Helping Hand
3-D printed prosthetics making a ‘real’ difference

Exponential Reach
Social media fundraising supports small, impactful projects

Lessons for Life
Simulation labs enhance nursing education
Evolving to respond to the needs of our community

The first weeks of fall are a time of renewal, as the campus community reconvenes with the energy and high hopes that fuel the opportunities that lie within the UNC Charlotte experience.

As a result of the expansion of an important partnership with Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools (CMS), fall arrived on our campus just a bit earlier than usual this year. Last month, UNC Charlotte and CMS opened the University’s second early-college high school, the Charlotte Teacher Early College (CTEC), a joint initiative of CMS and the Cato College of Education. Dean Ellen McIntyre and her colleagues have welcomed the inaugural class of about 50 ninth graders who are excited about exploring teaching as a career. CTEC will be housed in the Cato College of Education.

As far as we know, CTEC is the first such model for expanding the pipeline for new teachers in North Carolina, and it is an essential initiative given recent declines in enrollment in teacher preparation programs in North Carolina and nationally.

Our first early college high school, Charlotte Engineering Early College (CEEC), is thriving in its fourth year on the Charlotte Research Institute (CRI) area of campus. The 75 students in last year’s eleventh-grade CEEC classes completed an average of 16 college credit hours with an average GPA of 3.2. This outstanding achievement demonstrates that students will excel when held to high expectations. CEEC’s student body is selected by a random CMS magnet school lottery process and is comprised of 66 percent ethnic minorities, 48 percent of whom come from economically disadvantaged families and more than 50 percent of whom will be first-generation college students.

Of course, we owe many thanks to the UNC Charlotte faculty members who have welcomed these young students into their classes and have supported their success.

Our long-term objective is to raise sufficient private funding to seek a state-funded match that will permit us to house both of our Early College programs in a permanent facility to be located between the EPIC and Grigg buildings on the CRI campus.

A different kind of renewal is also evident this fall within the greater Charlotte community — one of a redoubled commitment to justice, understanding, and the peaceful resolution of conflict — as we mark the anniversary of the police-involved shooting of Keith Lamont Scott, which occurred about a mile from our main campus. Civil unrest in the city, our students’ peaceful demonstrations on campus, and The Charlotte-Mecklenburg Opportunity Task Force’s subsequent report all served to underscore the fact that UNC Charlotte can and must be a thought-leader as we move forward as a community.

We have asked each of our academic colleges to study the Task Force report and to identify ways in which the University can help address the report’s recommendations, particularly those relating to college and career readiness. We will assess these recommendations over the course of the fall semester.

While we work through the Task Force priorities that hold the most promise for our involvement, we are continuing conversations with CMS leaders, Central Piedmont Community College, and Charlotte Communities in Schools about developing an early outreach pilot program for seventh and eighth graders in two CMS middle schools. The program’s goal would be to help these middle school students and their parents envision a future that includes a college education.

Our recent Founders Celebration reminded us that UNC Charlotte was established to meet the singular need to educate returning World War II veterans. It took Bonnie Cone’s long-term vision of a more complete University, woven into the fabric of a great regional community, to help grow the institution into what we have become in 2017.

As we begin our 72nd year, we are still evolving. But as our ability to respond to critical issues in our community clearly attests, UNC Charlotte is integral to the future of Charlotte, and we look forward to working together to meet the challenges that will surely come our way in the years ahead.

Philip L. Dubois
Chancellor
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UNC Charlotte is open to people of all races and is committed to equality of educational opportunity and does not discriminate against applicants, students or employees based on race, color, national origin, religion, sex, sexual orientation, age or disability.
Dennis Rash, a visionary leader in the community who served UNC Charlotte in several key roles, died July 25. Across five decades, Rash and his wife Betty Chafin Rash have left an indelible mark, not just on UNC Charlotte, but the city.

Rash joined UNC Charlotte as dean of students in the 1970s. He used his talents to develop the University community, then still in its formative stages. It was here he met Chafin Rash, who also was helping to shape early University life. UNC Charlotte flourished under Rash’s nurturing, even after he moved into corporate America.

After an eight-year stint at UNC Charlotte, Rash left the University to begin what would become an illustrious 23-year career at Bank of America.

During his tenure at the bank, Rash initiated the first community development corporation and later became the first president of the bank’s community development subsidiary. He was pivotal in redeveloping Uptown’s Fourth and Third Wards. He was frequently referred to as Fourth Ward’s unofficial mayor, a place he called home.

UNC Charlotte always remained close to Rash’s heart, and he returned to the University in 2001. Serving as executive-in-residence and visiting professor for transportation policy studies, Rash was the driving force for crucial projects like UNC Charlotte Center City, the adjacent First Ward Park and the CATS Blue Line Extension of the LYNX light rail to campus.

One of Rash’s greatest joys was developing both the city and the University to forge connections that demonstrated UNC Charlotte’s power as the state’s urban research institution to serve community needs.

Rash, and his wife Betty Chafin Rash, received the University’s highest honor, the Distinguished Service Award, in 2013 for their commitment to the community and UNC Charlotte.

“The Rashes have remained steadfast in their commitment to service, dedication and passionate advocacy, demonstrating persistence, fortitude, honesty, integrity and generosity of spirit,” said Chancellor Philip L. Dubois. “Their tireless efforts have expanded educational opportunities for all the members of our community and have helped to forge a more vibrant, equitable society for all.”
French professor named 50th recipient of top teaching honor

Michèle Bissière is the golden jubilee recipient of the Bank of America Award for Teaching Excellence. Presented annually since 1968, the award is one of the University’s most prestigious accolades, recognizing a talented faculty member. She received the honor during a special ceremony Friday, Sept. 8.

A professor in the Department of Languages and Culture Studies, Bissière has developed 12 courses with most in the French curriculum, including language, advanced literature, culture, civilization and film.

According to her colleagues, it is what is not listed on paper that makes Bissière a truly exceptional teacher. Colleagues frequently state that because of her enthusiasm, integrity and work ethic, Bissière has supported every major programmatic initiative during the last two decades.

Her outreach has been so diverse and extensive that she is the face of French at UNC Charlotte.

She founded the French Club and established the internship program, which regularly places students in area schools to assist instructors teaching French; she encourages students to volunteer within local schools and for the Bechtler Museum of Modern Art. Finally, she single-handedly started the International Film Festival.

Bissière has received numerous honors and awards throughout her career, including being named Chevalier dans l’Ordre des Palmes Académiques (Knight in the Order of the French Academic Palms) by the French Ministry of Education, the most prestigious distinction bestowed upon instructors by the French government.

Rogelberg receives national award

UNC Charlotte professor Steven Rogelberg was named the inaugural recipient of the Society of Industrial and Organizational Psychology Humanitarian Award.

