

Annual Report



2025-2026



MORRISTM
COLLEGE
DIVISION OF EDUCATION



MORRIS COLLEGE

Message from the Chairperson Cornelius B. Leach, Ed.D.



As we begin the 2026–2027 academic year, I am honored to share our theme: **"Elevating Excellence Through Growth, Innovation, and Student Success."** This theme reflects our unwavering commitment to advancing academic excellence, fostering innovation, and creating transformative opportunities for our students.

The 2025–2026 academic year was a year of remarkable progress and achievement. One of our most significant accomplishments was an **increase in student enrollment**, reflecting the growing confidence students and families have in the quality of our academic programs and the dedication of our faculty and staff. This growth strengthens our institution and creates new opportunities to expand our impact and reach.

We also enhanced our **academic support services**, ensuring students have access to the resources they need to succeed. Through expanded advising, tutoring, mentoring, and student success initiatives, we have reinforced our commitment to supporting students throughout their educational journey and helping them achieve their personal and professional aspirations.

In addition, our faculty and academic leaders are making substantial contributions to **curriculum development**, strengthening existing programs while creating innovative learning opportunities that align with workforce demands and emerging trends in higher education. These efforts ensure that our students receive a relevant, rigorous, and forward-thinking education that prepares them to excel in a dynamic global society. Through thoughtful curriculum review and program enhancement, we continue to uphold our commitment to academic excellence and continuous improvement.

As we move into the 2026–2027 academic year, we will build on these successes by embracing innovation, strengthening collaboration, and staying focused on student achievement. Our theme serves as a reminder that excellence is not a destination but a continuous pursuit that requires vision, dedication, and collective effort.

I extend my deepest gratitude to our faculty, staff, students, alumni, and community partners for their unwavering support and commitment. Together, we will continue to elevate excellence, expand opportunities, and advance our mission of preparing future leaders who will make meaningful contributions to their communities and the world.



H.H. BUTLER BUILDING

The Division of Education has as its purpose to facilitate the academic and professional development of students toward the goal of preparing them to be effective teachers, competent health professionals and skilled specialists in the field of recreation administration. The Division operates within the framework of the institution's philosophy of preparing students for professional service in public and private schools, in health science and recreation programs, and in the armed forces.

The Division of Education majors graduate with the Bachelor of Science degree in Health Science, Recreation Administration, or one of two Initial Licensure teacher preparation programs: Early Childhood Education or Elementary Education.

The Division of Education provides oversight for three special programs: (1) the Army and Air Force Reserve Officer Training Corps (ROTC), which is a professional program designed to produce future officers for the United States Army or Air Force; (2) the Cooperative Education program, which enables students to acquire work experience while they are still in College; and (3) the "Call Me Mister" program, which seeks to attract under-represented teachers in the state's K-12 public and private schools.

The Teacher Education Program has its national accreditation with the Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation (CAEP) through the year 2032. The accreditation status demonstrates Morris College's Teacher Education program's excellence in the areas of content and pedagogy, clinical partnerships and practice, candidate recruitment, progression and support, program impact, and quality assurance with a sustained focus on continuous improvement.



CRYSTAL PIPER, PH.D.
ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR OF
HEALTH SCIENCE

MORRIS COLLEGE HEALTH SCIENCE



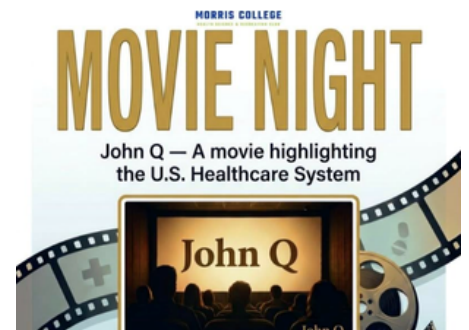
PAUL N. EZEJI PH.D., CHES.
PROFESSOR & COORDINATOR OF
HEALTH SCIENCE

The Health Science Department continues to empower students by providing a versatile education and new opportunities for students to participate in activities that prepares them for careers in healthcare.

