



NEWSLETTER

IN THIS ISSUE:

- CHANCELLOR HARRIS AND SGA PRESIDENT SPOTLIGHT
- THEATER, MUSIC AND ART RECAP: RENT, PINK FLOYD, AND ART GALLERY EXHIBIT
- SUMMER 2025 STUDY ABROAD TRIPS

REACH GREATER HEIGHTS IN THE ARTS,
HUMANITIES AND SOCIAL SCIENCES

UPSTATE SECURES \$4 MILLION GRANT FOR HUMANITIES INTERNSHIPS THROUGH 2028

By Jasmine Smith

The College of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences (CAHSS) is now offering paid internships for Upstate students, thanks to funding from the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation. These internships will provide students with valuable hands-on experience while preparing them for their future careers.

Each student selected for the program will receive a \$5,000 grant, ensuring they are financially supported while gaining real-world experience. By completing an internship, students will have the opportunity to network with local professionals, develop critical career skills, and gain a competitive edge in the job market.

The \$4 million grant, which will be distributed over the next four years, will allow participants to strengthen their abilities in critical thinking, communication, cultural understanding,

and self-awareness, skills essential for success in today's workforce.

Inspired by Dr. Tanya Boone, dean of the CAHSS, this internship program is being led by Dr. Carolina Webber, associate professor of Communication. The internship program is designed for students who want to pursue internships but face financial barriers, and Dr. Boone said she hopes this program will allow students to gain hands-on experience while reducing the number of hours they are required to work to maintain financial stability.

Many students struggle with tuition and other responsibilities, making it difficult to take on unpaid internship opportunities. This program removes that obstacle, allowing students to focus on learning and skill-building while being compensated.

Dr. Boone said, "It gives students professional skills and real-world

experiences by taking what they've learned in the classroom and applying it in a real-world setting."

Dr. Boone added, "The goal is to make it attractive and profitable enough that it will really make a difference for them."

CAHSS has a list of the organizations where students can apply to work as interns.

Thanks to this grant, students will be eligible for these paid internships through 2028.

Humanities internship grant

Who is eligible?
Students with a minimum 2.75 GPA and those majoring in the following disciplines:

- Communication Studies
- English
- History
- Interdisciplinary Studies
- Political Science
- Popular Music Studies
- Sociology
- Spanish
- Theater
- Students with these minors are also eligible
- For more information, please contact Dr. Carolina Webber at webbercr@uscupstate.edu

Leadership, service and community: SGA's Chaplin and Chancellor Harris lead by example

By Tahari Ashley

The University of South Carolina Upstate was founded on a shared commitment to service, leadership, and the promotion of an inclusive environment. Two people in particular who exhibit these values also happen to lead the campus community by example.

Madison Chaplin, president of the Student Government Association (SGA), and Chancellor Bennie Harris both play



important roles in defining the campus experience and ensuring that USC Upstate is a place where students prosper academically, socially, and individually.

Chaplin's leadership path began long before her time as SGA President. Chaplin, whose major is Sociology, is also a dedicated member of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc. She has always demonstrated a strong desire to empower people and give back to her community.

As a student leader, she has become a voice for her peers, lobbying for policies that prioritize student well-being, inclusivity, and overall student achievement.

"Being the SGA President is about serving students and creating a positive, supportive environment for everyone," Chaplin said. "It's not just about making decisions; it's about listening to what students need and ensuring their voices are heard."

Chancellor Bennie Harris shares Chaplin's dedication to leadership and community service.

Chancellor Harris has been instrumental in determining the direction and success of USC Upstate, and under his leadership, the University has increased student enrollment and campus resources, all while promoting diversity, inclusivity, and academic excellence.

Chancellor Harris said, "As we continue to grow as a campus, it is vital that we create a space where all students can succeed and feel supported."

"Our goal is to provide opportunities for students to excel inside and outside the classroom, preparing them to become leaders in their communities and the world."



Photos courtesy of USC Upstate SGA website

Making connections through communication:

Hall has dedicated her life to education



Photo provided by Ms. Suzanne Hall

By Taylor Flowers

Ms. Suzanne Hall, director of the Public Speaking program at USC Upstate, has dedicated her career to educating students on the importance of effective communication. With years of experience in broadcasting and education, Hall continues to inspire students to develop the skills that are crucial in today's world.

Hall has been a faculty member at USC Upstate since 2015, and she was initially hired to teach public speaking. Over time, her role has expanded to include teaching courses in mass communication, mass communication theory, and health communication courses, all of which align with her specialization in interpersonal health communication.

