



Interim President Roper's Report to the UNC Board of Governors March 20, 2020

Greetings everyone.

I want to devote the first portion of my address to a special guest speaker, who will update you further about coronavirus/COVID-19 matters.

Dr. David Weber is an internist, infectious disease specialist, and epidemiologist. He is the medical director of hospital epidemiology at UNC Hospitals and associate chief medical officer for UNC Health.

He is going to speak briefly and then can take a few questions. His accompanying slides were sent to you earlier and are posted on Board Effect.

As you all know, we are in the midst of a very serious health crisis. COVID-19 presents the UNC System and North Carolina with some unprecedented challenges.

Thank you Dr. Weber for your insight on this matter.

On a personal note, my son, who is a resident at UNC Health, was talking with my wife and I, and he offered us this reflection: "We will get past this, but to get past it we need to get through it."

I say this myself based on my own experience as a healthcare professional. I am confident that things are going to get better. But I am also confident that it's going to get worse before it gets better ... but it will get better.

I've been truly impressed with all of the work taking place at our 17 institutions and affiliates. In the face of trying circumstances, we are all working together toward a common end ... with an inspiring spirit of collaboration.

In the course of a few short weeks, our institutions have adapted quickly to a rapidly changing environment:

- We've recalled our students travelling abroad.
- In light of the CDC guidance announced this week, we have directed each institution to cancel or postpone gatherings that assemble 50 or more individuals.
- And we are mindful of the CDC's additional guidance to try to avoid crowds of more than 10 people.
- All University-sponsored travel outside North Carolina has been suspended.



- Our System-wide move from in-person instruction to a system of alternative course delivery is progressing.
- And I'm proud to share that more than 95 percent of UNC System classes are now online-ready. Our institutions tackled this challenge in two weeks, which is remarkable.
- We continue to substantially reduce the number of students on campus and in university housing by requiring that students who want to stay on campus get permission to do so.
- Originally, we tried encouraging students to stay away. This opt-out approach saw 30-40 percent of students remaining on campus. By shifting to a policy of requiring students to seek permission to stay on campus, we hope to see the number of those who remain fall closer to 10 percent on each campus.
- Importantly, we also understand that for some students, their only access to online course resources, housing, and food may be through their campus residence halls and dining facilities. Our institutions will continue to serve these students. Our institutions are doing the critical work to ensure that those students who remain have facilities that are safe, and that effective quarantine and isolation plans are in place, should they be needed.

Unfortunately, that time frame reaches into our commencement season. Simply put, we are facing the increasing likelihood that spring graduation ceremonies will be disrupted. I know and understand that this will disappoint our students and their families, who have worked toward this goal for so many years. But the health and safety of our students, faculty, and staff must be our top priority. We will work with our Chancellors as they consider how to celebrate academic achievement in due course. Plans for each university will be individualized by the universities.

Quite naturally, students and parents have contacted the System Office and our institutions with questions and concerns. There are many, many moving parts to this situation ... and they are moving very quickly. We are applying the principles of triage, dealing with the most acute items first, but I promise you that we are working to deal with all issues as quickly and as thoughtfully as we can.

We are addressing the most critical issues first: health and safety, the transition to online learning, and the well-being of our students in need. Matters related to fees, room and board, and grades are also important... We expect to be in position to start to answer those questions in the next week.

COVID-19 might be front and center on everyone's minds this week. But it is not the only significant challenge we face. The state budget stalemate continues to disrupt the University's capacity to serve its students and North Carolina.

Since our last meeting, I've visited Western Carolina, the North Carolina School of Science and Mathematics campus in Morganton, and UNC Pembroke, and I've seen firsthand how the failure to enact a budget has been detrimental to our institutions.



The consequences of not having a budget in place reach every corner of the state. Ultimately this impact will be felt most profoundly by our students and the communities we serve.

We had plans to visit ECSU and ECU, and later UNCG and N.C. A&T, but the coronavirus has forced us to postpone those visits.

Elsewhere, our five lab schools across the state are serving as “nutrition hubs” during this crisis. The schools are closed, but school nutrition programs continue. Families can pick up breakfast and lunch for their children who are enrolled and, in many cases, younger siblings.

