



# Impact Report

CALL ME  
**MiSTER**<sup>®</sup>  
CLEMSON<sup>®</sup> UNIVERSITY

## PROGRAM OVERVIEW

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, the program has expanded to include females and other prospective PreK-Grade 12 teacher candidates from these communities.

The program originated in the Clemson University College of Education in 2000 in collaboration with three private Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs). For more than 20 years, Call Me MiSTER has provided unparalleled support to its student participants. Students are selected through a competitive process after being accepted to attend a participating institution of higher education. Successful candidates must demonstrate strong academic potential, evidence of leadership potential and a commitment to teach in high-needs schools and districts.

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 and attend three Call Me MiSTER meetings per week.

## Call Me MiSTER by the numbers

28

The number of two- and four-year colleges and universities in South Carolina that include a Call Me MiSTER program

18

The number of colleges and universities in 10 states that include a Call Me MiSTER program

409

The number of MiSTERs who have become teachers



## IMPACT OF CALL ME MiSTER IN SOUTH CAROLINA

Since the inaugural class 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% have remained in teaching positions in the classroom, and 14% 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. Eleven South Carolina MiSTERS have gone on to earn doctoral degrees.

In 2000, the year Call Me MiSTER began, fewer than 1% of elementary teachers in South Carolina were Black. Just over two decades later, Call Me MiSTER has produced more than 409 graduates. These efforts have diversified the pool of highly qualified teachers who serve communities in need. Notably, at Clemson, the number of Black male graduates certified to teach K-8 grew from one to more than 75 students since 2005 when Call Me MiSTER began enrolling students at Clemson.

Since 2002, participants in the program have provided summer enrichment experiences for up to 700 elementary and middle school students across the state of South Carolina each year. The Call Me MiSTER program has received national recognition through various professional journals and other media, including ABC World News, National Public Radio, USA Today, the Washington Post, Newsweek, Diverse Issues in Higher Education, South Carolina Public Television and the Oprah Winfrey Show.



## THE ECONOMIC IMPACT IN SOUTH CAROLINA

The Center for Educator Recruitment, Retention and Advancement (CERRA) reported 51,000 certified teachers are needed to meet the educational needs of South Carolina alone. In 2022-2023, there were 7,353 teacher departures and only 2,892 graduates from South Carolina colleges and universities were eligible to teach—not nearly enough to address the state’s needs. The 2023-2024 academic year started with more than 1,600 teacher vacancies, up from just over 1,400 the year before. Nationwide, the data are similar and even worse in some locations, particularly in rural and economically disadvantaged communities.

While enrollment in teacher education degree programs in South Carolina public and private institutions has declined by approximately 23% over the last 10 years, there is a notable outlier. During this 10-year period, Clemson has increased its number of graduates by 57%. 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 state’s teacher shortage. Call Me MiSTER is an important part of its strategy to provide the state and nation with as many highly qualified teachers as possible, particularly from hard-to-staff school communities.

Call Me MiSTER addresses the teacher pipeline shortage in South Carolina and will continue to help address disparities in educational and economic 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 and strengthen the workforce and provide the next generation of PreK-Grade 12 students with well-prepared mentors and role models who transform lives and communities through education.