUDENT HIGHLIGHTS:

### Nursing Program Milestone



The University of South Carolina Beaufort's **Nursing Program** reached a milestone this semester as **24 sophomores became the first cohort to start classes** at the new Beaufort Memorial PATH Career Development Center. Their first day was Aug. 18, 2025.

The \$2.8 million, 6,340-square-foot facility, which opened in July, was built in partnership with Beaufort Memorial, the City of Beaufort, Beaufort County, USCB and the Beaufort Memorial Foundation. Located on the hospital's main campus, the Center expands USCB's capacity to educate nurses at a time when the demand for healthcare professionals continues to rise. [Link](#)

### Lucchesi Scholarship Grant



The Nicholas D. Lucchesi Memorial Scholarship, which honors the memory of former USCB student **Nicholas Lucchesi (Hospitality Management)**, received an additional \$1 million gift. This gift doubled the largest endowed scholarship fund at USCB. Currently, the scholarship awards \$10,000 a year to five qualifying USCB students in perpetuity.

Born on Hilton Head Island, Nick Lucchesi graduated from Hilton Head Preparatory School in

2016. An athlete, lover of nature, and enthusiastic outdoorsman, he aspired to be a Lowcountry waterway and fishing guide and earned his captain's license at age 18. Lucchesi then founded Fins Up Fishing Charters, LLC, and spent his final summer practicing his craft and building his business. We are grateful to have the Nicholas D. Lucchesi Memorial Scholarship to honor his memory. [Link](#)

### Program to Advance Training in Health and Science



**Matty Holt (Interdisciplinary Studies)** was selected to participate in the Yale School of Medicine's 2025-2026 Program to Advance Training in Health and Science (PATHS). This program is a nationally competitive initiative that prepares undergraduates and recent graduates for advanced careers in medicine and

biomedical research. In the 10-month online program, Holt and the other participants will attend seminars with the goal of giving the participants access to professional mentors, interactive lecturers, and research opportunities. [Link](#)

### Psychology Club



It is a tradition for USCB's **Psychology Club** to participate in the "Walk to End Alzheimer's" and this year was no exception! The USCB Psychology Club joined Psychology faculty in Old Town Bluffton to support the world's largest fundraiser for Alzheimer's care, support, and research. [Link](#)

## STUDENT HIGHLIGHTS:

(Continued from front page)

### Focusing on Health As We Age



On October 9th, 2025, **Ireland Mack (Nursing)** presented her seminar, "Focusing on Health As We Age" at the Colleton County Library. This seminar is a direct reflection of Mack's pursuit of combining her passion for nursing and commitment to improving the quality of life for older adults. [Link](#)

### Theater for Young Audiences



**USCB Students** in Libby Ricardo's "Theater for Young Audiences" (THEA B382) got extra creative this semester in their original show for preschoolers at May River Montessori. Not only did they write and perform the show, but they also made their own costumes! [Link](#)

### Murasko Video Spotlight



A film crew visited the Bluffton campus to spotlight USCB student and Special Olympics golfer **Jacob Murasko (Communication Studies)**. Jacob will compete side-by-side with his dad on a unified golf team at the

2026 Special Olympics USA Games in June in Minnesota. Jacob is one of only a few athletes nationwide chosen to be in a Special Olympics video spotlight! [Link](#)

### Office Hours Exhibit



Work from USCB Drawing & Painting Instructor Emma Barnes McClure (MFA) along with selected student work were presented at a back-to-school art exhibition at USCB Center for the Arts. The exhibition was titled "Office Hours" and showcased the work from students **Suzie Atkins (Studio Art)**, **Jackelyz Velazquez (Studio Art)**, **Morgan Dandridge (Studio Art)**, **Audrey Rackley (Studio Art)**, and **Sierra Culbertson (Studio Art)**. [Link](#)