Rogelberg, who is director of the Organizational Science doctoral program in the University’s College of Liberal Arts & Sciences and Belk College of Business, is a professor of psychology and professor of management. He also was the inaugural Chancellor’s Professor at UNC Charlotte, in honor of his scholarship of international and national distinction and significant achievement within the University community.

In one of his most impactful initiatives, Rogelberg oversaw the creation of the Voluntary Assessment Program, an outreach initiative that has provided free volunteer management assessment services to more than 200 nonprofit organizations, in partnership with the Humane Society of the United States. Nonprofit leaders who have used tools developed by Rogelberg and his colleagues speak of the deep and lasting impact on their lives and the lives of those they serve.

Rogelberg also co-founded the Organizational Science Summer Institute (OSSI), an inclusion-based initiative. OSSI seeks to diversify the field of organizational science through professional development, specifically targeting historically underrepresented undergraduate students to participate in a research-driven institute for a week each summer at UNC Charlotte. Additionally, he is founder of the Growth Mindset Initiative, an ongoing intervention for schools in high poverty areas to promote elementary school student success. The multifaceted annual intervention includes teacher training, interactive workshops for every fourth-grade class and follow-up mentorships.

Theatre professor’s novel garners awards

“Steeplejack,” the young adult fantasy novel by Robinson Distinguished Professor of Shakespeare Andrew Hartley, has won two major awards: the 2017 International Thriller Writers Award for “Best Young Adult Novel” and the 2017 Manly Wade Wellman Award for North Carolina Science Fiction and Fantasy.

This new work is a fantasy/mystery set in an imaginary world inspired by 19th-century South Africa. Published in 2016, “Steeplejack” is the first in a trilogy; the second book, “Firebrand,” recently was released in both print and audio versions.
University fills key leadership roles

Kevin Bailey is now UNC Charlotte's vice chancellor for student affairs. Selected following a national search, Bailey is a highly regarded educator and administrator who began his 27-year career in student affairs at UNC Charlotte. He joins the University from the University of West Florida where he served as vice president for student affairs as well as associate professor in the Department of Research and Advanced Studies.

Bailey has held administrative and teaching positions at Tulane University, Millersville University, Bowling Green State University and Indiana University of Pennsylvania. He has served on multiple committees and has received numerous awards and recognitions for his contributions to those institutions. On the national level, Bailey has held leadership posts in the Student Affairs Administrators in Higher Education (NASPA), ACPA-College Student Educators International and the Association for Student Conduct Administrators (ASCA). He is chair for the 100th anniversary NASPA conference being held in Philadelphia next year.

Bailey earned a Doctor of Philosophy in Higher Education Administration from Bowling Green State University. He holds a Master of Arts in Student Affairs in Higher Education and a Bachelor of Science in Management Information Systems.

Fatma Mili has started her tenure as the dean of UNC Charlotte’s College of Computing and Informatics (CCI), which is the largest and most comprehensive technology program in North Carolina and one of the largest in the nation, with a focus on cutting-edge research and innovation.

According to Mili, higher education institutions such as UNC Charlotte have the capacity to address long-term systematic challenges faced by societies. “My role is to ensure that we balance the most urgent and important. What do we need to do to ensure our graduates are marketable and successful in their first and second jobs, but also that they are equipped and motivated to take initiative to navigate the unknown and uncertain.”

Mili, who holds a Ph.D. in Computer Science from Pierre and Marie Curie University in Paris, France, joined UNC Charlotte from Purdue University. She has extensive experience in successfully driving progressive forces of change and transformation in computing.

Michael Mazzola was named the third director of the Energy Production and Infrastructure Center (EPIC), the University’s state-of-the-art research facility that provides education and applied research opportunities to students with energy-related interests. Previously, Mazzola was a professor of electrical and computer engineering at Mississippi State University (MSU).

At the MSU Center for Advanced Vehicular Systems, Mazzola was the associate director for advanced vehicle systems; he led research in high-voltage engineering, power systems modeling and simulation, the application of silicon carbide semiconductor devices in power electronics and the control of hybrid electric vehicle power trains. A professional engineer, he has published more than 100 papers and has been awarded 14 patents.

Mazzola, who holds a Ph.D. in electrical engineering from Old Dominion University, also was the Jack Hatcher Endowed Chair for Entrepreneurship at MSU’s Bagley College of Engineering. In addition, he served two years as the chief technology officer of SemiSouth Laboratories, a company he co-founded.

Transforming teacher prep

The Cato College of Education has taken a step toward its goal of reshaping teacher preparation in the region with the launch of its first Teacher Education Institute. The four-day event focused on improving teacher preparation at the undergraduate level, drawing around 100 key stakeholders daily. Attendees included teacher educators, university supervisors and school-based cooperating K-12 teachers from Charlotte-Mecklenburg, Cabarrus and Rowan-Salisbury schools. The group endeavored to set benchmarks and develop advanced coaching skills to support teacher candidates.

“This institute is critical for establishing a common understanding about what we mean when we say ‘accomplished teaching,’” said Ellen McIntyre, dean of the Cato College of Education. “Right now, many of these professionals work in silos. We believe that we can all raise our own skills in how to coach students toward becoming the best teachers they can be.”

The Belk Foundation provided more than $230,000 in grant funding for this two-year pilot program, which is backed by in-kind support from the Cato College.

Alumnus appointed to UNC Board of Governors

For the first time in several decades, the N.C. General Assembly elected a UNC Charlotte alumnus to the UNC Board of Governors: former Sen. Bob Rucho.

A retired dentist, Rucho (’94) served eight terms in the North Carolina Senate, representing Mecklenburg County. He served as co-chairman of the Senate Finance Committee, leading the most sweeping tax reform package in the state’s history. Rucho also championed UNC Charlotte’s $90 million science building, which was included in the NC Connect bond package.

Rucho earned an MBA from UNC Charlotte in 1994 and served on the Board of Advisors for the Belk College of Business. He was named to the UNC Board of Governors Budget and Finance Committee and the important Funding Model Task Force.

Rucho
Alumni Affairs honors longtime employee

The Betty M. Stancil Scholarship Endowment was established in honor of Betty Sue McCachren Stancil, 78, a longtime employee and integral member of the University’s Department of Alumni Affairs in the Division of University Advancement. Stancil died in July.

Stancil started at UNC Charlotte in March 1974 as secretary/office manager in the Center for Student Employment and Career Services (Placement Office). In 1990, she joined Alumni Affairs as secretary/administrative assistant to the director. She worked in that role until retiring from full-time service in 2004. She returned to her position in a part-time role in 2005 and had nearly 43 years of service at her death.

The Betty M. Stancil Scholarship will support a returning UNC Charlotte student with a GPA of 3.0 or higher. The student must be from Mecklenburg or Cabarrus counties and demonstrate a financial need. To make a donation in Stancil’s memory, send a check payable to the UNC Charlotte Foundation with “Betty Stancil Endowment” written in the memo line; mail to UNC Charlotte Foundation, 9201 University City Blvd., Charlotte, North Carolina 28223-0001.

