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2025 ANNUAL REPORT

MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR



J. Willis Cantey III

*J. Willis Cantey III
Chair, SCICU Board of Trustees
CEO, Cantey Tech*

Our mission is to strengthen South Carolina's independent colleges and universities through collaboration, governmental advocacy, fundraising, and public engagement so that every student may choose, afford, and earn an independent college education that fits their personal values, professional and social aspirations, and approach to learning.

This report marks my final year as Chair of the Board of Trustees. It's been a privilege, and I'd like to thank Robert Lloyd, Emma Reabold, Ashleigh Hohmann, Brenda Torrence, SCICU member Presidents, Donors, and Trustees for allowing me to help.

This was a year of many changes. SCICU welcomed Robert Lloyd and Ashleigh Hohmann to the SCICU staff while celebrating Brenda Torrence on a well-deserved retirement. We celebrated another strong year in the support and advancement of our mission. We supported undergraduate student and faculty research projects and celebrated our 2025 Excellence in Teaching award recipients. We hosted our first annual Legislative Conference for Higher Education Leadership and look forward to bringing this event back in 2026. We also advanced our legislative priorities and financial goals through important advocacy and fundraising work.

Let's not forget that SCICU's capacity to support our members depends largely on the support of our donors. In the past year, SCICU surpassed its fundraising goals, sending over \$400,000 in scholarships and grants to students attending our institutions. We continue to be so thankful for their partnership and support.

To Robert Lloyd and SCICU staff, SCICU Presidents, Trustees, and Donors, thank you. Your work and partnership are critical to our mission, and I am proud to have been a part of it. To our trustees, thank you for giving your time, talents, and energy to SCICU. As I wrap up my time as chair, the organization is in the wonderfully capable hands of Ben Porter who will take on the role of board chair and continue to lead SCICU forward.

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

As we reflect on 2025, I am proud to reaffirm that SCICU remains a trusted and effective advocate for independent higher education in South Carolina. In a year marked by shifting policy landscapes and growing demands on institutions, SCICU has stood firm in its mission to support our member colleges and universities through advocacy, collaboration, and a shared commitment to student success.

Advocacy has been central to our mission in 2025. At the state level, we successfully defended and advanced funding for financial aid programs that directly benefit students attending independent institutions. Nationally, we have weighed in on key legislation and regulatory proposals, assuring that our member campuses are represented in conversations about access, affordability, and opportunity for thousands of students across our state.

Advocacy is only part of our mission. SCICU fosters collaboration across campuses, helping institutions share resources, solve common challenges, and strengthen their impact. From joint professional development to coordinated research efforts, we have sought to enhance institutional effectiveness.

We also remain focused on promoting the value of independent higher education. SCICU institutions offer personalized learning environments, strong student outcomes, and deep community engagement. Graduates go on to lead in business, education, healthcare, and public service—contributing to the vitality and resilience of South Carolina. By amplifying these stories, we help ensure that independent colleges remain central to the state's educational and economic future.

Looking ahead, SCICU will continue to advocate for access, affordability, and excellence in private higher education. SCICU would not be successful without the efforts of Emma Reabold and Ashleigh Hohmann. I am truly grateful to our presidents and board for their partnership and leadership. It is a team that continues to strengthen South Carolina's independent colleges and universities.



A handwritten signature in blue ink, which appears to read "R. Lloyd". The signature is fluid and cursive, written on a plain white background.

Robert Lloyd
SCICU President and CEO

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Front cover photo courtesy of Erskine College



ALLEN UNIVERSITY
803-376-5700
1530 Harden Street, Columbia, S.C. 29204
www.allenuniversity.edu
Dr. Ernest McNealey - President



ANDERSON UNIVERSITY
864-231-2000
www.andersonuniversity.edu
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1301 Columbia College Dr., Columbia, S.C. 29203

www.columbiasc.edu

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100 West College Street, Sumter, S.C. 29150

www.morris.edu

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www.ciu.edu

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803-321-5127

2100 College Street, Newberry, S.C. 29108

www.newberry.edu

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803-793-3351

213 Wiggins Road (PO Box 678), Denmark, S.C. 29042

www.voorhees.edu

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www.converse.edu

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www.ngu.edu

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2024-2025 HONOR ROLL OF SUPPORT

During our 2024-2025 fiscal year, the following individuals, foundations, and corporations supported independent higher education in South Carolina by making gifts to SCICU.

On behalf of our member institutions and their students, as well as the SCICU Board of Trustees and staff, we extend sincere appreciation to the following for their support and commitment to Opportunities for Excellence.

A

Advancement EDU / 2
Affinity LTC, LLC / 12
Alera Group, Inc./1
Alliant/1
Alwinell Foundation Trust / 56
Amick, Susan P. / 2

B

Bailey Foundation, The / 55
Barnet Foundation Trust, The / 39
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Baruch Foundation, The Belle W. / 16
Bentley, Jerry / 2
BlueCross BlueShield of South Carolina / 38
Boineau, Sylvia M./1
Boldyn Networks Higher Ed, LLC/1
Bowman, Lee Wiley/1
Budd Group, The / 2

C

Campbell Consulting Group, The / 22
Cantey Technology Consulting / 9
Cantey, Willis / 5
CapinCrouse, LLP / 13
Cloud Labs/1
Cook, Russell D. / 19
Core Education/ 1
Corpay/1
Council of Independent Colleges, The /UPS
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Daniel-Mickel Foundation, The / 59
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Dowd, M. Blake / 4
Duke Energy Foundation / 70
Dynamic Campus / 2

E

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Ellucian Colleague/1
Enterprise Holdings Foundation / 11

F

First Carolina Bank/ 1
First Citizens Bank/2
Fortify Data/2
Forvis Mazars / 3

G

Groth, Stephen J. / 4

H

Hagler, Scott / 6
Harrell, David / 4
Hart, Martha O./ 1
Haylor /1
Haynesworth Sinkler Boyd, P.A. /16
Help 4 Edu/ 1
Hobbs Group, The / 2
Hohmann, Ashleigh/ 1
Howard, Beverly/ 1
Huntington National Bank / 2