These are vivid reminders that the UNC System’s work isn’t just good for our students. ... it benefits all North Carolinians.

We are in a moment of national urgency. Now is not the time to let political disagreements hold up funding for our universities, which train, for example, a significant percentage of North Carolina’s health care workers.

Speaking of the NC State Budget, we have two work streams, one is ongoing work regarding the regular state budget process, and the other is a new stream related to financial and other policy issues due to the coronavirus pandemic. Yesterday, in the committee on Budget and Finance, Rep. Fraley strongly urged the Board to continue with these two separate processes for now. They should come together in mid/late April.

I would like to conclude by drawing your attention to some important positive news that should not be overlooked.

Chancellor searches continue at four of our institutions.

- UNC Charlotte’s search committee is on track to present no fewer than two candidates to me by the end of March.
- The School of the Arts search committee anticipates sending me its top candidates in April.
- Although COVID-19 has delayed search timelines at ECU and FSU, both institutions anticipate having new chancellors named for the fall term.

This week, Dr. Andrew Kelly and his team in Strategy and Policy released the latest numbers on each of our institutions’ individual progress toward their Strategic Plan goals. I would encourage everyone to visit the System Office’s strategic planning website to learn more. It is very good news, and I would like to single out two points.

- Three institutions met or exceeded their annual targets on all five of their priority metrics: UNC Greensboro, NC State, and UNC Charlotte



- I would like to specifically congratulate UNCG. Under Chancellor Gilliam's leadership, the university is the only institution to meet annual targets on all nine strategic plan metrics this year.

COVID-19 and the ongoing budget crisis present significant challenges to our capacity to maintain this truly remarkable momentum. But witnessing our faculty, students, families and leaders at every level of the UNC System, rallying together. That has filled me with great optimism. These are challenging times, and we will not get everything right, but we will make corrections as we move forward. The UNC System is rising to this challenge. And we are deeply grateful for the Board of Governors leadership and guidance.

Thank you ... and be well.



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UNC System Office

Interim President Bill Roper visited three institutions – Western Carolina, North Carolina School of Science and Mathematics at Morganton, and UNC Pembroke – to review key infrastructure and operational needs resulting from the current state budget impasse. The visits included meetings with University leaders, business and community leaders, elected officials, and student and faculty leaders.

Chancellor search updates:

- The UNC Charlotte Search Committee Chair Mike Wilson reports that we have an excellent and diverse slate of semifinalists. After Board of Trustee approval and System-level interviews, a nomination is scheduled to be presented to the full Board of Governors in April.
- The UNC School of the Arts search committee has reviewed a strong pool of applicants and will be conducting initial interviews shortly. Board of Trustees Chair Ralph Womble expects to send recommended candidates to President Roper in April for a nomination to the full Board in May.
- The East Carolina University Chancellor Search Committee, chaired by Vern Davenport, will be reviewing applicants in the coming weeks. The goal is to have a new chancellor named for the fall term.
- The Fayetteville State University Chancellor Search committee is beginning its work and had planned constituent listening session for this month. These meetings were delayed in light of COVID-19 guidance on large gatherings. Chair Stuart Augustine is reworking the timeline and expects to accomplish the goal of having a new chancellor in place for the fall 2020 term.

Interim President Roper provided System-wide guidance on COVID-19, novel coronavirus:

- All UNC System institutions will transition from in-person instruction to a system of alternative course delivery, where possible and practical, no later than March 20. Alternative course delivery will begin on March 23 and last indefinitely. Our goal is to return to in-person instruction as soon as reasonably possible. Each institution will communicate the specific details to its students and faculty.
- University leadership will determine which classes, such as those with labs, will continue to require in-person instruction and attendance.
- Outside events and gatherings of 100 or more people will be cancelled or postponed unless otherwise authorized by a chancellor or provost.
- University-sponsored in-state travel to gatherings of 100 or more people is suspended, and all travel outside the state is suspended, unless otherwise authorized by a chancellor or provost.

Interim President Roper joined the Governor's Task Force on Coronavirus, and he and Chris McClure attended the Task Force meeting on Wednesday morning. Afterwards, he recorded a video at UNC-TV to address internal and external stakeholders on the COVID-19 coronavirus.

