

Spring 2017

# USCCONNECT

*A Story of Success*

USCCONNECT is  
**Award  
Winning!**

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Dr. Irma Van Scoy

Executive Director, **USC**CONNECT



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### Dear Colleagues and Friends of USC Connect,

It is my great pleasure to welcome you to USC Connect: A Story of Success. We dedicate this e-publication to all who have collaborated to enhance undergraduate education at the University of South Carolina through the integration of learning within and beyond the classroom.

USC Connect is a story of faculty, staff, and students coming together across USC Columbia, Lancaster, Salkehatchie, Sumter, and Union. It is a story about defining and clarifying a broad concept, integrative learning, through a concrete goal, Graduation with Leadership Distinction (GLD). It is a story that brings together teaching and learning, program development, and student success. It is the story of the impact of a shared mission across academic and student affairs and all units of the university supporting undergraduate education.

Do you wonder if USC Connect has really made a difference? Hear first-hand from graduate Ore Oluwole (class of 2016) on what it meant for him to reflect on, connect, and apply his experiences within and beyond the classroom. By this May, there will be over 1,000 GLD graduates (2014-2017) with similar stories to tell. Read about the “ripple effects” of faculty work with USC Connect on teaching, grant work, and engagement in the broader university culture from Dr. Charles (Charlie) Pierce, Associate Professor of Civil and Environmental Engineering. Consider the powerful story told by Laura Carnes, Director of Student Engagement and Success at USC-Lancaster, who shares what USC Connect has meant for campus relationships and the upward mobility of graduates from our Palmetto College Campuses.

We are proud of and thankful for all those who have supported the work of USC Connect since its inception. We still have much to do, but this is a great time to pause and reflect on how far we have come. If you see a glimpse of your story in these pages, please know that we appreciate all you have done to help us build a culture of integrative learning at USC. If this is a new story to you, we welcome your collaboration in the future . . . we are on to USC Connect 2.0.

On behalf of the hundreds of active participants in USC Connect since 2011, enjoy looking back on and taking stock of our journey.

Very sincerely,

Irma J. Van Scoy

Executive Director



USCONNECT is

# AWARD WINNING



USCONNECT & Carolina Core received the 2014 Association for General and Liberal Studies Exemplary Program Processes Award in Co-Curricular General Education Learning. The award recognizes USC's success in building on the nine learning outcomes of the Carolina Core by adding a tenth dimension: Student learning through beyond the classroom experiences. The ALGS award recognizes innovative and systematic efforts to use co-curricular activities to accomplish goals of general education and highlights programs that can be used as a practical model for other institutions.



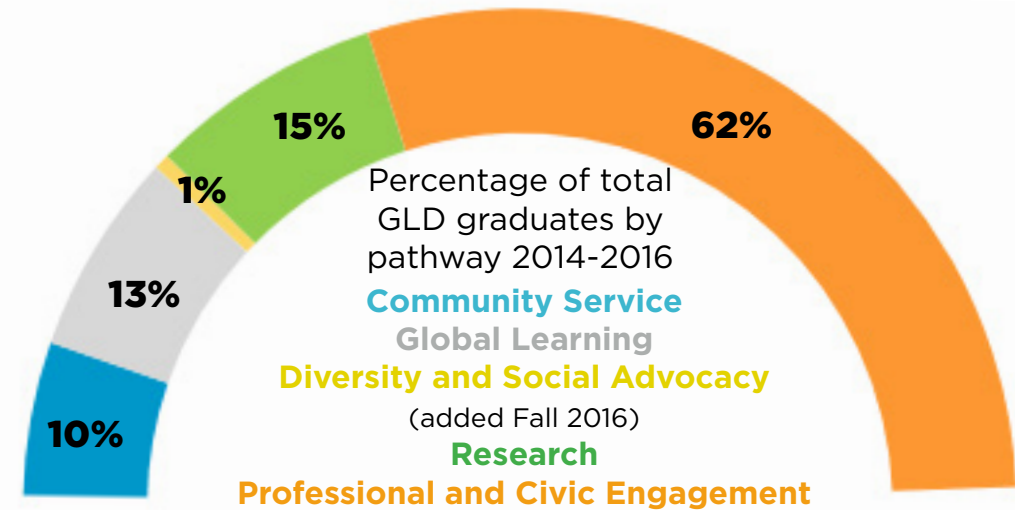
USCONNECT was selected as the Bronze Award Winner for the NASPA 2016 Excellence Award for Civic Learning, Democratic Engagement, Service-Learning, Community Service, and Related Category. The award recognizes USCONNECT's impact on student learning, cross-campus collaboration, originality and sustainability. While USCONNECT is housed in the Office of the Provost, its close collaboration with the Division of Student Affairs was key to this recognition.



