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Chants at the State House event showcases CCU's statewide impact

PHOTO COURTESY OF COASTAL CAROLINA UNIVERSITY

Coastal Carolina University took teal on the road and to the state capital to highlight the Chanticleer spirit through Chants at the State House.

Coastal Carolina University took teal on the road and to the state capital to highlight the Chanticleer spirit through Chants at the State House, the University's annual advocacy and engagement event that highlights CCU's statewide impact and legislative priorities.

The event in Columbia brought together trustees, administrators, faculty, staff and students to connect with members of the South Carolina General Assembly and state leaders. Through themed interactive displays, program highlights, and conversations, CCU showcased how it serves the region and the state through workforce development, research innovation and community engagement.

Their forward momentum and impact

Coastal Carolina University continues to build momentum through measurable gains in student success, academic distinction and statewide impact. Over the past five years, the university has increased its graduation rate by 25%, expanded research activity, and invested in high-impact academic programs aligned with South Carolina's workforce needs. CCU offers innovative pathways, including the state's only accredited PGA Golf Management program, the state's first space satellite program and in-demand fields such as nursing. Nationally, CCU has been recognized as a Fulbright Top Producing Institution and as a Carnegie-designated research university.

That momentum is reflected in several high-profile distinctions. CCU earned the prestigious Carnegie Community Engagement Classification, a national honor recognizing deep and sustained commitment to public service and community partnership. The university tied for No. 4 Most Innovative among Regional Universities in the South in the latest rankings released by U.S. News & World Report. CCU was also named to The Princeton Review's 2026 Mental Health Honor Roll for the second consecutive year — the only institution in South Carolina to receive this recognition. Additionally, the Horry County Schools Scholars Academy, located on CCU's campus, was ranked the No. 1 school in South Carolina, reflecting the strength of the academic environment the University helps foster.

As one of the state's fastest-growing public universities, CCU prepares graduates who contribute across critical industries, including education, healthcare, business, tourism, public service and the sciences, strengthening communities in every region of South Carolina.

Beyond academic achievement, CCU serves as a powerful economic engine. The university contributes an estimated $760 million annually to the state's economy and generates $270 million in income.

Through job creation, campus construction and infrastructure investment, and spending by students and visitors, CCU supports sustained regional growth.

CCU's impact is further demonstrated through strong alumni retention. Approximately 60% of graduates remain in South Carolina, with more than 30% living within 50 miles of campus, reinforcing deep local connections and long-term contributions to the state's workforce and economy.

"It is one thing to speak about the extraordinary work taking place at Coastal Carolina University; it is another to bring that work directly to Columbia and allow our state's leaders to experience it firsthand," said James J. Winebrake, Ph.D., president of CCU. "When they see the impact up close, it underscores a simple truth: the progress we are making is meaningful, measurable, and advancing our state's future."

On the move! Top achievements in local business

HGTC celebrates local talent at Author Showcase

Horry-Georgetown Technical College hosted an Author Showcase on Wednesday, Feb. 25, on the Conway Campus. The showcase featured seven local professional authors and underscored the college's commitment to encouraging student talent while enriching campus culture.

Students, faculty, staff and community members gathered to promote reading and writing across campus. Attendees explored published works, engaged with authors and gained insight into the writing process. Participating authors shared personal experiences and practical guidance, offering inspiration to students interested in pursuing their own work.

The program was organized by Dr. Michael Roberts, professor of English and writer-in-residence at HGTC.

Roberts said the event was designed to build confidence and inspire students while celebrating the power of storytelling. College leaders hope the showcase will spark future programming that connects the college and the broader community through literature and the arts.

PHOTO COURTESY OF HGTC

Pictured from left are Lisa Heartman, Dr. Michael Roberts, Caleb Wygal, Maegwen Salley-Massie, Angela Barnes and T.I. Lowe.

"This celebration of creativity is invaluable to the future of literacy in our College and our community," said Dr. Marilyn "Murph" Fore, president of Horry-Georgetown Technical College. "This event reflects our commitment to professional and creative growth in the literary arts and the continued development of our students' talents."

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