

USCB SHARK TALES

Vol. 3 • No.1

Celebrating Stories of USCB Student and Alumni Success

FALL 2021

Celebrating Stories of USCB Student Success

As we said our farewells to 2021 and rang in 2022 with all the anticipation and hope that a new year brings, we appreciate and welcome the opportunity to celebrate our students and their accomplishments. On and around campus we continue to see reasons to be optimistic. Once again, the stories featured in Shark Tales highlight the ingenuity and tenacity of our bright and shining stars at USCB. They are dedicated to being leaders in their fields, but they also seek to be leaders in their communities. They appreciate the knowledge gained in their courses, but also understand the importance of using their knowledge, skills, and abilities to solve real world problems. USCB students continue to thrive, despite the many roadblocks that have been placed before them. Please join us in celebrating them and their great work!

Angela Simmons
Vice Chancellor for Student Development

Eric Skipper
Provost & EVCAA

STUDENT HIGHLIGHTS:

USCB Celebrates These Success Stories



New "Finnegan's Sharing Shack" Recycles Beach Gear on Hilton Head Island

In the spring of 2021, Dr. Calvert taught HRTM 410 Current Issues in Destination Management. One of the guest speakers was Sally Krebs, Sustainable Practices Coordinator for the town of Hilton Head Island. Ms. Krebs discussed the problem of items such as towels, beach chairs, umbrellas, etc. being left on the beach by tourists. One of the students in the class, **Bethany McDonald**, followed up and developed a program to help reduce the problem. Bethany came up with the idea of starting a "Sharing Shack" that would collect, clean, store and check out these items free to visitors & islanders. Bethany's ideas were implemented and with the support of Town of HHI and USCB, the "Sharing Shack" was opened in the summer of 2021.

News Article [link](#).
USCBe Informed Article [link](#).

Bethany is a graduate of [Cross Lanes Christian School](#) in West Virginia.

Two Computer Science students present at ASEE Middle Atlantic Conference

Gabriela Morales and **William Mercado** recently presented a paper at the 2021 American Society for Engineering Education (ASEE) Middle Atlantic Conference ([Conference Website](#)). This conference is double-blind peer reviewed; conference proceedings are published, and both papers are available online (search via Google Scholar, using keywords: Mercado Morales Gabriela William ASEE).

[The Children's Center](#), a provider of early childhood education for working families in our community, is in need of a computer application to help manage data associated with early learning. Through partnership with the Department

(Continued on page 2)

STUDENT HIGHLIGHTS:

(Continued from front page)



of Computer Science, several computer science students have had opportunity to develop software to assist TCC manage and analyze this early learning data.

Gabriela is a first-generation college student graduating December 2021. She is majoring in 'Information Science and Technology,' and has accepted a position at Capgemini upon graduation.

William, who attended TCC for early education, is also a first-generation college student graduating December 2021. He is majoring in 'Computational Science,' and has accepted a position at L3Harris.

Funding for both the internships and conference presentations was provided by a Sea Islands Institute grant. Dr. Ronald Erdei and Dr. Sarah Swofford provided student guidance and project management.

William is a graduate of [Hilton Head High School](#) in South Carolina.

Gabriela is a graduate of [Leonia High School](#) in New Jersey.

USCB Marine Biology Students Present at POSea Conference 2021



USCB Marine Biology students dominated the virtual stage during the 2021

POSea Conference.

Yessenia Becerra, "Elucidating the Black Coral Microbiome Using Amplicon Sequencing." **Jicayla Johnson-Rosemond**, "Bioinformatically Mining Next-Gen Capture Libraries for Black Coral Mitogenomes." Yessy & Jicayla both gave 5-minute lightning talks on Saturday Oct 2. Jicayla won the best presentation award in the lightning talk category and will be receiving a \$200 prize. **Ilesha Whittaker**, "Assessing the Biodiversity of Oyster Reefs Using eDNA." Ilesha participated in the poster session on Sunday, Oct 3.

[Conference Website](#)

Yessenia is a graduate of [William J. "Pete" Knight High School](#) in California.

Jicayla is a graduate of [Wheatland High School](#) in California.

Ilesha is a graduate of [Ridge View High School](#) in South Carolina.

