

2024 Cohort

[Michael Alphonso](#) | Software Development Architect, CCIT

[Rachel Anderson](#) | Associate Director – Peer Learning Support Programs, Academic Success Center

[Ryan Best](#) | Police Officer II and K9 Handler, CUPD

[Kathy Breffle](#) | Manager of Financial Operations, Advancement

[Gabrielle Compton](#) | Recruitment Marketing Coordinator, Marketing and Communications

[John Davis](#) | Special Projects Coordinator, Facilities Landscape Services

[Kristy Dickinson](#) | Administrative Coordinator, VIPR-GS

[Shawna Fowler](#) | Data Visualization Engineer, CCIT

[Angela Gambrell](#) | Compliance Analyst, University Compliance and Ethics

[Khristy Glover](#) | Assistant Director of Operations and Strategic Development, Regulatory Services

[Rebecca Hedden](#) | Reporting and Staff Development Coordinator, Cooperative Extension Service

[Anthony Herrera](#) | Woodland Cemetery Superintendent, Land and Capital Asset Stewardship

[Shaw Hipsher](#) | Communications Coordinator, Advancement Marketing, Communications and Events

[Caren Kelley-Hall](#) | Associate Director, Center for Career and Professional Development

[Jacob Miller](#) | Senior Programmer, CCIT – ESA

[Mallory Mitcham](#) | HR Service Manager, Office of Human Resources

[Mary Erin Morrissey](#) | Program Manager for Logistics of Strategic Initiatives, Division of Community, Engagement, Belonging and Access

[Rooksana Noorai](#) | Assistant Director of Bioinformatics, Biological Sciences

[Lisa Robinson](#) | Associate Vice President of Operations, Clemson University Foundation

[Shay Vinson](#) | Interim Director of Student Services in the College of Architecture, Art and Construction

[Stephanie Vitalis](#) | Director of Strategic Academic Initiatives, College of Engineering, Computing and Applied Sciences

[Melissa Webb](#) | Assistant Supervisor, Facilities | Custodial

[Candace Weisner](#) | Office Manager – School of Civil and Environmental Engineering and Earth Sciences

[Theodore Zee Sr.](#) | Nursery Operations Coordinator, Plant Industry

COHORT PROJECT SUMMARIES

Michael Alphonso

Clemson is in DEBT...technically! Technical debt – like unused code, out-of-date software, workarounds, and accessibility barriers – can slow progress and increase risks for developers and end-users alike. To address this issue and promote tech equity, Michael's project focuses on creating a Software Engineering Intelligence Platform (SEIP) to catalog software components and provide meaningful insights.

Through the Compass software component catalog and an event-driven architecture, the project aims to address the lack of observability and standard metrics in application development. This platform will enhance the developer experience by identifying defects, mitigating risks, and offering actionable metrics to measure the health of developer workflows, platform maintenance, and software integrity.

By reducing technical debt and improving operational transparency, Michael's project is paving the way for smarter, more efficient, and accessible software solutions at Clemson University. Learn more at [Clemson SEIP](#).

Rachel Anderson

Supervising undergraduate employees poses the unique challenge of balancing program operations and employee accountability with goals for developing students into young professionals poised for success after graduation. Clemson employs nearly 3,000 undergraduate students, yet no guidance is provided to supervisors for creating a valuable experiential learning opportunity for student employees. To address this gap, Rachel compiled a workbook that guides new and experienced supervisors in establishing a

culture of workplace well-being for themselves and their undergraduate employees. The workbook gathers HR best practices, author stories, and considerations related to all aspects of the undergraduate employee experience from recruitment and onboarding to offboarding and supervision. The workbook operationalizes the U.S. Surgeon General's Workplace Mental Health and Well-being Model as a framework alongside Clemson supervisor guiding principles identified from analysis of interviews with staff from 10 peer learning and mentoring programs. The current project scope lies with peer learning (tutoring) and mentoring programs but can translate to other contexts such as research experiences or the classroom.

Ryan Best

Ryan's project aims to address a critical gap in public safety by fostering understanding and preparedness for emergency responders working with students from the Clemson Life program, which serves individuals with various needs and disabilities. To create a safer, more inclusive environment for these students, Ryan partnered with the Director of the Clemson Life Program, Erica Walters, to accomplish three goals:

Capture important information about each student in the Clemson University Police Department's (CUPD's) system so officers and medics responding to calls involving Clemson Life students are better equipped to support them and their needs.

Implement in-house training for all CUPD officers to help them understand best practices for interacting with disabled people. This training will be conducted annually.

Develop a similar training to extend to other law enforcement agencies that assist CUPD and Clemson University with events. This workshop will provide information that officers can take back to the communities they serve daily in addition to their time supporting Clemson.

