



S.C. Commissioner's School for Agriculture at Clemson Gives Students a Glimpse of College Life

2007 Press Release

CLEMSON, SC – High school juniors and seniors from across South Carolina and the nation gathered at Clemson University for the 4th Annual South Carolina Commissioner's School for Agriculture (SCCSA). The summer academic program is an intense, pre-college school that allows students a glimpse into the academic and career possibilities related to agriculture and natural resources.

This year, 32 students, including six from out of state, spent a week experiencing scientific exploration, academic integrity, teamwork, personal growth and leadership activities. Wide-ranging academic sessions included organic food, greenhouse production, athletic turfgrass management, animal and veterinary sciences, packaging science, aquaculture, forestry and wildlife, and natural resource management. The group also visited the university's research farms, Clemson Experimental Forest, the Walhalla Fish Hatchery, as well as enjoyed a rafting adventure on the Chattooga River.

One of the missions of this school is to recruit students into these essential careers. Nearly 60 percent of the high school graduates attending Clemson select majors in agriculture and the life sciences.

The program is conducted as a partnership among the office of S.C. Agriculture Commissioner, Hugh E. Weathers, the S.C. Department of Agriculture and the College of Agriculture, Forestry and Life Sciences at Clemson University. The school is supported additionally by Advocates for Agriculture,



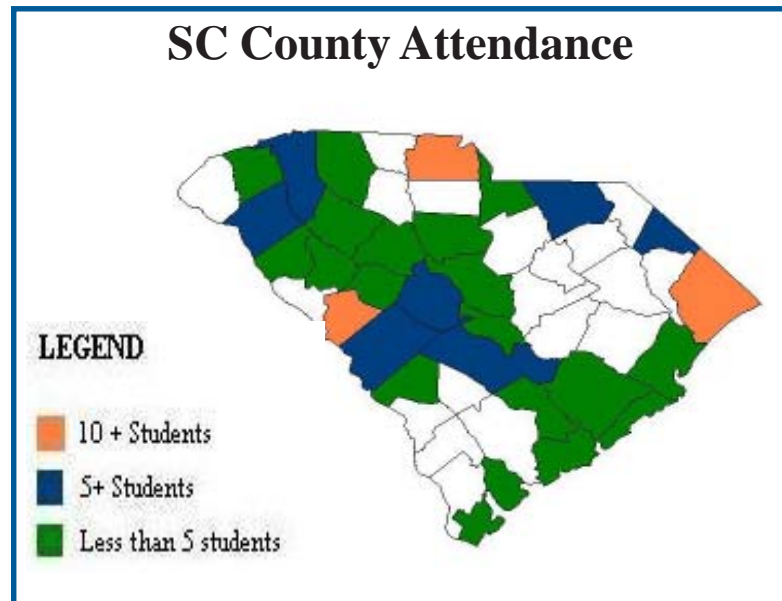
Students from 2007 SCCSA take a break from learning about athletic field management to pose for a picture.

Clemson Agricultural Alumni Association, USDA Natural Resource Conservation Service and a number of county Soil and Water Conservation districts.

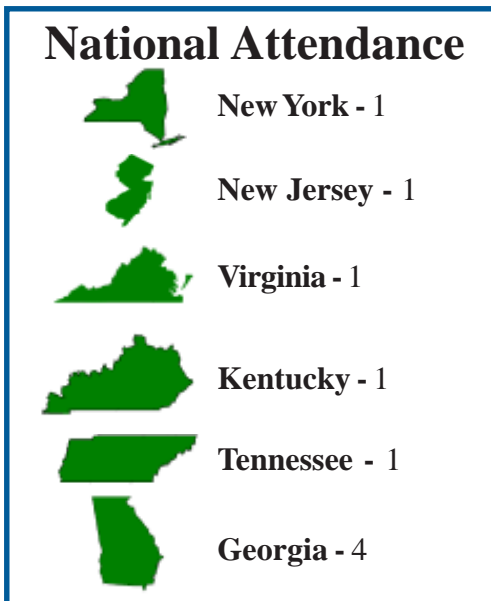
The students who participated in the 2007 program will reunite with state leaders in Columbia early next year. During the Statehouse visit, they will tour South Carolina Department of Agriculture facilities, local agribusinesses, and view a general legislative session.