### International Week



USCB celebrated International Week Nov 17-20 with a vibrant lineup of global activities and educational experiences, presented by the university's International Programs Committee. **Students** organized events (in picture **Mary Claire Garland, Chloe Mullinax**, and **Lauren Addy Muir** - International Karaoke Competition) and shared insights from their **study abroad experiences in the Bahamas, France, and Poland**. Participants also enjoyed international food trucks, explored global destinations through VR travel, and contributed dishes from around the world at the Beaufort potluck. Hands-on learning continued with a cooking demonstration

where Sand Sharks made Japanese sushi rolls and Korean kimbab. Students also participated in our **Passport Drive**, with **10 first-time applicants selected to receive reimbursement** for their application fee from USCB's Business Office. [Link](#)

### Fall Commencement



On December 13th, 2025, USCB's Fall Commencement awarded 104 bachelor's degrees to hard-working and dedicated Sand Sharks. Class Speaker **Shirley Ann Velazquez Rodriguez (Elementary Education)** moved the crowd with her speech and reinforced the impact that positivity and kindness can have in the world. [Link](#)

### Hilton Head Island's 2025 Lantern Parade!



USCB Students participated in Hilton Head Island's 2025 Lantern Parade! Professor Keri Olivetti's **Intro to Event Management (HRTM 210)** students evaluated the parade's marketing and promotion, created their own lanterns, participated in the event, and reviewed the event afterwards. [Link](#)

## INTERNSHIPS



This past summer, two **Biology** students took their studies outside of the classroom and into the wild! **Chloe Mullinax** and **Savannah Polovitz** interned at Spring Island's Summer Camp, where they conducted research and mentored youth. Mullinax focused on water quality monitoring across eight reservoir ponds. Polovitz focused on Kingsnake research along with USCB intern **Abigail Odom (Biology)**. [Link](#)



**Gray Ward (Biology)** and **Layla Bowman (Biology)** invested their summers interning at Brays Island Nature Center. Their work included swabbing snakes for fungal disease and collecting samples from the Pocotaligo River. [Link](#)



**USCB's team of student interns and Dr. Kim Ritchie** are in the spotlight in the August issue of "Local Life" magazine for their important work protecting and studying loggerhead sea turtles on Pritchards Island. The article also features **Dr. Amber Kuehn and her dedicated team** from Sea Turtle Patrol, who conduct loggerhead research on USCB's Hilton Head Island campus. [Link](#)



**Mason Reid (Biology)** spent his summer interning at the Nemours Wildlife Foundation. In his role, he assisted with pollinator and dung beetle ecological surveys, alligator tagging, and quail habitat assessments. [Link](#)



**McKenzie Wray (Psychology)** gained an internship with Pockets Full of Sunshine, a Lowcountry nonprofit serving adults with disabilities. Through her internship, one large project she has already assisted with is the opening of their own center on Arrow Road, Hilton Head Island. [Link](#)

## Lydia Gattozzi Interns for Savannah Bananas



**Lydia Gattozzi (Communication Studies)** has been working for the Savannah Bananas since May 2025. She works for Bananas Television (BTV), the broadcast network that the team uses to stream all of their games on YouTube. She continued working for the team through October 2025. [Link](#)



The Port Royal Sound Foundation was a homebase for many USCB interns **Matthew Richmond (Biology)**, **Brendan Cruz (Interdisciplinary Studies)** and **Madeline Jones (History)** in Summer 2025. From water quality and environmental education projects to hands-on experience with marine research equipment, these Sand Sharks used the tools they learned in their classrooms and utilized it to increase their on-the-job knowledge! [Link](#)



An internship turned into a surprise job offer for **Information & Science Technology** student **Roddey Sims**. Sims spent 12 weeks in Summer 2025 as an intern for the United Way of the Lowcountry. While in his role, he received and accepted a job offer to become an Automation Solutions Specialist at 1=3 Consulting for his amazing work! Congratulations Roddey! [Link](#)



**Hospitality Management** student **Olivia Viroche** interned in Summer 2025 at Wequassett Resort and Golf Club in Harwich, Massachusetts. She worked two paid positions at the one of the only five-star resorts on Cape Cod. For 12 weeks, she interned as the HR Coordinator and the Social Media Intern with the Sales and Marketing Team. [Link](#)