American Education Week

The National Education Association, created **American Education Week**, an annual nationwide observance designed to celebrate public education and honor the people who make it possible. During American Education Week at Morris College, the Department of Education hosted **Dr. Brandon Ross**, Principal of Muller Road Middle School in Blythewood, South Carolina.

Dr. Ross emphasized how vital health education is for preparing the next generation of essential medical professionals. He also connected this future-focused field to our community's deeply rooted history. Students were reminded that Morris College is sacred ground and that we have a collective responsibility to preserve the legacy of our institution. Ultimately, this powerful event highlighted how honoring educational history directly inspires future leaders to advance **public health and community wellness**. More than 20 students attended the discussion.



MORRIS COLLEGE HEALTH SCIENCE

Health Fair

For the first time in institutional history, the Morris College Health Science Department successfully organized a **community health fair**, bringing together undergraduate students and the local Sumter community for a vibrant, one-day campus event. Spearheaded under the exceptional guidance and leadership of Dr. Piper Health Sciences Associate Faculty, this landmark initiative transformed the campus into a dynamic hub for **public health advocacy and wellness education**. Local residents and students gained direct access to essential services and resources provided by over 15 diverse healthcare vendors including 3 mobile health units. Adding an energetic and interactive element to the day's itinerary, the health fair also featured lively Zumba classes that encouraged active participation and physical wellness among attendees of all ages.

The milestone event also served as a premier academic showcase, featuring 10 student research posters that highlighted critical health issues in South Carolina. The extensive reach and success of the fair quickly caught regional media attention, earning a prominent feature in **The Sumter Item** newspaper. Amplifying the event's public exposure even further, Dr. Piper and Ms. McClellan were invited onto a special news segment on **WIS-TV** to discuss the fair's community impact. This successful collaborative effort not only provided invaluable hands-on experience for Morris College students but also firmly cemented the institution's vital role in improving health outcomes across the Sumter area. Over 100 individuals participated in this event. Community partners and members were very excited about the opportunity to visit the campus and interact with students and the planning committee has already started to prepared for the next health fair.

First Aid & CPR Training

Learning **CPR and First Aid training** is critical because it empowers individuals to provide immediate, life-saving intervention during medical emergencies before professional first responders arrive on the scene. Recognizing this immense value, **City of Sumter Parks & Recreation Director BJ Reed**, who also serves as an invaluable advisory council member to the Health Science Department, generously provides free CPR and First Aid training directly to Morris College students. Through a successful event organized by Dr. Piper in close partnership with Director Reed, over 30 Morris College students have already successfully received official **American Red Cross training and certification**. This impactful on-campus opportunity has additionally sparked a brand-new collaborative partnership between Dr. Piper and the Morris College Residence Hall Director, Mr. Carlos Garrett. As a direct result of this initiative, all campus Resident Assistants will now be required to complete the certification training, ensuring they are fully equipped to assist and protect all students living within campus housing.

