



UNIVERSITY OF
SOUTH CAROLINA®



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Editor's Note: Local quotes may be available from individual technical colleges.

**University of South Carolina, SC Technical College System
announce historic statewide Bridge Program**

The University of South Carolina and the SC Technical College System have signed a historic agreement that will expand some of the university's successful student-oriented programs to technical-college students who plan to transfer to the university's Columbia campus.

The agreement, announced on the university's campus Thursday (Nov. 29) by University of South Carolina President Andrew Sorensen and SC Technical College System President Barry Russell, creates the statewide Bridge Program, which will take effect fall 2008. The agreement builds upon a similar one signed earlier this year with Greenville Technical College and Midlands Technical College, aiming to expand access and enhance transfer of students from all of the state's 16 technical colleges.

Sorensen said the statewide program is the realization of a goal to make the transition from South Carolina's technical colleges to the University of South Carolina as seamless as possible. The program also is a response to demand in communities across the state.

"Because of the overwhelming response, officials at the technical college system and here at the university agreed that we should take this program statewide and make it available to students throughout South Carolina," Sorensen said. "If we are to succeed as institutions of higher learning, and if we are to prosper as a state, we must build bridges with one another and to a better life and encourage our prospective students to cross them."

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.....**FOR MORE UNIVERSITY NEWS:** <http://uscnews.sc.edu>.....

Russell said the agreement is the result of a partnership that the SC Technical College System has worked to build with the state's flagship university.

"The SC Technical College System and its 16 technical colleges throughout the state are dedicated to preparing South Carolinians to succeed and achieve their work and life goals," said Russell. "This agreement with University of South Carolina-Columbia enhances our ability to serve those students who wish to begin their higher-education studies with us and then seamlessly transfer to the University of South Carolina-Columbia for further learning opportunities.

"Although university transfer addresses only one component of our overall mission, it is an option that more and more students are choosing," Russell said. "We are very pleased with the partnership we have developed with the university to make this opportunity even more accessible for students across the state."

The Bridge Program is intended for first-time college attendees who are recent high-school graduates. To be eligible, students must successfully complete 30 hours of general studies or earn an associate degree and meet the university's admissions criteria.

Student president Nick Payne, who attended Midlands Technical College in 2003 - 04 before entering the university in fall 2004, said the program will help students who want to obtain a four-year bachelor's degree.

"The technical-college experience is a unique one," said Payne, who will graduate in May with a degree in economics. "It offers an environment that is inquisitive with friendly instructors to support the student's learning experience. It allows students to become familiar with the work that is to be expected of them during their careers at an institution of higher education. I am proud of the steps that our state's education leaders are taking to ensure every South Carolinian is afforded the opportunity to further their education in the next chapter of higher learning."

The university and technical colleges will identify and contact students who were denied admission to the university's Columbia campus either for academic or space-available reasons.

University admissions officials said the Bridge Program has several components. Students will be provided information about the program in the fall and will be invited to attend an event at the university in the spring where they will meet staff from the university's admissions and financial-aid

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offices, the Student Success Center, the Career Center, University Housing and representatives from academic areas.

To further ensure student success, the program offers students the opportunity to be matched with a transfer student the semester before entering the university. Admissions officials said mentoring opportunities will continue throughout a student's first year at the university, and a special session on personal and academic success will be offered for Bridge Program students.

The agreement between the SC Technical College System and the University of South Carolina does not replace similar agreements that exist between the university and Greenville Technical College or Midlands Technical College.

In 2005 - 06, nearly 235,000 students were enrolled in credit and continuing-education programs in the SC Technical College System's 16 institutions. For more information, go to www.sctechsystem.edu.

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University of South Carolina

For two centuries, the University of South Carolina's scholarship, research and outreach efforts have contributed to the greater good of society. With 39,000 students on eight campuses and more than 350 degree programs -- including law, engineering, public health and medicine -- and 240,000 alumni, the university is improving the lives of individuals in South Carolina and around the world. South Carolina has received the highest research designation awarded by the Carnegie Foundation, and the university's undergraduate international-business program is ranked best in the nation in U.S. News & World Report.

SC Technical College System

The SC Technical College System is an integral part of South Carolina's higher-education system, working to make college affordable and accessible through its 16 colleges across the state. The continuum of education and training for businesses and individuals provided by the technical colleges and the Center for Accelerated Technology Training (CATT) and its readySC™ programs make the system a key partner in South Carolina's economic and workforce development efforts.