University provides future educators a head start

UNC Charlotte recently welcomed 50 high school freshmen who make up the inaugural class of the Charlotte Teacher Early College (CTEC), a new five-year program for Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools (CMS) students interested in a career in education.

The only program of its kind in North Carolina and one of the first in the country, the University launched the cutting-edge partnership with CMS to better prepare the future workforce for success in today’s classrooms.

It launches at a critical time. For years, the region’s teacher pipeline has been shrinking. Across the state, enrollment in education programs has been in decline, while the need for qualified teachers is increasing exponentially.

Housed in the Cato College of Education building, the program immerses students in field-based activities and curriculum, equipping them for achievement in contemporary urban classrooms, while providing the opportunity to experience the vibrant atmosphere of a college campus and University resources. Students will graduate with a high school diploma, a Certificate of Advanced Standing in Education and a minimum of 60 hours in course credits transferable to any public institution in North Carolina.

The program expands on the success of another University-CMS partnership, the Charlotte Engineering Early College (CEEC), also located on UNC Charlotte’s campus. Last year, the 75 CMS high school juniors at CEEC completed an average of 16 college credit hours with an average GPA of 3.2.

CTEC students will participate in clinical placements in urban schools focused on developing relationships with students who represent future attendees of the program. Each grade also will participate in one significant urban cultural event each academic year focused on art, music, theater or history.

By exposing aspiring educators to important aspects of the profession early, CTEC will produce teachers who are prepared to succeed during their critical first years in the classroom.

Theatre professor wins 2017 Princess Grace Award

Assistant Professor of Physical Theatre CarlosAlexis Cruz has received a 2017 Works in Progress Residency Award from the Princess Grace Foundation. The award will fund a residency next March at the Baryshnikov Arts Center in New York City. During his residency, Cruz will continue to develop his one-man show, “Pícaro,” a physical theatre interpretation on the journey of a Central American immigrant.
Researchers to study method for supporting grandparents raising grandchildren

A new UNC Charlotte study is set to evaluate the impact of an educational intervention aimed at supporting grandparents raising their grandchildren. Led by Julian Montoro-Rodríguez, director of the University’s interdisciplinary Gerontology Program and supported by a grant from Southminster senior living community, the study will evaluate the effectiveness of a psycho-educational intervention to improve the health and social psychological outcomes for grandparents raising grandchildren.

The study will focus on improving the quality of the relationship between grandparents and grandchildren, and it will refresh the grandparents’ communication skills and strategies to ask for help. The intervention will provide basic instruction in positive parenting practices. Researchers will supplement goal setting with goal implementation, to include the identification of potential barriers in implementing these goals. Each grandparent will share experiences in raising his/her grandchild and the relationship to the goals set, allowing for revision of those that were not realistic or too difficult to implement.

Professor’s debut novel receiving national acclaim

“Sycamore,” the debut novel by Assistant Professor of English Bryn Chancellor, has earned critical acclaim on the national stage. The work is being lauded as a riveting tale of how a teenage girl’s mysterious disappearance has haunted her Arizona hometown, and how the discovery of her remains leads to unexpected healing and forgiveness.

Amazon has listed Chancellor’s novel as among the “Best Literature and Fiction of 2017 So Far” and named it one of its “Best Books of the Month” selections for May. Independent booksellers from across the nation named the book to its June Indie Next List of bookseller-recommended favorites. Glamour magazine, New York Post and the online community Bustle named it to their book recommendation lists, and O: The Oprah Magazine listed it on “O’s Top 20 Books to Read This Summer.”

Belk College’s pioneering DBA program enrolls first cohort

The state’s first and only Doctorate in Business Administration program has enrolled its inaugural class.

The Doctorate in Business Administration is a unique program in the UNC system and the only program of its type in the region; it offers a professional degree to executives in a three-year, cohort-based, executive format.

This groundbreaking Belk College program was created for professionals who want to become professors, enhance their expertise, elevate their consulting credentials or become corporate change-agents in their industries.

Steven Ott, dean of the Belk College of Business, noted, “The inaugural class consists of an elite network of powerful professionals at the forefront of their respective industries. They will create for themselves a more enriched perspective through exclusive collaboration opportunities with America’s top corporations in one of the fastest-growing business centers in the United States.”

A strong community partner, the Belk College designed the DBA program to challenge the minds of these leaders, providing corporations, universities and the larger business community a higher level of top-caliber thought-leaders.

Webb named Bonnie E. Cone Early-Career Professor

Jennifer Webb, associate professor in the Department of Psychological Science, is the 2017 recipient of the Bonnie E. Cone Early-Career Professorship in Teaching.

Since arriving at UNC Charlotte in 2007, Webb has cultivated an engaging classroom environment for collective wisdom to dynamically unfold through lively exchanges in which participants can comfortably debate the merits of multiple sides of an issue.

As a course instructor, research mentor and academic advisor, Webb engages students with respect, fairness and authenticity that reflects her positive psychology value orientation. This holistic approach to teaching and instruction asserts that it is essential to establish a core foundation of trust, care and respect for diversity that naturally gives rise to a more optimal working relationship with students. Using this approach, Webb combines experiential ingredients including community engagement, social justice and advocacy themes to encourage students to bridge their personal educational goals with the desire to make a positive impact in the society.

The Bonnie E. Cone Early-Career Professorship in Teaching was established in 2006 and is annually bestowed to a member of the faculty who has been awarded tenure within the last three years. The appointment is for a three-year term.

Professor’s debut novel receiving national acclaim

Hartley

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A strong community partner, the Belk College designed the DBA program to challenge the minds of these leaders, providing corporations, universities and the larger business community a higher level of top-caliber thought-leaders.
UNC Charlotte to present works by noted N.C. artist

The UNC Charlotte College of Arts + Architecture and Davidson College are presenting exhibitions featuring the work of North Carolina artist Bob Trotman. “Business As Usual” will be displayed at the Projective Eye Gallery, UNC Charlotte Center City, from Friday, Sept. 8, through Thursday, Dec. 14 (curated by Crista Cammaroto), and at Davidson’s Van Every/Smith Galleries, Thursday, Oct. 19, through Friday, Dec. 8 (curated by Lia Newman). Each venue will display different works; between both exhibitions, more than 30 sculptures, 50 maquettes and 18 drawings will be exhibited.

Trotman will speak about both exhibitions in an artist lecture at 7 p.m., Thursday, Nov. 2, at UNC Charlotte Center City.

Working mostly in wood, but also using motion, light and sound, Trotman satirically suggests a confluence of power, privilege and pretense that secretly, or not so secretly, shapes the world.

Social practice artist Carmen Papalia arrives on campus

For the fall semester, the Department of Art & Art History, in partnership with the McColl Center for Art + Innovation, welcomed Vancouver-based artist and disability activist Carmen Papalia as the 2017 artist-in-residence. Papalia is a social practice artist and nonvisual learner who makes participatory projects about access to public space, the art institution and visual culture.

