

UPIC

THE PAW PRINT EFFECT



SPRING 2026



CLEMSON UNIVERSITY

OLD MAIN

SCIENCE

Table of contents

5.	About the theme	26.	Jamison Peebles
6.	A letter from UPIC	28.	Julianna Coates
8.	What is UPIC?	30.	Kaelyn King
9.	UPIC staff	32.	Lily Kurrack
10.	Pearce Center staff	34.	Megan Calahan
12.	The UPIC experience	36.	Reynolds “RJ” Young
15.	What interns think	38.	Riley Still
16.	Core competencies	40.	Danielle McFall
18.	Briggs Murray	42.	Dylan Andrew Porter
20.	Chiara Matrisciano	44.	Hrishita Negi, Ph.D.
22.	Gianna Truisi	46.	Maggie Erickson
24.	Jaivon Jefferson	48.	Sharetta Wynn, Ph.D.
		50.	Michelle Navis



About the theme

Students and staff at Clemson University begin to leave behind their first paw prints after discovering opportunities through UPIC, taking the initial steps to professional and personal success. Everyone who finishes their UPIC experience leaves with newfound confidence, because the most enriching aspect of working for UPIC is learning from those around you.

Using what we gain from our mentors and mentees to challenge our existing knowledge as we separate from Clemson and branch into new spaces is what will have the greatest impact on what we establish for ourselves, both in our limited time at Clemson and beyond. Keeping this in mind, our team went into interviews with UPIC student interns and staff mentors asking the following question: How has your position in the UPIC program allowed you to leave a lasting “paw print” at Clemson?

A lasting paw print. Something every Clemson University student and staff member hopes to imprint throughout their time on campus. The UPIC program is special in that it has a wide array of internships, ranging from conducting lab experiments, to performing cybersecurity, to assisting with actual tiger conservation, creating room for many paw prints to develop. Students can acquire professional skills through performing scientific research, running marketing campaigns and more, while mentors can act as a reliable guide in their designated area of expertise.

UPIC interns and mentors leave behind their paw prints via the work they put in to make Clemson a better community. Some student paw prints we found through our interviews with UPIC interns included inspiring others to take risks, using compassion as a strength in work ethic, leading with integrity and following your passions. Mentor paw prints we uncovered included cultivating an inclusive environment, inspiring newfound confidence and a sense of belonging to students and sharpening the students’ professional skills and instincts so they will be able to perform to the best of their abilities in their future career endeavors. The trail of paw prints our team revealed this year leads to a strong Clemson community filled with UPIC employees who embark into new chapters of their lives, using their skills, character development and passions to walk away from Clemson University a better person and professional. Although UPIC mentors and interns come and go, their paw prints stay “ever loyal” to Clemson.

Alyssa Dolina

Alyssa Dolina

Co-Editor-in-Chief

A letter from UPIC

I hope this message finds you energized, focused and ready to make the most of your experience. Being selected as a UPIC intern is an incredible opportunity — one that reflects your hard work, potential and commitment to growth.

As you move through your internship, remember that this experience is more than just a line on your resume. It's a chance to discover your strengths, refine your skills and step outside of your comfort zone. You will face challenges, but those moments are where the most growth happens. Lean into them. Ask questions. Be curious. Take initiative. Don't be afraid to make mistakes — just make sure you learn from them.

You are not just here to complete tasks; you are here to leave an impact. Bring your ideas to the table, collaborate with intention and carry yourself with confidence. The relationships you build and the effort you put in now can open doors far beyond this experience.

Most importantly, believe in yourself. You belong in these spaces. Your voice matters, your perspective is valuable and your contributions are meaningful. Wishing you a successful, inspiring and transformative internship journey.

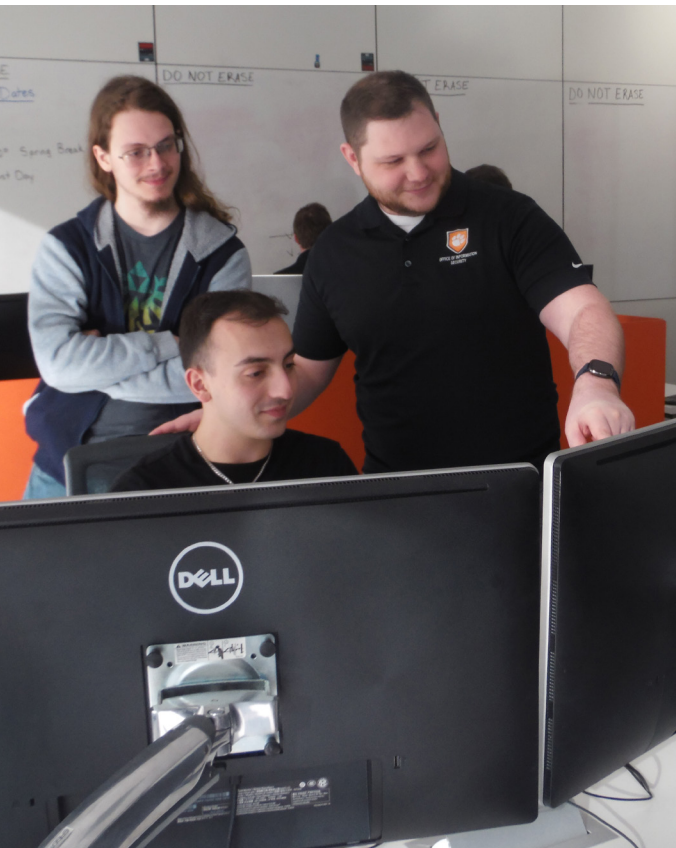
Tanisha Alexander

Tanisha Alexander
Senior Program Coordinator



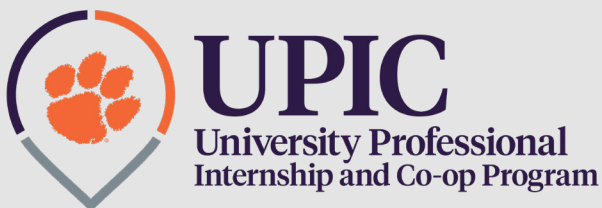
What is... UPIC?

The **University Professional Internship & Co-op** program offers opportunities for students and staff to become interns and mentors in the desired professional areas — ranging from marketing to scientific lab work.



“The UPIC Program is a leader in the creation of a campus-wide culture that involves students partaking in **meaningful and relevant developmental experiences**. Students have the opportunity to **work alongside Clemson University faculty and staff** gaining professional work experience in their field of interest and study. UPIC interns are required to register for the online Internship INT Course and complete all related assignments.” - UPIC Website

Student and faculty UPIC employees **make Clemson University** a better place when they are done with their own professional growth, whether by enhancing an existing program or inspiring someone else to do the same.



Students interested in participating in the UPIC program can **apply to UPIC internship** positions through **ClemsonJobLink**.

UPIC Staff



Troy D. Nunamaker,
Ph.D., MHRD
Director



Caren Kelley-Hall,
Ed.D., M.Ed.
Senior Associate Director



Jenna Tucker Grogan,
M.Ed.
Associate Director



Tanisha Alexander, MBA
Senior Program Coordinator



Caitlin Abbatiello
Assistant Director



Nathan G. Ives
Program Coordinator



Giana Truisi
UPIC Office Marketing and
Programming Intern

Pearce Center Staff



Brianna Bullard

Co Editor-in-Chief

Major: Marketing and
Communication
Graduation: May 2026



Alyssa Dolina

Co-Editor-in-Chief

Major: Spanish and
International Business
Graduation: May 2027



Hailey Herzog

Editorial Designer

Major: Marketing
Graduation: May 2026



Madeline Roberts

Lead Cover Designer

Major: English
Graduation: May 2028



Kate Shealy

Assistant Cover
Designer

Major: Communication
Graduation: December 2025



Alexis Ash

Staff Writer

Major: English and French &
International Business
Graduation: May 2028



Kathrine Brazgel

Staff Writer

Major: English
Graduation: May 2028



Caroline Fullem

Staff Writer

Major: Communication
Graduation: May 2026



Carly Sanders

Staff Writer

Major: English
Graduation: May 2027



Samantha Sirover

Staff Writer

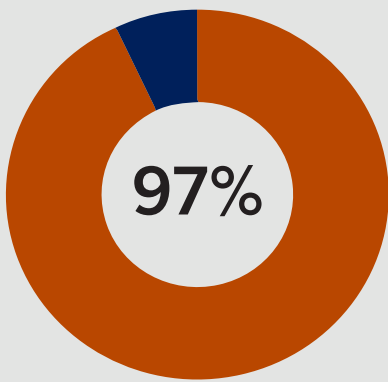
Major: Political Science
Graduation: May 2027

P E A R C E  C E N T E R

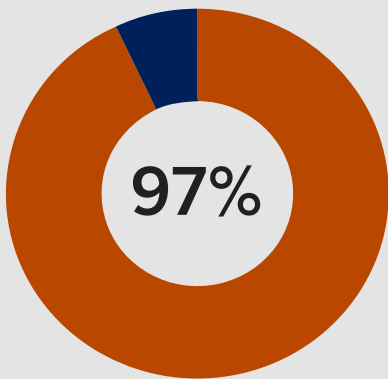
FOR PROFESSIONAL COMMUNICATION

CLEMSON

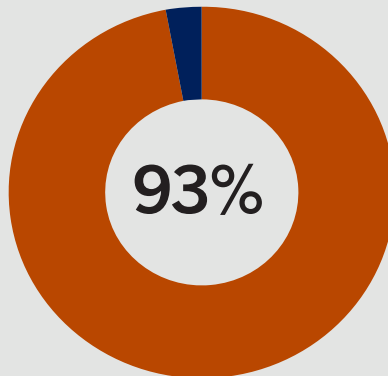
The UPIIC experience



of UPIIC interns rated the overall quality of their internship experiences as “good” or “excellent.”



of UPIIC interns rated their relationship with their internship site mentor as “good” or “excellent.”



93% of UPIIC mentors rated the interns' overall performance as “good” or “outstanding.”



TOTAL UPIC EXPERIENCES

405

Spring 2025

186

Summer 2025

412

Fall 2025

424

Spring 2026

During the Spring, Summer and Fall semesters of 2025, UPIC mentors ranked

Communication

Collaboration

Adaptability

as their interns' greatest strengths.

100%

of UPIC interns were able to explain the significance of their internship experience in relation to their future career goals.