Appalachian State University

The Appalachian State University Police Department (APD) has been named one of the top 25 university departments in the country by Safe Campus: The National Campus Safety Summit. The ranked universities were cited for increasing the safety and security of their campus community and making a difference in student safety. APD was ranked No. 18. In 2019, APD was named Law Enforcement Agency



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of the Year by the North Carolina Police Executives Association — primarily for its Appalachian Police Officer Development Program (APDP), the second of its kind in the nation and the only in NC.

For a decade, Appalachian State University has been recognized as a Military Friendly® School by VIQTRORY for its support of and resources for student veterans and active-duty military members. This year, the university also earned the distinction of being one of the Top 10 Military Friendly® Schools in the nation for 2020–21. App State offers a variety of services and resources for student veterans and military-affiliated students — including a dedicated resource center, a special admissions webpage, targeted orientation and advising sessions for veterans, and a student veteran association.

In less than two years, New River Light and Power (NRLP), the utility owned and operated by Appalachian State University, will begin purchasing power from NTE Carolinas LLC. NRLP serves nearly 8,500 residential and commercial customers who reside in and near Boone. It was the fifth lowest cost provider in the state, on average, for residential customers in 2018, according to U.S. Energy Information Administration data. A 10% cost reduction has been passed along to NRLP customers since March 2019, and additional savings of 5-7% is expected for customers under the new agreement.

East Carolina University

Construction of the ECU Life Sciences and Biotechnology Building reached a milestone with a “topping out” ceremony in February. Funded through the Connect NC bond referendum, the \$90 million building is slated to open in August of 2021 and will house interdisciplinary research in biotechnology, bioprocessing, biophysics, biofuels, plant biology, imaging and sensor development, and environmental biology. The 141,500 square-foot building will feature four stories with wet bench and computational laboratory spaces for researchers across a variety of academic disciplines.

Now in its third year, the Pirate Challenge is the signature pitch competition of ECU’s College of Business and its Miller School of Entrepreneurship, with \$100,000 in cash prizes and in-kind services to top competitors. A biology graduate and her software developer husband took first place and a cash prize of \$15,000 for their online company, FishingLicense.us, which streamlines registering for a fishing license with the goal of making outdoor recreation more accessible.

A \$400,000 grant from the Duke Endowment to the ECU School of Dental Medicine will allow the school to offer comprehensive dental exams, X-rays, cleanings, fluoride varnish application, and dental sealants to all public elementary and middle school children in Bertie County over the next two years. Bertie County has only two licensed dentists for a population more than 21,000 and 19% of the kindergartners screened had untreated tooth decay. The program is underway at Windsor Elementary School.

Elizabeth City State University

According to the spring 2020 enrollment census, ECSU has seen a 6.7 percent overall increase compared to spring 2019 – a jump from 1,508 in 2019 to 1,670 in 2020. In spring 2019, 1,332 continuing students enrolled at ECSU, and spring 2020 saw 1,456 continuing students enrolled. That represents a 10 percent increase in continuing student enrollment. Transfer student enrollment increased 36.7 percent. In spring 2019, there were 49 transfer students compared to spring 2020 with 67 transfer students.



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Blue Cross and Blue Shield of North Carolina has awarded ECSU a \$250,000 grant to assist with student retention. The grant funds will assist in the creation of the Successful Retention Collaborative (SRC) Task Force. ECSU students who are unable to fulfill their financial obligation due to a number of reasons will receive assistance from the SRC Task Force along with grants. The SRC Task Force will award students mini-grants or emergency funds to reduce “stop out,” temporarily breaking from the pursuit of their degrees. The students who are assisted must demonstrate that they are academically capable of maintaining their GPA requirements and are on a path to graduation as a result of the assistance. The task force expects to designate more than 75 awards of at least \$1,000.

Chancellor Karrie G. Dixon has been named one of “The Ten Most Dominant HBCU Leaders of 2020” by the HBCU Campaign Fund. According to their website, this is the third group of leaders to be named by the Fund, stating that this “group of individuals has proven their responsibilities for shaking policies, changing perspectives and making decisions that affect millions of individuals in the higher education sector and the daily needs of an HBCU or Minority-Serving Institution.”