"I've always had an interest in journalism and communication," says Hall, whose career began as a radio announcer and later transitioned into being the news director at her student-operated station during college. Her passion for teaching grew as she worked in the field, eventually leading her to pursue a doctoral degree. She currently teaches five classes at Upstate while balancing Ph.D. courses at USC Columbia.

With her wealth of experience, Hall emphasizes the importance of developing meaningful connections with others in the field. "If you want to succeed, it's not about you; it's about the people you engage with. Make connections, find mentors, and be adaptable," she advises students.

Despite the demands of being both a teacher and a doctoral student, Hall values the relationships she builds with her students. "There's no one moment that stands out as the most memorable; it's the cumulative experience of watching students evolve. When students start as strangers and eventually become a closer group, that transformation is incredibly rewarding," she said.

Hall's dedication to her teaching, studies, and students exemplifies the unique spirit of USC Upstate, where faculty members not only teach but also actively engage in their fields, continuing to learn and grow alongside their students.

CAHSS welcomes donations to invest in the education of tomorrow's leaders. Please scan this QR code to make your contribution or click this [link](#).



SCAN ME

Performance Notes:

Art, Music and Theater Updates

RENT, Pink Floyd, and 'Field of Flowers' spring up this season at Upstate

Theater

By: Avery Beaton

USC Upstate's Theater Department wrapped up the 2024-25 season with its production of *RENT*, which ran from April 10-13 in the Humanities and Performing Arts Center mainstage theater.

This classic 90s musical, written by Jonathan Larson, tells the story of several artists living in the East Village of Manhattan. The show features characters Mimi, Mark, Roger, Maureen, and others against the backdrop of the HIV/AIDS epidemic.

USC Upstate Associate Professor of Theater Laura Rikard directed this musical. Rikard said, "It's a show about the gentrification of NYC happening. It's a show about celebrating diversity of love, not just romantic love. You see the love between straight people, gay people, trans people. You see the love between gay friends with their straight

friends. It's a show about love across the spectrum."

The cast was primarily composed of Upstate Theater students, including Krischan Taylor as Mark, Maddyson Potts as JoAnne, Dee Slade as Benny, and Patrick McCuen as Roger. The cast also included community members Taji Mayberry as Tom Collins and Dexter Simmons as Angel.

Theater performance major Arianna Gardner, who played Mimi, said the movement aspect was her favorite part of this show. She said, "I've done musicals before, but the amount of movement, in this show, especially because we have scaffolding, it's very different from other musicals I've done. I love the amount of movement."

Rikard said she hopes audiences leave the show feeling happy. She said, "I hope that they enjoy it, and I hope that they have fun

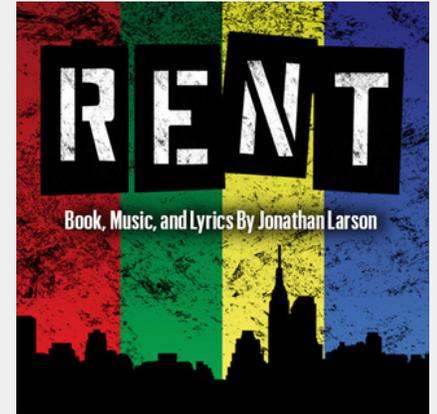


Image provided by USC Upstate Theater Department

watching it, and I hope that they just remember how important the arts are to celebrating who we are as individuals."

USC Upstate Theater productions are open to the public. For more information about the Theater program, click [here](#).

Art



Image provided by <https://www.instagram.com/uscupstateartgallery/>

For more information about Upstate's galleries, click [here](#).

By Camdyn DeShields

USC Upstate's downtown art gallery, located at the Chapman Cultural Center, featured a new art exhibit that ran through the end of April.

Artist Grant Mahan's new exhibit, called "The Void is a Field of Flowers," represented the dichotomy of optimism and pessimism around queer body image.

Mahan said this exhibit was based on the idea of pairing up two adjacent bodies of work. One body of work is an abstract of a queer figure that is the darker side representing the "Void."

Mahan said, "Those works address feelings of isolation within the queer body, objectification and the idea of wanting to fail your body." Each of those abstract pieces was paired with a Floral Still Life to represent the queer community. The theme around the exhibition was that the "void" does not have to be dark, but it can also be bright and beautiful, like a field of flowers.

The downtown art gallery is located at the Chapman Cultural Center at 200 E. St. John Street in Spartanburg.

Music

By Taylor Flowers

The USC Upstate Commercial Music Combo (CMC) presented a unique performance on Thursday, April 17 at 7:30 p.m. in the Humanities and Performing Arts Center. This spring's performance focused on one of the most influential albums in rock and roll history, Pink Floyd's *Dark Side of the Moon*. The concert offered those who attended a chance to explore the musical and cultural significance of the album, which is often considered a groundbreaking piece in the genre of progressive rock.