The UPIC Program has representation in all

7 COLLEGES



“As someone who wants to become a front-end web developer, having this internship was an incredible first step in achieving my career goals.”



“I found this internship to be very beneficial for my future career goals, because I was able to explore an entirely new career path...”

“I am interested in law school. This internship has piqued an interest in the compliance sphere and has helped develop my advocacy skills in and outside of the legal profession.”



What interns think

“I hope to be a creative director at a marketing firm, so this internship experience further rounded me out as a candidate.”

Core competencies

1. COMMUNICATION

Public Speaking • Writing • Listening

Engaging in dialogue that leads to productive outcomes and points of connection by effectively articulating oneself to individuals within and outside of one's industry or area of expertise.

2. COLLABORATION

Cooperating • Navigating conflict • Open-mindedness

Developing authentic and mutually beneficial relationships by valuing everyone and taking responsibility for one's role within a team.

3. LEADERSHIP

Motivating • Participating • Facilitating meetings

Being able to recognize, respect, develop and capitalize on the unique strengths of individuals from all backgrounds and being an active member in a group that achieves a shared vision.

4. ADAPTABILITY

Generating ideas • Taking initiative • Implementing solutions

Taking the initiative to further enhance one's skill set and being creative with ways of thinking or approaches that allow for action, reflection, failure and resilience in an ever-changing world.

5. ANALYTICAL

Identifying problems • Analyzing information • Making recommendations

Seizing the opportunity for organizational improvement that prompts critical thinking and problem solving by obtaining, processing and synthesizing information.

6. TECHNOLOGY

Conducting research • Learning software • Troubleshooting

Employing current and emerging software and tools to solve general and industry-specific challenges.

7. SELF AWARENESS

Multi-tasking • Time-management • Setting goals

Understanding one's strengths, limitations, emotions and biases in a variety of situations and articulating how one's interests, skills and values align with educational and professional goals.

8. INTEGRITY AND ETHICS

Understanding • Acting • Enforcing

Making choices and consistently acting in a manner that displays integrity (following internal principles, morals and values) and ethics (following external laws, rules and norms) in personal and professional settings.

9. BRAND

Punctuality • Meeting deadlines • Accepting responsibilities

Demonstrating the continual development of a positive impression or image in every facet of life while seeking feedback from others to ensure congruence between one's intended and perceived reputation.

Briggs Murray

Paws with a purpose: How one student can impact a community

By Maddie Roberts

For Briggs Murray, his time at UPIC was more than just an internship — it was an opportunity unlike any other. Murray, a junior political science and French double major from Charleston, South Carolina, described UPIC as an experience that has enriched his time at Clemson and prepared him for life after graduation.

Murray completed his first semester as a UPIC intern in Spring 2025. He interned with the Clemson chapter of Every Campus a Refuge, an organization dedicated to aiding refugees on college campuses across the country. At Clemson, that means welcoming refugee families into the community and connecting them with resources so they can build new lives here in South Carolina.

Murray began as a student volunteer at ECAR, and after discovering his passion for helping people through the club, a peer recommended he apply to UPIC as a refugee resettlement intern. Through this program, he was able to see the impact that UPIC has facilitated in the



Clemson community as well as leave his own legacy as a UPIC intern.

“We’ve worked all across the Clemson community and are really working to build bridges in between newly arrived families, but also families that have been here for a while.”

Murray was assigned to two refugee families — one from the Democratic Republic of the Congo and one from Venezuela. His role centered on weekly visits to ensure each family had access to a variety of resources, including after-school care for children and assistance with English language acquisition. Murray particularly enjoyed introducing the families to American culture, especially aspects that cannot be taught but must be experienced. He enjoyed being a resource for people who truly wanted to learn more about their new lives. This role was extremely rewarding for Murray, especially as he could watch the growth in each family and person he worked with over time.



“You could see the progress every week, from week one to the final week in the Spring. It was so enriching to be able to follow along and to look back and see how far people have grown in that regard.”

UPIC and ECAR do work that is integral to the Clemson community, considering the values of Clemson are reflected in the work that the interns and volunteers complete. According to Murray, UPIC’s “paw print effect,” especially in collaboration with ECAR, is employing interns and mentors who exemplify “integrity, respect, understanding and acceptance” in their daily lives and who embody what it means to be a Clemson Tiger.

When asked about the importance of UPIC’s work, Murray explained that it is imperative that UPIC interns represent Clemson positively when establishing relationships with those in need, particularly refugees who come here with very little. Clemson is made up of impactful individuals, and the best way to exemplify that is by helping others.

“To be able to create these global links and to really show that Clemson students are so welcoming, open and dedicated to integrity and respect and really just being there for people who are in need of help. I think that that’s the paw print legacy that we left, and that we are leaving still.”

UPIC has already had a very positive impact on Murray’s experience at Clemson. The work he accomplished with his team was what allowed him to form a community of people dedicated to helping others. For him, the “paw print effect” his team was able to produce was powerful because it created a stronger sense of community not only for the interns but for the refugees they were aiding.

“I really felt like my UPIC internship let me have a paw print effect because it wasn’t like I did anything that was unique or groundbreaking, but I think as a team — me, working with three other UPIC interns, a faculty mentor and

dozens of student volunteers, all of us together — I think we really felt like we were making a paw print effect as a team. And so it was that community experience that UPIC gave me that made me feel proud to be a Clemson Tiger.”

Though Murray is spending his Fall semester studying abroad in Dakar, Senegal, he will pick up where he left off and continue his work with UPIC and ECAR upon his return. Because he is not a UPIC intern this semester, he can look back and positively reflect on his experience with the program, especially on how it has impacted his college experience as a whole.

“We’ve worked all across the Clemson community and are really working to build bridges in between newly arrived families but also families that have been here for a while.”

“UPIC was my first true internship experience that I’ve had in college. To be able to step out of the academic classroom and into an actual professional context where I am an employee being paid for doing, on average, 15 hours of work each week, I think that it’s invaluable as a student to actually already receive that work experience.”

UPIC makes such positive impacts throughout Clemson, whether it’s on the community as a whole or on individual students like Murray. Murray embodies the passion to help people, a trait that UPIC fosters, leaving behind a legacy that defines what it means to be a Clemson Tiger.

Chiara Matrisciano

Taking risks as a UPIC intern

By: Sammy Sirover

Clemson University's UPIC program provides more than professional development opportunities for students — it's a remarkable outlet for students to grow in various personal and individual ways. One Clemson student who demonstrates the significance of the UPIC experience is Chiara Matrisciano, whose experience as an agricultural and environmental Spanish translation intern impacted her both professionally and personally.

As a Clemson Division of Regulatory Services intern, Matrisciano was responsible for translating the content of printed and digital materials, such as brochures and PowerPoint presentations, from English to Spanish. Through her work, diverse audiences were able to access and understand information from sources, including flyers, creating inclusion across various communities.

At 17 years old, Matrisciano moved to Florida and faced numerous challenges. For instance, the COVID-19 pandemic and mask mandate made learning to speak fluent English more challenging. Once an international student at Clemson, it was originally difficult for Matrisciano to adjust to a new environment at a university, especially considering the language barriers. Despite feeling lost, Matrisciano's UPIC internship allowed her to restore her sense of self and inner confidence.

"I think even before I moved to the states, kind of throughout high school, I was a little bit more closed off. And then coming here, I was thinking

it would help. But the first few years, obviously not speaking English, I feel like it made it worse."

However, Matrisciano noted that throughout her internship, she gradually begins to recognize her confident self.

Matrisciano's internship position at Clemson was her first professional experience, which created a sense of worry and unease. Without her UPIC mentor, Allison Guggenheimer Bower, Matrisciano's UPIC experience would not have been the same. Bower created an extremely positive work environment and continues to provide a support system for Matrisciano during her time at Clemson and beyond.

"I can say I have worked for Clemson before graduating, which is a pretty big thing that not a lot of people get to do."

"Allison, she's so great. That was my first job or internship, and I was very lucky to have her as my supervisor. It didn't really feel like work because everybody was so nice. Going into your first job, you're just so scared. The supervisor makes your experience in whatever kind of work or job."

Matrisciano's work translating words and content of materials allowed her to learn various

Spanish and English terms and improved her ability to speak these languages more fluently. Her hard-earned efforts to speak various languages has been recognized throughout the Clemson community. In the Spring of 2025, Matrisciano received the Roger K. Simpson '76 Annual Memorial Award for Excellence in Spanish from Clemson's Department of Languages.

"English and Spanish are my second and third languages, so, if I didn't have this internship, I don't think I would have learned a lot of Spanish and English terms."

A memorable aspect of Matrisciano's position was the chance to shadow other faculty members within Clemson's Division of Regulatory Services. Matrisciano shadowed Negar Edwards, Clemson's Information and Nursery Program Coordinator, and Christopher Walls, a chemist and staff member for Clemson's Fertilizer Regulatory and Certification Services.

While shadowing Walls, Matrisciano witnessed and learned how fertilizer labs function as well as the work that goes into maintaining them. Meanwhile, shadowing Edwards taught her how a professional office operates.

Clemson is a unique institution because students are given more than the sole opportunity to grow educationally. Instead, the students are also able to gain hands-on experience in a professional work environment, which Matrisciano credited to her involvement in UPIC. Matrisciano's positive UPIC experience increased her Clemson pride tremendously.

"I can say I have worked for Clemson before graduating, which is a pretty big thing that not a lot of people get to do."

Matrisciano discovered this internship through a class she was enrolled in at the time, and took the chance to assert herself and network with her professor. Despite having limited professional experience prior to her UPIC position, networking with her professor opened up new opportunities. Matrisciano hopes that her experience as an intern encourages Clemson students to step out of their comfort zone and feel comfortable to ask for guidance and support.



"Students in general, they're afraid to just reach out and talk to professors and ask, 'Do you know of an internship?' That's literally how I got this internship. But even just once you start talking and asking questions, to maybe a professor, mentor, advisor or counselor, they can give you ideas that you didn't think about just by talking about it."

Matrisciano's UPIC story highlights an example of taking risks and is a remarkable example of growth among Clemson students. Taking a risk as big as learning new languages and putting herself out

there for a professional task using those same linguistics required an integral strength that other students can look back on and admire. Following her walk across the graduation stage this upcoming spring, the pawprint Matrisciano left in Clemson will remain inspirational to students for years to follow.