## INTERNSHIPS



A USC Student spent 15 weeks as a paid research intern on USC's very own Pritchards Island. **Taylor DeSilva (Biology)** said she chose the internship because it aligned with her strong commitment to conservation and she was thankful to directly impact Sea Turtle conservation. [Link](#)



**Jania Simmons (Public Health)** interned at Trident Medical Center in North Charleston. As an intern, she invested her time in understanding how to best prevent falls with patients who had had brain injuries and neurological disorders. By interviewing nurses and Patient Care Technicians to see what they specifically do for this population, Simmons gained lots of insight for her 14-week project, "Fall Prevention with Patients with Neurological Disorders". [Link](#)



USC's first **Nursing** and **Communication Studies** double major **Arianna Pee** is showing the endless possibilities and connections between her two programs.

She received an internship at Good Neighbor Medical Clinic, where she spent about 10 weeks supporting the clinic's development and outreach efforts. [Link](#)



Bridges Preparatory School hosted 5 USC Student Teachers where they completed their internships during the Fall 2025 semester. Students **Kyndell Maree (Early Childhood Education)**, **Shirley Ann Velazquez Rodriguez (Elementary Education)**, **Alyssa Roberts (Elementary Education)**, **Marissa Lally (Elementary Education)**, and **Eli Smith (Elementary Education)**. By the end of the semester, our USC Sand Sharks taught lessons on their own to the classrooms! [Link](#)



**Tia Simmons** and **Kayla Sheriffe (Communication Studies)** gained real-world experience in media in Fall 2025 through their internships at The Post and Courier, home to the oldest newspaper in the south. Sheriffe interned in the newsroom and Simmons worked in public relations and advertising. [Link](#)

## AWARDS



Congratulations to **Jakob Laferriere (Nursing)** on receiving the Lynne Hutchison Nursing Scholarship! Jake, a nurse intern at Beaufort Memorial Hospital, was selected for this scholarship due to his dedication to the profession and his commitment to patient care. [Link](#)



**Keshona Sharpe (Nursing)**, Senior Resident Assistant, received the Outstanding Undergraduate Student Award from the South Carolina Housing Officers Association. [Link](#)



Three Sand Sharks won the USC's Origami Shark Competition during the Fall 2025 International Week. With Carolina Cash as awards, students **Jennifer Oviedo (M.S Computational Science)**, **Lincoln Fuller (M.S Computational Science)** and **Alexandra Horn (Psychology)** won \$200, \$150, and \$150 Carolina Cash respectively. [Link](#)

## STUDENT RESEARCH

**Jude Roman (Biology)** received a Magellan Scholar grant of \$2,480 from the USC Office of Undergraduate Research for his research mentored by Dr. Tye Pettay. Roman's research is titled "Describing the seasonal dynamics and genetic diversity of the Sea Wasp and Cannonball Jellyfish within the Calibogue Sound". Congratulations Jude! [Link](#)



Professor of Biology Dr. Eric Montie and his interdisciplinary team are taking advantage of the island's peace to eavesdrop underwater. Students **Mary Tindall (Interdisciplinary Studies)** and **Warren McClellan (Biology)** are included in Dr. Montie's team. Their project is called "Listening To and Remotely Sensing Marine Life Surrounding Pritchards Island, South Carolina." They use state-of-the-art underwater acoustic recorders to collect data about sounds made by fish, invertebrates and marine mammals. From the noises made by snapping shrimp to the complex communication of dolphins, the recordings hold stories about ecosystem vibrancy and resilience. [Link](#)



**Ash Bass (Psychology)**, a Social & Cultural Psychology Laboratory Student and Research Assistant presented her work overseas in August 2025. With her mentor Dr. Messick, she presented her research on expanding measures on nonbelief to better encompass Eastern populations and traditions at the International Association for the Psychology Religion Conference in Birmingham, England. [Link](#)



