After 21 years at USC, provost heads to UIC for chancellor job
PG 8

The Gamecocks look to avenge last year’s loss in the SEC tournament
PG 12
CORRECTION
A photo on the front page of Thursday’s edition did not match the caption or story. The building in the photo is Preston Residential College. A headline on a column in Thursday’s edition was inaccurate. The headline should have said “Net neutrality proponents misguided.” The Daily Gamecock regrets the errors.
“Old women love me here. Dogs hate me.”
— Conan O’Brien on his recent trip to Cuba

“We got stuck with three other people in between the second and the third floor ... The fire department had to come and get us out,”
— First-year sociology and psychology student Briana DellaSala, who became stuck in one of the Columbia Hall elevators during Thursday’s campus-wide power outage

“There’s no rest for the weary.”
— Kevin Epley, USC women’s tennis head coach

“I looked at you right in the face ... and realized I wasn’t afraid anymore,”
— Rebekah Gregory, who lost a leg in the Boston Bombing, in an open letter to Dzhokhar Tsarnaev
“I’m just excited to continue the semester. I’m starting my pediatric rotation in nursing, so I’m really excited for that, ’cause that’s a second-half of the semester type deal. So I’m pretty excited for that.”

— Lauren Harville, third-year nursing student

“I’m heading to Kiawah Island with like five of my friends for the week.”

— Justin Beldyk, first-year international business student

“I’m going to be celebrating my birthday in Charleston on Friday the 13th. It’s going to be great/unlucky, but we’ll find out.”

— Lauren Blew, first-year nursing student

“I guess I look forward to it almost being April which means it’s almost final exams, which means it’s almost summer.”

— Allie Morrison, third-year psychology student

“We’re going to go to California on Saturday for spring break and babysit for our grandchildren. Our daughter and her husband are taking a well-deserved vacation to Hawaii, and I’m going to stay the whole week. Harris can only stay until Wednesday, but we’re going to babysit for Penelope and Alice, who are almost 3 and 1. We’re looking forward to it.”

— Patricia Moore-Pastides

“I have no clue [what I’m going to do]. I’m going to find some trouble to get into.”

— Olivia Eckart, second-year biology student

“I’m going to be celebrating my birthday in Charleston on Friday the 13th. It’s going to be great/unlucky, but we’ll find out.”

— Lauren Blew, first-year nursing student

“The weather’s going to be so nice. I’m a runner so I do a lot of running, so my running really starts when I get back, so I’ll enjoy that.”

— Parker Moore, third-year marketing student
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- Secretary of Multicultural Affairs
- Secretary of Environmental Affairs
- Secretary of Health, Wellness, and Disabilities
- Secretary of Community Outreach
- Secretary of Athletics
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Vice-Presidential Staff:

- Clerk
- Sergeant-at-Arms

Applications for cabinet positions can be found on the Student Government Website at www.sa.sc.edu/sg
Applications due March 25, 2015 by 4 p.m.
FRIDAY

THE AVETT BROTHERS
Township Auditorium, 1703 Taylor St.
Fri, 8 p.m. & Sat 8 p.m., $39.50 to $49.50

Grammy award-winning folk rock group The Avett Brothers will take up a three-night residence in Columbia through Saturday evening. General Admission seats are standing room only.

SUGAR (SOME LIKE IT HOT)
Town Theatre, 1012 Sumter St.
Fri, 8 p.m., $15 to $25

Town Theatre will perform an adaptation of the film classic, “Some Like it Hot,” in which two male musicians accidentally witness a mob hit in Chicago. Their only ticket out of town being an all-female band headed to Miami, the two must don wigs and dresses and head to Miami. The show runs until March 21.

SATURDAY

EARLEWOOD CLASSIC DISC GOLF TOURNAMENT
Earlewood Disc Golf Course, 1111 Parkside Dr.
Sat, 9:30 a.m., free

Celebrate Columbia’s 26th annual disk golf classic this Saturday during the third and final rounds of match play. Players in the master and grand master categories are scheduled to tee off at 9 a.m. and an awards ceremony will follow.

TWO GALS AND A FORK FOOD TOURS WITH HISTORIC COLUMBIA
The Vista, 1101 Lincoln St.
Sat, 11 a.m. and 4 p.m., $30 to $38

With two sessions for lunch and dinner, there’s no excuse to miss this tour of Columbia’s past and cuisine. What’s better than sampling food from five top Vista restaurants? Sample food while Historic Columbia guides tell tales of local history.

SUNDAY

CRAFT & KVELL
Jewish Community Center, 306 Flora Dr.
Sun, 8:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m., $5

The Jewish Community Center will host a day-long crafting event for individuals looking to up their creativity quotient. Bring photos to scrapbook and yarn to knit. Turn your Pinterest finds into reality.