Gianna Truisi

More than an internship: UPIC changes your professional and personal life

By: Alyssa Dolina

Behind each piece of content you scroll past on your phone, there is a creator on the other side of the screen whose work you are leaving behind or categorizing as memorable. Someone is always responsible for your favorite marketing schemes and publication updates, a person who cares about the subject matter you are consuming. If you've ever wondered who is behind Clemson's informational UPIC emails, newsletters and social media presence, Gianna Truisi, the UPIC marketing and programming intern, is the one running the flow of material, ensuring your inbox and social media feed stay informative.

Truisi's position is possibly as internal as you can get within the UPIC program considering her job is to curate a close-knit community for all of the other UPIC interns to thrive in. She posts on the UPIC social media platforms, including Instagram and LinkedIn, to ensure all interns and mentors are aware of upcoming events they can attend to meet one another and connect professionally.

"One project we're trying to do is an intern get-together because everyone is so scattered across. So we're thinking of ways the interns will actually want to do it instead of forcing them into a lecture or awkward icebreakers. We want it to be kind of fun. So my idea was to do a UPIC version of Backstreets' bingo, and of course tying in some professional development core competency stuff."

Interpersonal skills are crucial to Truisi's work considering her weekly activities include interviewing fellow UPIC interns by

following their daily part-time careers and filming the progression of tasks in clips, while also highlighting intern accomplishments in the article spotlight sent in the UPIC IT UP newsletter. Creating a UPIC promotional video has been at the top of Truisi's priorities lately, effectively putting her communication skills to the test.



"I'm currently creating a UPIC commercial for the website to promote the program. I'm working on getting some interns, getting some clips, having a script for it, just kind of promoting it overall."

The biggest responsibility Truisi holds is crafting and distributing emails on behalf of UPIC that keep interns and mentors up to date on upcoming professional opportunities along with monthly launches of the UPIC IT UP newsletter that she designs herself. Truisi reaches out to UPIC staff for month-based reports, gathering the details necessary for readers to know, and inputs them into personally-made digital

graphics to create a cohesive newsletter. The publication also includes an intern spotlight, which Truisi and her team typically choose based on recent accomplishments that have substantial impacts.

“I want to finish with the general idea of promoting UPIC as much as possible, and encouraging students to join. You can do this...”

Developing Truisi’s marketing techniques has consisted mainly of graphic design skills, for both the newsletters and social media posts, while conversational abilities also continue to be a necessity. For instance, at the UPIC Mentor Lunch and Learn, Truisi moderated the questions and answers session for three interns who shared their experiences and how their mentors had helped them, especially if those mentors were new. Truisi served as a guide to make certain there were no awkward dips in conversation, keeping the pathway of talking points steady.

“It’s a lot of marketing, coming up with programs or events, and if I’m remote at home, I’ll just finish up the projects that carry into the next week.”

Though Truisi may seem like she is running the entire UPIC marketing department on the surface, she credits her expertise to her mentor, Caitlin Abbatiello, assistant director of the UPIC program. Without the support of her mentor, Truisi never would have found her own voice in the marketing campaigns she has contributed to, attributing pieces of her newfound confidence to Abbatiello.

“She’s guided me through the way, but also let me know that it’s okay to come up with your own things, and she has that trust in me to do it. Of course be sure to have a second eye for review

but come up with my own ideas. Even beyond that, she understands that I am a student and that I’m about to graduate, so I’m looking for post-grad jobs, and she’s always saying ‘Okay, well, how can we help you and your professional growth and get you into a future position?’ So kind of allowing me time to update my resume or look for jobs or things like that, ask her questions and just being a point of contact and reference, has been really amazing. Even beyond my mentor, Jenna Tucker Grogan, Caren Kelly-Hall, everyone has been so welcoming.”

Truisi’s only regret from her time at Clemson was not becoming a part of UPIC sooner. UPIC has given her a foundation of confidence for entering the professional landscape, along with a support system of mentors. Learning how to communicate with people, as well as getting to know them and building relationships has been essential to the growth she has experienced from her internship. Truisi aims to continue becoming a personable anchor in the workforce, staying reliable and hard-working for her future teams.

“I want to finish with the general idea of promoting UPIC as much as possible, and encouraging students to join. You can do this. This is a great step. This is something that you can handle. This is something that you’re worthy of doing, you’re deserving of it. I want to encourage that confidence amongst people who might be questioning it, people who might not know what the UPIC program is, and they’ll realize that they’ll also gain that confidence and development out of it.”

Informing undergraduate students at Clemson of the impression UPIC has left on her is the objective of what Truisi wants to leave behind at the University. She doesn’t want to keep the self-confidence and interpersonal abilities she gained all to herself; she wants to spread the message of all that she has gained so others can also assemble a network of encouragement, enhance their professional background and feel the joy she found at UPIC.

Jaivon Jefferson

Mentoring future engineers at PEER & WISE

By Brianna Bullard

Walking into the Programs for Educational Enrichment and Retention & Women in Science and Engineering center means being greeted with welcoming smiles, meaningful conversations and a community of focused students. This space invites STEM students in and provides mentorship, tutoring and counseling that help them reach their fullest potential, at Clemson University and beyond.

Jaivon Jefferson, a junior computer information systems major from Cross, S.C., embodies the optimistic and welcoming spirit that the PEER & WISE program has to offer. Through his roles as a mentor, role model and friend, Jefferson's journey in the PEER & WISE program has shaped the purposeful impact he has on the Clemson community.

PEER & WISE creates a supportive environment for Clemson students, offering countless

opportunities, academic resources and guidance throughout all stages of students' STEM paths. Students have access to tutoring, mentoring, life coaching and collaborative spaces on Clemson's campus. PEER & WISE shapes a community of inclusivity, growth and encouragement, even reaching off-campus to introduce STEM opportunities to K-12 schools in the community.

Jefferson's journey with PEER & WISE began before he officially became a Clemson Tiger. As a first-generation student stepping into a demanding STEM field, he arrived on campus full of excitement and uncertainties. The PEER & WISE summer program gave him an early start and, more importantly, a place where he didn't feel alone. He has grown through the program ever since, first becoming a counselor before moving to his current position as a mentor.

As a PEER & WISE mentor, Jefferson uses his own experiences to shape a community that promotes the development of Clemson students. Coming to Clemson as a first-generation student navigating a STEM major, he found support and resources through PEER & WISE, especially from his mentors Lisa Jackson and Serita Acker. Their guidance helped him get to where he is today and gave him the knowledge to guide and bolster others going forward. Jefferson now embraces the opportunity to give back the support and family-like welcome that he received during his Clemson journey.

"[The PEER & WISE program] makes me feel like I'm part of a family here and a family at home as well."





The PEER & WISE center is driven by the spirit of creating a comfortable, embracing space for STEM students. Jefferson fosters this environment by working to provide any and all help that his mentees need, ensuring they feel supported and confident in their learning experiences.

“I am always planning to be able to help my mentees study or get answers to their questions. I’m always there for them, for anything they want to talk about, even if it’s not school related.”

While shaping the Clemson experiences of STEM students, Jefferson is developing valuable skills that are shaping him both personally and professionally. Being in charge of over 15 mentees, his role demands both emotional understanding and academic knowledge. Over time, he has learned to read people and adapt based on their needs — when someone needs structure, reassurance or if they just want someone to listen.

“Every mentee is different. Being able to understand someone’s personality and feelings, to communicate with them and be a leader, are all skills I’m going to need in my career.”

Jefferson fulfills the UPIC program’s ideals by translating student engagement into long-lasting learning. His paw print will stay prominent in the Clemson community and in the hearts of each of

his mentees. His encouragement and guidance push students beyond their goals and perceived capabilities.

“This position allowed me to leave my paw print by showing people what they are capable of. I love to see everybody win, and I love to see everybody strive.”

Jefferson embodies the growth, leadership and learning fostered by the PEER & WISE and UPIC programs. He has cultivated a supportive and inclusive environment for STEM students, leaving an impact that will extend far beyond Clemson.

Both Jefferson and his mentees will continue to reach new heights thanks to the opportunities the PEER & WISE program has provided them, from the start of their Clemson journey and well into the future.

“ Being able to understand someone’s personality and feelings, to communicate with them and be a leader, are all skills I’m going to need in my career.

Jamison Peebles

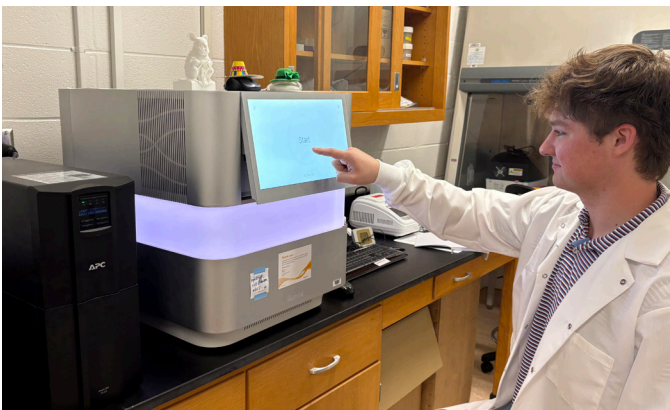
Exploring a passion for math through genomics & bioinformatics

By: Alexis Ash

Jamison Peebles is a man of varied pursuits. In addition to being a junior Honors student with a major in math and concentrations in actuarial science and finance, he's also had a UPIC internship for four semesters. It took some experimenting for Peebles to find his path, but once he did, he made it his own.

Peebles, hailing all the way from Naperville, Illinois, decided that Clemson would be the place for him while on a college tour, following after his mother. He went through six majors during his first year until he realized that math was the one, later seeking an opportunity to elevate his mathematical knowledge.

"I wanted to get a job because of the spare time I had after moving off campus. I figured, why not get some experience while doing it?"



Peebles previously worked with the Honors College through the EUREKA! program, giving him the opportunity to begin research before his first year began. His project on high-risk genes and autism sparked a passion for bioinformatics



and research. In his sophomore year, Peebles received a UPIC internship with the Clemson Genomics and Bioinformatics Department. He now works in a lab in Jordan Hall, thoroughly enjoying the professional atmosphere.

"There's a lot of math involved in different things. That's kind of what bioinformatics is. It's using statistical methods and data science to study genetics and understand the genome of a species."

Peebles works with graduate students as well as a mentor, Rooksana Noorai, the assistant director of Bioinformatics for the Clemson University Genomics and Bioinformatics Facility. Noorai has been Peebles' direct point of contact for lab work, helping him with his work and professional readiness. Peebles engages with computational biology, physics, biophysics and life science, providing him with a well-rounded experience.