Eight Elizabeth City State University students, who were awarded a total of \$43,500 from the Dwight David Eisenhower Transportation Fellowship Program in December 2019, recently attended the Transportation Research Board (TRB) conference in January. The students participated in the event with more than 13,000 people in Washington D. C. The Eisenhower Fellowship, awarded through the U.S. Department of Transportation’s Federal Highway Administration, is affording the ECSU students the opportunity to participate in various research projects under the direction of university faculty.

Fayetteville State University

Fayetteville State University’s uChargelt team, led by Steven Payne, a MBA student in the Broadwell College of Business and Economics, developed a business plan based on an invention by Dr. Daryush Ila, AVC for Research and Technology. This plan makes them a finalist for the NASA Innovation Competition at Johnson Space Center. This invention integrates a highly efficient piezoelectric material, produced by NASA, into belts and vests, designed at FSU, in order to charge batteries for mobile devices at high rates. This technology will prove useful for everyone, including warfighters and astronauts, whether they are inside or outside their space capsules. The team was supervised by Dr. Assad Tavakoli, the W.T. Brown Endowed Chair and Distinguished Professor of Economics. In addition to Payne, the team consisted of ZaMetria Wall, Business Administration; Marina Better, Biology; and Lianis Reyes-Rosa, Chemistry.

Dr. Nicole Anthony, assistant professor of special education, under the direction of Dr. Pamela Jackson, provost and cice chancellor for Academic Affairs, formed an Autism Advisory Council to address the complex needs of children and families affected by autism in the Cumberland County region. The council is believed to be the only one of its kind in the country at an HBCU addressing the needs of children and families impacted by autism.

FSU was recognized by the U.S. Department of the Treasury as a 2020 HBCU Visionary Institution for its success in accessing federal contracts. USDOT recently established a priority to increase HBCU participation in federal contracting. The initiative encourages HBCUs to seek approval as GSA Schedule contract vendors, which can significantly expedite the procurement process for federal contracting opportunities. FSU is one of only two HBCU's which currently have these GSA Schedule contracts.



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N.C. A&T State University

Two students for the College of Agriculture and Environmental Science were named to USDA's Future Leaders in Agriculture program. Bobby Brooks, an animal science undergraduate student, and Christina Bradshaw, an integrated animal health systems graduate student, were two of 30 students from across the nation selected to participate in a weeklong trip to Washington, D.C.

Professors Solomon Bililign, Ph.D., and Yuh-Lang Lin, Ph.D. served on the climate advisory panel for the independent, peer-reviewed North Carolina Climate Science Report released March 11. Bililign also contributed his expertise as a co-author of the report. The Carolina Institute for Climate Studies (NCICS) at NC State released the report, which presented key findings regarding historical trends and potential future changes in climate across the state as a result of increased greenhouse gas concentrations.

Political science student Brenda Caldwell has been named a 2020 finalist for the Truman Scholarship, a premier fellowship for those pursuing careers as public service leaders. She was invited to interview in the first panel of students in Washington, D.C., after completing a competitive campus selection process through N.C. A&T Extraordinary Opportunities.

North Carolina Central University

The School of Education has been awarded \$3.7 million to expand diversity among school administrators. The funds are provided by the Central Carolina Regional Education Service Alliance (CCRESA) to bolster the university's efforts in producing a diverse pool of Master of School Administration graduates. The four-year grant to NCCU's School of Education will provide funding to implement the Central Carolina Principal Preparation Program.

A new full-service U.S. Passport Office was opened on the campus of NCCU to meet the travel needs of the Central Durham community. The U.S. State Department oversees the passport office and trained university employees to serve as official agents at the site. NCCU is the second higher education campus to offer the service in the Triangle area.

Dr. William "Bill" McNeal and his wife, Nata Fayette "Faye" McNeal understand the importance of a high-quality education in a well-lived life. Faith in education was at the core of the career choices made by the two lifelong educators, as well as their decision to establish a \$25,000 endowment for student scholarships in the School of Education.

NC State University

Three alumni who have passionately supported NC State for decades earned the Watauga Medal, the university's highest nonacademic honor, at the Founders' Day Dinner. The Board of Trustees presents the annual award to recognize individuals who have made significant contributions to the advancement of NC State: Nancy Ridenhour, Kady Gjessing, and Steve Angel.