Hitachi Hiring USCB Intern



Hitachi Global Social Innovation Business has hired **Christopher Birt**, a Computer Science major at USCB as a software development engineer. This is a well-paid internship. Chris will be provided some great experiences in Advanced Mobility, EV as a Service, Distributed Energy Management, Resiliency, and Sustainability (alternative energy sources).

Senior Communication Studies Major accepted to Adobe Digital Media Academy at UofSC Columbia

This past summer, **Leia Aldrich**, senior Communication Studies Major, was



accepted to Adobe Digital Media Academy at UofSC Columbia. The Digital Media Academy is a weeklong, immersive, dive-in academy, sponsored by Adobe and held in UofSC's media facilities. Students were given the opportunity to receive expert training and mentorship from industry professionals while earning a certificate of completion. With the theme of Digital Storytelling with Adobe Creative Cloud, Leia was able to hone her skills by focusing on integrating pictures, graphics, and text to tell stories in innovative ways. Her acceptance into the program included housing and meals for the week.

Leia is a graduate of [Berkeley High School](#) in South Carolina.

USCB's Fifth Washington Semester Fellow Selected



USCB student **Madison Mindermann**, selected for the prestigious South Caroli-
(Continued on page 3)

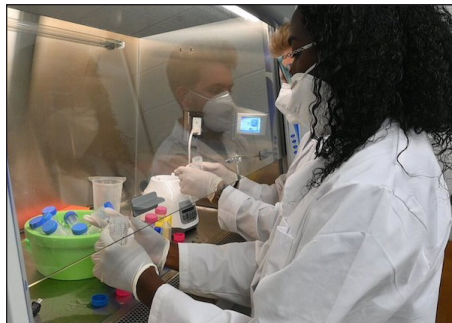
STUDENT HIGHLIGHTS:

(Continued from page 2)

na Washington Semester program.

Madison will spend four months as an intern in the nation's capital this spring, getting close to the political process, gaining professional experience and sharpening her analytical skills. Washington Semester Fellows in the past have gone on to excel in government, law, medicine, business, journalism, the non-profit sector and other fields. Madison is not sure what she wants to do after she graduates, but said, "Intelligence analyst is my dream job." The deadline to apply for the fall 2022 Washington semester will be in early February. Students interested in applying should view website [SC Washington Semester Program](#) link and contact Mollie Barnes at mbarnes2@uscb.edu. USCBe Informed Article [link](#). Madison is a graduate of [Beaufort High School](#) in South Carolina.

USCB Biology Students Analyze Sewage for Clues About COVID-19



A team of USCB undergraduate assistants, with **Zyamanii Baksh** and **Sam Messinides**, will study sewage, with the hopes of helping communities stay ahead of the fast-moving virus using wastewater surveillance. Coronavirus shows up in the feces of symptomatic and asymptomatic people infected by the virus, meaning evidence of its spread flows into wastewater treatment plants daily. Lab equipment on USCB's Beaufort campus uses sensitive tools to identify the virus that causes COVID-19 among everything else found in raw sewage. This methodology is called wastewater epidemiology and has been used to track the community presence of several other viruses in recent years, in-

cluding polio.

USCB biology majors Zyamanii Baksh and Sam Messinides are assisting Dr. Tye Pettay in analyzing local wastewater for signs of COVID-19. The project is a partnership with Beaufort Jasper Water Sewer Authority. News Article [link](#). USCBe Informed Article [link](#). Zyamanii is a graduate of [Bridges Preparatory School](#) in South Carolina. Sam is a graduate of the [South Carolina Connections Academy](#).

Magellan Scholar Award



USCB student **Yessenia Becerra**, a senior Biology major, was selected for the Magellan award with her project *Characterizing the Diversity of Ctenophores from the Port Royal Sound (Beaufort SC) Using Molecular Barcode* under the mentorship of Dr. Mercer Brugler from the Department of Natural Sciences. Yessenia is a graduate of [William J. "Pete" Knight High School](#) in California.

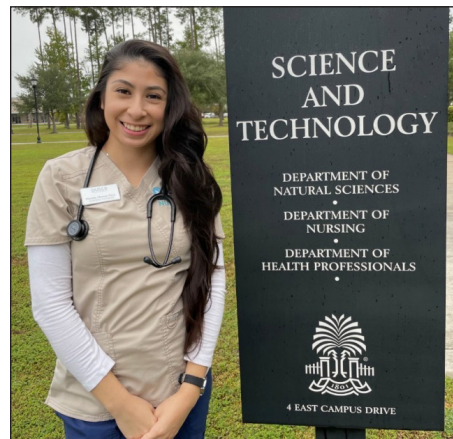
2021 Student Veteran Leadership Award



Jake Walsh, USCB Interdisciplinary Studies student, earned the G.I. Jobs 2021 Student Veteran Leadership Award. He is featured in the August issue of G.I. Jobs magazine.