“One of the really awesome things about coming to Clemson has been the number of opportunities I’ve been able to have. Looking at grad school, research is huge. Same with the willingness of the different Clemson faculty to help you.”

Peebles is especially appreciative that opportunities like UPIC internships are available to undergraduate students. Peebles has been able to work with the Palmetto Cluster, “one of the biggest, most capable top-20 supercomputers available at universities in the United States.”

“We’ll have mostly schools around the southeast United States come to us for their needs, because we have a lot of the resources they don’t have access to. They’ll send us their samples, we’ll process them, give them back their data, and then they can make conclusions as they will.”

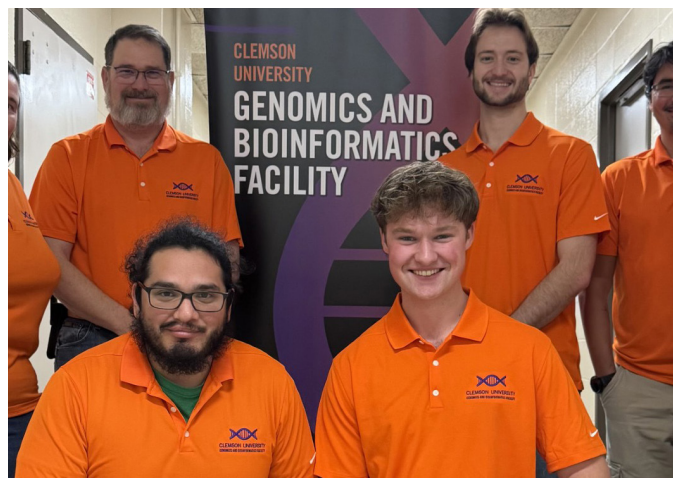
Peebles and the department have also received a few international projects, truly making the Genomics and Bioinformatics department global.

“If something breaks, I get to fix it. Somebody needs an update, I get to do it.”

A typical day for Peebles varies, but his primary task is making sure all the software is up to date and properly integrated on the Cluster.

“If something breaks, I get to fix it. Somebody needs an update, I get to do it. Someone wants something new on the Palmetto Cluster, I’ll also do that.”

Additionally, Peebles engages in hands-on genome sequencing. Peebles finds that his background in statistics has been incredibly helpful for understanding and making inferences based on the placement and structure of DNA within the genomes.



“Something I’ve been doing is comparing different snake genomes to try to understand how traits are inherited. I’ve been helping with that project and doing some of the analysis. This has been a super cool experience to answer questions like how they evolved, which have venom and which are dangerous.”

Looking towards the future, Peebles is studying for the GRE, with the intention of attending graduate school. He’s also studying for the LSAT and could see law school in his future. Nevertheless, Peebles says his dream job would be in financial trading since he finds the fun in applying math and computational skills to solve a puzzle as big as the financial market.

A man of many interests and career paths, Peebles remains dedicated to genomics and bioinformatics, thankful for the research he conducted during his internship.

“The work that we’re doing here, especially with the faculty that I work with, is really important. I’ve seen the ways that a lot of our work drives a lot of research, both at Clemson and outside of Clemson, and I think that that’s something really special.”

No matter what profession he pursues, Peebles feels well-positioned for success with the experience he’s gained through opportunities at Clemson and the UPIC Genomics and Bioinformatics internship.

Juliana Coates

Increasing awareness of Cooper Library and students' success

By: Samantha Sirover

When Cooper Library is mentioned, most Clemson students typically envision fellow students studying for exams or completing class assignments. However, Clemson's library provides more than an environment for studying among fellow Clemson students. Through the power of social media, Juliana Coates, third semester UPIC intern, educates the Clemson community about the various resources the Cooper Library offers, aiming to broaden its use for Clemson students and empower students' success.

As the marketing and communications intern for Cooper Library, Coates is primarily responsible for creating social media content for the library's Instagram and LinkedIn accounts. These tasks increased Coates' abilities in graphic design, photography, videography and social media writing. She discovered this UPIC internship opportunity through one of her communications' courses and was intrigued by the idea of fulfilling a social media management position. Already having writing experience from being an editor for Clemson's student-run newspaper, The Tiger, Coates was excited about the opportunity to gain new skills in social media content creation.

Coates' favorite project includes a series of posts surrounding a ClemsonLife student who works at the Cooper Library's front security desk. Collaborating with the ClemsonLife program increased engagement through filming a day in the life segment and promoting the ClemsonLife student's contributions to the library.

Through filming a day in the life segment and promoting the ClemsonLife student's contributions to the library, collaborating with the ClemsonLife program increased engagement for the library's Instagram page.

Following three semesters as a UPIC intern, Coates' confidence as a content creator has grown tremendously. At the beginning of her internship, Coates "jumped in feet first" when she was put in charge of managing the library's Instagram account. Through this creative freedom, Coates and Angela Nixon, her UPIC mentor and the marketing and communications director for Cooper Library, formed an extremely trusting relationship, which now gives Coates the ability to independently create original content.

"I feel like I'm more of a Swiss Army knife in terms of all the skills I now have. I can go into a job and know how to plan social media posts, create social media content, take a good photo and edit it, write an article and shoot and edit a video. That's probably the biggest aspect professionally, is giving me a set of skills that will translate into wherever I go in the future."

“ Don't be afraid to take on a role or a challenge in an area that you don't necessarily already have experience in or are already comfortable in.



Through producing a variety of content, Coates has grown familiar with the numerous services the library offers for Clemson students. For instance, Coates was not aware of the assistance the library offers nursing majors in order to set them up for success before her internship. Coates has also discovered the podcast recording studio in the Adobe Maker Space, as well as the cameras available in the library students can check out for free.

“I definitely have a bigger understanding and a better appreciation of all the library does for students. I just really appreciate how much the library has for all types of students, from the craziest STEM major to the craziest humanities major; they have something that will help everyone.”

Coates’ work goes beyond herself and her own personal benefits. While UPIC has benefited her life, she is now using her position to benefit the lives of others across all majors. Her goal as an intern is to market the library in a variety of ways in order to bring awareness to its various resources and educate students on its services. Just as Coates learned about everything the library has to offer, her mission is to create an outlet for students to learn about what is available to them and think to themselves, “I didn’t know the library had that. I could use that right now.” Through this realization, Coates’ work

is allowing students to personally elevate their success and experience at Clemson.

“So just through setting people up in the best position for success academically and professionally, I’m just hoping to increase awareness of that and pull people in the right direction in terms of those resources.”

Throughout her numerous semesters as a UPIC intern, Coates left her own “digital legacy” at Clemson through the numerous posts and online materials she crafted and published. Once she graduates from Clemson, she is excited to scroll back through the library’s Instagram page while reflecting on her own growth, as well as the change that she made at Clemson. Coates’ UPIC position represents personal triumph and hopes to encourage other students to become involved in the UPIC program.

“Don’t be afraid to take on a role or a challenge in an area that you don’t necessarily already have experience in or are already comfortable in. Because being put in that new position, it’s gonna push you and allow you to grow in ways that you never would have imagined.”

Ultimately, Coates’ UPIC position demonstrates the importance of social media and the influence it has over students’ achievements. While producing social media content benefited her own personal and professional development, she created a long-lasting legacy for herself through her contributions to the success of the Clemson community.



Kaelyn King

A helping hand: How environmental aid provided a sense of belonging

By Kathrine Brazgel

Invasive species in South Carolina have been harmful environmentally and economically and negatively impactful on the forestry industry. Thanks to UPIC's Invasive Species Program, interns, such as Kaelyn King, are making focused efforts to educate others about and regulate this harm.

For King, moving from Massachusetts to Clemson was no small feat. King always loved hiking, camping and the outdoors, but little did she know her move to South Carolina would turn this love into a passion that she would pursue for four years and will continue to do so for many more to come.

When King first came to Clemson, she looked for programs to get involved in. With the help of a professor, King was introduced to the UPIC program. She found a love for researching, communication and “the different aspects of the natural resources field.”

Although she had no idea what she was getting herself into, she dove headfirst, finding an internship full of kindness, passion, encouragement and inspiration.

As an environmental and natural resources major, King has been able to apply her studies to the unique elements of her internship. Through her role, King creates digital and physical

advertisements and outreach materials. Her designs for outreach events are distributed throughout the state and beyond through social media and online e-blasts.

“The designs are focused on educating the general public, as well as industry professionals, on the regulated invasive species in South Carolina, including how they can track them and trap them and how they can engage [with] our program.”



One of her largest goals is to spread necessary information and create a space for education and resources to aid the Invasive Species Program.

Along with her outreach efforts, King also participates in hands-on monitoring of these invasive species and translates the collected data.

“My colleagues and my goal is to reduce the spread because the invasive species can be super harmful to both the nature of South Carolina . . . but also economics as well, especially to the forestry industry.”

King's efforts are to support and administer assistance to the natural world, providing an environment that is safe for all individuals and species.

Not only has her UPIC internship allowed King to be a hands-on supporter of the protective efforts

to reduce the spread of invasive species, but it has also provided her with a strong sense of belonging.

“I was terrified coming in as a first year because I knew no one. I’m now looking back, and it’s so special to be able to see you’re doing the right thing and that you’re going to find your place.”

King has only joy when thinking of her academic and professional experience, as they helped her find her home, giving all thanks to UPIC for providing her with this opportunity.

“[UPIC is] the true reason that I’ve stayed [with the internship] for so long.”

For King, nothing compares to the opportunity, belonging and experience of being a UPIC intern.

As King’s UPIC internship has impacted her, the paw print she has left here at Clemson is imperative for the program’s growth. She explained the newer, fresher perspective she provided as a student and young woman, saying,

“My paw print is ... from the outreach side because I feel like I’ve gotten a lot of chances to incorporate new types of media and new types of outreach materials and bring a fresh perspective on design.”

King’s discovery of what gets an audience’s attention and how to increase publicity of her

“ This internship has been a vessel for me to exercise my passions, has been really special, allowing me to sort of feel like I’ve made an impact.”

outreach allowed for an improvement within the program. Her work and growth directly improved the program as a whole, as she introduced helpful elements and perspectives.

A sense of humility and joy emanated from King as she explained how impactful this four-year-long project has been and the enjoyment she has gained from leaving a lasting mark on the Invasive Species Program and the breadth of regulatory services.