Kathy Breffle

Development officers travel over 50% of their time. In doing so, they generate multiple travel reimbursement reports each month. To increase efficiencies in the reimbursement process and to ensure employees receive their reimbursements soon, Kathy created a mandatory training session about travel reimbursement policies and procedures. The training is housed in Tiger Training and is asynchronous.

Gabrielle Compton

Did you know that prospective Clemson students receive over 100 unique communications from us before even stepping foot on campus for their first day of class? With approximately

150 Marketing and Communications staff, being able to see and document what a particular audience is receiving ensures message consistency and mitigates duplicative work. Gabrielle's project utilizes the Canto file sharing system to organize and tag both print and digital assets so any staff member can see what and how we're communicating with a particular audience.

John Davis

Landscape services has made significant strides in enhancing the onboarding experience for new employees, recently launching THRIVE, a program designed to deliver precise, job-specific information to new hires.

To complement this initiative, John is developing a series of pre-interview videos aimed at giving job candidates a clear understanding of what to expect in their prospective roles. These videos not only showcase the responsibilities and environment of the position but also highlight why Clemson University is an exceptional place to work. This project seeks to attract top talent while setting the stage for a positive and informed start to their journey at Clemson.

Kristy Dickinson

The CU-ICAR campus, home to Clemson's renowned the Automotive Engineering Program, enrolls 62 graduate students and 115 undergraduates – more than 80% of whom are international students from countries like India, Bangladesh, China, and Nigeria. Many of these students are far from home and face significant financial challenges.

Unlike Clemson's main campus, CU-ICAR lacks dormitories and dining halls, leaving students and their families responsible for covering the high costs of housing, utilities, food, and transportation in Greenville. Due to their visa restrictions, these students are only allowed to work up to 20 hours for Clemson, but there are no jobs available at the CU-ICAR campus. Unfavorable exchange rates (e.g., 1 Indian Rupee equaling just 12 U.S. cents) adds to this burden. These students cram 5-6 people in 2-bedroom apartments and rely on walking or public transportation to make ends meet.

To help alleviate these financial hardships, Kristy launched the Paw Pantry at CU-ICAR, a vital resource aimed at "fueling futures, one student at a time." The pantry provides essential items to support these students, helping them focus on their education and well-being.

If you're interested in making a difference, consider donating to the Paw Pantry by contacting Kristy at dickin7@clemson.edu.

Shawna Fowler

Faced with a staffing shortage on the CCIT ITIO Splunk team, Shawna turned the challenge into an opportunity for innovation and growth by reimagining the team's structure to enhance communication and collaboration both internally and externally with other teams.

To achieve this, Shawna analyzed Splunk's recommended practices to identify the roles and skills essential for success. She then developed a RACI chart to clearly define responsibilities, ensuring that each team member's role was aligned with the team's goals. This effort culminated in the creation of a comprehensive staffing plan designed to optimize team performance and foster stronger connections across the organization.

Through her leadership, Shawna transformed a staffing obstacle into a strategic opportunity to build a more effective and cohesive Splunk team.

Angela Gambrell & Melissa Webb

In 2023, 18 million American households faced food insecurity, with 13.9% of individuals in Pickens County experiencing this challenge—exceeding the state average. While many Clemson employees may not face sustained food insecurity, unexpected financial hardships could leave them in need of support.

To address this, Angela and Melissa spearheaded the development of The Nook, Clemson's employee pantry. Designed as a respectful and confidential space, The Nook provides faculty and staff with essential resources during times of need. Beyond immediate assistance, The Nook also connects colleagues with community tools and services to help them navigate financial challenges.

Learn more about this valuable resource and how you can support it by visiting [The Nook](#).

Khristy Glover

Many new and aspiring supervisors enter leadership roles without sufficient preparation, leading to challenges in communication, performance management, conflict resolution, delegation, and change management. This can lower team morale, reduce productivity, and increase turnover, impacting overall success.

To support new and aspiring supervisors in the Department of Regulatory Services, Khristy Glover developed the CU Succeed program. CUSucceed equips supervisors with the skills, knowledge, and support needed to lead with confidence, supervise with purpose, and have lasting impact. Through a six-month journey of workshops, exercises, case studies, and ongoing support, the program prepares participants to effectively manage teams, resolve

conflicts, and navigate operational complexities. By developing high-performing supervisors, CUSucceed fosters positive results, enhances team engagement, and creates a foundation for sustainable leadership success.

Rebecca Hedden

As the Reporting & Staff Development Coordinator for Clemson Cooperative Extension Services, Becca identified a gap in understanding Civil Rights requirements critical for maintaining compliance and funding. Recognizing the importance of addressing this issue, she partnered with Clemson Online to develop a comprehensive Civil Rights Compliance course for all Extension staff.