He is on a cross-country campaign for his new conceptual work called “Open Access,” a response to the failures he experienced as a recipient of institutional support services. “Open Access” fosters care, mutuality and the responsibility to disrupt the conditions that obstruct agency for those in need.

Lee College provides advanced manufacturing partnership

UNC Charlotte’s Lee College of Engineering, a leader in precision metrology and manufacturing, provided two students from the Navajo Technical University (NTU) an immersive summer experience to explore the technology and software of advanced measuring equipment.

NTU professor Scott Halliday, who is developing manufacturing and metrology capabilities to serve the Navajo Nation, approached the University about a partnership that supports opportunities for NTU students. The partnership was made possible by the National Science Foundation’s Research Experiences for Undergraduates supplement program.

Halliday said the exchange will be beneficial because students will learn from UNC Charlotte’s resources and help create a lab experience for NTU’s engineering-based programs.

CCI associate dean recognized for work in diversity

The Center for Minorities and People with Disabilities in Information Technology (CMD-ITT) has recognized Manuel Pérez Quiñones, associate dean for the College of Computing and Informatics, with the 2017 Richard Tapia Achievement Award for Scientific Scholarship, Civic Science and Diversity in Computing.

This award is bestowed annually to an individual who demonstrates significant leadership, commitment and contributions to diversifying computing.

Quiñones has a long history of leadership with diversity and inclusion in computer science. He has created and led impactful programs for African-American, Latino, Native American, LGBTQ and women students in his role as an academic leader. Most recently, he created a Corporate Mentoring Program at UNC Charlotte for women freshmen students, matching them with female corporate representatives. He continues to co-manage the Hispanics in Computing listserv that he founded, which has more than 400 members.
September marks one year since a difficult and challenging time in the history of the University and the greater Charlotte community.

The police-involved shooting of Keith Lamont Scott, which occurred about a mile from UNC Charlotte's main campus, spurred civil unrest in the city, followed by peaceful demonstrations on campus.

The Charlotte-Mecklenburg Opportunity Task Force, which at the time of the shooting was already engaged in examining how to reduce barriers to economic opportunity for families frustrated by intergenerational poverty, said that “[f]or many who view our community as a beacon of prosperity and live in relative comfort and affluence, Charlotte seemed an unfathomable setting for racial protests. However, for those whose voices have been ignored, or missed in our collective gazing at civic progress, it was no revelation that long-standing frustrations were finally being aired in the streets.”

The Task Force specifically called on UNC Charlotte to act as a thought-leader on economic opportunity — to help find ways for all Charlotte-area residents to have access to the education and support systems they need to succeed. The University’s seven academic colleges have all worked to identify ways in which the University can help address the Task Force’s recommendations, particularly those relating to college and career readiness. Those recommendations will be assessed and refined during the fall semester.

But what lessons has the UNC Charlotte community learned during the year since those turbulent weeks? UNC Charlotte magazine asked several current and former students to reflect on last September’s events and what changes they’ve seen since that time.
Lauren Bullock (’18)  
22, Newport News, Virginia  
Sociology; minor in Africana studies

“Since the Keith Lamont Scott shooting, I have seen a lot of changes on campus as far as putting together groups to be able to freely speak on subjects regarding police brutality and other issues affecting marginalized communities.

It is important to be able to have students of all backgrounds come and join the conversation. A lot of students come from communities where they have never been exposed to people of different backgrounds. This can cause a lot of backlash and misunderstanding and miscommunication.

That is why it is so important to have these conversations and make everyone feel welcome...[and making] sure every community is present. When you have conversations about things that affect one community, that community should not be the only one there. You should have all communities in the conversation.

Many times people think that because they are not part of a community, they don’t have a voice in it. This is not true. It affects them too. Martin Luther King said, ‘An injustice for one is an injustice for all.’ We can’t keep living in an individualistic mindset, as if it does not affect me or my family. We are all connected. If you do not take care of others, then you are nothing.

Being in the Black Student Union taught me a lot about service. Being a part of it has helped me learn what service is. It taught me that service makes you relevant. Because that’s what we are here to do, whether it is to serve your God or other people or the environment.

This is what we are meant to do...[b]eing here and having the opportunity to serve. It’s our duty to make sure we are connecting with people who were not allowed this opportunity and making sure those people who are not here also know what is going on.”

Fahn Darkor (’17)  
22, Greensboro, North Carolina  
Marketing

“As a result of the Keith Lamont Scott shooting, the 49er community...[became] more vocal and active in social injustice. Students were consistently speaking up for what they believe in and rallying behind causes they thought our campus should be aware about.

As a result of this, local news stations began to pay attention to what was happening at UNC Charlotte and would frequently reach out to student leaders to provide their perspective on topics. This provides our community with a platform to amplify our voices.

Ultimately, some vocalized opinions made students feel uncomfortable, but that is where you learn the most about yourself and others. They allow us to open our eyes to the diverse perspectives our students have and reflect on what we value the most, justice. From the experience I learned that we are stronger as a community when we respond as a community.”

Anthony Mower (’17)  
22, Gaithersburg, Maryland,  
Biology and Psychology

“From the time of...this tragic event, I have been able to see great strengths develop from our student body, [t]he most prominent of which is how unified students have become...[on] issues of social injustice. I was able to see a lot of student
organizations and students come together and talk about these issues in a peaceful manner.

Also, professors and advisors were great for talking about feelings within a safe environment for my peers and myself. My hope is that we unite our campus even further on such issues so that we may set the example of what it means to stand for basic human rights.

The biggest lesson is knowing how to be supportive for people of communities that I can’t identify with. As a white male, I can’t speak to what it is like to be a person of another ethnicity within our society.

However, I can be a person...who is there to listen to those of the certain communities to try and understand what they are going through, to support them in their time of need. The day after the event, the MRC [Multicultural Resource Center] was holding a Food for Thought session, which...became a roundtable discussion on how people were feeling regarding the loss of this human life. I took [it] upon myself to LISTEN to the words that were being said rather than to speak on how I was feeling. From this I have become a stronger advocate for educating people of my community to understand what it is like to be a person of different background.”

**Javier Negrete** (‘18)
22, Newton, North Carolina
Social Work

“From my perspective, I think the campus was a little bit more awakened to the circumstances that a lot of students of color feel on a campus that is predominantly white. It was more of a wake-up call for everyone. Not that we feel strong animosity.

However, we know of many social injustices that have happened. Ever since...[the unrest] we felt, ‘Oh wow, this is real.’ It was very real to everyone who was feeling it. Following the shooting, there was a huge feeling of solidarity on behalf of the community from students of color. That was a strong opportunity for students to get into a reflective mode for a while.