King’s fresh perspective, along with her passion for outreach and research within the program, has been influential for both her and the program. King has both experienced and created a lasting effect.

After moving to Clemson with fear and no sense of belonging, King has truly found her home within UPIC.

“This internship has been a vessel for me to exercise my passions, has been really special, allowing me to sort of feel like I’ve made an impact.”

The UPIC internship program has changed King’s life, enabling and encouraging her to follow her passion as she inspires future Tigers through her outreach and involvement.



Lily Kurrack

From the balance beam to balancing the scales of justice

By: Alyssa Dolina

Doing the right thing may seem like a simple task; however, many of the details within policies and rules are often overlooked. Considering acting in alignment with compliance standards is vital to the success of any organization, especially for a professional university, Lily Kurrack, a junior political science major, has reviewed a multitude of Clemson University's procedures through her UPIC internship, ensuring they have been crafted with incorruptibility.

From her former Clemson athletic career as a gymnast, Kurrack incorporates team building techniques and time management into her UPIC experience to effectively collaborate on her tasks of ethical policy making. After learning about this opportunity through student athlete development, Kurrack found her true passion of being the one to ensure different assets of organizations are acting truthfully, according to legal policies in place.

Although Kurrack has since stepped off the balance beam and decided to focus on balancing the scales of justice, she has learned how to act with integrity from all aspects of her journey at Clemson. Now it is her intention to give the values of honesty and moral righteousness back to the university, ultimately paving her pathway with the experience to become a human rights attorney.

Ever since Kurrack became a UPIC intern for the Office of University Compliance and Ethics during her first year at Clemson, she has learned how to make certain that Clemson adheres to the logistical and administrative protocols,

from something as small as golf cart safety requirements to the broad task of rewording conduct codes to be more inclusive.

"Equity is really important, so often my task is benchmarking, which is to research policies of different universities and help create a more universal policy system that's accessible to all individuals."



Compliance held significant weight throughout Kurrack's internship. She often conducts extensive research on which required laws Clemson University must follow since the institution cannot step outside the rules without encountering legal repercussions.

"The rules that conduct the University policies range from things having to do with golf carts to the way that money is distributed. I compare it to how laws are passed in state legislatures, as well as federal laws and the national government. The University is its own little bubble and has its own way of doing things, so you can't go do something crazy and expect it to be okay."

In order to make sure the University acts ethically and legally, Kurrack promotes compliance and doing the right thing by making presentations for university departments to view, especially during compliance and ethics week. Last semester, the compliance and ethics UPIC team was assigned to make graphics for the career fair advertising “Coffee and Compliance,” where students could meet with University records officers and coordinators who empower the community to do the right thing.

As someone who wants to become a human rights attorney, doing the right thing is always on Kurrack’s mind. It is important for her to understand the ethical principles required in legal processes so she can follow proper procedures when advocating for equity in future fundamental rights disputes.

“I’m learning a lot about policy and administration conflict of interest laws, and I’m doing a lot of research and analytical skills on what actually affects the University. So I think that’s really important for me to take with me when I go to graduate school and law school, which is my ultimate goal. It’s really helping me.”

UPIC’s hands-on environment has allowed Kurrack to understand how ethics are approached in professional settings that involve high stakes legalities. Kurrack’s on-site experience has also expanded her viewpoint on navigating interpersonal relationships in business environments, so she is more prepared for her real-world career.

“UPIC has given me a really great foot in the professional door.

“UPIC has given me a really great foot in the professional door. When a lot of people graduate, they don’t understand how to act in



a professional setting or what the real world requires. I feel like I’m starting to learn how to act in the workplace while in college, and I’m understanding how I can be my own best employee in the actual work environment.”

Kurrack hopes to leave an honorable sense of morale interwoven throughout each aspect of Clemson, not just in the codes and policies, but also within the human beings that make the University come alive. She intends to act with the integrity she gained from this internship in her future professional endeavors, as well as her personal life.

“I guess I just want people to know that I always act with integrity, and I feel like that’s something that’s really been promoted, not just within my sport or within my internship, because compliance is all about doing the right thing. How can you make the right impact on people, and how can you act with integrity in everything that you’re doing? That’s kind of what I want to leave behind.”

As Kurrack walks away from Clemson University after graduating, she will be able to look back at her lasting legacy and see a paw print shaped with the integrity she gathered through her tasks at UPIC’s compliance and ethics department.

Megan Calahan

How the Brook T. Smith Launchpad made her an entrepreneur

By Brianna Bullard

Megan Calahan, a senior mechanical engineering major, has taken her entrepreneurial potential to the next level at the Brook T. Smith Launchpad. The Launchpad empowers her, among entrepreneurs of all walks of life, to reach their fullest potential. As a full-time student, business owner and Entrepreneur in Residence through the UPIC Program, Calahan embraces every opportunity to expand her personal and professional dreams, while giving back to the Clemson community in any way she can.

After taking an entrepreneurship course at Clemson that introduced her to the Launchpad, Calahan felt inspired by everything it had to offer. She landed her role as an Entrepreneur in Residence in Fall 2025 and, since then, her position has allowed her to grow her personal business, begin a new business project and gain endless amounts of mentorship and learning opportunities to support them.

“You can come here with the spirit to learn more, and you come in with an idea that you have and you want to grow...I get to work on my business ideas, and I have opportunities for mentorship, events and symposiums.”

Calahan has always had a spirit for entrepreneurship. She started and continues to run a permanent jewelry business with her mother this summer, and is currently working toward her dream to open a coffee and food trailer. Being able to put her passions into her projects at the Launchpad, Calahan is learning the tools that will help her businesses take flight.

She is using her love for coffee to drive her business development, aiming to make coffee more accessible in Clemson. Calahan recognizes problems with coffee shop hours, making cups more transportable and the gap in the market for a coffee truck. The Launchpad allows her to build her business idea while also supporting her and her mother’s business, LAYERS.

As a mechanical engineering major, Calahan is grateful for the broad scope of learning she receives at Clemson, through her classes, internship and the community. She is a Department of Defense SMART Scholarship student, committed to serving in the Army for three years as an engineer after graduating in Spring 2026. Before and after serving, she will devote her time to developing her business plan in Alabama and ultimately bring her vision to life in Clemson.



Calahan emphasizes the support she has received from Clemson and the surrounding community throughout her learning experience. Through the UPIC program, endless mentorship and even learning how to become a barista in between her off-site hours at Blackwater Roasters in Seneca, there is no other place she would want her business to grow. Guidance takes shape at the Launchpad, having each EIR meet with mentors who specialize in topics from budgeting to pitching their business, leaving no questions unanswered.

“The most rewarding part has been meeting people here and learning what my strengths and weaknesses are. Recognizing I don’t know everything and having to really lean on my peers and the mentors here, I’m learning so many skills that my classes don’t have, especially coming from engineering, and transferring it over to all my work.”

The Brook T. Smith Launchpad has given Calahan the opportunity to give back to others in return for the opportunities she has received. She spends her time encouraging new faces at the Launchpad, meeting with interested entrepreneurs and sharing the strength of the Launchpad’s mission.

“I love that others have invested in me, and the least I can do is give back to everybody else.”

The UPIC Program has allowed Calahan to instill her values into her learning experience. Having always been passionate about giving back, the Launchpad has provided the perfect space to support fellow entrepreneurs who share her drive. By sharing her own lessons and experiences, Calahan helps foster a collaborative, encouraging community in Clemson where students and innovators can grow together.

“I think the main thing is how much of a community this builds; it’s truly people who would not have interacted any other way, but now we’re such a close group who really know



each other, and my interaction with local businesses has changed my outlook on what Clemson has to offer.”

Calahan continues to make a meaningful impact on Clemson’s welcoming and supportive community. She has embraced every opportunity to grow and give back, whether through her work at the Launchpad, her own business ventures

“ I love that others have invested in me, and the least I can do is give back to everybody else.

or her connections with local entrepreneurs. As she prepares to serve as an engineer in the U.S. Army and later expand her business plans, Calahan will maintain her outreach and Clemson spirit. Her journey reflects the lasting influence of mentorship, hard work and community, leaving a Clemson paw print that will continue to inspire fellow entrepreneurs long after graduation.

Reynolds “RJ” Young

From Clemson research intern to paleogeneticist

By: Carly Sanders

Reynolds “RJ” Young, junior genetics major, found a future in the Clemson Light Imaging Facility. At the beginning of his Clemson journey, he planned to pursue a career in medicine, focusing on research in epidemiology and immunology. Medicine would have been a safe pursuit, a stable horizon. However, Young did not envision himself in that career for the rest of his life, and his UPIC internship provided him with the confidence and resources to explore a more ambitious area of study: paleogenetics.

An ongoing project in the genetics lab dissecting flies changed the entire trajectory of his future career, a passion that would have gone undiscovered had Rhonda Powell, research lab manager of the Clemson Light Imaging Facility, not extended him an invitation to become a research intern.

The majority of Young’s work in the lab revolves around paraffin embedding — the process of inserting tissue samples in paraffin wax to preserve them for microscopic analysis. Once the sample is embedded in wax, Young can complete a fluorescent stain, allowing other researchers and students to visualize the complex tissue structures under a microscope. It is a very delicate series of processes that require an incredible amount of focus and intricate procedure, but they are invaluable to the carrying out of subsequent research.

Without the hard work of research interns like Young, the majority of tissue samples used in the University’s educational labs would not exist. His internship has allowed him and his team the



opportunity to leave a lasting impression on the future lab procedures and endeavors.

While Young consistently contributes to the genetics lab, being a UPIC intern has also challenged him by creating a chance to see what it’s like to pursue both academics and work that simultaneously feed into his future career path while also making connections from his internship that prepare him for prospective experiences in a lab.

“The most rewarding part is that I feel like somewhat of a professional, just by the fact that I am an intern. I know how to make things in the lab now, and I’ve gained a skill set that’s invaluable, at least to the workforce. Despite the fact that I do plan to go to grad school before I start in the industry, I feel like I developed skills in this mentorship that would make me a

better candidate for job interviews and getting selected for those positions.”

Through the UPIC program, Young was paired with a mentor to enhance his skills. Having a mentor has made his Clemson experience more reliable knowing he has someone to go to for advice on his lab techniques and overall questions regarding his education journey.

“Clemson in general is such a family environment, I can’t imagine never contacting anybody from here ever again, just because, not to sound corny, but tigers are forever. As far as my mentorship program, I know my mentor has really helped me with everything I need — whether that be recommendation letters for grad school or researching programs to make sure I find the right one. She has my best interest at heart.”