This training equips employees with practical knowledge to promote inclusivity and ensures adherence to Civil Rights regulations specific to Clemson Cooperative Extension Services. By fostering awareness and accountability, the course empowers staff to uphold compliance while supporting an inclusive and equitable environment.

Anthony Herrera

Preserving Clemson's history and keeping it alive is at the heart of Anthony's project, which focuses on granite marker restoration and education. In order to enrich the aesthetics of the Clemson University cemetery property, Anthony outlined the standard procedures for cleaning gravesite head stone markers. Anthony will create a detailed instructional video on properly cleaning and preserving granite markers, emphasizing a method that maintains the integrity of these historic monuments.

The video will be shared with the surviving families of plot holders, fostering connections between Clemson's past and present. Future plans include organizing events where students, faculty, and staff can learn the preservation process hand-on. These events will also offer an opportunity to explore the biographies of those memorialized, highlighting their ties to Clemson University and the contributions they made to its legacy.

Shaw Hipsher

Shaw's project leverages Clemson's Creative Inquiry program to give students an unparalleled opportunity to explore the real-world impact of philanthropy and fundraising. By developing two new Creative Inquiry courses, Shaw created a hands-on learning environment where students could engage in experiential learning and cross-disciplinary collaboration. These courses equip students with practical skills in fundraising while showcasing how their efforts directly contribute to the betterment of the Clemson campus and community.

Caren Kelley Hall

With 60% of American companies now sending their employees to etiquette classes, it's clear that technology and the shift to remote work during the pandemic have significantly impacted professional communication. As traditional workplace norms around etiquette and professionalism have evolved, there's an urgent need to reinforce these foundational skills for success in both virtual and in-person settings.

To address this need and prepare Clemson students to enter the workforce, Caren developed The Leadership Etiquette and EQ Seminar. This seminar is designed to equip students with essential skills in etiquette, emotional intelligence (EQ), communication, and collaboration. This seminar empowers participants to navigate various social and professional settings with confidence, empathy, and effectiveness. Upon completion, students will earn a certificate recognizing their proficiency, contributing to both their personal and professional development.

Jacob Miller

Jacob's project takes IT monitoring at Clemson to the next level by moving beyond traditional uptime/downtime checks and basic health metrics like storage space. Recognizing the need for a more comprehensive approach, he sought to implement a holistic monitoring system that collects detailed metrics across various software systems.

These metrics will be organized into a user-friendly web dashboard featuring intuitive graphs and visualizations, enabling IT professionals to gain deeper insights into system performance. The system will also include an alert mechanism to identify and address potential issues proactively – before they escalate into downtime. This project aims to enhance Clemson's IT health by fostering smarter, more proactive problem-solving and system management.

Mallory Mitcham

Navigating the challenges of parenthood while maintaining a career can be incredibly demanding. In August 2024, the U.S. Surgeon General released an advisory highlighting the urgent necessity of supporting parents and caregivers. Additionally, a 2019 Pew Research study indicated that 52% of working parents feel that balancing work and parenting hinders their ability to be good parents, with many mothers specifically noting it impacts their career development.

In response to this and her own experience as a working mother, Mallory created Parenthood That Works. This resource center, housed in Canvas, aims to empower Clemson

faculty and staff by providing educational materials and opportunities for working parents to build community with each other.

For more information about Parenthood That Works, email Mallory at mallor4@clemson.edu.

Mary Erin Morrissey

To address the absence of a formal reverse mentorship program at Clemson University, Mary Erin created a Reverse Mentorship Toolkit. Designed to foster inclusive decision-making, intercultural competence, and strong communication, the toolkit reflects Clemson's commitment to creating an environment where students, faculty, and staff feel valued and heard.

By pairing mentors and mentees in meaningful partnerships, this initiative will enable participants to exchange knowledge, gain new perspectives, and strengthen relationships. Beyond personal growth, the program aims to increase trust in leadership and enhance communication across the university.

To receive updates about the Toolkit, sign up using the form linked [here](#).

Rooksana Noorai

Rooksie's project brings together a collaboration between Clemson University's Genomics and Bioinformatics Facility and Research Computing and Data (RCD) to maximize the potential of Clemson's high-performance computing cluster, Palmetto, a powerful yet underutilized resource among university researchers.

Focusing initially on the Life Sciences community, the project develops a series of hands-on workshops aimed at faculty, staff, and students. These workshops teach bioinformatics pipelines and demonstrate how to leverage Palmetto's cutting-edge capabilities, including machines equipped with Graphics Processing Units (GPUs), for advanced data analysis techniques like single-cell sequencing.