MARCH BARTENDER CHALLENGE
City Roots, 1005 Airport Blvd.
Sun, 2 to 6 p.m., $20

Enjoy live music and local food while bartenders compete for the drink with the best taste, presentation and originality.

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Michael Amiridis is like the director of a play. You might see him if you stop by rehearsal, but you don’t see him during the show — he stays behind the curtain, making sure everything on stage goes as planned, as rehearsed, as it should. You probably wouldn’t recognize him on the street. It’s the actor’s face you remember.

He came in as director — to continue the metaphor — right after the theater’s budget was slashed, leaving virtually no money for sets or costumes and certainly not to pay new actors. His rehearsal time was nixed.

Regardless, the show had to go on.

The theater was USC. The sets and costumes were programs and renovations. The actors were faculty.

And the director was the provost.

DRESS REHEARSAL

Amiridis, 52, didn’t go into academics to be an administrator. But after 21 years at USC — six as provost — Amiridis is leaving Columbia this month to serve as chancellor of the University of Illinois at Chicago.

Long before he set foot in the Office of the Provost, long before the Great Recession hit and long before he bonded over Greek food with USC President Harris Pastides, Amiridis was a chemical engineering professor, eager to dive into academia at the ground level.

He was brought on in 1994 as part of a university push to bring more researchers to campus, particularly in the College of Engineering.

Years later, after rising through the ranks of the college, serving as department chair and dean, he worked to bring more of a focus to teaching in the engineering school, the flipside of what he’d been hired to do in the ‘90s.

“I felt like I was walking on water,” he said. “Of course, I didn’t know anything.”

But after a few years as dean, Amiridis was looking to provost jobs. But Vice Provost Harry Ploehn, who worked with Amiridis in the engineering department at the time, didn’t want to see him go.

Ploehn knew his colleague was up for USC’s provost position, and when he ran into Pastides on the Horseshoe one day, he didn’t hesitate to give the president his two cents.

“I said, ‘You have to keep him. He’s the natural,’” Ploehn said.

But Pastides didn’t need any convincing. He saw the same thing Ploehn did.
Amiridis walked into the Office of the Provost in
just 2009.

It was one year after Pastides settled into his
office and got the news of the first of several
The Great Recession was hitting South Carolina,
higher education was feeling the pain.

Somebody had to do the job, and I was facing
consequences, whether I was in this office or
whether I was in my office as dean of engineering,”
Amiridis said. “So instead of just facing the
sequences at my level, I decided it was my
opportunity to try to solve the problem.”

But USC fired no one during or after the
session. There were no furloughs.
The university’s hiring process did freeze,
ever, and more than 273 employees left for
other jobs or retired, but existing positions weren’t
a cost-saving measure. Instead, USC brought
more and more students and raised tuition
higher and higher to make up for the lack of state
funding.

That meant there were more students on campus,
they were paying more for their education.
Quantity was on the rise, but it was unclear
whether quality would do the same.

Enter the Faculty Replenishment Hiring
Initiative (FRI).

It was a way to ensure faculty members hired
up to snuff — retired professors were replaced
experienced faculty replaced them, a real
gain of pace after years of hiring younger, less
experienced professors who came at a lower cost.

When the plan was introduced in 2011, the goal
was 200 new professors by the 2015-2016 school
year.

Most of our revenue growth had been through
a strategic move to increase the student body size
and maintain the faculty-to-student ratio at a
level we could be proud of,” Ploehn said. “We
to hire more faculty. It’s simple math.”

Today, around 175 tenure-track faculty members
have been hired. Funding for the remaining hires
will come from South Carolina is potentially some financial

THE ACTORS

Amiridis an engineer by trade; he learns best by
doing. By nature, he’s a people-person. He learns
even better when he’s talking with someone else.

When he took over as provost, Amiridis wasn’t shy
about how little he knew about other departments
on campus. He didn’t pretend to understand their
needs or priorities.

Instead, he visited every department, talked to
every dean and heard it from them.

“I know I wasn’t the only one who said, ‘Is that
really the best use of your time in your first year
as provost?’” said Dennis Pruitt, vice president for
student affairs. “But he was able to go out and get
an institutional assessment from the ground roots
and make a strategic plan for what needed to
advance.”

Those one-on-one sessions built a sense of trust
between the deans and new provost.

For Mary Anne Fitzpatrick, dean of the College
of Arts and Sciences, it was satisfying to work with a
provost whose plans aligned with hers.

For Tony Ambler, dean of the College of
Engineering, he appreciated the fact that the
provost kept ties with the college and kept himself
accessible.