I

IMA Financial Group, Inc. / 1

J

Jackson Family Donor Advised Fund / 16

Jackson, Michael / 3

Jennings, John/ 1
Jenzabar/ 1
Jolley Foundation, The / 61

K

Kastler, William & Lesa/ 1
King, Kathryn R. / 19
Kolb III, Wade S. / 2

L

Lane, Hugh/ 1
Lawson, Mary / 1
LeFever, Michael G. / 18
Lesesne, Jr., Joab M. and Ruth O. / 25
Lloyd, Robert/ 1

M

Maddrey Foundation / 36
Malloy Foundation, The / 67
Mayo, Jr., Earl L. / 22
McAbee, Jada / 4
McElveen, Donny / 2
McIver, Lucy Grey / 11
McKinney, Kathleen C./ 1
McMillan Pazdan Smith Architecture / 12
Meadow/ 1
Metz Culinary Management / 10
Milliken & Company Charitable
Foundation / 59

N

NFP / 3

P

Parker, Karyn/ 1
PeopleFirst, LLC./ 1

(Numbers following the donor name indicate the number of years the donor has contributed to SCICU.)

Pharos Resources, LLC / 5
Pioneer College Caterers / 11
Pollock Company / 11
Porter, Robert / 5

Q
Quattlebaum, Mary Jane / 1

R
Rawl & Sons, Walter P. / 14
Reabold, Emma R. / 2
Robbins, Mark / 2

S
S.C. Student Loan Corporation / 26
Sanders, Family Foundation / 12
ScholarBuys LLC / 13

Security Federal Bank / 6
Shannon, III, Edward M. / 18
Shaw, Hal and Minor / 34
Short, Kevin M. / 7
Sodexo / 31
Sonoco Foundation / 70
South State Bank / 7
Southeastern Freight Lines, Inc. / 43
Sqwire, LLC. / 1
Staton, Robert and Phyllis / 11

T
TIAA / 18
Torrence, Brenda S. / 27
Total Comfort Solutions / 13
Transact Campus, Inc. / 6

U
United Community Bank Foundation / 3

V
Varsity Health / 4
Vedane, Caryn S. / 5
Vetter, Dana / 1
Vulcan Materials Company Foundation / 56

W
Weaver, Sr., Brent / 12
Wells Fargo / 1
Williams, Sharon C. / 6
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*Every effort has been made to ensure the accuracy of donor information.
Should you note an error, please accept our apology and notify our office immediately.*

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Thank you to the following

SCHOLARS PROGRAM

- Bailey Foundation, The
- Council of Independent Colleges / UPS Foundation
- Dominion Energy Charitable Foundation
- Duke Energy
- Milliken & Company Charitable Foundation
- Sanders Family Foundation
- Security Federal Bank
- Sonoco Foundation
- Hohmann, Ashleigh
- Howard, Beverly
- Jackson Family Donor Advised Fund
- Jackson, Michael
- Jennings, John
- Jolley Foundation, The
- Kastler, Willian and Lesa
- King, Kathryn R.
- Kolb III, Wade S.
- Lane, Hugh
- Lawson, Mary
- LeFever, Michael G.

UNDERGRADUATE STUDENT/FACULTY RESEARCH PROGRAM

- Baruch Foundation, The Belle W.
- BlueCross BlueShield of South Carolina
- Daniel-Mickel Foundation, The
- South Carolina Independent Colleges & Universities Endowment

SCICU STUDENT LIFELINE GRANTS

- Alwinell Foundation Trust
- Amick, Susan P.
- Barnet Foundation Trust, Inc.
- Bentley, Jerry
- Boineau, Sylvia M.
- Bowman, Lee Wiley
- Campbell Consulting Group, The
- Cantey, Willis
- Cook, Russell D.
- Council of Independent Colleges, The
- Davidson, Robert G.
- Dickson Foundation, Inc.
- Dowd, M. Blake
- Eidson, Kristi
- Enterprise Holdings Foundation
- First Citizens Bank
- Groth, Stephen J.
- Hagler, Scott
- Hall, Steve
- Harrell, David
- Hart, Martha O.
- Lesesne, Jr., Joab M. and Ruth O.
- Lloyd, Robert
- Maddrey Foundation, The
- Malloy Foundation, The
- Mayo, Jr., Earl L.
- McAbee, Jada
- McElveen, Donny
- McIver, Lucy Grey
- McKinney, Kathleen C.
- Parker, Karyn
- Porter, Robert
- Quattlebaum, Mary Jane
- Ramsey, John C.
- Rawl, Walter P. & Sons, Inc.
- Reabold, Emma R.
- Robbins, Mark
- Shannon, III, Edward M.
- Shaw, Hal and Minor
- Short, Kevin M.
- South State Bank
- Southeastern Freight Lines, Inc.
- Staton, Robert and Phyllis
- Torrence, Brenda S.
- United Community Bank Foundation, Inc.
- Vedane, Caryn S.
- Vetter, Danna
- Vulcan Materials Company Foundation
- Weaver, Sr., Brent A.
- Williams, Sharon C.