According to Dr. Griffin Woodworth, associate professor of popular music studies, and a key faculty member involved in the project, this album has had a major impact on the rock genre. Dr. Woodworth said, "*Dark Side of the*



Photo provided by USC Upstate Commercial Music YouTube

Moon really helped define the era of music considered to be Progressive Rock."

As a regular feature of the university's music program, the CMC continues to provide students with an interactive learning experience, showcasing their abilities while offering the audience a unique opportunity to engage with the music on a deeper level.

Upstate also offers a Bachelor of Arts degree in Popular Music Studies, catering to those students who want to pursue a career in the field. For more information about this degree, please click [here](#).

STUDY ABROAD TRIPS SUMMER 2025: CULTURE, CUISINE AND COMMUNICATION IN SPAIN AND GERMANY

By Jasmine Smith and
Mary Kathryn Chandler

Students often look forward to taking time off from classes in the summer and maybe even traveling with friends and family. However, summer also offers an opportunity for students to travel with their classmates and professors to other parts of the world to learn while being immersed in different cultures.

One of the adventures being directed by faculty this summer is the trip to Barcelona, Spain, led by Dr. Christa Christ, assistant professor of Psychology, and Ms. Jodie Martin, director of the Center for Child Advocacy Studies. From May 9-16, students will join Dr. Christ and Martin in Barcelona to study the psychology of food.

Dr. Christ says the purpose of this trip is to explore the motivations behind eating, cultural differences in dining, and the psychology of eating behaviors. This experience is part of Dr. Christ's Spring 2025 PSYC 300: Special Topics Psychology of Food course, and she said it aims to prepare students to critically analyze food choices in various cultural contexts.

"This trip will allow students to take the content they learned from the class and see that within another culture," Dr. Christ said.

During the week-long experience, students will engage in multiple activities and excursions, including visits to olive and wine vineyards, learning about local beverages such as soda and mineral water, and participating in a tapas tour to experience diverse cuisines.



Dr. Christa Christ,
Photo provided by USC Upstate



Photo provided by Dr. Emily Kofoed
Dr. Wallace and Dr. Kofoed with students in Germany in 2024.

This trip is designed to immerse students in Spanish culinary traditions while encouraging critical thinking about food choices across cultures. Barcelona was chosen for its cultural richness and culinary diversity.

Later in the summer, Communication professors Dr. Emily Kofoed and Dr. David Wallace will take 10 students to Germany as a continuation of their Spring 2025 JOUR 398 course. In the Communication and Politics in Berlin course, students have worked with Magdeburg-Stendal students online. This trip will allow them the opportunity to meet their German classmates in person. Upstate students have been working alongside these students to produce a six-minute political news story video presentation.

"The purpose of this trip is to build student portfolios while also developing intercultural communication skills," said Dr. Wallace, who has been involved with the program since the beginning. The first Germany trip with students took place in 2016. "Students not only create professional content but also gain invaluable experience working internationally."

One of the biggest cultural differences between Germany and the U.S. is communication style, according to Dr. Kofoed. "German students are much more direct," she said. Dr. Wallace added that while Americans often soften their words,

Germans say exactly what needs to be done, which teaches students to adapt to different communication styles. Dr. Kofoed added, "The biggest benefit of studying abroad is learning about intercultural communication."

Studying abroad offers numerous benefits but can be a financial burden for students. However, the Germany trip is affordable, according to Dr. Kofoed. "This is the best experience and the cheapest trip internationally that you can get," she said, emphasizing that students who study abroad benefit professionally and personally. Dr. Wallace added that traveling abroad helps students see the world from a new perspective, challenging assumptions and broadening their global awareness.

Both professors encourage students to study abroad for the unique experiences and perspectives it offers. Dr. Wallace says that experiencing new places firsthand helps students develop meaningful connections and gain a deeper appreciation for global communities. "It can really make profound and significant impacts on the students that go," he said.

"The world is really cool, and there is so much to see," said Dr. Kofoed. "I encourage everyone to study abroad. It's so worthwhile even though it's expensive. Save your money for it, and DO IT."

The Spain and Germany trips are just two of the many faculty-led study abroad trips occurring this summer.

This inaugural edition of the CAHSS Newsletter is distributed by faculty and students in the Fine Arts and Communication Studies Department at USC Upstate. Students in the Spring 2025 section of the JOUR 333: News and Feature Writing class have contributed content and visuals for this issue. We would love your feedback. Please contact Allison Lane at acantre@uscupstate.edu or Dr. Tanya Boone at tanyabh@uscupstate.edu with any comments, suggestions and/or questions. Please look for our next edition in Fall 2025.