In conjunction with the Study Abroad Office, USCONNECT received the Innovation in Alumni Engagement Award from GoAbroad.com for Graduation with Leadership Distinction in Global Learning. The award acknowledges universities who are pioneers in offering productive re-entry programming for students who have participated in study abroad experiences.



# USCONNECT An Overview



27 Sections of University **401** offered 2016-2017 to support students in completing GLD.



Since the addition of USCONNECT/GLD to Discovery Day, undergraduate presentations have tripled to over 700 for 2017.





# Reflecting on my GLD Experience.

By Ore Oluwole

**A**s a graduate of the University of South Carolina, I am proud of what I accomplished during my four years.

**The experience is richer because I completed and earned Graduation with Leadership Distinction (GLD).**

Going through GLD let me reflect on the classes and experiences that challenged and shaped me into the person I am today.

Senior year I thought I had everything all together before enrolling in GLD. I planned to have two pathways in Global Learning and Professional and Civic Engagement and thought I knew exactly how I was going to piece everything together.

**Global Learning graduates have taken off to 20 countries!**



From enrolling in the University 401 class, I came to the realization that I didn't have the complete picture outlined. So I simplified and evaluated what the key classes and experiences were that led me on a specific path. From doing that I found that even though I had experiences in Professional and Civic Engagement, the pathway for me was Global Learning.

This was the start of slowly putting the puzzle together.

I chose a pathway in Global Learning from living and working at the International House at Maxcy College and studying abroad in Germany and Australia. As a public relations major, I had classes that prepared me for the endeavors abroad when it came to writing, mass communications and multimedia.

**Through GLD, I connected how each experience built upon another.**

It took several brainstorming sessions, worksheets, presentations, written drafts, one-on-ones and class discussions to finally put everything together. That was the value of taking the University 401 class because I had frequent guidance along the way.

The connections were some of the most rewarding aspects. For instance, writing was one of my strengths and having classes that challenged my writing and knowledge of global media was beneficial when I studied abroad both times because I got experience in social media, journalism, blogging, international affairs and multimedia. I blended my love of writing with my interest in global learning.

After studying abroad, I used those experiences at the International House

at Maxcy to revitalize the residence hall's communications tactics to improve global learning and engagement. If I was not enrolled in GLD, I would have just listed my mass communications experiences on a resume but by being in the program, I connected each experience to one another to build upon the work in and outside of the classroom that attributed to my chosen pathway. That's the part of GLD that challenged me the most but was also the most rewarding in the end.



**"With all the different pathways, there's something for everyone with GLD."**

I had to select my pathway and connect the dots from there. It's great that every student has a different story but what's even better is how that story comes alive in the online portfolio and at Discovery Day.

Achieving Graduation with Leadership Distinction was more than just an honor, but a validation of why I chose the University of South Carolina and all the opportunities available along the way. Everything paid off because now I can always go to my e-portfolio to reflect on some of the most important within and beyond the classroom experiences at USC but can also show a more holistic, adventurous and personal side of myself that a resume cannot.

# Over the Years.

## Approved!

USCONNECT approved by the SACS as USC's quality enhancement plan.