Researchers from the Chinese Academy of Sciences and NC State University have found evidence of preserved fragments of proteins and apparent chromosomes within isolated cell-like microstructures in



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cartilage from a baby duckbilled dinosaur. The findings further support the idea that these original molecules can persist for tens of millions of years.

Research at NC State University shows that the CRISPR-Cas system can be used to effectively target and eliminate specific gut bacteria, in this case *Clostridioides difficile*, the pathogen that causes colitis – a chronic, degenerative disease of the colon.

UNC Asheville

Assistant Professor of Physics and Astronomy Britt Lundgren has been named a 2020 Cottrell Scholar, an honor that comes with a \$100,000 prize from the Research Corporation for Science Advancement (RCSA) in support of her research on how galaxies evolve over cosmic timescales. The 2020 Cottrell Scholar award provides support over a three-year period. Previously, Professor of Medicinal Chemistry Amanda Wolfe was named a Cottrell Scholar in 2017 for her work in developing new antibiotics.

Alumna Kerri Eaker has been appointed as the chair of the North Carolina Council on Developmental Disabilities (NCCDD) by Governor Roy Cooper. Eaker, the Family Support Outreach Coordinator for The Family Support Network™ of WNC at Mission Children's Hospital in Asheville will preside over NCCDD Council meetings, serve as Chair of the Executive Committee, and represent the Council to the public and to policymakers among other duties.

A U.S. Fulbright Student 17-18 Ghana Alumni, UNC Asheville Director of Africana Studies Tiece Ruffin received a grant from the U.S. Department of State for a public service project in Ghana via the Citizen Diplomacy Action Fund for U.S. Alumni. Ruffin and her fellow grantees have partnered the Ghana Federation of Disability Organizations (GFD) to implement the Universal Design for Learning component of Ghana's Inclusive Education Policy. The Universal Design for Learning is a framework for teaching and learning, which underlines the proactive planning of the curricula in terms of goals, assessment and flexibility, among others, in a way that works for both teachers and learners.

UNC-Chapel Hill

UNC-Chapel Hill and ViiV Healthcare announced a \$20 million, 5-year renewal of a groundbreaking partnership focused on finding a cure for HIV. This unique collaboration will continue making discoveries and advancing a cure for HIV, one the most pressing challenges of our time.

In January, the Board of Trustees unanimously endorsed Carolina Next: Innovations for Public Good, our new strategic plan. This bold roadmap identifies an actionable, measurable and impactful set of goals that will guide Carolina in becoming the leading global public research university in the nation, providing an outstanding, accessible and affordable education, and applying our expertise for the benefit of the people of North Carolina, the nation and the world.

Terry Rhodes was named dean of the College of Arts & Sciences, after serving as interim dean since February 2019. She is the first faculty member from the fine arts to be named dean of the College since it took its modern-day name in 1935. She has already introduced key initiatives that will foster dialogue around important issues, and we are confident that she is well-positioned to continue the trajectory of excellence of the largest academic unit at Carolina.



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UNC Charlotte

UNC Charlotte's chancellor, Philip L. Dubois, in recognition of the University's tremendous growth and achievement over the course of his tenure, has been named by the *Charlotte Business Journal* as recipient of its Most Admired CEO Lifetime Achievement Award. Prompting the award is the university's unprecedented growth in enrollment, capital investment, and programming between Dubois' 2005 arrival and his announced retirement date of June 30. Dubois oversaw record-breaking enrollment, unprecedented academic program and research growth, and capital improvements that total \$1.2 billion.

James Walsh, a core faculty member in the Public Policy program and professor in the Department of Political Science and Public Administration, is the 2020 recipient of the First Citizens Bank Scholars Medal, UNC Charlotte's most prestigious faculty award in recognition of excellence in research. He was honored at a special ceremony Tuesday, March 10 at the Harris Alumni Center at Johnson Glen.

John Connaughton, Barings Professor of Financial Economics at UNC Charlotte's Belk College of Business, is forecasting an extended period of "sluggish growth" for the state's economy in 2020. The full report is available at belkcollege.uncc.edu/forecast.