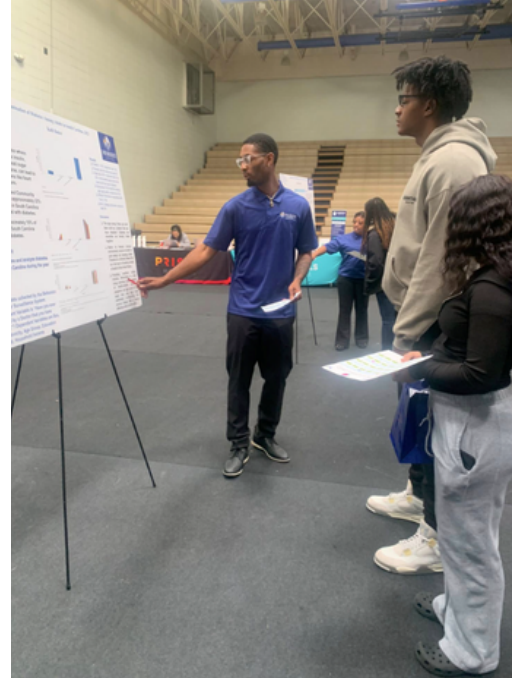
Health Science Club

The newly formed **Health Science Club** plays a vital role at Morris College by fostering the professional growth, academic capacity, and core competencies of students through dedicated community service. Under the leadership of **Dr. Piper**, Advisor and **Ms. McClellan**, Co-Advisor, the club's student leadership team—including President **Trinity Pearson**, Vice-President **Yorie Watson**, Secretary **Kursula Shorter**, and Activities Director **Damani Wilson**—successfully organized the landmark **1st Annual Health Science Club Week**. This inaugural week featured a dynamic lineup of health-focused events, beginning with a campus Health Walk that drew over 40 active participants. The club also promoted physical fitness and engagement by hosting a lively soul-line dance class for 15 students, followed by an educational movie night screening of John Q. To conclude the successful week of advocacy, Health Science students formally presented detailed research papers targeting crucial health issues impacting South Carolina, perfectly demonstrating the club's **commitment to academic excellence and public health awareness**.

MORRIS COLLEGE HEALTH SCIENCE



HEALTH SCIENCE STUDENTS IN ACTION





JENONE BELL, HEAD BASKETBALL COACH
RECREATION ADMINISTRATION-
INSTRUCTOR

MORRIS COLLEGE RECREATION ADMINISTRATION



DR. JOON CHOEL LEE
ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR/COORDINATOR
OF RECREATION ADMINISTRATION



TYRONE HENDERSON
RECREATION ADMINISTRATION-
INSTRUCTOR

Recreation Administration is fortunate to have two additional instructors to ensure that students are prepared for a career in the field of Recreation Administration. Through our partnership with the City of Sumter, tennis was a course that was offered during this academic year to give our students more opportunities to engage in physical activity.

A major in Recreation Administration at Morris College provides students with the knowledge, skills, and practical experiences needed to become leaders in the recreation, sports, tourism, and wellness industries. The program prepares graduates for careers in **parks and recreation, sports management, community and nonprofit organizations, event planning, youth development, and health promotion**. Students gain valuable experience in leadership, program design, facility management, budgeting, risk management, and community engagement while developing strong communication and problem-solving skills.

As communities place greater emphasis on health, wellness, and quality of life, the demand for qualified recreation professionals continues to grow. Recreation Administration majors are equipped to create and manage programs that enhance physical, social, and emotional well-being for individuals of all ages. Through a combination of academic preparation, hands-on learning opportunities, and a commitment to service, Morris College graduates are prepared to make meaningful contributions to their communities while pursuing diverse and rewarding career opportunities. The **Health Science and Recreation Administration Advisory Council (HSRAAC)** helps ensure our graduates are ready for the challenge.

Another milestone was achieved when the **Recreation Club** was reestablished. It allowed students throughout the campus to engage in informational sessions and activities to inform them of the various career fields within Recreation Administration. Since the president of the Recreation Club graduated in Spring 2026, the remaining members decided to join the Health Science Club to engage in meaningful activities to promote health and wellness for the upcoming academic year.



MR. XAVIER TEASLEY, CHAIRPERSON &
2002 MORRIS COLLEGE GRADUATE

MORRIS COLLEGE

HEALTH SCIENCE AND RECREATION ADMINISTRATION ADVISORY COUNCIL (HSRAAC)



MR. HILTON FORDHAM, VICE CHAIR &
ADJUNCT PROFESSOR

The **Health Science and Recreation Administration Advisory Council (HSRAAC)** successfully supported the mission and goals of the Health Science and Recreation Administration programs at Morris College during the 2025–2026 academic year. Approximately 15 active members represent a variety of health, recreation, education, and community-based professions. The council provided valuable mentorship, guidance, assistance, and support to both faculty and students. Through regular meetings, collaboration, and engagement activities, the council contributed significantly to strengthening program quality and student success.

A major focus of the council's work centered on **student recruitment**. Advisory council members served as ambassadors for the programs by promoting opportunities in Health Science and Recreation Administration within their professional networks, communities, and organizations. Members provided recommendations for recruitment strategies, participated in outreach efforts, and assisted in increasing awareness of career opportunities available to graduates of both programs.

The council also placed a strong emphasis on **career readiness** by helping students connect classroom learning to workforce expectations. Members shared industry trends, discussed employment opportunities, provided career guidance, and offered insights into the knowledge, skills, and professional competencies required for success in health and recreation-related professions. These efforts helped ensure that students were better prepared to transition from college to the workforce or graduate study.

