

COLLEGE OF ARTS AND SCIENCES REMARKS

We are here today to celebrate the launching of our new college as well as the 200th anniversary of the College of Arts and Sciences and of the University of South Carolina. Our college is the oldest in the University and, for much of the history of this institution, the college and the institution (be it South Carolina College or University of South Carolina) were virtually synonymous.

When I mentioned to a colleague what we would be doing today, she asked why we were celebrating the 200th anniversary of the founding of the University on 7 April 2005. Didn't we do that four years ago in 2001. The answer is that in 2001 the university community celebrated the 200th anniversary of the **chartering** of the South Carolina College. However, it was not until 10 January 2005 that the first students matriculated. The chartering was an anniversary date, but without students and faculty there can be no college.

Another colleague then opined that if that were the case, why we didn't celebrate this anniversary on January 10th. My reply for my study of our University's history is that anniversary dates of this institution are movable feast days. The magnificent 50th Anniversary celebration of the South Carolina College was held on 19 December 1854—a date that was a tad bit premature. So, deciding to hold this observance on April 7th was certainly in keeping with the hallowed traditions of this place.

However, in discussing the locale for this ceremony, there were no options. This celebration had to take place on the Horseshoe—the historic and spiritual heart of the University. And, in choosing Rutledge Chapel, we are meeting in the oldest building on

campus. Where better to celebrate the college that is the intellectual heart and soul of any great university?

When the South Carolina College opened its doors in 1805, its curriculum was right out of the 18th century—a traditional, classical one. In 1815, though, the trustees moved to broaden the curriculum. And, what they said in 1815 is still true today as USC continues to climb the ranks of the nation’s major research universities:

That in order to keep pace with the growing knowledge of the world, and to place this Institution on a footing with the great and improving Colleges of the Northern States, it would be advisable to establish new Professorships and Tutorships whenever the prosperous circumstances of the Country should induce a belief that the Legislature would provide for them. Professorships for Political Economy, for Elocution, and Belles Lettres and others might be usefully established in succession, according to their order of importance.¹

For two hundred years, one of the most significant aspects of the University---and of this college—has been the quality of its faculty. Today, we have many distinguished professors. There are 26 Carolina Distinguished Professors—19 of whom are from the College of Arts and Sciences:

James B. Appel	Psychology
John W. Baynes	Chemistry and Biochemistry
Ward W. Briggs, Jr.	Languages, Literatures, and Cultures
Bruce C. Coull	Marine Science
David J. Cowen	Geography
Susan L. Cutter	Geography
John H. Dawson	Chemistry and Biochemistry
Karl G. Heider	Anthropology
Robert E. Herzstein	History
Janette T. Hospital	English
John R. Jensen	Geography
Barry M. Preedom	Physics and Astronomy
Ronald J. Prinz	Psychology
Daniel L. Reger	Chemistry and Biochemistry

¹ Trustees’ Minutes, 30 November 1815, quoted in Daniel W. Hollis, *University of South Carolina, Volume I: South Carolina College* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1951), 48.

John Richards	Psychology
Mark M. Smith	History
James M. Sodetz	Chemistry and Biochemistry
Robert C. Thunell	Geological Sciences
Sarah A. Woodin	Biological Sciences

These distinguished scholars and teachers are following in the footsteps of such luminaries as

- **Thomas Cooper, Professor of Chemistry and Belles Lettres**
- **Robert Henry, Professor of Metaphysics, Moral and Political Philosophy**
- **Augustus Baldwin Longstreet, Professor of History, Political Economy, and Elocution**
- **John LeConte, Professor of Natural and Mechanical Philosophy**
- **William J. Rivers, Professor of Greek**
- **Francis Lieber, Professor of History and Political Economy (as well as an internationally-recognized expert in criminal justice and military law)**

Since 1805, the College of Arts and Sciences and the University of South Carolina been through numerous reorganizations and restructurings. From 1805 until 1865 the curriculum of the South Carolina College was an arts and science one—so, that, in effect, what we now call the College of Arts and Sciences **was** the South Carolina College. From 1865 until 1888, the curriculum was primarily that of the antebellum college with some additions such as engineering, law, medicine, agriculture, and mechanic arts.

In 1888, the chartering of the second University of South Carolina saw the formal creation of colleges as we know them today

- **College of Liberal Arts & Science**
- **College of Agriculture and Mechanic Arts**
- **College of Pharmacy**
- **Normal School**
- **College of Law**
- **Graduate Department**

In the second volume of his wonderful history of the University, Daniel W. Hollis

commented on the new courses of study available to students after 1888. “Despite the great variety of specialized courses, candidates for degrees were assured of a fundamental acquaintance with general culture. A senior in civil engineering might be studying Merriman’s textbook on *Roofs, Trusses and Bridges*,” Hollis noted, “while his roommate in classics perused the pages of Cicero’s *De Natura Decorum*; but both students shared a common background of required work, which included four years of English, two of mathematics, and one year each of physics, chemistry, and geology.”²

It was understood then—as now—by educated individuals, that students needed a “fundamental acquaintance with general culture.” Acquainting students with “general culture” is what we in the College of Arts and Sciences provide for our own majors and for students in other colleges.

After more than three decades of separation, the College of Arts and Sciences is back together again. In no other college on campus can students obtain “a fundamental acquaintance with general culture. Or, can they imbibe intellectually the necessary “learning” which, as our University motto states “humanizes character and does not permit it to be cruel.”

In one form or another, **this** College has been the intellectual heart and soul of this University for two hundred years. And, ladies and gentlemen, as we aspire to even greater heights as a University, it will continue to be so. Thank you.

² Daniel W. Hollis, *University of South Carolina, Volume II: College to University* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1956), 147.