Jake served in the US Army from 2004-2010, and he is passionate about helping veterans in the Bluffton, SC area and beyond. He also organized veteran-friendly activities for the campus. Media [link](#). Jake is a graduate of [Perry High School](#) in Georgia.

Awarded by the National Hispanic Health Foundation



Mariela Moreno Nava, USCB Junior Nursing major, was awarded a national scholarship by the National Hispanic Health Foundation. This is a competitive, national scholarship that only one nursing student in the country received. Media [link](#). Mariela is a graduate of [Wahluke High School](#) in Washington State.

C.J. Cummings, USCB-affiliated Olympian, Lifts at Tokyo Games



When USA Weightlifting announced its team for the 2021 Summer Olympic Games in Tokyo, no one at USCB was surprised to see **C.J. Cummings** on the list. Cummings was one of USCB's Sand Shark Scholars several years ago and is now the youngest member of Team USA. He is a four-time consecutive junior world Champion, two-time Youth World Champion, and holder of three International Weightlifting Federation World Records and 23 American records. The Wall Street Journal named him "the LeBron James of weightlifting." USCBe Informed Article [link](#). C.J. is a graduate of [Beaufort High School](#) in South Carolina.

USCB STUDENT GROUPS RECOGNIZED

Outstanding Student Workers

In the classroom and on the clock the student workers of the USCB Maintenance Department have proved the true meaning of Fins Up! Through the Summer of '21 and the Fall of '21 ten of USCB's best have stepped up to make the University a better place to learn, work, and play, not only for their fellow students, but for faculty and staff as well. Working with the staff of USCB's Maintenance Department the student workers' diligent efforts play a key role in maintaining the highest standards in the upkeep of the university's buildings and grounds. In addition, the work allows the students a chance to hone their life skills in a setting that they do not have in the classroom. USCB's Norman Varnes and the Maintenance Department are very grateful to have an extra set of hands and send their heartfelt appreciation to these students.

Summer '21: **Shamar Deacon, Tewodros Eckstein, Jordan Murry, Meldrick Obadiah, Jessica Simpson**

Fall '21: **Isabella Aahlen Jakobs, Caleb Freeman, Kyle Hageman, Dawson Halford, Jonell Wright**



Jicayla Johnson-Rosemond, Zharla McFadden, Tamara Pendarvis, Jeremy Smalls

In addition, these eleven students and interns have worked with faculty on research this summer 2021:

Chandler Chapman, Alyssa Marian, William Mercado, Lindsey Moon, Gabriela Morales, Tiffany Serra-Pichardo, Suchir Shetty, Jamileh Soueidan, Lindsey Transue, Caroline Tribble, Gabriella Woodrum

USCBe Informed Article [link](#).

USCB Kicks off Summer Research Experience (S.R.E.) for Students

Twenty-five young scholars take their research skills to the next level. USCB's inaugural Summer Research Experience, (S.R.E.) initiative gave students and interns the opportunity to research coral reef ecology, estuarine soundscapes, health markers in wastewater among other topics.

USCB "Summer Research Experience" (S.R.E.) Funded Ten Awardees for 2021 (\$1,000 each):

Yessenia Becerra, Brianna Bonilla, Anneau Cappellmann, Jicayla Johnson-Rosemond, Hannah Merchant, Sam Messinides, Kristen Mullins, Jeremy Smalls, Ashley Watson, Iesha Whittaker

The following eight students received \$1,000 from the University of South Carolina's "Support for Minority Advancement in Research Training" (SMART) funding:

Zyamanii Baksh, Yessenia Becerra, Brianna Bonilla, Melfry Gonzalez,

The Communicator Award

Congratulations to the following Communications students:

Leia Aldrich, Josh Bing, Makayla Bing, Jack Blaisdell, Julia Flemming, Emily Firster, Cassandra Headden, Rebecca Linam, Wilson McAlarney, Celia Nguyen, Sophia Peach, Taylor Powers, Beverley Roberts, and Shavar Seabrooks.