Mentorship remained a cornerstone of the council's work throughout the academic year. Advisory council members served as professional role models and mentors, providing encouragement, networking opportunities, and practical advice to students. Through formal and informal interactions, members supported student development by discussing career pathways, professional expectations, leadership skills, and personal growth opportunities.

Additionally, the council stressed the importance of **curriculum development and review**. Members evaluated current program offerings and provided recommendations to ensure that curricula remained relevant, current, and aligned with industry standards and workforce needs. Committee members will continue to work to provide feedback so faculty can identify emerging trends, strengthen course content, and explore new academic opportunities that will enhance student learning and program effectiveness.

Overall, the HSRAAC demonstrated a strong commitment to advancing the Health Science and Recreation Administration programs at Morris College.



DR. MICHIKO MCCLARY
DIRECTOR OF TEACHER EDUCATION

MORRIS COLLEGE TEACHER EDUCATION



MS. CHASIDY GRAHAM
ASSISTANT PROFESSOR

The 2025-2026 academic year provided numerous opportunities for success for both candidates (teacher education students) and faculty. Candidates participated in various engagement activities that helped them enhance their content knowledge, pedagogical skills, and soft skills as they prepare to become educators who are **"Competent, Critical Thinkers, Reflective Practitioners, and Caring."** Faculty achievements in accreditation were acknowledged during the Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation (CAEP) Conference.

Mr. Quinton Dawkins completed the qualifications to earn a BS in Elementary Education in December 2025. He became employed with the Sumter School District in January 2026 as a fifth-grade teacher at Lemira Elementary School. Mr. Dawkins, who served as the Student – South Carolina Education (S-SCEA) President and a member of the Call Me Mister Cohort, graduated from Morris College on May 2, 2026.

Candidates must complete 100 hours of field experience in diverse educational settings to meet accreditation requirements before starting their student teaching internship. Field experience provides candidates with the opportunity to connect theoretical knowledge to practical application in supervised, real-world classroom environments. Through observation, participation, and guided teaching, candidates develop their instructional skills, deepen their understanding of diverse learners and school communities, apply various pedagogical strategies, maintain professional and ethical standards, and reflect on their growth as effective educators who are "Competent, Critical Thinkers, Reflective Practitioners, and Caring." During this academic year, candidates have engaged in field experiences at several schools within the Sumter School District. We extend our gratitude to our district partners for their continued support of our candidates.

Jase McKnight, an elementary education major; **Antonia Jackson**, an early childhood education major, and Dr. McClary attended the **2025 HBCU Summit** from November 7 to 9, 2025, in Atlanta, GA, which was sponsored by the **National Education Association (NEA)**. The purpose of the summit was to unite HBCU leaders, educators, and union partners to build collective power through organizing, affirm the excellence of Black educators, and take bold, coordinated action to protect and strengthen the Black educator pipeline and the union. Candidates participated in various sessions designed to empower them as future educators engaged in advocacy. The summit was attended by teacher candidates from Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) across the United States.

Dr. McClary, the Director of Teacher Education, along with students, participated in the **Sumter School District (SSD) Educational Summit** on March 30, 2026. The summit aimed to achieve three key objectives: 1) strengthen partnerships between the district and Colleges of Education; 2) gain a better understanding of how colleges and universities prepare teacher candidates; and 3) identify ways the district can be more attractive to students and graduates.

MORRIS COLLEGE TEACHER EDUCATION



During the event, Dr. McClary took part in a panel discussion alongside deans and directors of education. **Amaury Johnson**, an elementary education major, and **Tiara Starks**, an early childhood education major, were also present, along with other education majors from various institutions who participated in a student panel. The event offered a chance to connect with high school students from SSD about Morris College and its Teacher Education program.

All candidates are required to become members of the **South Carolina Education Association (S-SCEA)**, which holds monthly meetings. The purpose of S-SCEA is to support candidates in completing their education and training, empowering them to become active, successful, and visible members of their future profession. Additionally, S-SCEA provides leadership opportunities. During the 2025-2026 academic year, several guest speakers were invited to discuss various topics related to the education profession. Dr. Michiko McClary serves as the college sponsor and advisor for S-SCEA.

