

## 226 graduate from USCL

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### Content

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A total of 226 students graduated from the University of South Carolina Lancaster at the 2023 commencement ceremony Saturday, April 29. About 100 walked across the stage to receive their diplomas at the event in the Starr Hall parking lot.

Some graduates from the August and December 2022 classes also walked at this ceremony, as well as some students who will officially graduate in August.

Students receiving associate and bachelor's degrees were represented, across seven different programs. Fourteen students graduated from the USC Columbia College of Nursing with bachelor's degrees in nursing and 27 students graduated from USC Columbia Palmetto College programs with bachelor of arts degrees. A total of 185 received associate degrees — 51 in arts, 78 with in science, 34 in business, 17 in criminal justice and five with in technical nursing.

USCL's graduate with the highest academic average is Savannah Hope Lyles, who graduated with an associate in science degree with highest honors.

USCL Dean Walter Collins also presented the commencement speaker scholarship to Yorsdamia Mercedes Cuesta Ogando, in honor of Mary Ann Claud, this year's commencement speaker.

Ogando graduated from USCL fall 2022, and is planning to continue her education at USC Columbia to become an accountant.

"She participated regularly in class discussion and her enthusiasm for life is contagious," said associate professor Susan Cruise.

USCL nursing professor Suzette Jean Taylor was presented the distinguished teaching award.

Claud began her commencement speech by acknowledging the nervous excitement graduates were feeling with their new milestone, and said she could relate, as she had never shared a platform with a university president before. Dr. Michel Amiridis, president of the University of South Carolina, was present for the festivities.

As a Lancaster native, Claud also spoke about how much the USCL campus meant to her and her career. Many of her published works are now in the Medford Library, which is named for her father, J. William Medford, one of the campus founders.

Claud also shared a story from her childhood about expressing frustration to her mother that she was in a supporting role as an angel in a church play, which led her mother to remind her that she could not always be the star.

“She told me to be the best angel that I can be,” Claud said. She encouraged the soon-to-be graduates to do the same in whatever role they may play.

“When it’s time to make a decision, please listen to your own voice — the voice in your head,” Claud said. “It’s telling you what’s right and what’s not for you. It may not keep you from making a mistake, but it will keep you from making the same one twice.”

Dr. Ernest Jenkins, USCL associate professor of history, ended the commencement ceremony with a benediction, thanking God for the guests who attended and for continued support to the graduates in all of their future endeavors.

“May today’s commencement ceremony mark the commencement of their next phases of growth and achievement,” he said.

## **Child images**

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**LANNWS-05-03-23 USCL GRAD 1**



**LANNWS-05-03-23 USCL GRAD 2**







**LANNWS-05-03-23 USCL GRAD 3**



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