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College Presidents Form Lowcountry Consortium

The presidents of seven public and private colleges and universities have agreed to form a collaborative consortium focused on increasing the number of individuals with degrees or certificates in the Lowcountry. Formed with the support of the Tri-County Cradle to Career Collaborative (TCCC), the consortium includes Charleston Southern University, The Citadel, Clemson University, the College of Charleston, Medical University of South Carolina, Trident Technical College, and the University of South Carolina.

According to TCCC Board Chair, Anita Zucker, “The formation of this coalition is huge for our community because it shows our colleges and universities are committed to meeting the demands of the future workforce, which puts our region in a better position to compete for new businesses.”

In response to TCCC’s *Regional Education Report*, the consortium agreement identified three areas of emphasis:

- Improving the alignment of current degree programs with projected workforce requirements which estimate the addition of 25,000 new jobs by 2018, many in STEM related fields;
- Encouraging degree completion by the more than 107,000 residents aged 25 or older who have completed some college work but have yet to complete a degree; and
- Closing the gap in enrollment and completion rates between students groups, including the 24% point gap between Blacks (22.3%) and Whites (47.1%) and the growing gap between Whites and Hispanics (28.0%).

“As a partner in Cradle to Career, The Citadel is proud to be a part of this higher education consortium,” said Citadel President Lt. Gen. John W. Rosa. “Together we have more resources—we’re smarter, stronger and better prepared to meet all of the needs of the Lowcountry. This is an exciting time in higher education in South Carolina.”

The consortium will establish a goal for degree completion improvement and will work with other TCCC network partners to make data-driven decisions to make progress towards that and other goals.

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About the Tri-County Cradle to Career Collaborative

The Tri-County Cradle to Career Collaborative (TCCC) is a community-wide movement in Berkeley, Charleston, and Dorchester Counties, South Carolina focused on improving the quality of life of its citizens and its workforce through education by collectively aligning resources and working toward common goals. Using data and focused community collaboration across a continuum from “cradle-to-career,” TCCC works to build and implement strategies that will facilitate widespread systemic change, with the ultimate goal of increased student success and economic prosperity for all.