Morris College has received reaffirmation of its accreditation from the **Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation (CAEP)** for the period from Spring 2025 to Spring 2032. As a result of the Division of Education's accreditation efforts, Morris College was honored with two awards at the CAEP Conference in Fall 2025.

The first award, the **Emerson J. Elliott Award for Excellence in Educator Preparation Continuous Improvement**, recognizes educator preparation programs that demonstrate a sustained commitment to improvement through robust quality assurance systems, evidence-based practices, and a culture of inquiry and accountability. This award honors Emerson J. Elliott, the first commissioner of the National Center for Education Statistics.

The second award, the **Frank Murray Leadership Recognition for Continuous Improvement**, is given to educator preparation providers (EPPs) that achieve accreditation without any stipulations or areas for improvement. This distinction is awarded for providing strong evidence and consistent data trends. Named after Frank Murray, the founding president of the Teacher Education Accreditation Council (TEAC), this award celebrates his legacy as a champion of rigorous educator preparation standards and his leadership in uniting the profession through the creation of CAEP.

The conference was attended by Dr. Cornelius Leach, Chair of the Division of Education; Ms. Chasidy Graham, Assistant Professor of Early Childhood and Director of the Honors College; and Dr. Michiko McClary, Professor and Director of Teacher Education. During the conference, Dr. McClary presented on the division's journey toward achieving Full CAEP Accreditation. The session was titled **"From Stipulation to Full Accreditation: The Story of a Small EPP."**

MORRIS COLLEGE TEACHER EDUCATION 2026 GRADUATE



Quinton Dawkins Elementary Education

My name is Quinton Dawkins, and I am from Simpsonville, SC. I am a 2026 graduate of Morris College earning a Bachelor of Science degree in Elementary Education. I completed my student teaching in fourth grade at Millwood Elementary School and Lemira Elementary School. I was honored to be offered a teaching contract with Sumter School District teaching fourth grade at Lemira Elementary School.

I am a former president of the **S-SCEA** organization and **Call Me Mister** program at Morris College. While earning my degree, I was captain of the Morris College Esports team and am currently a member of **Kappa Alpha Psi Fraternity, Incorporated**.





MORRIS COLLEGE ROTC

MAJOR DARYL SCOTT
MORRIS COLLEGE ROTC LIAISON



MRS. GWENDOLYN WIGGINS
COORDINATOR OF VETERANS
RESOURCE CENTER/SECRETARY
(ROTC)

During the 2025–2026 academic year, the **Morris College ROTC** program expanded its leadership development mission through active engagement across both the **Army and Air Force ROTC** pathways. This academic year marked the successful introduction of the Air Force ROTC program through a cross-town enrollment partnership with the University of South Carolina (USC), creating additional opportunities for Morris College students to pursue commissioned officer pathways across multiple branches of military service.

ROTC cadets and program representatives volunteered at the **Sumter Homeless Shelter**, reinforcing the program's commitment to community service, civic responsibility, and leadership in action. Participation in **High School Day** activities increased awareness of ROTC educational and career pathways among prospective students, supporting long-term recruitment and program sustainability.

The program conducted a **Student Development Workshop** focused on career readiness, including hands-on instruction in job search strategies, resume development, professional communication, and career pathway planning. These activities are designed to support cadet success both during their academic experience and in future leadership roles within military and civilian professions.

ROTC representatives continued active participation in community engagement events, including local parades and outreach initiatives that strengthen public awareness of Morris College's commitment to leadership development and service.

In collaboration with **Veterans Affairs** representatives, program leadership participated in the Annual Veterans Benefits and Administration Workshop, supporting veterans and students in understanding educational benefits, administrative processes, and transition resources available through federal and state programs.

Recruitment initiatives focused on strengthening future cadet participation through expanded outreach efforts, enhanced engagement pathways, and the development of structured retention strategies designed to support cadet persistence and progression toward commissioning opportunities.

The combined Army and Air Force ROTC initiatives reflect Morris College's continued commitment to preparing future leaders through discipline, academic excellence, service, and community partnership. The expansion of cross-town enrollment opportunities enhances institutional capacity to support cadet development while strengthening long-term program growth and leadership continuity.