USCB Sand Sharks shined bright at the 2025 Georgia Undergraduate Research Conference (GUCRC) on November 7-8, 2025. Located at Oxford College of Emory University in Oxford, Georgia, 4 USCB students presented their research! **Matheson J. Bray (Biology)** presented the Leishmaniasis-arginase research she has conducted in Dr. D'Antonio's lab. **Alexandra Horn (Psychology)**, a USCB SRE grantee, presented the findings of her work in France. **Daniela Lopez (Biology)** presented "Polycystic Ovary Syndrome: Class, Culture, and Care of Latinas". **Savannah Fumbi (Psychology)** presented on endometriosis and health equity. What an amazing experience for these 4 students! [Link](#)



**Mary Tindall (Interdisciplinary Studies)** presented her research with Dr. Eric Montie about soundscapes near Pritchards Island on Nov 14th. Their project is called "Listening To and Remotely Sensing Marine Life Surrounding Pritchards Island, South Carolina". [Link](#)

## FALL 2025 BEAUFORT COLLEGE HONORS GRADUATE



**Danisha Moise (Biology)**

## STUDY ABROAD



Dr. Babet Alvarez and a group of USCB Students explored **France** in their **Summer 2025 Study Abroad!** Outside of the classroom, a few highlights of their trip were visiting historic sites, witnessing a jousting match, visiting a vineyard and eating delicious French food! [Link](#)



Another success in the partnership between USCB and Poznan University of Medical Sciences (PUMS) was represented by the study abroad experience 4 USCB Students had in Poland! **Danisha Moise (Biology)**, **Lexie Castro (Biology)**, **Sonia Davila Torres (Public Health)**, and **Daysi Sanchez Hernandez (Public Health)** received hands-on experience at the Medical Summer Program and got a taste of life in medical school! [Link](#)

USCB **Nursing** students **Chris Gaspary**, **Keshona Sharpe**, **Quantaysia Harris**, **Alexandria Dobson** and **Public Health** student **Faith Jackson** completed a Study Away mentored by Dr. Lynne Hutchison. At Pine Ridge Reservation, our USCB Sand Sharks assisted the Oglala Lakota Nation in South Dakota by building skirting for mobile homes and constructing outhouses. They also learned about Lakota culture, history, and health challenges, hiked in the Badlands, and so much more! [Link](#)





# ATHLETICS

## USCB Athletics Transition to Full NCAA Membership!

On September 3rd, 2025, USCB Athletics celebrated its official transition to full NCAA Division II membership! This historic milestone is an achievement for all of our Sand Sharks as they continue to increase their talents. [Link](#)



## Men's and Women's Cross Country

USCB's men's and women's cross country made history by competing in the team's first-ever NCAA Regional Meet. **Braxton Talley** (*Business Administration*), **Elliot Howe** (*Business Administration*), **Benton Cantrell** (*Biology*), **Ryan Kurz** (*Business Administration*), **Rickson Figueroa** (*Information Science & Technology*), **Chandler Riley** (*History*), **Avrie Farrington** (*Elementary Education*), and **Sofia Mejia** (*Public Health*) competed in Wingate, North Carolina and made USCB's presence known at the meet. [Link 1](#) [Link 2](#)



Braxton Talley



Elliot Howe

## Division II



### Men's Golf

**Octavio Laurent** (*Hospitality Management*) tied for seventh overall at the Bermuda Invite on Fripp Island in October 2025. With two-under-par (214), Laurent showed just how talented our Sand Sharks are! [Link](#)



### Women's Golf

*Interdisciplinary Studies* student **McLain Neal** led the Sand Sharks at the Ralph Hayes Toyota D2 Elite Invitation at the Currahee Golf Club. Neal placed fifth overall and earned a spot on the All-Tournament Team. [Link](#)



### Soccer

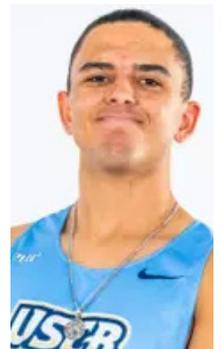
**Jasiah Pack** (*Interdisciplinary Studies*) was selected to the All-Southeast Region Third Team after an amazing 2025 season! She is one of only two Sand Sharks that have ever been selected for this team in Sand Shark history! [Link](#)



Benton Cantrell



Ryan Kurz



Rickson Figueroa



Chandler Riley



Avrie Farrington



Sofia Mejia