The first SCCSA program was held in 2004. It was modeled after programs at other land-grant institutions, including Pennsylvania State University and Virginia Tech.

SC County Attendance



National Attendance





Commissioner's Report

Hugh E. Weathers, SC Commissioner of Agriculture

Following the closing ceremonies of the 2007 Commissioner's School program, I told some of my friends, who also happen to be state leaders in agriculture, about how proud I am to be involved in this program. I think that the Commissioner's School has tremendous potential for keeping agriculture strong in South Carolina and I've been impressed with some of the 'young guns' that I've met through this program.

Every year the program continues to grow and flourish, as attested to by the growing number of applications, especially out of state applicants! My staff members always report back to me about all of the great activities and wonderful students that they have the chance to be involved with, and they are always telling me how exciting (and exhausting!) the program is. We would like to increase participation and exposure to ag industries and welcome suggestions and input from former students and from agribusiness professionals offering support and ideas to help us achieve this goal.

My staff and I are looking forward to hosting the Class of 2007 reunion next March here in Columbia, as well as working with Clemson University to plan the 2008 program. I thank you for your continued support and participation in the South Carolina Commissioner's School for Agriculture.

2007

Statistics

Applications

- ◆ 41 Total Applicants
- ◆ 34 Total Accepted

Attendee Demographics

- ◆ 32 Total Attendees
- ◆ 81% In State
- ◆ 19% Out of State
- ◆ 63% High School Juniors
- ◆ 37% High School Seniors
- ◆ 63% Female
- ◆ 37% Male
- ◆ 10% Minority Population
- ◆ 19/199 (Top 9%) Average Class Rank
- ◆ 4.09 Average Reported GPA

New Presentations Added to Programming



APICULTURE: Beekeeping

Dr. Mike Hood who is the President of the American Association of Professional Apiculturists and Professor in the Department of Entomology, Soil and Plant Pathology presented an educational session related to the common honey bee. The distinction between honey bees and other common flying and stinging insects to the amazing culture and behavior of the honey bee. Participants also gained an understanding of some basic beekeeping techniques and the fundamentals of honey production. Students also discussed the recent Colony Collapse Disorder and the importance of honey bees to crop and ornamental production.

BIOFUEL: Preparing for Tomorrow

With an ever increasing interest in finding, producing and making use of the agricultural products available to have renewable forms of energy, it was imperative that the participants of the 2007 SCCSA learned more about biofuels. The environmentalists and agriculturalists of tomorrow were educated about the basic ideals surrounding the uses of these agricultural means to produce fuels and the negative impacts of burning fossil fuels. Mr. Lance Beecher, Chemist with the Department of Agricultural and Biosystems Engineering, presented participants with some basic information about biofuel and showcased his research which involved utilizing the algae grown at the aquaculture facilities at Clemson University. This project has recently been patented and some students even made a presentation at the final luncheon regarding this issue thanks to Mr. Beecher's help.





Entering the Fifth Year: Program Review

Katie H. Black, Recruiting Coordinator

The South Carolina heat is long gone, and that can only mean one thing, it will not be long until it is back. Along with many others, the SC Commissioner’s School for Agriculture planning committee is already looking forward to next summer! Summer 2008 will bring about the 5th Annual SCCSA and plans are already in the works to make that program even better!

Since its beginnings in 2004, the program has seen an increased growth in interest and academic abilities. More applications have found their way to the hands of interested students and more students are applying than ever before. Program participants are holding higher GPA’s, higher standardized test scores, and even more alumni are applying to Clemson. The program has also seen an increased interest from out of state students. From our first two out of state students in 2005 to six in 2007, this shows us that our program is strong and interest will continue to grow.