I think a lot of students took [it] upon themselves to become more there for each other. I think it was like the Black Lives Matter movement across the nation, with people becoming more aware and being in a place of solidarity. Most of the students who already knew what was going on were experiencing dialogues with other students who were not so knowledgeable. And this can be taxing. For example, I felt it when I had to keep explaining to other students why I felt uncomfortable. So we need to allow the dialogue to continue to happen so we can work through these hard times.”

**Libby Nixon** (‘17)
22, Rocky Mount, North Carolina
Communication Studies/Organizational Communication Major

“I am fortunate enough to be able to promote unity and help the community grow in harmony and mutual respect. One of the hardest lessons I had to learn to get to this point was that when people feel targeted or otherwise slighted it is very difficult for them to process their own pain, let alone the pain of others.

An individual...feels their own emotions first. The exception to this is in friendship. When something happens that could affect a friend significantly, most people turn their concerns to their friends because they care about them. This is the change I have gotten to see over the last year. It started slow, and this community has a lot more healing to do before it can reach its full potential, but the number of strong friendships between those that were divided in the chaos surrounding the shooting of Keith Lamont Scott are increasing every day.

No one is forgetting; we are just continually realizing the need for progress. We are recognizing the strengths in each other in addition to the differences. It isn’t going to be easy, but now, when something goes wrong or when there is an injustice affecting any part of the community, I don’t think there is the automatic assumption others don’t care or will never understand. I believe that there is a long fight ahead, with seemingly insurmountable problems, but little by little we are growing together.”

**Ena Walker** (‘18)
21, Beaufort, North Carolina
Business-Organization Management Major

“Since the shooting of Keith Lamont Scott, UNC Charlotte’s community has changed in a few different ways. Immediately after the events that took place, many students, especially students of color, at UNC Charlotte became much more vocal about the issues we saw and the places where the University could’ve been stronger in their response to the events. Peaceful protests assembled out across campus and continued through the spring semester.

The student leadership at UNC Charlotte is strong and we always push to have more student opinions in high-up decisions, and the Keith Lamont Scott shooting was no different. Though we did receive support from some crucial campus administrators, such as Dean Christine Reed Davis, there was a definite lack of support from...[the] teaching staff at the University. The day after the shooting took place, many professors went about business as usual, making many students feel that their pain was unimportant. The silence was deafening...[M]uch of the student body found support within their peers, and I would say our student body is much closer now than last year after the events.

From this experience, I learned that though I may attend classes with and learn from many different individuals at this University, a university that strives for inclusivity and diversity, not all of them appreciate or understand the importance of unity amongst all students and the hard conversations that need to be had to achieve that. The shooting burst my happy UNC Charlotte bubble but, now awake, I can appreciate further the wonderful allies that do support our student body and the unification we all seek.”

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Paul Nowell is a senior communications manager in the UNC Charlotte Office of University Communication.
Helping Hand
Project members assist Landon Boyer with his 3-D printed prosthetic.

Photo by Lynn Roberson
The UNC Charlotte students clustered around young Landon Boyer in the Woodward Hall classroom, just a few steps from the CCI Makerspace lab where they had coalesced as a team over the past semester.

Boyer flexed his elbow and curled the fingers of his new red and blue prosthetic hand around a bottle of tea. The students greeted the sight with cheers, tears and fist bumps with Boyer, before taking him to see the lab where the device was created.

For months, the UNC Charlotte Helping Hand Project team had used 3-D printers and other tools in the Makerspace lab within the College of Computing and Informatics (CCI) to build recreational prosthetic arms for Boyer and other children with limb differences.

While team members had already shipped a device to Amy, a girl in Texas, their visit with Boyer marked the first time they had witnessed face-to-face the impact of their work.

“Hands-on designing something, putting it together, putting hours into this (Makerspace) room to build a final product that could be given to a kid and trying to get it as perfect as it possibly can be — there’s something uniquely special about that,” said Henry Weaver, president of the Helping Hand Project student group. “It gives you motivation and drive to finish something that could potentially be very great.”

For Weaver, a senior in the biology honors program and a Spanish and chemistry minor, moments like these put into context the time spent in Makerspace (Read more about the lab on page 17).

Inspirational Power

But then, along comes a video from Amy, thanking the team for her device printed in her favorite color purple and for the care package that included a stuffed bear in Charlotte 49er gear. Or, they receive photos of 13-year-old Boyer at home,
showcasing his dexterity with his device, and they are reminded and re-energized.

“Just to be able to see where the research and development and education make a difference — a real positive difference — in somebody’s life, to see the light go on in his eyes when he gets his new 'robot hand,' is incredible,” said David Wilson, a software and information systems professor who co-advises the Helping Hand Project student group with biology professor Richard Chi. The professors also have received National Science Foundation funding for research related to the project (see page 16).

“IT GIVES YOU MOTIVATION AND DRIVE TO FINISH SOMETHING THAT COULD POTENTIALLY BE VERY GREAT.”

Wilson’s overall research interests include human-computer interaction, which led to an interest in makerspaces and fabrication — which led to the opening of Makerspace in CCI in the fall of 2016. The space is meant to inspire the process of making, which includes making things for social good, such as with the Helping Hand Project.

Students in biology, engineering, computer science, public relations, exercise science, psychology, education, marketing and other majors have been drawn to the Helping Hand Project. They come together with their differing skills, knowledge and future aspirations, united by their shared drive to meet a pressing human need. While these printed devices are not intended to be a complete replacement for an FDA-regulated, professionally consulted prosthesis, they do provide the user with an affordable introductory device. They also offer some functionality for grasping light and pliable objects, as well as having shown to boost many recipients’ confidence.

Brandon Glover is project director for the Helping Hand Project student group and was one of the first students to sign on to start the effort. He has since completed his bachelor’s degree in exercise science and is on a path to pursue osteopathic medicine.

“Since the beginning of this journey, I have noticed a change in myself,” he said. “I have become more interested in trying to find ways to directly help our community and specifically our children. I am very interested in mission work and plan to use my medical degree to help people all around the globe.”

Multilevel Learning

Johanna Okerlund, who oversees Makerspace, is pursuing a doctoral degree in computing and information systems and is a member of the Helping Hand Project team. She has noticed multiple levels of learning in the group.

“It’s very empowering to know that with tools that are right around you, you can actually help real people,” Okerlund said. “You learn what the machines can and can’t do because you try something that sort of reaches that limit, and it doesn’t work. Another sort of learning is about working with other people, so you learn in what ways you are similar to and different from other people.”

The students have learned not to assume how others perceive aspects of the work and to tune in to possible differences in approach or perception, she said. “If you can notice those differences and articulate those differences, you
actually can build on those differences and come together with an even better thing,” she said.

Like the students, the group’s two faculty advisors come from different disciplines and draw from their distinct knowledge, interests and skills.

When Chi, a molecular and cell biologist, and his wife learned their child would be born with a limb difference, he read academic literature to learn all he could. He found an international community focused on sharing open-source designs and making devices for children, and he connected with other families.