**EXCELLENCE IN TEACHING
AWARDS DINNER SPONSORS**

- SC Student Loan Corporation

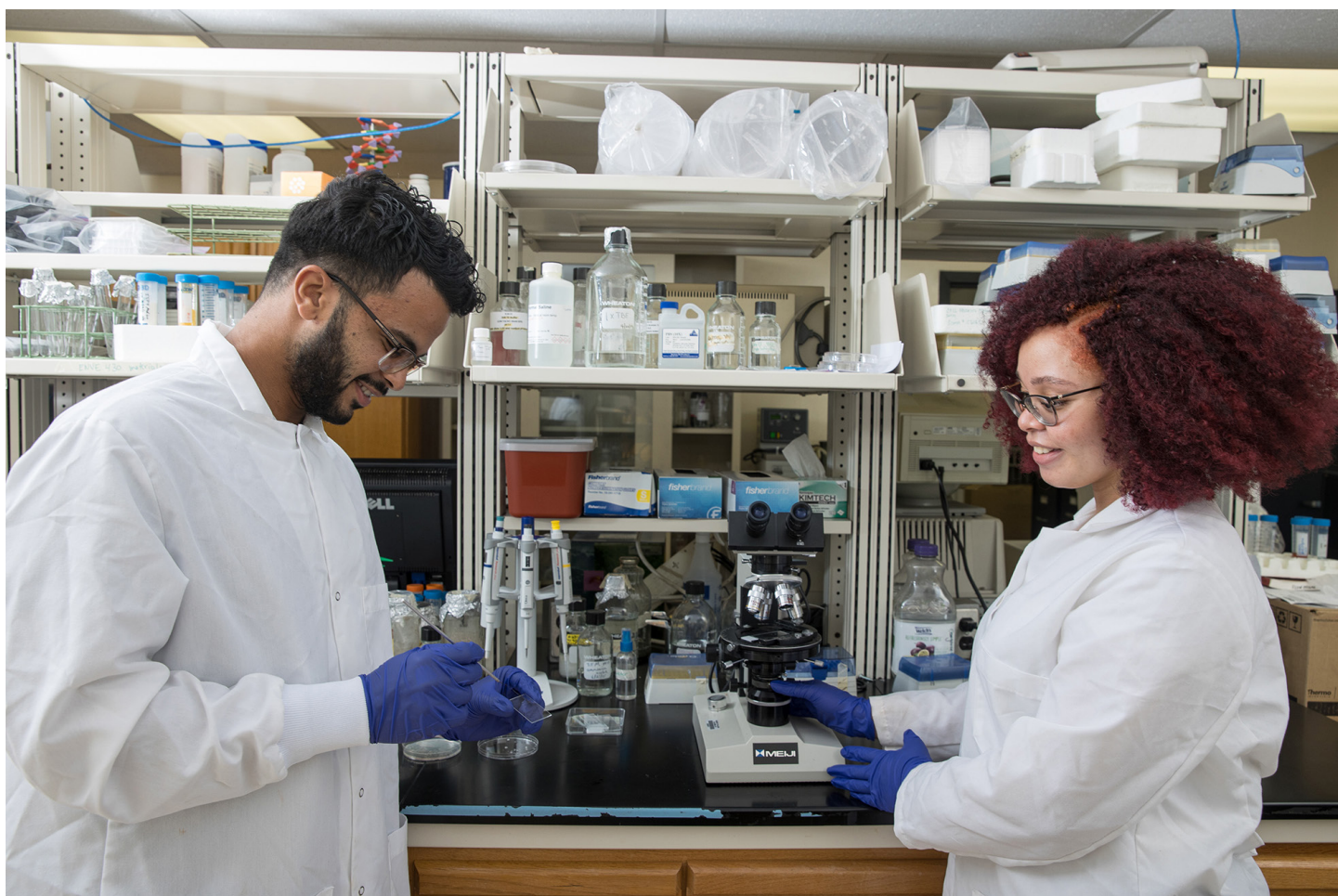
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- Sodexo

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- Budd Group, The
- Cantey Technology

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- Jenzabar
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- Metz Culinary Management
- NFP
- PeopleFirst, LLC
- Pioneer College Caterers
- Pollock Company
- Sqwire, LLC
- TIAA
- Varsity Health
- Wyche Professional Association



FUNDRAISING & GIVING OPPORTUNITIES

SCICU FUNDRAISING

Thanks to our generous donors for helping SCICU exceed our FY 2024-2025 fundraising goals and helping more students at our 20 member colleges and universities!



FY 2024-2025 Results by Program - \$495,978 total gifts

Scholars Programs	\$ 275,000	Business Partners	\$ 13,406
Student LifeLine Grants	122,630	Excellence In Teaching Sponsorships	2,000
Undergraduate Research	17,500	Miscellaneous (parking fees)	2,700
In-Kind Gifts	4,423		
Meeting Sponsorships	58,319		

FY 2024-2025 Giving Opportunities with SCICU

Scholars Programs - Businesses and charitable organizations are encouraged to invest in student scholars at SCICU's 20 member institutions through programs they customize based on academic achievement, major area of study, financial need, or leadership.

Undergraduate Student/Faculty Research Program - In its third decade, this program funds research projects conducted by undergraduate students under faculty mentorship. The program gives students a taste of graduate-level research – from submission of proposals for competitive funding review to professional research symposium presentation of findings.

Student Lifeline Grants Program - Lifeline Grants help SCICU students persevere through financial crises, stay in school, and complete their degree. Campus financial aid directors select grant recipients who are identified as at-risk for dropping out.

SCICU Business Partners - This program is designed for businesses that seek opportunities to grow relationships with SCICU member colleges and universities. A \$500 annual fee gives partners listings on the SCICU website, regular features in the SCICU newsletter, listings in the SCICU annual report, and package discount opportunities to sponsor SCICU events.

SCICU Event/Program Sponsorships - Businesses and individuals are invited to sponsor SCICU events, including the annual Excellence In Teaching Awards Dinner, trustee meetings, and more.

SCICU Endowment - Designated gifts may be made to the SCICU Endowment that provide income to support donors' goals, including student scholarship, faculty development, research support, and other areas.

Emma R. Reabold, Vice President for Development and Campus Services, can help you invest in South Carolina's future through SCICU's 20 member colleges and universities. Call her today at 803-799-7122 or email at emma@scicu.org.

SCHOLARSHIP & GRANT PROGRAMS

The SCICU Scholars Program was developed in 1994 to encourage investment in individual student scholars attending SCICU member institutions. Investors supporting SCICU's scholarship and grant programs recognize the need to assist talented and deserving students in achieving their goals for obtaining a college education.