Developing that relationship with the deans was
crucial for Amiridis, who has always emphasized
the importance of faculty to his staff in the provost
office.

“He tells me to never forget that I’m faculty first,”
Interim Provost Helen Doerpinghaus said.

He stresses the dean-provost relationship, so
it will trickle down colleges, departments and
classrooms.

The faculty are the owners of the institution, he
said — he works with faculty, so faculty will work
with students.

“What is key and central in this experience?” he
asked. “It’s the faculty members — who you’re going
to associate with, who you’re going to be taught by,
who you’re going to be mentored by, who’s going to
guide you in the next steps of your career.”

ACT II

USC’s state funding has started to come back up
a bit over the last few years, but it’s still far from the
$165 million the Columbia campus saw cut from the
legislature in 2007.

Instead of issuing a sweeping cry for funding
every fiscal year, the university has proposed specific
plans to the legislature in hopes of getting funding
for certain projects.

“I think what we’re going to see in the future
from South Carolina is potentially some financial
Higher education is fast-paced — needs for funding and space and support come in rapidly, oftentimes faster than the resources do. To combat that imbalance, universities are always looking for the next big thing.

Or as Pruitt calls it, the NBT.

“And [Amiridis] has always been one step ahead of the NBT,” Pruitt said.

**BACKSTAGE**

Students don’t know Amiridis like they know Pastides. Pastides is visible — a staple of the university community, always out shaking hands and kissing babies. But that’s not in the provost’s job description. However, just about every aspect of the university crosses the provost’s desk.

“Students see what they see. They see their courses, they see their major, they see their opportunities,” Kelly said. “They shouldn’t really be caring about the higher administration of the university and the only time they should is when there’s a problem. The fact that they don’t really know who he is means he’s done a really good job.”

It’s not that he has avoided students — his job doesn’t deal with them directly.

“He cares so much about the students and the quality of education we’re receiving here,” said Student Body President Lindsay Richardson. “He wants to make sure that’s accessible and that’s affordable and as high of quality as possible.”

Though the FRI was a faculty-centered initiative, it was implemented for the students — if tuition is rising, Amiridis said, students should be getting their money’s worth with quality instruction.

“Most of the things that I do, most of the students on campus don’t know about, but that’s the nature of the position here,” he said.

“But they’re affected by them. That’s the difference.”

**FINALE**

Amiridis will ship out to the Windy City next week, but he’s in limbo until then.

“Two states, two schools,” he said. “Too much uncertainty.”

Pastides has been adamant that the provost’s office won’t be empty long — he’d like to see someone in there by the start of next semester.

Some faculty have been openly skeptical about the plan for a rather quick turnaround, but Amiridis doesn’t doubt it will happen.

“When Harris wants to make something happen,” Amiridis said, “he does.”

Senate Faculty Chair James Knapp is a member of the provost search committee. What kind of qualities is he looking for? “The ability to work with the president, a broad command of education enterprise, comfortable working with people.”

The same ones Amiridis has shown over the years, he said.

And it seems like he’s making a habit of stepping into jobs looking at the brink of financial crisis.

In his first spending plan in office, Illinois Gov. Bruce Rauner proposed massive cuts to higher education funding in his first spending plan in office — his “turnaround budget” recommends a 31.5 percent reduction for collegiate funds.

If enacted, the University of Illinois system would take a big hit, nearly $209 million.

Amiridis said he really doesn’t know much about UIC’s financial situation yet; nonetheless, he’s already considering enrollment increases and ways to bring more students to Chicago from other states and countries.

“It’s starting all over again for me,” he said. “I wish I didn’t have to do it all again, but we’ll figure it out when we get there.”

Amiridis has met a few deans and students, but he has spent little time there since he accepted the position in December.

He’s in for his fair share of changes: UIC is an urban campus; more students commute to class; the weather “It’s just a different mindset,” Pastides said. “He can’t go in and bring a Carolina mindset.”

He will, however, bring what he calls the “Carolina model” — he’s seen how USC has succeeded and where its faltered, and he’s seen the school through both.
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The regular season is over and the SEC tournament is now underway with the No. 1 team in the conference, South Carolina (27-2, 15-1), getting ready to play its first game in Little Rock against Arkansas on Friday.

The Gamecocks had a bye through the first two rounds of the tournament, while Arkansas won 72-61 against Ole Miss on Thursday.

After a tough 67-56 loss against Kentucky ended their chances at an undefeated conference record, the now-No. 3 Gamecocks look to bounce back from the tough defeat.

Committing 20 turnovers and shooting 32.3 percent from the field, South Carolina will need to get back its usual self on offense in order to handle the challenges ahead, according to head coach Dawn Staley.