“Clemson in general is such a family environment, I can’t imagine never contacting anybody from here ever again, just because, not to sound corny, but tigers are forever.”

As for Young’s main interest, there is a continuous project in the lab in which flies are dissected. The project gets rotated to interns for short periods, and Young hopes to make the project a permanent experiment in the lab instead of just an “on-the-side classroom experience.”

This particular project has guided Young into his niche of genetics, equipping him with a foundational skill set that he can apply, not only to a diverse range of future lab work but also in future research he plans to conduct in paleogenetics.

Paleogenetics relies on preserved ancient materials to inform a modern understanding of the past, and is therefore reliant on samples that can withstand the tests of time. Young’s dedication to a lasting legacy in the genetics lab has equipped him with an intimate understanding of the procedural and analytical knowledge required to produce viable, high-quality genetic samples.

“Extracting DNA from fossilized animal samples would take a process of steps and trying to get viable fragments out of those, so I do see what I’m doing now in that way.”

Young will carry this passion with him as he advances in his academic and professional career, cultivating rich educational and research environments in Clemson University and beyond. His work will lay the roots for future paleogeneticists and paleobiologists, like himself, to continue their important study of the past and embed that work in our history.

Riley Still

A UPIC intern's role in building better communities

By Kate Shealy

Most students never see what goes into improving life in Clemson's residential communities, but through her UPIC internship, Riley Still found herself at the center of it, helping shape the spaces students call home.

When Still first arrived at Clemson University, she knew she wanted to make an impact. What she didn't realize, however, was just how deeply her internship would influence her journey, both academically and personally. Now serving as the Residential Learning Intern for Clemson Home, Still spends her days helping enhance the residential experience for students across campus.

"There are two different departments of housing. There's Clemson Residential Living and Residential Learning. Residential Learning focuses on taking information from residential communities on campus and looking at different strategies on how to make the experience better."

After she and the team analyze the strategies, they use the data they have gathered to make tangible improvements that strengthen social engagement and enhance the students' time in their residential communities.

This position serves as the perfect bridge between Still's passion for education and her drive to help others. As an early childhood education major, she's accustomed to analyzing learning environments, observing student needs and identifying ways to support student growth.

These same analytical and problem-solving skills are also evident in her internship work.

"I was a residential community mentor last year," Still said. "When I was no longer going to be in that position, one of my bosses actually reached out to me and said, 'I think that this would be great for you.'"

That mentor, a graduate director in her housing community, was right. After Still's journey to UPIC began with a bit of encouragement, this role has allowed her to combine her interest in education, community engagement and data-driven problem-solving, all while gaining hands-on experience that extends beyond the classroom.

In her position, Still surveys students in various residential areas of the University, gathers that data and analyzes it to understand student enjoyment and participation in their communities. If numbers are not elevated, Still and the team take this information and use it to improve the student living experience, whether through social activities or connecting students to resources, helping them thrive.

"You learn so many different things through UPIC that you just wouldn't learn in a regular classroom."

“UPIC has given me the confidence and skills to actually make an impact on the Clemson community.”

Still's internship was her first experience with the UPIC program, and the impact it has had on her time at Clemson has been substantial. This role has affected her experience at Clemson beyond her academic career.

“Clemson offers such amazing academics. However, there are things you learn through the UPIC program that you wouldn't learn in your classes.”

At Clemson, there are three main core competencies that contribute to enhancing student performance: Engagement, Innovation and Professionalism. Still states that her UPIC internship has allowed her to expand upon and become more effective in these competencies.



Her time at Clemson has not only academically prepared her but has also given her the confidence to pursue her future career goals. According to Still, no other university better prepares students for the future than Clemson. After graduation, Still hopes to become a speech-language pathologist specializing in helping young children with learning disabilities. This passion aligns closely with her desire to help others reach their potential.

When Still reflects on her Clemson Experience, her work within the UPIC program has been the most rewarding part of her journey.

“The connections I make with people have been my favorite part. I've met people through Clemson Home, CSLE and the UPIC office...

people that maybe I would not have met otherwise. You get to learn so much because everybody is different, and everyone brings something different to the table.”

Networking with fellow interns, staff members and students throughout the UPIC program and the Clemson community has significantly enhanced her experience during her time at the University.

Those newfound connections have also helped Still feel empowered to make a real difference.

“UPIC has given me the resources and skills to make an impact. It's helped me actually feel confident in what I'm doing, especially because my work affects the entire Clemson campus.”

Still's work within the Residential Learning community has helped students better enjoy their time on campus, thereby uplifting their positive impression of Clemson University.

“UPIC has given me the confidence and skills to actually make an impact on the Clemson community.”

Still explained that her time in the UPIC program has truly allowed her to leave her Clemson paw print, while developing both professionally and personally.

“The UPIC program has allowed me to grow in ways I wouldn't have without it. The projects I'm working on right now, none of them would have been possible without this experience. I really feel like I'm making an impact at Clemson.”



Danielle McFall

A secret worth sharing

By: Katherine Brazgel

Danielle McFall sees the Rural Health and Nutrition Program for Clemson Extension as the best-kept secret, but she wishes that weren't the case. Instead, as the Extension Associate, she hopes to spread information about the incredible research programs and medical help available for all, through her work mentoring and aiding UPIC interns. McFall helps coordinate and manage chronic disease prevention and self-management programs. With an Extension office in every county, McFall is one of the many impressive individuals who provide support across the state.

The program utilizes UPIC, which enables at least four students each semester to work with Clemson Extension.

“The goal is to connect extension agents across the state to help them with recruitment for their chronic disease programs, data collection, program delivery, evaluation, and resource navigation.”

UPIC internships were able to be allocated back in 2017 purely through grant funds. Since then, the program has taken off. The interns hired are the backbone of this progress, as they are not just temporary workers but impactful teammates.

“Nearly 60% stay with the program. At least eight who have gone on to do something in extension... whether that's a program assistant, program coordinator, extension agent or an extension associate.”



This program has affected the lives and futures of interns, motivating them to continue working in the field and uncovering this “best-kept secret.”

Together, the UPIC interns and McFall, along with the Extension Program's other employees, used their opportunity to address the needs of Greenville County, namely diabetes and hypertension.

There was an opportunity to submit to the Greenville Health Authority for a project on diabetes self-management, so they decided to work with Greenville Health System and Mount PRISMA Health to submit a diabetes prevention program.

After five years, they were able to deliver a community-based and a clinic-based diabetes prevention program, as well as develop a diabetes self-management support program in collaboration with the department at PRISMA.

McFall was not yet supporting her county's needs. She was tasked with adapting, editing and creating the Health Extension for Diabetes

program, with the help of the Association of Diabetes Care and Education.

None of this could be done without the framework from the American Diabetes Association's Life with Diabetes teaching outlines.

"We worked with some certified diabetes care and education specialists to review it and help us with our facilitator guides and things."

The creation of participant materials could not have been executed to such valor without the student interns.

Because of the work of UPIC interns and McFall, in 2019, the American Diabetes Association recognized the Health Extension for Diabetes program as a practice-tested support program.

"Because of that ADA designation in 2019, the CDC actually put out a list in 2022...and our program was on one of the ten programs nationally that would meet their criteria for being able to deliver."

“UPIC provides a workforce pipeline for training...and access to real-world experiences through the internship.

The program has since been able to work with Tennessee, North Carolina, Georgia and Alabama to expand this program throughout the Southeast. McFall can't help but emphasize how much the UPIC students had to do with that. Along with creating support programs, student interns are able to recruit for this program, help

with social media posts, create flyers, assist with in-person events, make calls to agents and share the lifeline that is their support systems.



"UPIC provides a workforce pipeline for training...and access to real-world experiences through the internship. The students really do make what we do possible... Without our students, I just don't think that our programs would have the impact. I hope and I think that they get something out of it too."

McFall has left her paw print on UPIC interns, as a mentor, as well as on Clemson. Through her mentorship, she sees students leave with many valuable, real-world skills they can apply.

"But beyond that we try to make sure they are interacting with community members...to make sure they always remember that this is a person first, that they remember that this is not just a record ID. This is not just a patient number. This is a person."

All interns who leave this program exit with the utmost respect and care for their medical practices and community support. As McFall leaves her caring, empathetic paw print on UPIC interns, they leave their mark on the community around them.

"We are typically told we're the best-kept secret. But we don't want to be. We want people to know about Extension...I just want people to leave knowing what Extension is and how Extension can help the community."

McFall's paw print is no secret; it is a daily, compassionate work ethic that has provided the county with life-changing support. She thanks UPIC and the interns for aiding her tireless labor.

Dylan Andrew Porter

The superheroes behind the screen: Crafting a cybersecurity task force through UPIC

By: Alexis Ash

Although Clemson University is targeted by cyberattacks at least once every two weeks, alarm bells never ring. Each cyber attack is defeated time and time again by none other than Dylan Andrew Porter and his team of UPIC cybersecurity analyst interns. Porter, originally hired as a cybersecurity analyst for Clemson, was later promoted to be the manager of the Security Operations Center. His role also notably includes serving as a UPIC mentor to an average of 10 students per semester.

Porter and his UPIC interns are behind the computer screens, countering the threats to Clemson students' privacy and protecting security confidentiality. He describes his interest in cybersecurity as a "cat and mouse game where you're always racing to beat the bad guys on whatever they're trying to do," and he finds joy in its competitive nature.

The UPIC interns are hired because of their passion for cybersecurity, usually selected from the Clemson Cyber Security club. The interns learn to work with real Clemson login credentials and build upon their knowledge base of cybersecurity and computer science. Interns start in tier one, learning the basics until they advance to more specialized tasks in tier two and tier three as their tenure lengthens. It's important for Porter to build that relationship with his UPIC interns, so they can feel like it's a place where they can grow by working with Clemson data and users in a hands-on manner.

"We can build you up. As long as you have basic computer knowledge, just entry freshman

level computer knowledge, computer science knowledge, you can fit right in. We'll be able to teach you everything you'll need to know."



Once students take on the internship, they always stick around to complete it during their time at Clemson, sometimes for two to three years. As they continue, they become increasingly specialized within the tier system.

"You're working with real Clemson data. You're doing actual operational-type tasks. So you're working with things you would see in a real job, doing cyber security, just with supervision and training under my full-time employees and me."

