



CALL ME
MiISTER®
CLEMSON® UNIVERSITY

*College of Education
Case for Support*





CALL ME MISTER®

Call Me MiSTER (Mentors Instructing Students Toward Effective Role Models) is a national program designed to increase the pool of highly qualified teachers from broader, more diverse backgrounds, particularly from rural, economically disadvantaged and underserved communities. While the program was originally intended to recruit Black males to teach in early childhood and elementary schools in South Carolina, Call Me MiSTER has expanded to include females and other prospective PreK-Grade 12 teacher candidates from these communities.

Call Me MiSTER originated in the Clemson University College of Education in 2000 in collaboration with three private Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) and has grown to include a total of 28 two- and four-year colleges and universities in South Carolina and an additional 18 colleges and universities in 10 states. The state's two land-grant institutions — Clemson University and South Carolina State University — matriculated their first cohort of students in Fall 2005. Ninety percent of the MiSTERS currently in the teaching force are graduates of South Carolina colleges and universities.

SUCCESS REQUIRES INVESTMENT

Since its inception in 2000, Call Me MiSTER has been supported through a mix of private and public funds. The program uses these funds to provide students with academic and social support, educational and cultural enrichment, internships, and financial assistance to reduce the expense of tuition, books, housing and fees. Financial support for students increases as they successfully progress through the program.

Scholarships and Financial Assistance Provided to MiSTERS at Clemson University, 2024

Cost of a Clemson Education <small>AY 2024-2025 (in-state tuition)</small>	Years 1-2		Years 3-4	
	Undergraduate	Graduate	Undergraduate	Graduate
Tuition and Fees	\$ 15,120	\$16,575	\$15,120	\$16,575
Additional Estimated Costs: housing, food, books, transportation and personal expenses	\$20,694	\$17,037	\$20,694	\$17,037
Total Cost of Attendance Per Year	\$35,814	\$33,612	\$35,814	\$33,612
Annual Support for MiSTERS				
Tuition Assistance	\$5,000	\$5,000	\$10,000	\$10,000
Tuition Supplement	\$3,000	\$3,000	\$5,000	\$5,000
Housing Discount	\$4,933	\$4,933	\$4,933	\$4,933
Book Stipend	\$1,000	\$1,000	\$1,000	\$1,000
Praxis Stipend	\$270	\$270	\$156	\$156
Total Annual Support for MiSTERS	\$14,203	\$14,203	\$21,089	\$21,089
Net Cost of Attendance	\$21,611	\$19,409	\$14,725	\$12,523

In addition to students' rigorous college coursework, Call Me MiSTER participants engage in service-learning projects, cross-cultural study trips and multiple internships. They participate in Living Learning Communities on campus, attend three Call Me MiSTER meetings per week and participate in an annual leadership institute in the summer. Participants receive individualized mentoring and academic tutoring sessions as needed. The program is nearly 100 percent self-sustaining. Gifts and public investments provide the necessary funding to maintain the program.

FIERCELY FOR OUR STUDENTS

After a quarter century of Call Me MiSTER in South Carolina, our early program graduates are approaching eligibility for retirement. As these distinguished educators move into this next phase of life, the need for highly qualified teachers, particularly from diverse backgrounds and rural, economically disadvantaged and historically underserved communities, is higher than ever.

The Center for Educator Recruitment, Retention and Advancement (CERRA) estimates 51,000 certified teachers are needed to meet the educational needs of South Carolina alone. In 2022-2023, there were 7,353 teacher departures in the state, and only 2,892 education graduates eligible to teach — not nearly enough to address the state's teaching needs. The following school year started with more than 1,600 teacher vacancies in South Carolina, up from over 1,400 the year before. Nationwide, the data are similar and even worse in some locations, particularly rural and economically disadvantaged communities.

Clemson University distinguishes itself as a leader in teacher education.

While enrollment in teacher education programs in South Carolina's public and private institutions has declined by 23 percent over the last 10 years, there is a notable outlier. *During this 10-year period, Clemson has increased its number of education graduates by 57 percent. The Clemson University College of Education is the only public institution in South Carolina to experience an increase in enrollment between 2014-2023.* The College's ongoing strategy is to create as many innovative, flexible and accessible pathways as possible to address the teacher shortage. Call Me MiSTER is an important part of our strategy to provide the state and nation with as many highly qualified teachers as possible, particularly from hard-to-staff schools and districts in rural, economically disadvantaged and underserved communities.