BAILEY FOUNDATION

\$1,000 scholarships given at all 20 colleges to traditional students who are S.C. residents living in Laurens County.

DOMINION ENERGY



Two \$1,050 scholarships are awarded at all 20 colleges and are available to traditional students with a GPA of 3.0 or higher.

DUKE ENERGY



Ten \$1,000 scholarships are awarded to minority juniors or seniors pursuing engineering degrees (3-2 program or engineering major).

MILLIKEN FOUNDATION



\$3,000 scholarships are given to S.C. residents attending SCICU's five HBCUs (Allen University, Benedict College, Claflin University, Morris College, and Voorhees University). Recipients must be full-time STEM majors with 2.5 or higher GPA and demonstrated financial need.

SANDERS FAMILY FOUNDATION

The foundation established by former SCICU Trustee Dan Sanders coordinates with the Furman University Bridges to a Brighter Future Program. This program assists at-risk youth with their educational goals. Up to 10 Furman Bridges participants will be selected annually to receive \$2,000 scholarships to attend a SCICU member college of their choice. Recipients will be sophomores, juniors, or seniors who have extenuating financial circumstances.

SECURITY FEDERAL



\$1,500 scholarships to one student each at Allen University, Benedict College, Columbia College, and Columbia International University. Recipients must be full-time S.C. residents with financial need and a minimum 2.5 GPA.

SONOCO FOUNDATION



Fifteen 2,800 scholarships for traditional students who are S.C. residents with demonstrated financial need.

S.C. STUDENT LOAN CORPORATION



\$2,500 scholarships are given at all 20 SCICU member colleges for traditional full-time undergraduate students who are S.C. residents with a GPA of 3.0 or higher and have financial need as determined by FAFSA. The scholarships should be used to reduce the need for educational borrowing.

UPS FOUNDATION



\$3,500 scholarships at all 20 member colleges for traditional students.

SCICU BUSINESS PARTNERS

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Greenville, SC



We would like to express thanks to the SCICU Business Partners. The program is designed to enable SCICU member colleges, their employees, and their students and families to obtain information about goods and services available from the companies and businesses that have chosen to become SCICU Business Partners.

THE HOBBS GROUP
Columbia SC



POLLOCK COMPANY
West Columbia, SC



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PRIMESOURCE
Calabash, NC



IMA FINANCIAL GROUP
Greenville, SC



SCHOLARBUYS
Carpentersville, IL



JENZABAR
Boston, MA



SC STUDENT LOAN CORPORATION
Columbia, SC



MCMILLAN PAZDAN SMITH ARCHITECTURE
Spartanburg, SC



SODEXO
Spartanburg, SC



MEADOW
New York, NY



SQWIRE
Norfolk, VA



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TIAA
Charlotte, NC



METZ CULINARY MANAGEMENT
Sarasota, FL



TOTAL COMFORT SOLUTIONS
Columbia, SC



NFP
Greenville, SC



TRANSACT
Phoenix, AZ



PEOPLE FIRST SOLUTIONS
SC



VARSITY HEALTH LLC
Salem, OR



PIONEER COLLEGE CATERERS
Olathe, KS



WYCHE, P.A.
Greenville, SC



ACCOLADES & SPECIAL EVENTS

SCICU LAUNCHES A NEW LOOK!

We were excited to unveil SCICU's new logo on November 1 — a fresh design that reflects both who we are and the state we proudly serve. Every element was chosen with meaning:

- Waves celebrate South Carolina's beautiful coast.
- Mountains reflect the strength of our Upstate communities.
- The Crescent Moon honors our state flag and heritage.
- The Torch of Knowledge lights the way for learning and opportunity.



Our new logo is more than a design, it's a symbol of SCICU's mission to guide students, support our colleges, and champion the power of education across South Carolina.

We're especially grateful to the Council of Independent Colleges for their generous grant, which made this rebranding possible and Infinity Marketing for the amazing design that helped us share the story of SCICU and the students we serve in a fresh new way.

Celebrating the 2025 McLean-Smith SCICU Student of the Year – Caleb Erkens

Caleb Erkens, a senior actuarial science major at Bob Jones University, is the 2025 McLean-Smith SCICU Student of the Year. Born in Beijing, China, Caleb lived there for more than fourteen years, gaining fluency in Mandarin Chinese and developing a deep cross-cultural understanding that continues to shape his academic and community pursuits. At BJU, Caleb has made the President's List each semester while leading calculus study groups, organizing the actuarial science club, and guiding peers through statistical analysis projects for a local healthcare client. A National Merit Finalist and U.S. Presidential Scholars Program candidate in 2023, Caleb has also been recognized with the Chick-fil-A Remarkable Futures Scholarship (2023–2025) for his leadership and service as a designated trainer at Chick-fil-A Cherrydale Point.



(L-R) Board Chair Willis Cantey, 2025 McLean Smith Student of the Year Caleb Erkens, Bob Jones University President Dr. Bruce McAllister

Caleb's commitment to service extends beyond campus. He has volunteered with the Christian Learning Centers' Released-Time program at Sevier Middle School, tutored homeschool students in Mandarin Chinese, and served actively in his church through teaching, youth leadership, and summer Bible school programs. Looking ahead, he plans to pursue a master's degree in applied statistics, using his skills to develop practical strategies that help businesses manage financial risks and promote economic stability.

His excellence in academics, leadership, and community service was celebrated at the SCICU Board of Trustees meeting held October 9, 2025, at Furman University.

The McLean-Smith SCICU Student of the Year award includes a \$3,000 scholarship. Nominees must be full-time students at one of SCICU's 20 member institutions, receive the South Carolina Tuition Grant, perform well academically, and demonstrate a commitment to public affairs, community service, and leadership.

SCICU hosted its inaugural Leadership Conference

on June 18, 2025, bringing together leaders from South Carolina's independent colleges and universities for a full day of collaboration, insights, and inspiration. The day began with a light breakfast and opening remarks, followed by two rounds of engaging breakout sessions that covered a range of timely topics in higher education.

