

SPARTANBURG METHODIST COLLEGE

Ninety-nine years and counting down to our Centennial in 2011!! Ninety-nine years ago, the Methodist Episcopal Church, South and the Rev. David English Camak began a partnership which has continued and grown in strength across the years through the General Board of Global Ministries and the Board of Global Ministries of the (now) South Carolina Annual Conference. Our name attests to the pride we at SMC take in working and studying at a college based on the traditional values of the church.

From our humble beginnings in a mill house on the corner of Farley and Brawley Streets in Spartanburg to our 110-acre campus in the foothills of the Blue Ridge Mountains, SMC operates from a position of strength in its academic, athletic, and campus life programs. This academic year brought with it yet more strength:

- **Reaffirmation of Accreditation:** In recognition of our quality academic program, and commitment to ongoing assessment and evaluation, we were awarded a full 10-year reaffirmation of our accreditation, with no notations, by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS).
- **University Senate:** Visitors from the University Senate of The United Methodist Church came to SMC in September for their accreditation visit. In February, we were notified that we met the required standards and our status as a United Methodist college was reaffirmed.
- **Enrollment:** We began the Fall 2009 semester on a very high note: we experienced our highest enrollment in two decades, with 808 headcount and 789.2 FTE (full-time equivalent)! Our enrollment efforts have been enhanced with a redesigned website (www.smcs.edu) and new admissions communication software that allows us to personalize our on-line presence for prospective students.
- **Retention:** Even more impressive than this record enrollment is our retention rate. We retained 63.6% of last year's freshman into their second year at SMC.
- **Academic Program:** Hand-in-hand with a focus on student retention is a new initiative that started this fall, the Pioneer Learning Community (PLC). The PLC offers a purposeful structuring of courses and activities that are designed to increase the chances for student success in personal, academic and professional arenas.
- **New Degree Program:** After approval by our regional accrediting body (SACS), a new degree program – the Associate Degree in Religious Studies – was launched this year and we awarded our first ARS degree in May 2010.
- **Faculty Updates:** Professor of History and Anthropology, Cole Cheek, successfully defended his dissertation at the University of Mississippi and has been awarded his Ph.D. Dr. Joseph Onger, Professor of Economics, published a book titled *Teaching Economics from a Learner-Centered Perspective: In Enhancing Student's Motivation for Learning and Achievement* (VDM Verlag, 2009). In addition, Dr. Onger authored a chapter titled, "The Effects of Race on Education and Prosperity: Lived Experiences of an African Man" in the recently published *Expanding What We Know Through Research Across the African Diaspora*. (Africana Research Center, Penn State University, 2009).
- **Athletics:** Pioneer athletes continue their winning traditions! In 2008-2009, eight of the College's 14 athletic teams advanced to national competitions. This accomplishment brought with it another national ranking for the Pioneers: SMC is now ranked in the Top 50 of the National Junior College Athletic Association's (NJCAA) scholarship division programs. Thus far in 2009-2010, four teams have already competed in national events ... as of the printing of this journal, several other teams are still in season.
- **New Administrators:** Following the retirement of some beloved administrators, SMC welcomed its new President, Dr. Colleen Perry Keith, a new Vice President for Institutional Advancement, Mr. Bob Fuzy, and a new Dean of Students, Mr. Ron Laffitte to the SMC family.
- **Commitment to Service and Worship:** The Chaplain of the College and Director of Church Relations, Rev. Candice Sloan, offers weekly worship services on campus, Bible studies, and coordinates service projects in the greater Spartanburg community for our students. Our annual Freshman Day of Service, in which more than 400 SMC students, faculty and staff participate, has garnered impressive media attention. Our commitment to providing meaningful worship experiences for young people has resulted in a new Thursday night service, called Overflow, which is student led and growing in popularity each week.
- **Welcoming Venue for Non-SMC Groups:** The College continues to welcome groups such as the Spirit Singers (the South Carolina Annual Conference United Methodist Student Choir), the Conference Board of Global Ministry, and the annual meeting of the School of Christian Ministry of the United Methodist Women in the South Carolina Annual Conference. Youth Annual Conference (now known as Breeze) will be meeting this year at Southern Wesleyan University, and we hope to welcome them back at some future date. Our campus is open and ready to offer hospitality to other groups as well.

Things to watch for: We will launch a "Centennial Year" celebration in September 2010 with the inauguration of SMC's 7th President, Dr. Colleen Perry Keith. From there, you can expect regular events on the SMC campus that celebrate our history, our present and our future, culminating in a Centennial birthday party in September 2011.

In her book, *Common Ties: A History of Textile Industrial Institute, Spartanburg Junior College and Spartanburg Methodist College* (Spartanburg, SC: Hub City Writers Project, 2007, p. 27), Dr. Katherine Davis Cann shares:

"At the 1911 South Carolina Methodist Annual Conference, Bishop John C. Kilgo released English Camak from his pastoral duties and appointed him to Textile Industrial Institute, an appointment made continuously until 1924. At the same Annual Conference, the Board of Missions of the South Carolina Methodist Conference adopted the fledgling school, three months old with seven boarding students, as one of its projects ...The willingness of the Methodist Church to support the new school stemmed from a long-standing interest in education and a more recent commitment to social concerns and the Social Gospel ..."

Those who have gone before each of us in this conference believed in the connection between SMC and this conference. SMC's covenant with you is to not only properly and faithfully steward the funds you provide for us, but also to celebrate and help further this connection and relationship. We look forward to our future together, and are blessed by your prayerful support of our work.

Respectfully submitted,

*Colleen Perry Keith, Ph.D.
President of the College*