MORRIS COLLEGE ROTC



With the successful introduction of Air Force ROTC through the USC cross-town partnership and the continued development of Army ROTC programming, Morris College has strengthened the foundation for sustained program growth. Expanded recruitment pathways, leadership development activities, and community engagement efforts position the program to increase cadet participation and broaden career opportunities for future officers and professional leaders.



MORRIS COLLEGE ROTC



CALL ME MISTER

Call Me MiSTER (CMM) is celebrating its 26th Anniversary. It was established in 2000 to reduce the shortage of Black male teachers in South Carolina. It has since grown to include teacher education programs in 11 states, making it a national model. The program both educates future teachers at the collegiate level in a learning cohort and provides mentors to area elementary and high school students. Morris College is proud to be one of the original Call Me Mister programs!

Morris College and USC-Sumter held their annual recruitment showcase for local middle and high school males on USC-Sumter's campus during the Spring semester. The purpose of the event was to recruit, retain, and nurture CMM participants; build a talent pipeline for the Sumter area; identify and support diverse students through the CMM program; and impact the Sumter area with future leaders and teachers in the community.

The Call Me Mister mentored and tutored students at Crosswell Drive Elementary during the academic year. This is the third year the CMMs have supported the faculty, staff, and students at Crosswell Drive. During Crosswell's Volunteer Recognition Ceremony, the MiSTERS received a certificate of appreciation for their dedicated service to the students at Crosswell Drive Elementary.

In addition to serving the community, two of our MiSTERS, Amaury Johnson and Tiara Starks, were on the Dean's List for academic achievement.



CALL ME MISTER

MISTERS must embody the five tenets of the program.

AMBASSADORSHIP



SERVANT LEADERSHIP



BROTHER'S KEEPER



TEACHER EFFICACY





Above: Call Me Misters speaking with high school students in March about their experiences as a Mister and a student at Morris College



Above: Call Me Misters and the advisor supporting MiSTER Johnson, who was the speaker for the 2026 Black History Month program at Liberty STEAM Charter School.

Meet Our Mistrs

2025-2026



Quinton Dawkins
Elementary Education



Lavaron Johnson
Elementary Education



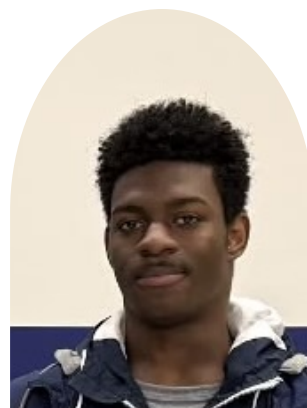
Tiara Starks
Early Childhood Education



Amaury Johnson, President
Elementary Education



Travis Johnson (new)
Elementary Education



Brooklyn Rouse (new)
Elementary Education

MEET OUR TEAM

2025-2026

Cornelius B. Leach, EdD.

Chairperson, Division of Education

Dr. Paul N. Ezeji

Professor and Coordinator
of Health Science

Mrs. Gwen Wiggins

Coordinator of Veterans Resource
Center/Secretary (ROTC)

Mrs. Gail China

Quality Enhancement Program
Teacher Education Faculty

Mrs. Sheree Boozer

Adjunct Faculty
Teacher Education

Mr. Hilton Fordham

Adjunct Faculty
Health Science

Ms. Alexias Singleton

Adjunct Faculty
Teacher Education

Mr. Tyrone Henderson

Recreation Administration

Ms. Blanche Brown

Data Manager

Dr. Michiko McClary

Director of Teacher Education

Dr. Joon Choel Lee

Associate Professor/Coordinator of
Recreation Administration

Ms. Chasidy Graham

Assistant Professor
Early Childhood Education

Ms. Suzette McClellan

Adjunct Faculty
Health Science

Dr. Lakeshia Adams

Adjunct Faculty
Teacher Education

Mr. Herbert Johnson

Adjunct Faculty
Teacher Education

Mrs. Thoma Williams

Adjunct Faculty
English Education

Ms. Jenone Bell

Recreation Administration

Major Daryl Scott

ROTC