They are USCB's TV Studio Production II students who have won a Communicator Award for their [episode](#) of the USCB Sand Shark Show. The Communicator Awards honors work that transcends craft—work that made a lasting impact and provides an equal chance of winning to all entrants regardless of company or agency size and project budget. Media [link](#).

USCB Health Ambassadors



USCB Health Ambassadors administer COVID tests on campus, bring meals to and check-in with students in quarantine, and conduct observations of COVID-19 protocols in action in public spaces on campus. We are so thankful for all of their hard work to keep Sand Sharks safe.

Pictured: **Kaylee Aiken, William Ancrum, Elyse Andrejisk, Frances Gaskin, Lauren Heath, and Ianna Traumbauer.**

Media [link](#).

USCB Nursing Students with the Alpha Alpha Omicron Chapter Recognized

Congratulations to USCB's Sigma Nursing Chapter of Alpha Alpha Omicron for their recognition as a "Showcase of Regional Excellence 2019-2021" by [Sigma Global Nursing Excellence](#). Alpha Alpha Omicron was formed on November 20, 2020. This is a significant accomplishment in the timeline of formation, during a pandemic, with limited resources.

Media [link](#).

Representing USCB at Various Events

We are pleased to have various USCB students represent our University at these events held in the community:



June 2021. PGA Tour's Palmetto Championship with USCB Communication students.

As pictured, from left to right: **Sophia Peach, Leia Aldrich, Emily Firster, Adam Bifulco, Sabrina May, Cassandra Head-den (alumni), Tyler Lindo (alumni), Tyler Cunningham.** Not in picture: **Brian Bromley, and Nick Milhan.** These students were ferrying camera operators around the course in golf carts, carrying camera equipment and helping shoot the tournament. Media [link](#).

regarding our program offerings at USCB. Media [link](#).

October 2021. Hilton Head Island Latin Music Festival

USCB students **Yessenia Becerra, Yash Bhanushali, Melfry Gonzalez, Jake (Samuel) Laird, Sam Messinides, Samantha Mobridge, Olivia Rasch, Vlad Rusu, Jessica Tracy, Haley Wright, and Curtis Yockey,** along with Dr. Lukasz Pawelek and Dr. Joe Iglesias, represented USCB to showcase our programs. Media [link](#).

October 2021. Beaufort Shrimp Festival

Yessenia Becerra, Piper Davis, and Jicayla Johnson-Rosemond are with Drs. Mercer Brugler, Tye Pettay, Joe Staton and Butch Alvarez to represent and help respond to questions



ALUMNI HIGHLIGHTS

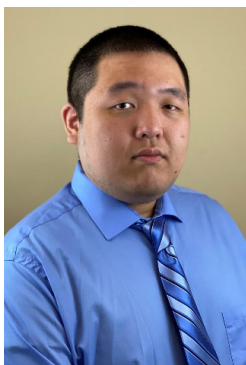
USCB History Grad Recognized as Outstanding Educator by UChicago



USCB alumna **Mary Katherine Schramm** recognized with the University of Chicago's Outstanding Educator award, after being nominated by a former student. Newly admitted students at UChicago have the opportunity to recognize teachers who made a difference in their lives. Thomas Hughson, a freshman at UChicago, a student of Mary Katherine's several years ago, submitted the winning response. "You are the smartest person I have ever met, and not only that, but you taught in a way that made me fully realize my passion for history and throwing myself into learning. AP World History remains my favorite class I have ever taken, and it is the reason I will be pursuing a focus on history or something history-related (like archeology)," he wrote in his submission. USCBe Informed Article [link](#). Mary Katherine is a graduate of [Hilton Head High School](#) in South Carolina.

USCB Student Chosen for Prestigious SULI Research Program

Lingtao Chen, a USCB Spring 2021 graduate, was selected for the U.S. Department of Energy's Science Undergraduate Laboratory Internship (SULI) program. Lingtao is currently working as an intern with Oak Ridge National Laboratory. The SULI program



encourages undergraduate students and recent graduates to pursue science, technology, engineering, and mathematics careers by providing research experiences at one-of 17 participating DOE laboratories/facilities. SULI interns work under scientists and engineers on projects supporting the DOE mission. USCBe Informed Article [link](#). Lingtao is a graduate of [Beaufort High School](#) in South Carolina.