Participants will gain practical insights into the efficiency and scalability of high-performance computing by comparing run times across different platforms: personal laptops/desktops, single servers/workstations, and Palmetto's expansive cluster. This initiative not only empowers researchers with the tools to accelerate data analysis but also promotes broader adoption of Palmetto, enhancing the university's overall research capabilities.

Lisa Robinson

As artificial intelligence (AI) continues to reshape the workplace, the need for discussions on integrity and ethics has become increasingly critical to preparing students for the future. Recognizing this, Lisa's project emphasizes collaboration between the Clemson University Center for Career and Professional Development (CCPD), University Professional Internship and Co-op (UPIC) program, and the Rutland Institute for Ethics.

The Rutland Institute, known for its programming and curricular engagement on ethics and integrity in daily and professional life, offers a unique opportunity to enhance the UPIC Career and Internship Course curriculum. By integrating the Rutland Institute's programming into the course via an assignment and encouraging participation in its certification or service offerings, this collaboration aims to equip students with the ethical and professional competencies needed to succeed in an evolving workplace.

Shay Vinson

Shay's project aims to establish embedded counseling services within Clemson University's College of Architecture, Art, and Construction (CAAC) to address the unique mental health needs of its students. With demanding studio schedules of 12+ hours per week on top of other coursework, CAAC students face unique pressures, further compounded by the growing mental health challenges experienced by young adults today.

While Clemson's Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS) is available, students often hesitate to seek help due to stigma or concerns about confidentiality. Inspired by successful embedded counseling programs at NC State and other Clemson departments, such as Athletics and Military Engagement, Shay's proposal brings counseling services directly to the CAAC environment.

Embedded counselors provide an approachable, familiar presence within the college, building trust and offering tailored workshops and services based on emerging student needs. They remain connected to CAPS, ensuring seamless referrals to specialists for more complex cases.

This initiative seeks to make mental health support more accessible, foster a sense of community, and equip CAAC students to navigate academic and personal challenges with confidence.

Stephanie Vitalis

Clemson's Full-Time Equivalency (FTE) positions are a finite resource, allocated annually by the state, making their distribution a critical challenge for budget center leaders.

Stephanie's project addresses this issue by forecasting FTE growth to align with Clemson's strategic priorities, including the Clemson Elevate goal of doubling research by 2035.

Through collaboration with Clemson's Business Intelligence (BI) team, Stephanie created a dashboard to help leaders visualize FTE usage—historically and currently—and project future needs. By incorporating factors such as historical trends, student growth projections, program and building expansions, and workforce demand, the tool offers actionable insights into where FTEs are needed, the types of roles required, and the anticipated timeframes for filling positions.

The project also analyzes “time to fill” data to identify patterns in hiring timelines based on position classifications, job functions, and organizational structure. For example, understanding why some roles take significantly longer to fill than others can guide better resource planning and improve efficiency.

This initiative equips budget center leaders with data-driven tools to allocate FTEs strategically, ensuring Clemson's workforce is prepared to meet its ambitious growth and research goals.

Candace Weisner

Candace's project, Defining Workflows in the Hiring Process, addresses the need for clarity in hiring responsibilities within the School of Civil and Environmental Engineering and Earth Sciences (CE and EEES). As a relatively new school with recent departmental reorganization and turnover, confusion arose about who is responsible for hiring new faculty and staff for refill and new Full-Time Equivalency (FTE) positions.

To address this, Candace utilized LucidChart swimlanes to map hiring workflows by duty position, creating a visual job aid for office managers at both the school and departmental levels. This tool provides a clear, step-by-step outline of duties for various types of employee hires, allowing managers to track progress, estimate timelines, and understand responsibilities at each stage of the process.

Additionally, the project reviewed the hiring approvals process and gathered feedback from other department hiring managers within the college to assess their understanding and satisfaction with current processes, identifying areas for improvement.

By defining workflows and streamlining the hiring process, Candace's project improves efficiency, enhances communication, and ensures a more seamless approach to staffing within the school.

Ted Zee

Ted's project leverages ArcGIS StoryMaps to create an interactive and accessible Nursery Story Board for the Department of Plant Industry. Initially focused on the department's inspection management system—used to document inspections and interactions with registered growers and dealers—the platform serves as a dynamic resource for staff training and reference.

Designed for both in-person and virtual use, the Nursery Story Board provides valuable support for field staff, enabling them to review procedures and information while working independently. It also offers a comprehensive training tool for onboarding new hires and cross-training other department staff who may be unfamiliar with the system.

With plans to expand the platform's content over time, Ted envisions it becoming a central repository for essential reference materials, fostering knowledge sharing and operational efficiency across the Department of Plant Industry.