Chi built a relationship with Jeff Powell, founder of the Helping Hand Project nonprofit organization in Chapel Hill, with which the UNC Charlotte group is affiliated. Powell, who graduated from the biomedical engineering program at UNC Chapel Hill, joined UNC Charlotte this fall as a master’s degree student in biology and will be part of both Chi’s and Wilson’s research teams.

Chi recalls his delight in discovering the Makerspace lab at CCI. “I learned about printing recreational prosthetics using a 3-D printer and started looking for a local place to print these devices, and I came across the newly opened Makerspace just one floor down from my office,” he said.

Since the space is open to the UNC Charlotte community, he headed downstairs to learn to use the printer.

Wilson noticed Chi working, and as he often does with people using the space, he struck up a conversation about Chi’s project.

‘Fabulous Project’

“He turned around and said, ‘Well, I’m 3-D printing a prosthetic hand for a 9-year-old girl in Texas,’ and I was floored,” Wilson said. “We had opened the space, and I had never imagined out of the gate that we would get such a fabulous project incubated right here.

“And I immediately started trying to help figure out how we could do more and bigger and better on this kind of making for social good,” Wilson continued. “From that point, we started working together writing grant proposals and working on other ways of outreach and connection with the Helping Hand Project out of Chapel Hill. And, it all took off from there.”

Chi also reached out to biology student Weaver, who intends to be a doctor and researcher, and who immediately took the role of president of the Helping Hand Project student group. Other students quickly signed on.

“I think the beauty of it is, you don’t have to have a major interest in engineering or biology,” Chi said. “You just need to have this desire to help out on a topic that is appealing to many people. They may not know someone with a limb difference, but they can relate to a child who has a limb difference. And everything in your heart says — let’s do whatever we can to give this child anything we can that could make their life a little bit better.”

The team collaborates with the international e-NABLE community, which includes Drew Murray and Stephen Davies of Team UnLimbited. They created designs the UNC Charlotte team uses in its 3-D printing.

“This community has designed these open-source devices, so other people like us can download and modify it depending on who we want to give it to,” Chi said.

Fun Fundraisers

While the designs are open-source, the students still must raise money to purchase materials for printing and to cover other expenses. Past efforts included a “rent a puppy” activity and a “pie your professor” event. This fall, their Helping Hand Project will be part of the Crowdfund UNC Charlotte effort.

(Read more about this fundraising initiative on page 42.)

One family that will surely help raise awareness of the students’ fundraising effort is the Boyer family — Landon and his brothers, Ryan and Logan, and his mom and dad, Mariann and Tom. For them, the relationships and experiences have been invaluable.

“There are plenty of children out there who would benefit from the experience as well as the arm,” Mariann Boyer said. “Because the experience of meeting with these guys and seeing how these arms are built and everything that goes into this is useful in and of itself. And the arm is just an added bonus to that.”

Lynn Roberson is director of communications for the College of Liberal Arts & Sciences.
How Students Learn:
Researchers to study CCI Makerspace

By Lynn Roberson

The CCI Makerspace lab at UNC Charlotte exists as a place of wonderment — where people can explore the creative power of making things, while discovering their potential as individual creators and as members of diverse teams.

In recent months, this College of Computing and Informatics lab has provided a home for just such an effort, the Helping Hand Project. This student group uses 3-D printers and other tools in the lab to build recreational prosthetic arms for children with limb differences.

As the group’s faculty advisors have worked alongside the students, they have seen how students from different fields of study and walks of life have united around the focus of helping others. The advisors — Richard Chi, a molecular and cell biologist, and David Wilson, a software and information systems researcher — realized the potential for broader impact and for using Makerspace and the Helping Hand Project as centerpieces for an in-depth research effort.

“One of the things that we got started on very shortly after Richard and I connected was to put together a proposal to the National Science Foundation (NSF) that would be exactly this kind of ‘making for social good’ as a driver for engagement in STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Math) education,” said Wilson, who was instrumental in founding CCI Makerspace.

“We want to use these kinds of projects as seeds to engage students from across the high school and college level to do good and to become more engaged in science and technology,” he said.

In July, the NSF awarded Chi and Wilson $298,186 in funding over the next two years for their research project entitled: “EAGER: MAKER: Making Prosthetics for Kids — Socially Relevant Making to Catalyze Diversity and Engagement in STEM Learning.”

Addressing a Gap

While the project title is a mouthful, it represents an important exploration of how learning occurs. The researchers seek to address a gap that exists in understanding how and why informal learning takes place in a makerspace setting within a formal, campus learning environment. None of their NSF funding goes to the Helping Hand Project itself, which is seeking $5,000 through crowdfunding to provide materials for the student group’s work (see page 42).

With their research, Chi and Wilson will collect and analyze data to learn more about methods of learning and instruction — using their insights to develop and test the role of “making” in improving the effectiveness of formal and informal learning in attracting and retaining people in STEM.

Their research materials and results will be available through a project portal, and they will share their work at interdisciplinary conferences, workshops and through academic activities.

Key partners will include the Charlotte Early Engineering College, which is part of Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools and is located on the UNC Charlotte campus. Other partners will include the STARS Computing Corps and the Center for Education Innovation in the College of Computing and Informatics. Chi and Wilson will seek other partners across campus and in the broader community, too.

The initiative will include graduate and undergraduate students from across disciplines and will specifically focus on inclusion of students from underrepresented populations.

“The grant will provide us the funds to really enrich the experiences for students who may not want to stay in one of the STEM topics,” Chi said. “I see us being able to attract people who would most likely leave the STEM fields and get them engaged by working on a socially relevant topic, such as a limb difference for children.”

Broad Brush of Students

The funding will allow the research team to study the informal learning aspects and impacts of CCI Makerspace across high school, undergraduate and graduate program levels. They also intend to use the design challenges associated with the devices to study questions about Makerspace-related learning. Specific areas of design include computer hardware and software development, engineering problems, biomechanics, 3-D design and electronics for sensors and actuators.

The research team seeks ultimately to connect its learning materials to more formal learning at UNC Charlotte and at the Charlotte Early Engineering College. Beyond that, the team will consider how to develop the expertise and structure within the Makerspace community to streamline the process for new people or groups to become involved, gain skills and replicate the process.

They may explore how to distribute 3-D printers into families’ homes, so they can print their own devices.

In alignment with the maker movement’s
focus on gaining knowledge through making things, people involved in the research will be producing knowledge, rather than simply consuming it. In other words, learners literally build their own knowledge by building physical objects, and they can work together to do so.

Lessons learned from early work in Makerspace likely will influence this research project and the broader questions it explores through the NSF funding.

Being open to what others have to contribute is a critical part of learning in the Makerspace setting, said Johanna Okerlund, who oversees the lab and is pursuing her doctoral degree in computing and information systems.