A highlight of the conference was the lunchtime presentation by the National Association of Independent Colleges and Universities (NAICU), providing a national perspective on policy and advocacy efforts supporting private higher education. Attendees also gained valuable insights during the afternoon session, The State of Higher Education in South Carolina, culminating in an inspiring address from South Carolina Speaker of the House, Murrell Smith. The conference concluded with closing remarks, leaving participants energized and informed as they continue to lead and advocate for higher education across the state. Feedback was overwhelmingly positive—we hope to continue this event in future years.



2024-2025 ADVOCACY REVIEW

Public Policy Update for SCICU Board Meeting – October 9, 2025

The legislative session concluded with several positive developments of significance for independent higher education. All of SCICU's priorities were included in the budget passed for the state's fiscal year 2026-27. The General Assembly reinstated the Higher Education Excellence Enhancement Program (HEEEP) at \$9 million, restoring an important funding stream for eligible institutions. The South Carolina Tuition Grants Commission reported a 10% increase in applications and a 6.5% increase in awards, reflecting strong statewide demand for need based aid.

A new lottery proviso restricting debit card purchases is projected to increase lottery revenue by \$52 million, potentially strengthening future need based aid programs. The state's ongoing public college in state tuition freeze, now in its sixth year, continues to create competitive pressures for private institutions that do not receive state operating subsidies.

At the federal level, the "One Big Beautiful Bill" preserved key education tax benefits, addressed a \$10.5 billion Pell Grant shortfall, and set the elimination of Grad PLUS loans for 2026. New gainful employment rules will apply

broadly across academic programs. Federal guidance on DEI practices emphasized the use of neutral criteria in institutional policies and procedures.

Accreditation remains an area of emerging concern as several states, including South Carolina, explore the creation of a new multi state accrediting body. Such changes could have implications for institutional eligibility for state aid and may require future updates to SCICU's bylaws.

The closure of Limestone University had significant statewide impact. SCICU met the challenge through proactive assistance by member institutions in assisting students, faculty, and staff in transferring to other SCICU institutions when possible. SCICU also conducted an in-depth comprehensive financial health assessment of Limestone in comparison to member institutions for review at the October board meeting. This demonstrated the unique challenges Limestone faced. Following the closure of Limestone University, 146 Tuition Grant awards were successfully reallocated to other SCICU institutions to support affected students.

Fourth annual Joint Higher Education Day held at S.C. State House April 1, 2025

Students from SCICU member institutions, public colleges and universities, and the technical colleges once again combined forces and held the Joint Higher Education Day on April 1, 2025.

Students met with their respective members of the House and Senate and were recognized in the House Chamber with a concurrent resolution. The day began with Lieutenant Governor, Pamela Evette on the North State House Steps for the Higher Education Day proclamation ceremony and remarks.



LT. Gov. Pamela Evette on the North State House Steps addressing students for Joint Higher Education Day.

SCICU Tuition Grants say ‘Thank You’

In 2025, Tuition Grants recipients at SCICU member colleges and universities sent 4,064 thank-you letters to their members of the S.C. Senate and House of Representatives.



SCICU EXCELLENCE IN TEACHING AWARDS

The hallmark of South Carolina's private, non-profit colleges and universities is the emphasis on individualized learning and student achievement. This can only be accomplished by a distinguished faculty working in a supportive environment that encourages and fosters serious inquiry, critical thinking, and a broader understanding of the world in which we live.

Each year, SCICU recognizes and celebrates outstanding faculty members with its Excellence in Teaching Awards. Each campus selects an Excellence In Teaching award winner, and SCICU is proud to award each recipient a \$3,000 professional development grant. This group of teacher-scholars represents many different academic disciplines and brings a rich diversity of education, experience, and interests to our campuses. SCICU was proud to recognize 21 outstanding faculty members as the recipients of the 2025 Excellence In Teaching Awards.



Furman's 2025 Excellence in Teaching Award recipient is Dr. Margaret J. Oakes, joined by SCICU's President, Robert Loyd (left), and Chair, J. Willis Cantey III (right)



The 2025 Excellence in Teaching Award recipients sitting together after the award ceremony

2025 RECIPIENTS



Mr. Jordan A. Jakubek
Allen University
Business



Mr. Jer Nelsen
Anderson University
Art and Design



Dr. Hong Jiang
Benedict College
Engineering and Computer Science



Dr. Marc A. Chetta
Bob Jones University
Health Sciences



Mr. Daniel Leach
Charleston Southern University
English



Dr. Abdullah Khan
Claflin University
Business



Ms. Natalia Schradle
Coker University
Visual and Performing Arts



Dr. Alexandra Szarabajko
Columbia College
Health, Mathematics, and Sciences



Dr. T.K. (Timothy) Dunn
Columbia International University
Arts and Sciences



Dr. Amanda Mangum
Converse University
Mathematics and
Computer Science



Dr. Matthew Campbell
Erskine College
Biology



Dr. Margaret J. Oakes
Furman University
English



Dr. Frederick (Fred) Lux
Limestone University
Education and Behavioral Sciences



Dr. Michiko McClary
Morris College
Education



Dr. Lindsay Boateng
Newberry College
Biology



Mr. Joshua J. Styles
North Greenville University
Humanities and Christian Studies