"Research consistently affirms that well-prepared teachers positively impact students' academic achievement, enabling them to thrive academically, but also socially, emotionally and economically later in life. Simply stated, well-prepared teachers change lives and communities."

DEAN KRISTIN M. GEHSMANN



OUR GRADUATES SUCCEED

Since the inaugural class from the original Call Me MiSTER programs graduated in 2004, all MiSTERS eligible for teacher certification in South Carolina have fully met their obligation to teach in socio-economically and educationally at-risk communities for as many years as they received support in the program. Of these graduates, 85 percent have remained teaching in the classroom, and 14 percent have become principals, assistant principals, district office administrators or faculty in teacher education programs. In South Carolina, nearly one in five MiSTERS have been recognized as Teacher of the Year, including three who have been named District Teacher of the Year and four who have been named Induction Teacher of the Year. Nine South Carolina MiSTERS have gone on to earn doctoral degrees.

FEATURED GRADUATE, MR. CALEB BROWN

Growing up, MR. Caleb Brown was inspired by the transformative power of education and the positive impact of dedicated mentors. His passion for learning and helping others was ignited at a young age. Once at Clemson, Caleb immersed himself in multiple organizations, each allowing him to develop his leadership skills and serve our Clemson community in a variety of capacities. Above all, Caleb's path to Clemson was significantly influenced by the Call Me MiSTER program. Within the program, Caleb received the support and financial resources necessary to pursue his dream of becoming a high school history teacher.

MR. Brown graduated from Clemson University and the Call Me MiSTER program in May 2024 with a degree in secondary education. He is currently enrolled in the College of Education's Teacher Residency program, pursuing a Master of Arts in teaching. He looks forward to becoming an impactful high school history teacher and mentor, inspiring the next generation of students and leaders.



MR. Caleb Brown '24 receives the University's Martin Luther King Jr. Award for Excellence in recognition of his exemplary service.



CALL ME MISTER® 2.0

Call Me MiSTER seeks to double the total Clemson cohort of MiSTERS from 20 students to 40 by 2030. In order to achieve this, we must begin nurturing the next generation of prospective teachers while they are in middle and high school by providing community-based and on-campus enrichment and development opportunities in the summer. **To reach our 2030 goal, we aim to add four to five new MiSTERS per year, beginning with incoming first-year students in Fall 2025.**

Additionally, we will need to increase available funding to support 20 new students in the program. In today's dollars, each MiSTER receives a total aid package of more than \$20,000 per year. **We estimate the need for an additional \$750,000 in student aid, personnel and operating funds per year to achieve the goal of doubling the Clemson cohort by 2030.**

Gifts to the Call Me MiSTER Fund will help us sustain and expand the program, ensuring its long-term success. Contributions to the College of Education's General Scholarship Fund, College of Education Rural Education and Outreach Fund, and Dean's Excellence Fund will complement the needs and goals of Call Me MiSTER 2.0.

IMPACT

Call Me MiSTER 2.0 addresses the teacher pipeline shortage in South Carolina and will help ameliorate disparities in educational outcomes across the state, particularly in rural, economically disadvantaged and historically underserved communities. **Investing in the recruitment and development of a diverse population of pre-service educators will expand opportunity and access to higher education; diversify the teacher workforce; and provide the next generation of PreK-Grade 12 students with well-prepared mentors and role models.** Graduates of the Clemson University College of Education and Call Me MiSTER go on to make a positive impact in the lives of individuals and the communities they serve. An investment in them is an investment in the educational and economic future of South Carolina and beyond.



The College of Education promotes the growth, education and development of people across the life and career span. Your gift can help support future teachers and leaders who are dedicated to transforming lives and communities.

Have a question about giving? Contact Executive Director of Development Margaret Owens '91, M '92 (MR6@clemson.edu or 864-276-7245) or visit:

iamatiger.clemson.edu/giving/education



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