“The future of computing is not always going to be screens and mice and keyboards,” Okerlund said. “It’s going to physical devices, and it’s going to be wearable devices, and it’s going to be things that are on our bodies and things that are embedded in our lives. For computer scientists to design things like that, they need to have an artistic perspective, and they need to have a humanities perspective, and they need to have a humanitarian perspective.” Makerspace brings together these perspectives and much more.

CCI’s Digital Fabrication Lab Attracts Innovators Across Disciplines

BY CLARK CURTIS

Digital fabrication, innovation and collaboration nicely sum up the Makerspace lab in UNC Charlotte’s College of Computing and Informatics (CCI). It’s the vision of David Wilson, a professor in the college’s Department of Software and Information Systems. The lab represents more than a collection of digital fabrication tools, Wilson said; it represents the opportunity to build a broader fabrication community with the mindset of making meaningful things.

“I started the CCI Makerspace because a proud ‘I made this’ is a more powerful driver of learning and creativity than any exam,” said Wilson. “I wanted to do something new and exciting, something tangible to help energize and synergize creativity through making things. Something that would catch both your eye and your imagination, a carrot toward learning more about computing and how it connects to science and art.”

CCI faculty, staff and students, as well as those from other colleges, can visit the lab, which houses all types of digital fabrication tools, such as 3-D printers, a laser cutter, sewing machines, robots and other electronics, including a device that whips out pancakes every Friday morning. In addition to hands-on training for these tools, the lab offers workshops centered around the technologies and their capabilities. Doctoral student Johanna Okerlund oversees the lab’s operations.

“It has been a fascinating experience,” said Okerlund. “We didn’t really know what to expect in terms of the people who would visit the lab. It has been really interesting to see the different people who have come in, understand what drew them to the space and the types of projects they have undertaken.”

Unique on Campus

CCI Makerspace is one of several similar facilities located in the J. Murrey Atkins Library and in the colleges of Liberal Arts & Sciences, Arts + Architecture and Engineering. But Makerspace is unique, Wilson noted.

“Many of the other spaces on campus are much more inward-facing and locked down for internal coursework, and their tools are much more specific to what is going on there,” he said. “Here at CCI, we are much more external-facing, engaging those across many disciplinary boundaries on campus. Individuals are welcome to come in and work on projects of their choice, not one that is required by their current curriculum. However, if they want to work on an assigned project, they are more than welcome to do that here as well.”

Okerlund said her goal is to raise awareness across campus about Makerspace and to increase collaboration among other digital fabrication areas.

“This collaboration will hopefully remove the silos and result in the sharing of new ideas and the creation of innovative projects that may never have been thought of without the input of others with different mindsets,” she said.

Successful Projects

Helping Hand Project and a spring 2017 digital fabrication fashion show on campus are examples of projects that have been big successes.

“The lab was opened in the fall of 2016, and the phrase ‘If you build it, they will come’ certainly proved to be very true,” said Wilson. “Helping to incubate the work of the Helping Hand Project enabled us to provide a place for the training on how to make the prosthetic devices. The technology fashion show brought together individuals from many disciplines across campus to create garments from laser-cutting tools, 3-D printers, computers, sewing machines and garments adorned in LED lights.”

Wilson said Makespace recently received a $10,000 grant from the National Center for Women and Information Technology to serve as seed money for a mobile Makerspace, intended initially for outreach to community colleges.

Eventually, Wilson predicted, “Everyone is going to have a full suite of digital fabrication devices in their homes. People won’t need to go to the store or online to purchase certain things. With the press of a button, they will be able to make them in their own homes. We are trying to prepare people for that upcoming revolution.”

Clark Curtis is director of communications for the College of Computing and Informatics.
As a professor in the humanities, Jeffrey Leak has seen the impact scholarships have on students’ lives and the positive ripple effects upon families and communities. This is why he has made a gift to Exponential: The Campaign for UNC Charlotte.

“We are at a crossroads when it comes to higher education in our country, and while public education is underfunded at both the primary and secondary levels, it is still one of the most effective ways of ensuring access to knowledge, and therefore opportunity, to a cross section of our citizens,” says Dr. Leak.

As chair of the Faculty and Staff Exponential Campaign, Dr. Leak is encouraging other faculty and staff to look at our University and consider making a regular contribution to a department, college, or other relevant endeavor they believe in. “Support activities you believe in,” says Dr. Leak. “Big gifts are indeed exponential, but with enough smaller gifts tremendous work can be done as well.”
Sallie Hutton Sistare, UNC Charlotte’s new executive director of alumni relations, knows it sounds cliche, but “my first day on the job, I immediately felt like I was home as I stepped out of my car and smelled the freshly cut spring grass. It brought me back to my earlier time in North Carolina of which I have very fond memories.”

Sistare grew up three hours north of Charlotte in Chilhowie, a small southwestern Virginia town. Fittingly, what originally brought her to North Carolina was education. She attended college at Elon University, graduating in the early ’90s with a major in English. She had a passion for education and wanted to teach, or so she thought.

Fortunately for many, she took an early detour, found her passion and has been blazing a trail in higher education ever since.

**Knack for Building Relationships**

Sistare’s first foray into higher education was at UNC Chapel Hill, where she was an event planner for the School of Government, handling conference logistics. She had a knack for organizing special events, especially utilizing them as tools for building relationships. After five years, she joined Chapel Hill’s General Alumni Association, helping to plan and coordinate reunions.

“I really fell in love with alumni relations. In college, I had no idea the field even existed, yet here I found my niche. And the rest is history,” Sistare said jokingly.

She was at Chapel Hill for nine years and then Elon came calling. The school tapped Sistare to oversee parent engagement; though, she quickly assumed the role of alumni director after several months in the Parent Programs office. “It was wonderful to be back at my alma mater. I had a transformative undergraduate experience, and then I got a chance to see everything in a different light, behind the curtain so to speak. It was incredibly gratifying to help grow and shape alumni experiences.”

After nine years at Elon, Sistare learned about a special opportunity with the Medical...
Sistare with Alumni Association leaders Steven Steiger ('04), Madeline Keeter ('08) and Terrell Blackmon ('89).

University of South Carolina (MUSC) in Charleston. “They were looking to build and develop alumni relationships — keep in mind this is a graduate school with no athletics or other traditional college experiences, so that presented a challenge unique to my previous experiences. I’ve always relished opportunities where I can learn and also affect positive change, so the role was very intriguing.”

During the next three years at MUSC, Sistare bolstered alumni events, programming and participation.

Then came an email from Jenny Jones, the University’s former alumni relations director.

Impressed Beyond Expectations

“Jenny Jones and I knew each other from our days at UNC Chapel Hill, when she was working with the School of Education,” Sistare recalled. “We were acquaintances and would run into each other through the years being in similar fields. When she reached out about the position at UNC Charlotte, I couldn’t get the opportunity off my mind.”