2011

## Making Connections

USCONNECT holds the FIRST annual Get Connected Fair to orient students to integrative learning.

2012

## Grants!

The First **Integrative Learning Grants** are awarded to faculty.

2013

## First Graduates!

First students to earn **Graduation with Leadership Distinction** in May 2014.

USCONNECT holds the FIRST Faculty Conference!

## Award Winning

Winners of the 2014 **Association for General and Liberal Studies Exemplary Program Award**



USCONNECT and GLD highlighted in New Student Orientation.

## GLD!

Faculty Senate approves **GRADUATION WITH LEADERSHIP DISTINCTION**

Recommendations for Beyond the Classroom Engagement by Major available online.

2014

## University 401

14 sections of **University 401** established as a support course for **students completing GLD.**

## So Many Graduates!

Over 200 GLD Graduates including students from **Palmetto College Campuses.**

## New Pathway!

**Diversity and Social Advocacy** approved as GLD's fifth pathway!

USCONNECT showcase at Discovery Day increases presentations almost 40%.

2015

2016

## By the Thousands

The **1,000th** GLD Graduate crosses the stage!

## Discover USC

**Discover USC** includes 715 undergraduate presentations (tripled from 2011).

## Awards Galore

Winners of the **Innovation in Alumni engagement Award from GoAbroad**, in partnership with the Study Abroad Office!



## Another Award

Bronze Award Winner **NASPA** 2016 Excellence Award



2017



# The perspective of a Professor

By Charles E. Pierce, Ph.D.

Associate Professor in Civil and Environmental Engineering

I have long been a staunch believer in student learning through co-curricular engagement. While I have shared these values with many students over the years, I did not fully understand how to help students integrate their learning until building collaborative relationships with USC Connect.

**Partnering with USC Connect has given me a much deeper education in and appreciation for the concepts of integrative learning.**

Now, I have firsthand experience in how USC Connect is designed on the premise of collaboration across student affairs and academic affairs, with a focus on the integration of student learning through a network of within-the-classroom (WTC) and beyond-the-classroom (BTC) experiences.

One of the most tangible examples of integrative learning is Graduation with Leadership Distinction (GLD), a signature institutional program developed within USC Connect. This program supports students in making self-discoveries through integrative learning. GLD offers students with a clear process, and ultimate recognition, for the successful completion of meaningful achievements along a chosen path. What I appreciate about GLD is that it identifies multiple options for students to pursue, such as professional and civic engagement and research, which are two of the paths that align well with engineering student interests. In fact, the GLD in Research program is an essential component of a current NSF NUE (Nanotechnology Undergraduate Education) grant award for which I am a co-investigator.

GLD is purposefully rigorous. Students must demonstrate integrative learning through specific and relevant WTC assignments, significant time spent on BTC activities, public presentation, and perhaps the most challenging requirement, an e-portfolio. The reflective insight that the e-portfolio draws out of students has the most personal impact, in my opinion. In other words, the e-portfolio

brings to life the linkages that each student creates in his/her own assessment of learning. It truly captures the essence of what we mean when we state that higher education must develop more and better critical thinkers.

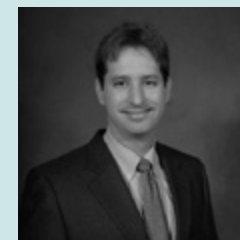
Through USC Connect, I have firsthand knowledge of how GLD impacts students. Last year, I served as a small-group advisor to help guide individual students through the process of writing an e-portfolio. In addition, I was trained for and served as an independent e-portfolio evaluator, providing informative feedback for students to elevate and enhance their e-portfolios. This process of supporting and reviewing student reflections has had ripple effects, especially with how I approach teaching and learning in my classroom. Reflective writing assignments are now linked with engineering problem solving, which has become a staple in the Introduction to Civil Engineering course that I teach for first-year and transfer students. This semester, I am developing and implementing an integrative learning module for this course, with the support of an internal grant from our Center for Teaching Excellence and USC Connect.

