

Dr. Louis D. Whitesides Named Interim Provost at SC State

Veteran executive brings nearly 30 years of leadership in academics, research, agriculture, public service, and institutional transformation



ORANGEBURG, South Carolina — July 18, 2026 — Dr. Louis D. Whitesides has been appointed interim provost at South Carolina State University, expanding a distinguished record of executive leadership spanning nearly three decades at the historic 1890 land-grant institution.

South Carolina State University announced the appointment on July 17, 2026, as the university began a nationwide search for its next permanent provost and vice president for academic affairs. As interim provost, Whitesides will serve as the university's chief academic officer, providing leadership for its colleges, schools, academic programs, curriculum, accreditation, academic policies, faculty support, and student success.

"I am honored to serve South Carolina State University in this important leadership role and grateful for the confidence placed in me," Whitesides said. "My commitment is to work collaboratively with our faculty, staff, students, alumni, and institutional partners to sustain academic excellence, strengthen student success, advance research, and support the university's historic mission. This is a time for continuity, disciplined execution, and a shared commitment to SC State's future."

Before his interim provost appointment, Whitesides served as SC State's vice president for public service and agriculture, acting vice president for research, and executive director of the university's 1890 Research & Extension Program. In these cabinet-level roles, he has provided leadership across research administration, agriculture, Cooperative Extension, public service, regulatory compliance, infrastructure development, external funding, community engagement, and institutional partnerships.

Whitesides provides executive leadership for an enterprise comprising approximately 190 faculty, staff, and students across research, extension, public service, and agricultural education.

Over the course of his executive career, Whitesides has helped secure and direct more than \$150 million in external funding, state appropriations, partner resources, and capital investments. His record includes managing annual portfolios exceeding \$23 million with zero audit findings, securing more than \$65 million in grants and contracts, generating more than \$57 million in additional state and partner resources, and directing approximately \$30 million in infrastructure modernization.

He also helped achieve an 80 percent increase in state appropriations over four budget cycles and led the acquisition, construction, or renovation of 10 facilities comprising approximately 90,000 square feet throughout South Carolina.

Among Whitesides' most consequential institutional achievements was leading the team that restored agriculture as a formal academic enterprise at South Carolina State University. Agriculture had been one of SC State's

foundational academic programs when the institution opened in 1896, but the program was discontinued in 1971.

Whitesides led the institutional effort that culminated in the establishment of the College of Agriculture, Family and Consumer Sciences in 2021, bringing agriculture-centered academic leadership back to the university after approximately 50 years. The restoration reconnected academic instruction with agricultural research, Cooperative Extension, workforce development, student scholarships, and SC State's historic land-grant mission.

His leadership also helped establish and expand the SC State 1890 Agriculture Innovation Scholarship Program. A 150-student scholarship cohort supported through the program achieved an 86 percent four-year graduation rate and a 94 percent employment or graduate-school placement rate.

As acting vice president for research, Whitesides helped strengthen research governance, faculty competitiveness, interdisciplinary collaboration, sponsored-program administration, and institutional compliance. He contributed to the growth in research capacity and expenditures that supported SC State's elevation to the Carnegie Classification of Research 2, or R2, status for high research activity.

In June 2026, Whitesides was selected for the Association of Governing Boards of Universities and Colleges Institute for Leadership and Governance in Higher Education Class of 2026–2027. The national program prepares experienced higher education administrators for expanded executive leadership and institutional governance responsibilities.

Whitesides is a scholar-practitioner whose research interests include higher education governance, institutional trust, organizational capacity, agricultural economics, international trade, public accountability, and the performance of public and land-grant universities. His scholarly record includes refereed journal publications and collaborative working papers addressing governance architecture, institutional trust, resource capacity, and institutional transformation.

A native of Orangeburg, South Carolina, Whitesides earned a Bachelor of Science in computer science, with a minor in mathematics, from South Carolina State University. He earned a Master of Science in management from Southern Wesleyan University and a Doctor of Business Administration in international business from Argosy University–Sarasota.

His executive preparation also includes advanced leadership education through Harvard University, Cornell University, the Food Systems Leadership Institute at North Carolina State University, and other national professional-development programs. He is also a Certified Research Administrator.

Whitesides' appointment as interim provost represents the continuation of a career devoted to advancing South Carolina State University through academic opportunity, research growth, agricultural innovation, fiscal accountability, workforce development, and public service.

About Dr. Louis D. Whitesides

Dr. Louis D. Whitesides is a higher education executive, scholar-practitioner, and public-service leader with nearly 30 years of experience at South Carolina State University. His leadership portfolio encompasses academic affairs, research administration, land-grant programs, public service, agricultural innovation, fiscal stewardship, infrastructure development, student success, workforce development, and institutional governance.

He serves as interim provost at South Carolina State University and has held executive responsibilities as vice president for public service and agriculture, acting vice president for research, and executive director of the 1890

Research & Extension Program.

Additional information about Dr. Whitesides' executive leadership, scholarship, and public service is available at louiswhitesides.com.

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