Chatting with Business Alumni

Andrew Parnell and **Carson Reed** are featured in two events organized by the Sand Shark Business Club and Dr. Joe Iglesias to help current students with their career goals. Andrew currently works for Wells Fargo Bank and Carson is at the Amazon Headquarters in Seattle. Media [link](#). Andrew is a graduate of [Abundant Life Academy](#) in South Carolina. Carson is a graduate of [Columbia City High School](#) in Indiana.



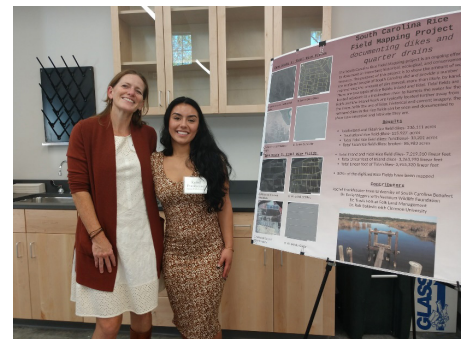
USCB Alumna Victoria Smalls Leads Gullah Geechee Cultural Heritage Corridor

Victoria Smalls graduated from the University of South Carolina Beaufort in spring 2021 with a bachelor's degree in Interdisciplinary Studies and started her new job after serving on the Gullah Geechee Cultural Heritage Corridor Commission for several years. Smalls grew up on St. Helena Island and part of her new job is to help protect it. Smalls is the new executive director of the Gullah Geechee Cultural Heritage Corridor, a nonprofit group dedicated to preserving and promoting the cultures and traditions of Black people in the rice-growing regions of the Southeast. As a member of the Gullah Geechee community, she knows first-



hand the strengths and challenges of this unique group. USCBe Informed Article [link](#). Victoria is a graduate of [Beaufort High School](#) in South Carolina.

Academic Presentation Leads to Folk Land Management Position



USCB Class of 2021 alumna **Rachel Frankhouser** presented at the Nemours Plantation open house and lab dedication. Rachel's presentation of her work on GIS mapping and measuring of canals in historic South Carolina rice fields stood out among the graduate work being presented, and she has been offered a full-time position from Folk Land Management. Rachel, lauded by Biology professors as a standout student, is in the picture with Prof. Kathryn Madden. Media [link](#). Rachel is a graduate of [Jupiter Community Senior High School](#) in Florida.



Very Young SAND SHARKS

Math Camp Fun: Profit Calculations, Volume of Pizza, Lava Lamps

Twenty-five Ridgeland-Hardeeville High School students attended math camps conducted by professors at the University of South Carolina Beaufort. What they experienced was not what they expected. The 10-day residential camps were planned and coordinated by USCB Associate Professor of Mathematics Volkan Sevim with his team consisting of Dr. Davide Fusi and Dr. Morgin Jones Williams, USCB Assistant Professors of Mathematics, and teaching assistant USCB Math major **Jennifer Oviedo**.

The summer enrichment program was designed to encourage pursuit of science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) fields, increase problem-solving and analytical skills, and build math skills for college and the workplace while expanding understanding of mathematics. "It's more fun than what I thought it would be. I thought they were being a little sarcastic saying it would be fun. But it actually has been fun," said Emely Camargo. "I thought it was going to be all books, hard problems, and a lot of worksheets, but they've helped explain the concepts of it in a fun way..."

Camargo was one of 12 students attending the second of two camps that took place in July on the university's three Beaufort County campuses. USCBe Informed Article [link](#).



"Mad Scientists" Camp helps youngsters explore their environment



Children from the Beaufort-Jasper YMCA spent a week immersed in nature, learning from USCB faculty in the fields of ecology, biochemistry, zoology and more. The motto of the day camp was "What Is Our World Made Of? Let's Go Explore It!". Members of the University of South Carolina Beaufort's Natural Sciences Department assisted: Prof. Kathryn Madden and Dr. Mercer Brugler. The program was coordinated by Dr. Jena Chojnowski, who taught children ages 7-11 how to use hydrogen peroxide to make "elephant toothpaste," cultivate bacteria, test water and observe animals commonly found in coastal environments. The camp staff hopes some of the week's experiences will become lasting memories that encourage the students. As the kids were lining up to leave USCB, Sophia Cazares, 9, said "I learned that girls can be scientists." Bluffton Today News Article [link](#). USCBe Informed Article [link](#). Media [link](#).