Most of the interns are alert-based, meaning they tackle security breaches as they roll in, but they also take on a practical or research project to have a physical representation of their work by the end of the semester.

The interns also get very invested in their cyber competitions, often winning in the region and even advancing to nationals. Their UPIC internship work tends to give them an edge in those competitions. Namely, Clemson Cyber has asserted its dominance at the national Palmetto Cyber Defense Competition with eight wins in the past 13 years.

Beyond cyber competitions, Porter has seen how pursuing this UPIC internship is a great stepping stone to putting yourself ahead in the job pool after you graduate. Since becoming a mentor, he has witnessed many success stories of students who have gone on to join Fortune 500 companies after their internship.

Situated on the expansive fourth floor of the Watt Family Innovation Center, the cybersecurity lounge is both open and technologically advanced. The room where the threats are thwarted is off-limits to the public, with a giant, gleaming screen at the front that encompasses the entire room. The Cyber Security Department at Clemson is uniquely located with access to all nearby departments, allowing them to serve as the “overseers” behind the scenes.

“Our goal is to deliver the number one student experience, so we like to be there for our interns. If they have questions, [we] make sure they understand it’s a safe place. You’re not going to know everything in cybersecurity.”

Porter prioritizes the growth-mindset approach to the internship and the flourishing of his interns, which he cultivates from start to finish.

Looking toward the future, Porter aims to make the internship more refined in tiers two and three, away from generic cybersecurity and toward niche areas in offensive security. This is where students engage in penetration



testing and vulnerability assessment and, on the network side, in firewalls and security. The final tier is endpoint security, which focuses on protecting the computer itself.

Making sure the data of Clemson users doesn’t get compromised or leaked, Porter and his team of diligent UPIC interns are working hard in Watt, solidifying themselves as the superheroes behind the screen.

“ Our goal is to deliver the number one student experience, so we like to be there for our interns.

Porter greatly appreciates UPIC for the opportunity it provides students to gain critical experience and skills in the professional field of cybersecurity. From the unique standpoint of both mentor and manager, Porter has not only analyzed data and security but also how much the internship has allowed his students to thrive.

Hrishita Negi

Using our mascot to unite Clemson Tigers for tiger conservation

By: Alyssa Dolina

In order to efficiently ensure tiger conservation, our very own Clemson Tigers have been recruited to assist in saving these spectacular animals. Hrishita Negi, Ph.D., knew from the very start of her animal protection journey how important students and University resources would be to the overall success of her scientific mission.

“I grew up in the central Indian landscape, which is very important for tigers and their conservation. Naturally, my path led me to doing research for tigers as well. I eventually came to Clemson in the year 2020 to start my Ph.D. in tiger conservation research, looking into both the social and ecological factors of what drives human-tiger coexistence in this landscape, and that’s what I graduated with last year.”

Not long after obtaining her Ph.D., Negi joined Tigers United as the associate director. Tigers United is a coalition of four land-grant institutes, Clemson, Auburn, Missouri and Louisiana State University, who have decided to use their tiger mascots as a way to advocate for tiger conservation efforts and the empowerment of the issue in local communities.

Through its integrative nature, Tigers United collaborates with other universities, including partnerships and programs. Even athletic departments participate in the Save the Mascot campaign. The organization does work for tiger conservation in 13 tiger range countries, resulting in many partnerships, meetings and communications.

Tigers United required a lot of support to fulfill its mission. After realizing the limitations of their available resources, Negi and the director of Tigers United, Greg Yero, Ph.D., agreed that student interns from the UPIC program could support a lot of the organization’s initiatives.

The four components of Tigers United that needed the help of the UPIC interns included outreach, marketing and communication, education and training and partnership building and fundraising. These foundational categories resulted in hiring four students, who worked with Negi as their mentor.

“ I want us to learn how we all can come together for a cause, and how we can sort of bring together these different interdisciplinary expertise, knowledge bases and experiences.

Hence the revival strategy of Tigers United, these communication interns’ tasks consist of changing the marketing and communication tactics on all the social media platforms, as well as cross-collaboration with Clemson Division of Marketing and Communications specialists, working in conjunction with the fundraising and partnership development team to identify who the top donors would be, the projected



engagement and corporate partnerships, establishing a student implementation arm for Tigers United, called Tigers for Tigers and revamping all the environmental education curriculums being implemented this year. Due to these new intern roles, Negi has stood as a pillar of guidance and support. The team often meets for brainstorming sessions, current updates and assisting the interns in understanding the desired paths for each of Tigers United's different branches.

"The interns were integral in those discussions and they gave a lot of fresh inputs. We would strategize with each of these Tigers United arms, discussing their roles and what tasks they needed to take care of for a couple of days, and then we would regroup to do those updates again and again and have those Tigers United team discussions with all of the interns present."

The UPIC mentor position was extremely rewarding for Negi because it was another way for her to advocate for the preservation of these animals' health and safety and spread the Tigers United mission. Not only was she able to enhance the professional capabilities of these student interns but she gave them a complete understanding of what this overall goal of protection aims to accomplish, effectively recruiting more people to contribute to the conservation efforts.

With the help of Jenna Tucker Grogan, Negi paved a bridge of connection so the interns had access to insight from experts in their domains. For instance, the marketing and communications intern was also advised by a Clemson Division of Marketing and Communications professional, while Negi was still their mentor for Tigers United assignments. The interns helped Tigers United in all the roles and responsibilities necessary to advance their core competencies.

"It's really rewarding to see how holistic their growth has been."

Negi has curated beneficial relations with her interns, resulting in an eye-opening, resume-building exploration for the driven-minded students, paired with an impact left on Tigers United that would not have been achievable without them. She wants to leave behind an important legacy through stewardship, leadership and an active effort in research to aid in advancing the tiger conservation agenda.

"It's very important for us to know that we're a university that takes this platform very seriously, and we also have great cross-college expertise with the interns who are so great in their own domains. I want us to learn how we all can come together for a cause, and how we can sort of bring together these different interdisciplinary expertise, knowledge bases and experiences and sort of create a conservation engine, as well as an engine for student leadership, so we can all collectively be part of high-impact projects that ultimately help save our mascot in the wild, and also the local communities that live alongside with them."

Implementing tiger conservation on a global scale has always been at the core of Tigers United, but particularly in Negi's ambitions. By constantly showing her interns the importance of the tiger mascot operation and the symbolism it brings, Negi has successfully begun her mission of creating a space for people to care about saving these animals that stabilize the environment and natural processes, making the world go round.

Maggie Erickson

Preparing students for success in the age of AI

By: Caroline Fullem

Her interns stood in front of a room full of faculty, answering questions about their work with a certain level of professionalism and honesty that suggested they'd done this many times before. From her seat in the audience, UPIC mentor Maggie Erickson watched quietly, momentarily forgetting her role as a program director and slipping into what she described as “mom mode,” not out of nerves, but out of pride.

This moment reflects the heart of her work as a mentor in the UPIC program, preparing students not just for a job but for an entire workforce being reshaped by artificial intelligence and uncertainty. Through intentional mentorship and innovative program design, Erickson focuses on giving students the tools and confidence to be ready for their careers after Clemson.

“My proudest moments aren’t about me — they’re about what the students are able to accomplish.”

Erickson is the director and leader of the Career Innovation Lab at Clemson University, a program with the mission of developing AI-driven career guidance for students.

Before the development of the Career Innovation Lab, Erickson first joined the Career Center at Clemson in September 2022, with the public launch of ChatGPT following shortly after. For her, this moment raised a clear question: how could the Career Center better support students preparing to enter workforces that were actively changing in real time? Rather than focusing solely on traditional career readiness, she began



thinking about what it meant to prepare students for work in the age of AI.

Working closely with the UPIC program, Erickson saw an opportunity to create student roles centered on learning about emerging technologies, subsequently understanding how to teach those skills to others. At the time, these conversations were happening before the University had made any large-scale moves around AI adoption, making this effort both early and experimental.

With state funding to pilot the idea, Erickson launched the Career Innovation Lab. The lab functions as a collaborative space where students explore innovation, career development and ethical uses of AI while working alongside peers and mentors. What began with eight interns has since grown to 22, a scale made possible by UPIC’s infrastructure and support. Today, Erickson sits at the forefront of mentorship and innovation within UPIC, designing programs that anticipate where the

workforce is headed while ensuring students are prepared to meet it with confidence.

“Clemson Elevate has three pillars, and the first one is to create the number one student experience. Getting to be part of thinking through what that looks like from a career standpoint has been really exciting and fulfilling, but also getting to develop partnerships across campus in every department.”

Since the internship framework is already in place, Erickson and her team look beyond campus and offer meaningful support to South Carolina small businesses. This semester alone, interns at the Career Innovation Lab are working on six projects outside of the Clemson system. Through these partnerships, Erickson’s students gain professional experience and expand their network beyond the University while simultaneously contributing real value to organizations across the state. The built-in support UPIC provides results in a model where students can develop professionally, small businesses receive innovative support and Clemson’s commitment to serving the state of South Carolina is actively carried out in tangible ways.

“We’re a land grant school and that was part of Thomas Green Clemson’s will, is that we give back and improve the lives of South Carolinians as well.”

As the Career Innovation Lab continues to grow, Erickson sees emerging technologies as tools that can strengthen, not replace, human-centered work at its core. Emerging technologies like AI are most powerful when used for efficiency. They can streamline routine and repetitive tasks, creating consistency and also saving time.

However, Erickson emphasizes that AI cannot replicate genuine human interaction. An AI program cannot replace the depth of a real conversation or the trust that is built through face-to-face collaboration. In the Career Innovation Lab, interns work on developing AI

systems that preserve knowledge and create smoother transitions between graduating interns and incoming ones, reducing lag time and maintaining continuity. By allowing AI to maintain duplicative functions, students and mentors are able to focus on high-level thinking, creativity and relationship building, which ultimately elevates the UPIC experience rather than diminishes it.

Erickson leads in hopes that every intern carries forward curiosity. Rather than framing growth as the pressure of being a “lifelong learner,” she challenges students to lead with lifelong curiosity. For her, the goal is simple but quite significant: UPIC interns and all Clemson students use their education and curiosity to make a tangible difference.

“My proudest moments aren’t about me — they’re about what the students are able to accomplish.”