**In my view, USC Connect is our institutional driver of an educational culture shift.**

This belief was cemented this past summer while participating on the USC team that attended the AAC&U Institute on Integrative Learning and the Departments. Our goal for this intensive workshop was to develop a five-year strategic plan that builds on the tremendous momentum with USC Connect. While working with administrative leaders and other faculty members from across our campus, it became clear to me that USC Connect and its signature GLD program is an embedded and highly visible part of the culture at USC. I am proud to be a small part of this transformative movement on integrative learning, and I look forward to seeing what comes next. •

# FACULTY FELLOWS

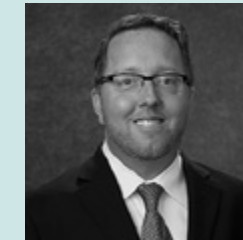
Faculty Fellows are an integral part of the **USCCONNECT** team. Fellows serve as advocates for integrative learning and provide faculty perspectives and recommendations to **USCCONNECT**. **They support students in developing Graduation with Leadership Distinction e-portfolios and explore the application of integrative learning strategies to their own programs.** Faculty Fellows collaborate with **USCCONNECT** and one another to assess student learning and pursue scholarship opportunities including national presentations and publications.



Bentley Coffey  
Economics



Lara Ducate  
German



John Grady  
SPTE Management



Stuart Hunter  
UNIV 101



Laura Kissel  
Visual Art & Design



Elise Lewis  
Library &  
Information Sciences



Stephanie Milling  
Theatre & Dance



Charles Pierce  
Civil & Environmental  
Engineering



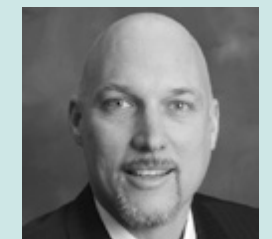
George Roy  
Instruction & Teacher  
Education



Simon Tarr  
Media Arts



Amanda Wangwright  
Art History



John Weidner  
Chemical Engineering

# The National Conversation

High Impact Practices (e.g. internships, undergraduate research, study abroad, capstone seminars) and Integrative Learning are at the center of national conversations on high quality undergraduate education.

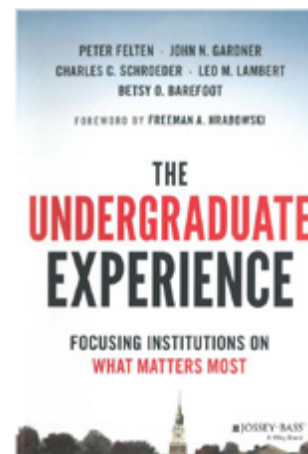
Stories of success have been dominated by small, liberal arts colleges...USCONNECT is leading the way to demonstrate integrative learning at a comprehensive research university.

## National Leadership Roles

Reinvention Collaborative's Network for Curricular and Co-Curricular Engagement and Integrative Learning  
American College Personnel Association Commission on Assessment and Evaluation  
QEP Lead Evaluators for SACSCOC  
Invited presentations at numerous conferences

## Featured

USCONNECT was featured in *The Undergraduate Experience: Focusing Institutions on What Matters Most* a book by Peter Felten, John N. Gardner, Charles C. Schroeder, Leo M. Lambert, and Betsy O. Barefoot



## Consultations

Over a dozen universities such as **UCLA, Indiana University (IUPUI), Wake Forest, University of Central Florida, and University of Texas El Paso** have contacted us for further information on our work.



Since 2011, **1,000+** faculty & staff have attended **Integrative Learning events & workshops** (many co-sponsored by the Center for Teaching Excellence).