During 2008, the program will see the first alumni graduate from college and enter the workforce. This exciting change in our alumni will also bring about exciting changes for the program and future participants. Our alumni will continue to serve as program counselors and will begin serving in new roles as speakers, presenters and financial supporters. Several alumni have already signified their interest in giving back to the program by offering their time and money.

As a stakeholder in this program, I hope you will continue to support this program as we look forward to a long and exciting future. I also would like to personally thank you for your support.



Recent Additions to the Clemson Family - Fall 2007

SCCSA Admissions Report As of Aug 2007	
High School Grads	62%
Still in High School	38%
Applicants to Clemson	68%
Accepted to Clemson	83%
Bridge Program	6%

JOSHUA BOATWRIGHT	Agricultural Undeclared
HEATHER COLEMAN	Agricultural Education
JOSHUA CRAW	Agricultural Mechanization & Business
CHRIS ENGEL	Animal & Veterinary Sciences
CHRIS HANDLEY	Forest Resource Management
JUSTIN HAWKSWORTH	Agricultural Undeclared
JONATHON HOLMES	Horticulture
KENNETH HOWLE	General Engineering
CASEY JOHNSON	General Engineering
ASHLEY MATTHEWS	Animal & Veterinary Sciences
JOSHUA MCILVRIED	Forest Resource Management
CLAY SETTLE	Agricultural Education
GINGER THOMAS	Agricultural Undeclared
NATALIE WATSON	Horticulture



South Carolina Commissioner's School for Agriculture

FACES Through the Years...



Laura Jane Burdette Class of 2005
Fountain Inn, SC

"SCCSA opened many doors for me. I already knew many of the staff and faculty at Clemson University in the agriculture department which made my transition into college a lot smoother. Not only did I know their faces and names, but they knew mine as well. This made it easier for me to ask questions."



Trevor Moorer Class of 2007
Georgetown, SC

"The Commissioners School allowed me to make friends that had the same interests as me in careers and I saw who I was up against when applying to college."



Chris Engel Class of 2005
Westfield, NJ

"The SC Commissioner's School of Agriculture was the beginning of my future. While there, I was finally surrounded by people that were as excited about agriculture as I was. The energy level was high and the passion for both learning and teaching made the SCCSA unforgettable. It got my foot in the door at Clemson and I made friendships that I will have for the rest of my life. At the dawn of my college career I now feel comfortable. I am familiar with the Clemson

program, the campus, and the people. But most importantly I already feel like a part of the Clemson Family."



Jeffrey Epps Class of 2004
Orangeburg, SC

The SCCSA was more than just an opportunity to meet new people and experience Clemson for a week. It has opened so many doors for me. I knew agriculture was a vast industry, but I had no idea that it encompassed areas like genetics, engineering, biotechnology, and even politics.



Russell Henderson Class of 2004
Johnston, SC

"This program showed me the wide variety of agricultural opportunities available and the majors that Clemson offers to achieve a career therein. The students I participated with provided me with a network of friends at Clemson before I set foot on campus. The faculty and staff that worked with me have continued to support me through my endeavors while at the university."



Heather Coleman Class of 2006
Latta, SC

"My time at SCCSA helped me to meet many new people and one of them is my roommate for my freshman year! SCCSA also helped me explore different majors in the CAFLS. Now I will be studying to teach agriculture while minoring in AVS."

THANK YOU TO OUR SPONSORS, SUPPORTERS & FRIENDS

Advocates for Agriculture	SC Department of Agriculture
AgSouth Farm Credit	SC Peanut Board
Belton-Honea Path High School	SC Soil & Water Conservation Districts
Grand Strand Master Gardeners Assoc	SC Watermelon Board
Hunter-Kinard High School	Strom Thurmond Career Center
Natural Resource Conservation Service	

If interested in sponsoring SCCSA, please contact Kirby Player at (864) 656-5433

FOR MORE INFORMATION

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