For her Clemson legacy, Erickson wants to leave behind one word: “impact.” When returning to the University, she had a narrower vision of what impact may look like for her. Disruption brought on by AI expanded what was possible for her, allowing Erickson to think beyond individual outcomes and toward change at a larger scale. Through the Career Innovation Lab and UPIC, that impact now reaches students, faculty and communities beyond Clemson’s campus.

“It’s such an honor to [be a mentor]. Sometimes I really can’t believe that I’m getting to do this. It’s a lot of fun to make an impact.”

Sharetta Wynn

Building pathways in science

By: Caroline Fullem

Sharetta Wynn, Ph.D., serves as a mentor in Clemson's UPIC program and is the director of recruitment and retention in the College of Science. In this role, she oversees initiatives for prospective undergraduate and graduate students while also leading retention efforts that support student success throughout their academic careers. Through her work supervising full-time staff, graduate assistants and UPIC interns, Wynn plays a central role in shaping access and opportunity within the College of Science.

Wynn has been involved with UPIC for nearly a decade, joining the program shortly after arriving at Clemson in December 2016. At the time, the College of Science was newly formed, and Wynn began her career as a recruiting program coordinator. What started as a role focused on outreach quickly evolved into something much larger: a career built around advocacy, mentorship and helping students recognize their own potential.

"I get to supervise, manage and lead a team of full-time employees, graduate assistants and UPIC students. And together, we work on recruiting students into science and making sure they stay."

On the recruitment side, Wynn helps bring high school, transfer and graduate students to Clemson through open houses, campus events and conference travel. As for retention, she founded the College of Science Mentoring and Inclusion Collaborative, a program she started nearly eight years ago that has since become

a cornerstone of undergraduate support in the College of Science.

COSMIC is a peer mentoring program designed to support incoming College of Science students as they transition to Clemson. The program pairs new students with upperclassmen mentors who share similar backgrounds, interests and goals. The initiative serves a wide range of community groups, including first-generation students, transfer students, military and veteran students, students with disabilities, students of color and LGBTQIA+ students, while also providing faculty and staff liaisons to offer additional academic support.

Through regular check-ins, goal-setting and guidance, mentors help students navigate college life and build a strong foundation for success at Clemson. This program was designed to help students feel connected not only to their coursework but to Clemson itself.



“That sense of belonging matters. If people feel that they matter, they will stay.”

As part of COSMIC, Wynn created the first science-designated courses in the College of Science. She teaches the SCI 1000 course for mentees who are new to Clemson and SCI 2000 for mentors who are learning how to support their peers. These courses are built around academic success, leadership and community-building, skills that extend beyond the classroom.



More recently, Wynn’s work has expanded to include recruitment and retention efforts for faculty and staff. She now helps identify and support underrepresented professionals, ensuring that Clemson is not only a place people want to come to but a place they choose to stay. That advocacy-centered mindset is also what drives Wynn’s involvement in UPIC. As a UPIC mentor, Wynn works closely with student interns who support the College of Science’s recruitment and retention initiatives. She credits these students with making it possible to manage the scope of her work.

Most importantly, Wynn’s most rewarding moments have come when she sees her students experience a sense of clarity, specifically when confidence builds or when students realize the work that they are doing now mirrors the kind of work they want to pursue as their career post-graduation.

“Clemson is the land of opportunity. The resources are here. It’s about whether or not we decide to use them.”

“Seeing a student have that epiphany, when they realize they enjoy the work they’re doing, that’s everything.”

Wynn believes the UPIC program empowers mentors just as much as students. Through the program, she is able to shape experiences that leave a lasting impact on the Clemson community, while also deepening her own sense of purpose.

For Wynn, Clemson is a place that encourages growth and initiative. For Wynn, meaningful impact comes down to how individuals choose to take advantage of the opportunities in front of them.

“Clemson is the land of opportunity. The resources are here. It’s about whether or not we decide to use them.”

This mindset shapes how Wynn approaches every role, from teaching and mentoring to program creation and advocacy. She remains deeply committed to creating pathways for others, ensuring that students, faculty and staff alike feel supported, valued and empowered. Through her work with UPIC, COSMIC and the College of Science, Wynn continues to strengthen Clemson’s culture of opportunity and support. Her impact goes beyond metrics or programs, living on in her students who have been able to discover confidence, direction and belonging at Clemson.

Michelle Navis

Shaping Clemson's next generation of entrepreneurs

By: Kate Shealy

Entrepreneurs aren't born. They're built in places buzzing with ideas and quiet offices where someone pulls up a chair and says, "Okay, tell me your idea." At the Brook T. Smith Launchpad, located at the end of Downtown Clemson, that person is Michelle Navis.

When Navis first stepped into the UPIC program in November 2021, she wasn't planning on becoming the quiet force behind some of Clemson's most ambitious student entrepreneurs. She began part-time, working under Director John Hannon at what was then the Spiro Institute. Four years later, the program has grown, shifted into the Brook T. Smith Launchpad and expanded its reach across campus, but Navis' role as mentor, a guide and anchor for dozens of students, has only deepened.

Today, she oversees a team of 18 interns, entrepreneurs-in-residence, analysts-in-residence, Federal Work-Study students, a graduate assistant and a graphic communications intern. She's the person they go to with their ideas, problems, progress updates and questions.

"My main role is supervising, hiring and mentoring all our interns," Navis said. "I keep them on track and help them take the next step, whatever that looks like for their venture or their career."

The students she mentors often arrive with big ambitions. The entrepreneurs-in-residence tend to come in with early-stage business ideas,

sometimes born in a classroom, sometimes sketched out in a notebook months earlier. They spend their time conducting market research, refining business plans, meeting with mentors, building prototypes or developing software.

Analysts-in-residence, on the other hand, work directly with startup companies, often run by Clemson alums. They sit in on meetings with CEOs, assist with tangible deliverables and gain hands-on experience in how a young company grows.

Some interns go on to build companies with striking longevity. Kanga Coolers, a brand familiar to many Clemson students, started as a class project that grew within the Launchpad ecosystem. Other alumni-founded ventures, such as one former intern's companion-AI product for animals or Adam York's stock-trading platform, continue to draw alumni back to Clemson where they speak to current students and offer advice from the other side of the





journey. More recent interns, like Saylor Koon, have built businesses from the ground up as first-year students. Koon leveraged her welding certification to launch a permanent jewelry business, growing it into an LLC with a website, hosting pop-up events and assembling a team to support her marketing efforts.

Even AIRs, who may not have their own startup, often leave with job offers from the companies they support.

“A lot of people don’t even realize we exist,” Navis said. “But now that we’re in this new space, we’ve worked really hard to connect with every college across campus. Students from all majors are part of the program now.”

To demonstrate the welcoming nature of Navis at the Launchpad, the diverse array of students from various majors is notable. Mechanical engineering students, for example, have recently entered the lineup in both EIR and AIR roles, and they’re already spreading the word among their peers.

Though mentoring is at the heart of her role, Navis’ work extends far beyond the UPIC office. As a project manager, she also helps run the Blue Ridge Market, a student-led vendor event that gives student businesses their first real-world sales experience. Some first-year students

who participate in the Launchpad program apply for internships after experiencing what it has to offer.

She also coordinates the Launchpad’s study tours — signature, donor-funded experiences that blend history, culture and entrepreneurship. In the fall, she helps lead trips to Alabama where students study civil rights history and meet local entrepreneurs. In the spring, she organizes the Charleston and Columbia tour, taking students from the State House to MUSC’s innovation labs to the entrepreneurial hubs of Mount Pleasant.

“ I keep them on track and help them take the next step, whatever that looks like for their venture or their career.

“We’ve taken international students and students who had never been to these places before,” Navis said. “Giving them the chance to explore new environments and see what’s possible is meaningful.”

And then there's the summer camp, one of the Launchpad's newest and most ambitious projects. Last year, they brought 50 rising high school juniors and seniors to Clemson for a week of entrepreneurship immersion. Navis hired the student staff, coordinated speakers, planned events and observed as students from vastly different backgrounds bonded while building pitch decks and presenting ideas to real judges. The response was so overwhelmingly positive that this year's camp will double to 100 students. A grant is also allowing them to launch a similar camp for teachers.



The program's impact even extends nationally. Navis helped coordinate the Palmetto Pitch Competition and, more recently, the Blake Family Military and Veterans Pitch Competition, UPIC's first national event, bringing finalists from multiple states to pitch for a \$30,000 top prize. Through it all, her interns see her juggling countless responsibilities and, surprisingly, she's realized that this visibility is part of her mentorship.

"At one point, I wished I could spend even more time with my interns," she said. "But then I realized that watching me manage these events is part of their learning experience."

Navis' passion for students is unmistakable. As a Clemson alum who returned to the area when her husband joined the business school

faculty, she found her way into entrepreneurship through him, and now she can't imagine doing anything else. Many interns know not just her, but her family as well; her daughter worked as a counselor at the summer camp, and her son participated in it.

"Dr. Hannon jokes that I'm the 'mom' of the program," Navis said. "And honestly, it's true."

Some students come to her for strategic guidance, some for feedback and some simply because they need someone to listen. For many, the Launchpad becomes a second home, and Navis a steady presence in what is otherwise an uncertain chapter of their lives.

When asked how she hopes she'll be remembered, her answer is simple: "The long-lasting connections. Seeing students grow, staying in touch and coming back to give back, that's special."

In a program built on big ideas and bold visions, Navis' impact is quieter, steadier and just as essential. She is the mentor behind the momentum, the person students trust to cheer for them, challenge them and remind them that their ideas are worth pursuing. To Clemson's entrepreneurial community, that might be the most lasting paw print of all.

The Career Closet

The Drop-In Night at the Career Clothes Closet was a tremendous success, offering students a meaningful opportunity to prepare for their next professional steps with confidence. Throughout the evening, students browsed, tried on, and selected a wide range of business casual and business professional attire—adding valuable pieces to their wardrobes at no cost.



"I have loved it so much and have received so many compliments already!"
- Landry Billingsley

Hosted at the Nieri Family Alumni and Visitors Center, the event created a welcoming and supportive environment where students could explore their personal style while gaining access to clothing that will serve them in interviews, career fairs, and networking events. From blazers and dress pants to blouses and standout pieces, attendees left feeling more prepared and empowered to present their best selves.

Dr. Caren Kelley-Hall especially thanks the generous donors. Their continued support makes opportunities like this possible and has a direct impact on our students' confidence and success. Overall, the event reflected the Career Clothes Closet's ongoing commitment to helping students not only look the part but feel ready for what's next.





UPIC

University Professional
Internship and Co-op Program