Dr. Kendra Y. Hamilton
Presbyterian College
English



Dr. Jonathan Sircy
Southern Wesleyan University
Humanities



Dr. Taylor Brickley
Southern Wesleyan University
Social Sciences



Ms. Alicia Davis
Voorhees University
Business and Entrepreneurship



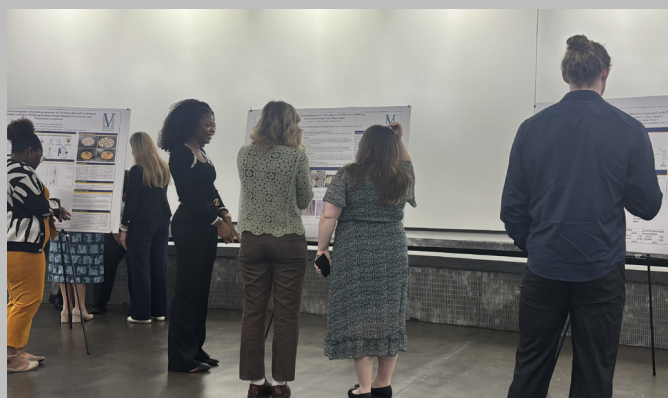
Dr. Yongfang Zhang
Wofford College
Modern Languages,
Literatures and Cultures

SCICU Undergraduate Student/Faculty Research Program

Initially developed in 1995, the SCICU Undergraduate Student/Faculty Program increases research opportunities for undergraduate students attending SCICU member institutions. Research projects are selected for funding based on rigorous subject-area expert review. Participating students have opportunities to develop professional research and presentation skills, the benchmarks of highly-qualified professional researchers.



2025-2026 Research Symposium Group Photo



Research students ask questions during the Q&A portion of the poster presentations

Research projects completed in December 2025. Research findings were presented at the February 19, 2026 Research Symposium.

Institution	Student(s)	Faculty Sponsor(s)	Research Topics
Anderson University	Samuel Diaz, Timothy Matthews, Josh Pruitt, Ethan Ruppert	Dr. Chad Rodekohr	Sputter System Characterization and the Effects of Chemical Etching on Whisker Propagation on Sputtered SN Films
Bob Jones University	Naomi McCaslin	Dr. Rebecca Garcia	Expanding Preventative Health Services for Underserved Populations in Greenville County, SC
Bob Jones University	Kelila Richmond and Kathryn Munger	Dr. Stephen Chen	The Cobra Study: Exploring the Cortisol-Balance Relationship in Aging Adult
Claflin University	Shalaya Murray	Dr. Randall Harris	Characterization of Antibiotic Producing Bacteria Isolated from South Carolina Heritage Preserves
Coker University	Kenneth Bell and Diego Martinez	Dr. Jia Fei	RNA Editing & Splicing Regulate Aging
Coker University	Jeffrey Stiles and Walji Dadem	Dr. Richmond Adebaiye	Cybersecurity Risks and Business Resilience: Quantifying Financial Losses and Strategic Responses in South Carolina
Coker University	Delaney Freeman and Lily Byrd	Dr. Jennifer Borgo Raia	The Impact of Leg Wraps on Forelimb Temperature Increases of Horses in Work
Coker University	Brianna Robinson and Rachel Grove	Dr. Joseph Flaherty, Dr. Gina Mohanty	Microbial Biodegradation of Plastic Polymers
Columbia College	Bradley Tilby	Chakia McClendon	Comparing Inflammatory Biomarkers of Respiratory Cells Post-exposure from Traditional and Electronic Cigarettes

For the 2025-2026 research cycle, a total of 22 research proposals involving 29 students from 11 SCICU member institutions were awarded research grants totaling \$91,045 in the spring of 2025. Project research concluded in December 2025. Student researchers will present their project findings via oral, multimedia, and poster presentations at the SCICU Research Symposium on February 19, 2026. Listed below are the students, faculty sponsors, and the project titles for the research projects selected for funding in 2025.

<i>Research projects completed in December 2025. Research findings were presented at the February 19, 2026 Research Symposium.</i>			
Institution	Student(s)	Faculty Sponsor(s)	Research Topics
Converse University	Isabella Moreno	Dr. Jeffrey Howard, Dr. Allison Vick	Researching the History of the Land Sustaining the Hobcaw Barony
Converse University	Ruth Maria Clasina Spijker	Dr. Hannah Barnhill	Investigation of Bioconjugation of Red Fluorescent Proteins DsRed and mCardianl to Biotin
Furman University	Charles Sanderson	Dr. Megan Lyons	Musical Structure in Contemporary Christian Hit Music
Furman University	Anna DeMino	Courtney Quinn	"Authentic, Seasonal, Delicious, and Nutritious" - An Exploration of Communal and Sustainable Eating With the Rome Sustainable Food Project at the American Academy in Rome
Presbyterian College	Veby Youssef	Eli Owens	A Granular-Based Magnetically Controlled, Soft Robotic Gripper
Southern Wesleyan University	Christa Paulus	Dr. Jeffrey Mohr	The Effects of Artificial Structures and Natural Barriers on Salamander Richness and Abundance
Voorhees University	Vanessa Sherman	Dr. Zhabis Golkar	In-vitro Investigation of Fractions/ components of Calendula Officinalis by Bioassay Guided Method on Multidrug Resistance Strains Staphylococcus aureus and Pseudomonas aeruginosa
Voorhees University	Georgea Saffrey	Dr. Zhabis Golkar	The Study of Bacteriophages as a Therapeutic Strategy in Combating Propionibacterium acnes bacterium
Voorhees University	Vacavia McKenzie	Dr. Zhabis Golkar	Investigating the Impact of Novel Phages from Medicinal Rhizospheres and Water Samples in South Carolina Against Microbial Pathogens
Wofford College	Rachel Dozier	Dr. Youmi Efurd	Horyeop-do Folding Screen: Art, Patronage, and Social Accessibility in Joseon Korea
Wofford College	Darcy Phillips	Dr. Ramon Galinanes, Jr.	Social Movements/Confederate Flag Study
Wofford College	Emma O'Brien	Kelli Carroll	The Role of tango6 in Zebrafish Development