UNC Greensboro

UNCG ranks No. 1 in North Carolina and No. 7 in the United States in the Master's Programs Guide "10 Most Affordable Online Graduate Schools" list. The rankings were compiled using five data points: graduation rate, affordability, earnings potential, selectivity, and breadth of online graduate offerings. UNCG is the only North Carolina university to make the list.

The Digital Library on American Slavery at UNC Greensboro has been recognized by the National Park Service (NPS) as the first-ever "virtual" stop on the Underground Railroad Network to Freedom. The recognition is the first of its kind for the NPS, and it is significant not only for UNCG, but for the broader community, region, and beyond. As a "virtual" stop, members of the public can access the thousands of resources within the Digital Library on American Slavery from the comfort of their homes, as opposed to visiting a physical marker, building, or monument.

Recent graduate Akecicia "Keci" Steward '19 has been recognized for outstanding leadership and service by North Carolina Campus Compact, a statewide network of colleges and universities that are committed to community engagement. Steward is one of 22 recipients of the network's Community Impact Student Award, which honors one student leader at each member school. The award recognizes students with a deep commitment to community involvement and ability to inspire peers.

UNC Pembroke

To further address the mental health needs of children and adolescents in the region, the College of Health Sciences has added a new play therapy curriculum. The Department of Counseling will begin offering the graduate courses this fall. Current students pursuing a degree in a mental health-related field, such as counseling and social work, are eligible. Practitioners and counselors can also utilize the new program to become a registered play therapist or school-based registered play therapist.



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Kaitlyn Deal, who balances her studies at UNC Pembroke and volunteer work at a local elementary school, was named Miss Indian North Carolina. Deal was crowned during the United Tribes of North Carolina-sponsored pageant in Lumberton.

Senior Lemuel Subdias placed second overall at the annual Peach Belt Conference Art Exhibition. Subdias, a senior art studio major from Pinehurst, was recognized for his encaustic beeswax painting entitled "Pride." His piece was displayed on a slideshow during the 2020 Peach Belt Conference Basketball Tournament Championship.

UNC Wilmington

Chancellor Jose V. Sartarelli has been recognized as one of North Carolina's most influential leaders by *Business North Carolina*.

UNCW recognized faculty researchers and the importance of scholarship at its annual research reception. Three faculty were inducted into the university's One Million Dollar Club, which recognizes individuals who have received more than \$1 million in research funding. Dr. Christopher Finelli, a professor in the Department of Biology and Marine Biology, dean of the Graduate School, and interim executive director of marine sciences, was inducted into the Ten Million Dollar Club.

UNCW's Center for Innovation and Entrepreneurship is collaborating with the North Carolina Biotechnology Center to sponsor the NC Bioneer Venture Challenge, a life-sciences-related, innovation-focused challenge for southeastern North Carolina.

UNCW Assistant Professor of Nursing Hayley Estrem is participating in a \$2.66 million research project to identify signs that certain infants and young toddlers may develop chronic feeding disorders. The project includes researchers at UNC-Chapel Hill, Boston College, and UNCW.

UNCW's Center for Education in Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (CESTEM) welcomed about 1,000 regional K-12 students as well as teachers, families, and community volunteers to campus for events that support STEM education. About 200 students from 11 Southeastern NC counties participated in the Regional Engineering & Science Fair on Feb. 15. On March 7, about 800 students from around the region visited the campus for the NC Science Olympiad regional competition.

UNC School of the Arts

School of Drama alumnus Isaac Powell stars as Tony in the reimagined Broadway musical *West Side Story*, which is one of the hottest tickets in New York City this season. Powell, from Greensboro, also starred in Broadway's *Once on This Island* upon his graduation in 2017.

The costume design program is among the top 10 of its kind in the world, according to *The Hollywood Reporter*. The program in the School of Design & Production has been in the top 10 since the list began in 2018. To develop the list, the national publication consulted with costume designers and professors to choose 10 top schools based on curriculum, reputation, alumni success and networking opportunities.



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Working to support an increasingly female student body entering a male-dominated field, the School of Design & Production recently hosted an unprecedented “Weekend of Women+” also known as WOW+. The event brought together successful professional women+ from across the design and production industries for a weekend of workshops and featured a panel discussion with special guests discussing issues facing women+ in these industries.