**USCONNECT**  
has awarded **53**  
**Integrative**  
**Learning Grants**  
to faculty, totaling  
**\$170,443.25**

# COMING TOGETHER

to lift up our students



**By Laura Carnes**

Director of Student Engagement and Success, USC Lancaster

Universities have struggled, for some time, to address the dichotomy that exists between student and academic affairs. Student affairs staff believe student involvement in co-curricular activities enhance the collegiate experience, provide valuable opportunities for real world experience and leadership development, and assist in retaining students within the university. However, these experiences are often unassociated with academic work and faculty members sometimes worry that over involvement may lead to procrastination, lower academic performance, and attrition.

The concept of integrative learning, achieved through USC Connect, has finally provided a gateway for student affairs and academic affairs professionals to have conversations about meaningful learning that may occur both within and beyond the classroom:

Learning that is holistically connected, and learning that is grounded in active experimentation and reflection requiring both coursework and co-curricular experiences.

The Palmetto College Campus student experience is grounded in open admissions policies which allow greater access to higher education among the nontraditional student population--including first generation college students. These students often come from areas of the state that are economically and educationally underserved. They are drawn to higher education due to the promise of social mobility and economic progress. Motivating Palmetto College Campus students toward academic success can be complex, but research has pointed to student drive for achievement as a strong

motivational factor along their path to academic success. This indicator is even higher for first generation college students.

The very nature of USC Connect and Graduation with Leadership Distinction (GLD), with integrative learning as the core, is not just "another" accomplishment for Palmetto College Campus students. USC Connect and GLD represent a style of teaching and learning that can truly galvanize Palmetto College Campus students toward either transferring to another institution or earning a degree.

GLD offers a pathway for Palmetto College Campus students to tap into an intrinsic need for achievement.

Taken a step further, accomplishing GLD builds qualities related to self-esteem and self-efficacy. These are qualities Palmetto College Campus students may initially need assistance in developing and qualities that will serve these students well as they persist through the higher education environment. One of the strongest motivators for first generation students is their need for achievement, and GLD allows them to achieve in challenging, yet supportive ways that ultimately influence their futures both within and beyond the university atmosphere. It is, truly, one of the most impactful experiences offered to Palmetto College Campus students.

USC Connect and GLD have reinvigorated me both professionally and personally as I am now able to connect with academic and student affairs colleagues in unique, purposeful, and substantial ways, and watch as students achieve greatness in capacities they had never imagined. •



# Beyond The Classroom

Connecting  
Students to  
Purposeful  
Learning

Check out how students can get connected at USC!

## USCCONNECT Opportunity Database

Currently over 800 opportunities listed

## USCCONNECT Recommendations by Major

72 Programs Represented and Growing

## USCCONNECT Calendar

New in 2016

Send them to us!



**100%** of survey respondents said that GLD Advisors were able to answer their questions.

From survey of GLD advisees 2016.

With appreciation to all those sharing information in these systems so students can connect with meaningful experiences aligned with their areas of interest.

## USCCONNECT is a campus-wide initiative.

We celebrate the many offices and individuals who support and encourage student engagement and learning within and beyond the classroom. **YOU** are **USCCONNECT**! There are too many to list everyone, and we thank you ALL, but here are some of the many entities that make **USCCONNECT** happen:

### Our Pathway Partners

- Career Center
- Leadership and Service Center and the Office of Service-Learning & Community Engagement
- Office of Multicultural Student Affairs
- Offices of Study Abroad and International Student Services
- Office of Undergraduate Research

### Faculty, staff, advisors, and administrators

supporting student engagement and integrative learning in the Offices of the **President and Provost**; the **Division of Student Affairs**, and all **Colleges/Schools/Departments**.

**All those helping** develop and orient others to **USCCONNECT**: Admissions, Communications, New Student Orientation, UNIV 101 Programs, University Technology Services, **USCCONNECT** Advisory Council, **USCCONNECT** Student Advisory Council

**YOU** are connecting students with experiences, challenging students' to integrate and articulate learning, and helping students apply learning to leadership.

**Thank you!**





# USCCONNECT

The **University of South Carolina's** comprehensive initiative to **enhance undergraduate education** and **build a culture of integrative learning.**

## USCCONNECT Staff

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