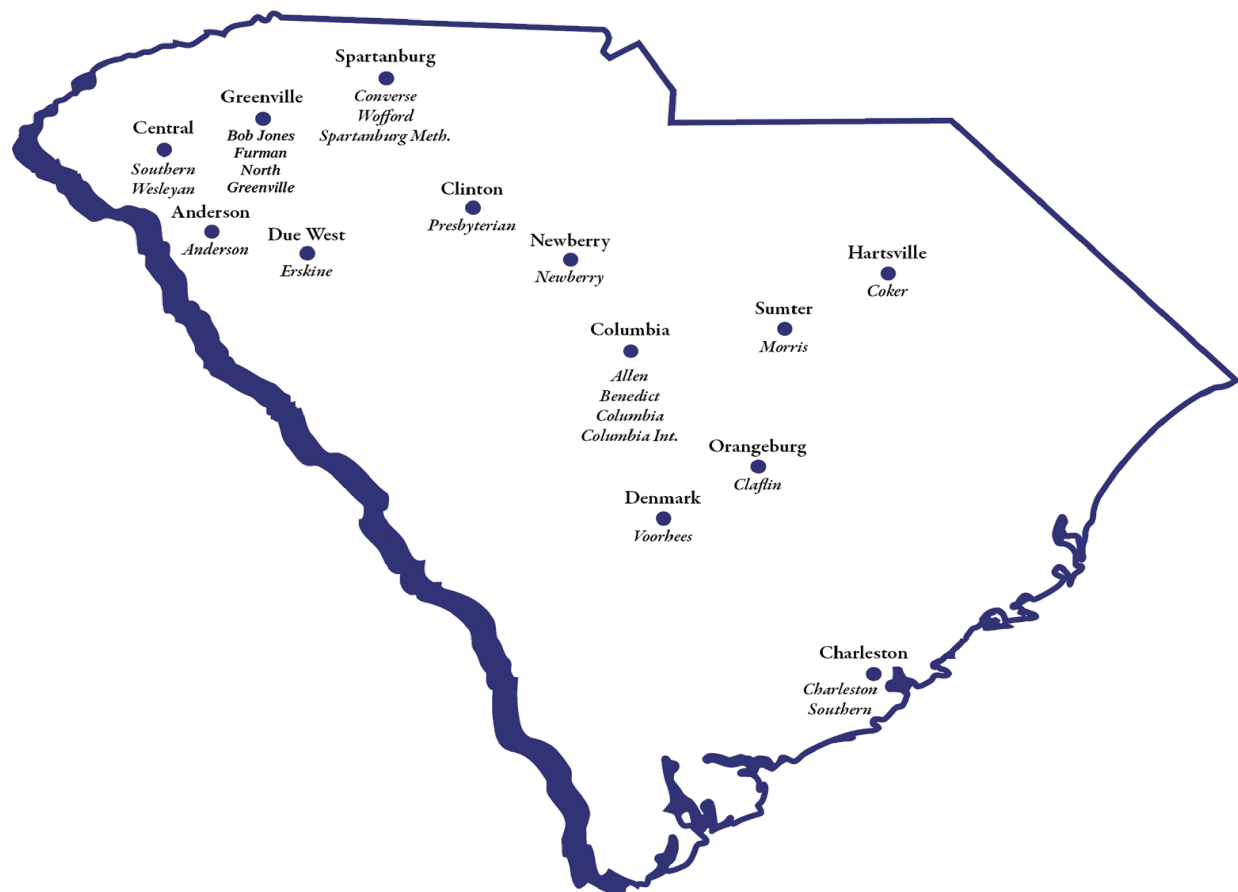
EDUCATIONAL & ECONOMIC IMPACT

Educational and Economic Impact of Independent Colleges and Universities

SCICU represents 20 independent colleges and universities, each with a unique historical and cultural background. Many also have a strong faith-based emphasis. SCICU's member institutions currently include five historically black colleges and universities and two previously all-women's colleges that are now co-educational.

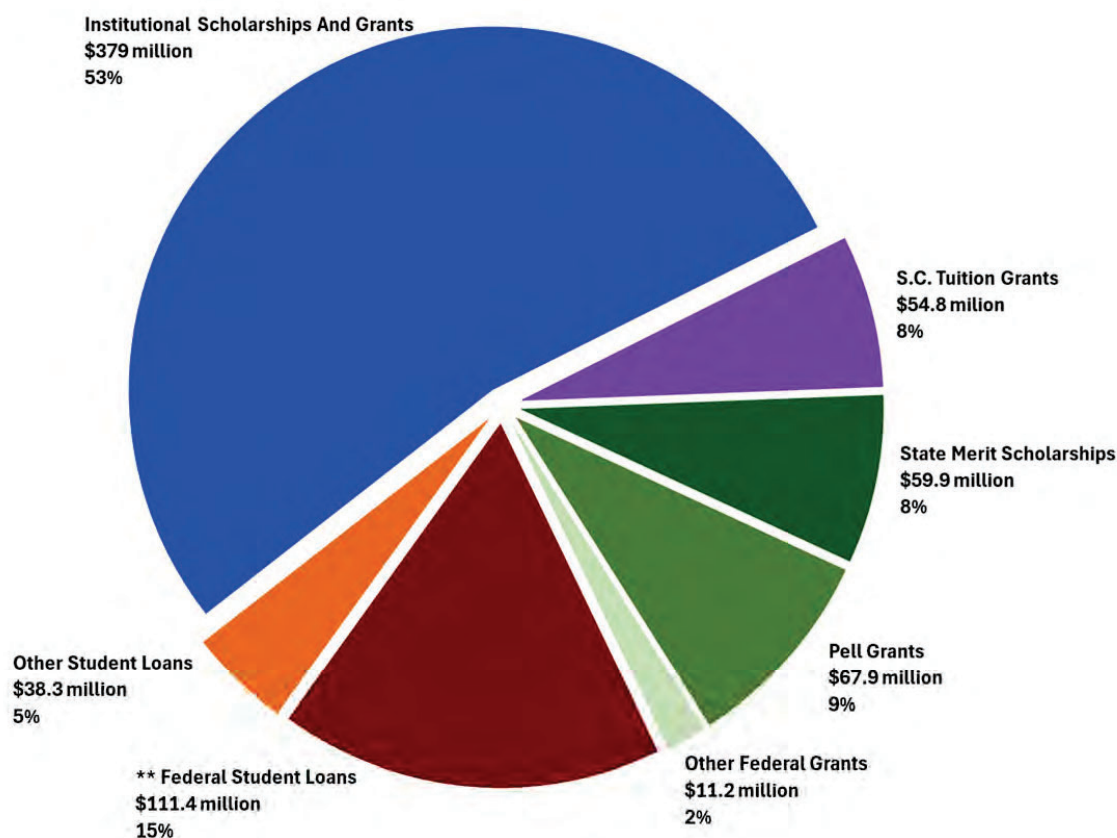
SCICU member colleges and universities:

- Enrolled **38,219** total students (Fall 2024)
 - o **29,586** undergraduate students (23% of S.C.'s total undergraduate enrollment at four-year institutions)
 - o **68%** of undergraduate students are S.C. residents
 - o **46.2%** identify as minority
 - o **8,633** graduate students
- Provided **\$363 million** in institutional aid to undergraduate students (AY 2022-23)
- Awarded **5,261** bachelor's degrees (20% of S.C.'s bachelor's degrees) and **1,851** graduate degrees during AY 2023-2024
- Employed more than **8,200** faculty and staff and several thousand student workers (Fall 2024)
- Contributed more than **\$1 billion** in business expenses and payroll to South Carolina's economy (AY 2023-2024)



STUDENT FINANCIAL AID

Academic Year 2023-2024 Student Financial Assistance: All Undergraduates Percentage by Aid Category



- SCICU institutions invest substantially in the success of students. At \$379 million, or 53% of all financial aid, institutional scholarships and grants are the largest single source of student financial aid.
- Nearly four-fifths of the SCICU average student financial aid package does not require repayment by students. Federal grants/work study, state merit scholarships, tuition grants, and institutional scholarships collectively account for 79% of student financial aid for students attending SCICU member colleges and universities.

Data Sources:

IPEDS (Pell Grants, Other Federal Grants, Federal Student Loans, Other Student Loans),
S.C. Higher Education Tuition Grants Commission (Tuition Grants),
S.C. Commission on Higher Education (State Merit Scholarships),
SCICU Institutional Research Survey (Institutional Scholarships and Grants)

Notes:

**Federal Student Loans -- Only includes loans with the student as the named borrower (Parent PLUS loans excluded). Higher Education Emergency Relief (HEERF) grants funded under the CARES Act are reported as Other Federal Grants (not Title IV) in Student Financial Aid. IPEDS guidance regarding CARES and HEERF funding is available at <https://surveys.nces.ed.gov/ipeds/public/survey-materials/package?surveyid=7&instructionid=30017&formid=17&faqid=8>.

FINANCIAL CONDITION

FINANCIAL CONDITION: September 1, 2024 - August 31, 2025

The financial statements of SCICU are audited by The Hobbs Group, P.A. which has issued its unmodified opinion. The following is drawn from their 2025 audit. Total assets of \$5,714,903 at August 31, 2025 compared to \$5,437,274 at August 31, 2024.

Because our member colleges and universities are assessed dues to underwrite the entire administration and operating costs of this non-profit organization, 100 percent of all contributions raised from donors are distributed to the members for scholarships without any reductions for fund-raising costs. Gifts and awards totaled \$587,046 at August 31, 2025 compared to \$673,985 at August 31, 2024.

SOUTH CAROLINA INDEPENDENT COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES, INC.

STATEMENT OF ASSETS, LIABILITIES, AND NET ASSETS MODIFIED CASH BASIS

For the year ending August 31, 2025

CURRENT ASSETS

Cash and cash equivalents	\$ 505,791	
Cash Portion of Investments	80,931	
Investments	<u>5,128,181</u>	5,714,903

PROPERTY AND EQUIPMENT

Total Non Current Assets	<u>\$13,196</u>	
	13,196	<u>13,649</u>

Total Assets \$ 5,728,099

NET ASSETS

WITHOUT DONOR RESTRICTIONS

Undesignated	\$ 3,940,942	
Designated by the Board for endowment	<u>241,553</u>	<u>\$4,182,495</u>

WITH DONOR RESTRICTIONS 1,545,604

TOTAL NET ASSETS \$ 5,728,099

STATEMENT OF REVENUES, EXPENSES, AND CHANGES IN NET ASSETS — MODIFIED CASH BASIS

For the year ending August 31, 2025

REVENUES

Gifts and awards received	\$ 378,012
Member college assessments	559,381
Investment Income	490,887
Special functions	73,725
Buy-in revenues	45,742
Miscellaneous	<u>40,957</u>

Total Revenues \$ 1,525,184

EXPENSES

Gifts and awards distributed	587,046
Operating costs	<u>647,313</u>
Total Expenses	<u><u>\$ 1,234,359</u></u>

CHANGE IN NET ASSETS 290,825

NET ASSETS, BEGINNING OF YEAR 5,437,274

NET ASSETS, END OF YEAR \$ 5,728,099

SCICU Team

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in South Carolina:***



SCICU website
scicu.org

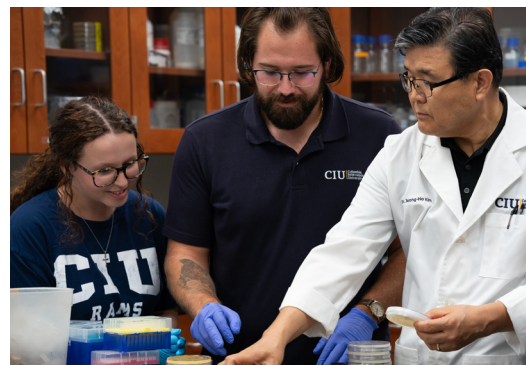


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SOUTH CAROLINA INDEPENDENT COLLEGES & UNIVERSITIES MEMBERS