“UNCSA Presents,” the presenting series that brings world-class, professional entertainment to downtown Winston-Salem at the university’s Stevens Center, was presented with a Downtown Excellence Award. Mayor Allen Joines presented the award during a ceremony held at the annual meeting of the Downtown Winston-Salem Partnership. “UNCSA Presents” launched in the summer of 2018 and has since reached more than 9,000 people through ticket sales to a wide variety of offerings, from the American Music Series to award-winning Broadway tours to shows for kids.

Western Carolina University

The Research and Scholarship Conference combines WCU’s 22nd annual Undergraduate Exposition and the 28th Graduate Research Symposium. The RASC is WCU’s largest showcase for both graduate and undergraduate academic, research and creative work for the year. The conference brings together students, faculty and staff, and the broader community, to engage in peer-to-peer discussions while allowing students the opportunity to present their research and scholarship in a professional setting.

Second-year student Jordan Rasheed has been chosen by Campus Compact, a nonprofit organization working to advance the public purposes of higher education, as one of 290 students to be among its 2020-21 cohort of Newman Civic Fellows. The fellowship, named for Campus Compact co-founder Frank Newman, is a yearlong program emphasizing personal, professional and civic growth for students who have demonstrated a capacity for leadership and an investment in solving public problems.

The Western Carolina University Board of Trustees unanimously approved a new policy establishing criteria for naming university programs and facilities, including a more extensive background screening process of potential honorees or donors.

Winston-Salem State University

Winston-Salem State University partnered with Wake Forest University to honor the 60th anniversary of the Winston-Salem sit-ins. The event honored the 21 students from both universities who united in 1960 to protest segregated lunch counters in Winston-Salem. As a result, Winston-Salem became the first Southern city to desegregate its lunch counters.

Winston-Salem State University’s elementary education program has been recognized as one of the best in the nation—earning an “A” grade from the National Council on Teacher Quality. The score evaluates the scientifically based methods for teaching reading taught to elementary teacher candidates. A team of literacy experts examine every course in early reading and assesses readings, assignments, practice opportunities, and tests. The experts look for clear evidence of dedicated course time, as well as measures where aspiring teachers must demonstrate their knowledge of the five key components of the science of reading: phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension.



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The Rams put on a performance for the ages when the team won the 2020 Central Intercollegiate Athletic Association (CIAA) Men's Basketball Championship with a 63-62 win over the Fayetteville State Broncos. The Rams came back from an 11-point deficit in the final five minutes of the game to claim the lead for good with just four seconds left to play. With the win, the Rams claim their first conference championship since 2012 and the 12th conference championship in school history.

North Carolina School of Science and Mathematics

The J. Alex and Vivian G. Mull Foundation (JAVGMF) has granted \$4,000 to assist in the construction of the NCSSM-Morganton campus. JAVGMF makes grants to non-profit programs or projects that focus on new projects and concerns that have a wide impact and are collaborative and entrepreneurial in nature.

With no operating funding for the new North Carolina School of Science and Mathematics campus being built in Morganton, the entry of the first group of residential students there is being delayed from August 2021 until August 2022, NCSSM Chancellor Todd Roberts announced.

Affiliates

UNC TV

Recognizing UNC-TV's crucial role in statewide early childhood education efforts, DHHS awarded three years of funding to support Rootle's efforts via NC's \$40M Federal Preschool Development Grant. This funding will support additional Rootle Block Party LIVE! events, Roadster "Pop-Ups," and Early Educator Trainings that reach over 10,000 participants annually with a particular focus on rural communities.

UNC-TV's year-end fundraising campaign, Winter of Discovery, brought engaging, motivational, and enriching programs to North Carolinians, resulting in \$1.46M of on-air, digital and direct mail contributions. The calendar year closed hot with both major and annual giving up 13% year over year and production support booking 90% of an \$850,000 annual goal.

A year-long integrated programming strategy in New Bern to spread economic benefits to all residents finished with the November premiere of *New Bern Rises Again*, a powerful documentary highlighting efforts in New Bern to recover from the devastating impacts of Hurricane Florence and to reconcile long-standing divides in the community. Along with the *Faces of New Bern* digital series, this documentary is a model for future content initiatives.