“I think it was just us ... how we approached the game and the energy that we did not put into the game,” Staley said. “Obviously you got to bring it every time you step on the floor, especially on the road. We punished ourselves with how we performed.”

Now with Arkansas defeating Ole Miss, the Gamecocks can focus on the Razorbacks. Staley’s team knocked off Arkansas just over two weeks ago in Fayetteville, winning 73-56.

Coached by first-year head coach Jimmy Dykes, the Razorbacks are on the bubble to make the NCAA tournament, and a win or even a good showing against South Carolina could secure them a spot in the big dance.

In the Gamecocks’ win against Arkansas in February, four different Gamecocks scored in double-digits with junior guard Tiffany Mitchell leading the way with 15 points. As a team, South Carolina shot 52.1 percent and made 80 percent of its free throws against the Razorbacks.

In its most recent game against Ole Miss, Arkansas used a second-half run to get past the Rebels with sophomore forward Jessica Jackson, the Razorbacks’ leading scorer on the season, having a 25-point day.

One day after the conclusion of the regular-season, the SEC announced its end of the year awards and South Carolina took home several honors.

Staley was honored as the co-Coach of the Year along with Mississippi State’s head coach Vic Schaefer.

Despite the honor, Staley did not want to focus on her award, saying she liked winning championships more and while these individual awards do in fact make the program look good, they only benefit one individual instead of the entire team.

Welch was named the program’s first Scholar-Athlete of the Year, while sophomore center Alaina Coates earned spots on both the All-SEC Second Team and All-Defensive Team.

Freshman guard/forward A’ja Wilson gained the title of Freshman of the Year and joined Mitchell on the All-SEC First Team.

Mitchell also earned the SEC Player of the Year award for the second straight season and is just the sixth player to win back-to-back awards for player of the year.

With this being the last go-around for Welch, she expects nothing less than the best from her teammates.

“The mindset going into the tournament is don’t leave anything on the court because ... we only really, truthfully have two more guaranteed games,” Welch said. “That’s the first game in the tournament and the first game in the NCAA tournament, and we want to make sure we can keep playing as long as possible.”

As the Gamecocks begin the postseason against Arkansas and move closer to the NCAA tournament, South Carolina now has a chance to carry its regular season success into March, when it matters the most.

“If we take care of what we need to, you know, as far as bringing the energy, playing like we played all season long — that will take care of stuff,” Staley said.
GAMECOCK BASEBALL WEEKEND PRIMER

WILL HELMS @WHELMS21

No. 5 South Carolina (9-3) seems to be finding its offensive rhythm with the past couple of games. The Gamecocks scored a combined 21 runs against Charleston Southern and High Point. As head coach Chad Holbrook waits for the pitching to click, a three-game series against the struggling Miami (Ohio) Redhawks provides an optimal opportunity.

Miami enters the weekend with a 2-5 record marred by inconsistent hitting, scoring more than four runs just once in their seven games thus far. South Carolina will look to take advantage and put together a weekend sweep.

**Sunday Starter TBA**

The Gamecocks will send sophomore righty Wil Crowe (1-1) to the mound Friday while junior southpaw Jack Wynkoop (2-1) will pitch Saturday.

Crowe had been on a roll before giving up eight earned runs in six innings last Friday against the Tigers. Wynkoop gave up just one run in six innings on Saturday.

Once again, Holbrook said he would wait to release the Sunday starter. Sophomore lefty Josh Reagan (0-1) has started the finale of every weekend series so far. Reagan has not made it to the fifth inning in his last two games.

Junior college transfer Preston Johnson pitched 3.2 perfect innings Wednesday in his first appearance of the season while sophomore Matthew Vogel again showed promise with a strong start. One of them could slide into the weekend rotation in the near future.

**Schrock Returns to Form**

Junior second baseman Max Schrock began the season 5-31. Following the loss to Clemson on Monday, Holbrook stressed that he still had confidence in Schrock.

“He’s a good hitter,” Holbrook said. “He’s struggling right now, and I’ve got to find a way to push the right buttons to get him going.”

In the two games since, Schrock is 4-6 with five RBIs and a home run.

**End of the Hitting Streak**

Wednesday’s game against High Point was the first game this season in which sophomore Gene Cone did not record a hit. Cone went 0-1 with three walks. He has still reached base in his last 13 games dating back to last season.

**Jack-of-All-Trades**

Freshman designated hitter Alex Destino is hitting .356 with three home runs and 13 RBIs this season.

Wednesday, Destino saw action on the mound for the first time this season. He struggled a bit with his command, walking three, but he struck out one in .2 innings of work.

**Up Next**

The three-game series will start Friday at 7 p.m. From there, the Gamecocks will play a pair of midweek games against Penn State before beginning SEC play.

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Monday, March 9th - Friday March 13th

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