After visiting campus, Sistare was impressed beyond her expectations. Though familiar with UNC Charlotte, she was still blown away with the growth and energy she encountered. “Just look at the history. The University started in order to fill a need for local veterans and is now a thriving research university. The rise of UNC Charlotte is just incredible. It speaks tremendous volumes about the leadership of the last 60 years.”

Sistare, along with husband Charlie and 16-year-old stepson Beau, are ecstatic to be in Charlotte, another hub of extraordinary growth. The location also keeps them close to their families, including Suzannah, Sistare’s 20-year-old stepdaughter, who still resides in Charleston.

Growing up, Charlotte was always the ‘big city’ for me. I had an aunt and uncle who lived here and we would visit occasionally,” Sistare remembers. “I was always captivated by Charlotte’s metropolitan charm, which has only increased over the years. We love the culture, arts and food — coming from Charleston, food was important. The city and UNC Charlotte have grown together at an astounding pace; there’s so much here we’re excited about.”

130,000 Alumni and Counting

Sistare’s eagerness to dive in is readily apparent. With an alumni population hovering close to 130,000 — and roughly 75,000 of those within the Charlotte region — she feels the excitement and wants to expand upon it. “When I talk to alumni, it’s pride, an immense pride that really shines through. I want to build off that.”

Sistare shares her thoughts on the three initial focus areas she has identified:

Student Programming

“Students are the reason we exist as they will become our alumni. The more deeply students are engaged while they’re here, the more engaged they are as alumni. We’ll focus on programming that builds tradition and helps strengthen student bonds with the University. The Ring Ceremony, the Senior Toast and the Legacy Programs are great examples of how to connect with students in meaningful ways and deepen their experience.”

Regional Activity and Beyond

“While most of our alumni base is in Charlotte, there’s also a large contingency outside the region. We have a good population throughout North Carolina, especially the Triangle, but also in cities like D.C. and New York. We’re exploring how to engage these graduates in ways that resonate. This means continuing to build off the strong connections in certain areas, and growing relationships in areas where we don’t have as much of a presence.”

Deepening Connections

“I’m really interested in how to be more in touch with our graduates — let them know what’s happening at their alma mater, bring them back to campus, get them out to an event in their community. I want to look at how events like Homecoming and Alumni Reunion Weekend can showcase the entire University and give graduates even more reason to come back.”

Sistare knows that campus collaborations and partnerships are an essential ingredient for success. She plans to spend her first few months meeting people across the University.

“So many alumni feel a special connection with their specific college, department or professors,” she noted. “I want to meet with as many people as I can to understand and bring out that natural affinity.”

So, back to the smell of freshly cut grass and the feeling of home. “You know, there was just something that felt right. It felt like the right move, to the right place, at the right time. It just felt like home.”

Jenny Matz is director of communications operations in the Office of University Communications.
Women’s golf team debuts this fall with challenging schedule

BY TOM WHITESTONE

The Carolinas are a golf destination with signature courses at Pinehurst, Quail Hollow, Hilton Head and many other locations. Factor in the weather and the sport’s history and the Carolinas are truly a golf mecca.

When the Charlotte 49ers looked to add a female sport following football’s addition in 2013, women’s golf was a logical choice. The 49ers have had a men’s golf team for many years, and now the new women’s program is making its debut this fall under head coach Holly Clark.

But make no mistake, Clark is not taking one of those slow, unspoiled strolls.

“We love to win. I want to win. I want to win at everything I do,” Clark said, admitting that patience may not be her greatest virtue.

“We have the resources from a golf standpoint. We have what it takes to be really good. I wouldn’t have come here if I didn’t think it could be successful — if I didn’t feel it could really grow into something really special and really unique.”

Clark has background building a program. A former Vanderbilt associate head coach, she did as much at Carson-Newman University, with impressive results, back in 2008.

In her first year with the startup Eagles, Clark helped guide Carson-Newman to the 2009 South Atlantic Conference Championship and had an individual earn a trip to the NCAA regionals. In year two, the Eagles team qualified for the regionals.
Blessing and Curse

“We were fortunate; we had some success (at Carson-Newman),” Clark recalled. “I didn’t know anything about patience. Having success early was a blessing and a curse. Now, I think it can be done so it should be done and I want to do this. I try to remind myself to be patient — I don’t do very well with that.”

Upon her arrival at UNC Charlotte, Clark threw herself headlong into recruiting, scheduling and keeping an eye on the women’s golf addition to Stubblefield Golf Facility.

She’s been dogged in her desire to see the addition completed, knowing what it will bring to the program.

“Once the facility is done, it will be fantastic,” she noted. “I’ve watched what it did for us at Vanderbilt. Truly, when we built that building, we were able to attract kids we couldn’t attract before. It is a huge recruiting opportunity for us. We’re very fortunate that we can have it.”

Her first signee was Siarra Stout from Franklin, Tennessee; Clark called once she was hired as the 49ers head coach.

“The first commit I had was a girl that I knew and followed, and I’ve watched her over and over,” Clark said. “I just love this kid. She’s amazing. She’s the first person I reached out to.”

Clark has scheduled challenging tournaments that include fall trips to Vanderbilt, Michigan State and Yale.

“I told the girls, we’re going to put together the strongest schedule that we can,” Clark said. “I’m going to throw you to the wolves — you know that coming in. It’s going to happen. In order to set the standard for the type of golf I want to see and in order to attract the recruits — I have to have a good schedule, and it has to be competitive.”

While team members will be playing together for the first time, they won’t be strangers, thanks particularly to Stout, the initial recruit.

“I was really expecting to do a lot of introductory stuff when they got here,” Clark said. “They’ve taken it on themselves and done that on their own. (Stout) was quick to reach out to new teammates. She’s been incredibly adamant about staying in touch with them.”

Bonds Among Players

“They know each other way better than I would have thought,” the coach continues. “They spent Christmas vacations with each other. Fall break together. They’ve gone to each other’s homes. This summer, they’ve taken trips to visit each other. They have developed bonds since they’ve signed that I wasn’t expecting.”

And now, they’ve come together on campus. Ready to play. Ready to compete. Ready to build.

“It takes the right kid to come in and want to build the foundation of something,” Clark said. “It’s such a special and unique opportunity. They’re excited, motivated, hard-working. They’re good people. That was far more important to me in getting this program started. Of course, I need talent, but I wanted good people because I know that they’re the foundation of what we’re building. They’re the type of people you want around yourself to push you be a better person or a better coach.”

And now, they will push the 49ers’ latest startup program to be an even better one.

And there isn’t a better backdrop.

“This is the perfect area,” Clark said. “This area is so good for golf in general. We have 25 golf courses in a 30-mile radius of this campus. And they’re not just any golf courses. They’re incredible. We have an ability in this area of the country to grow grasses,” she explained. “We’re in this pocket that we can grow five or six different types of grasses, which allows us to practice for any event we want to prepare for. We’re fortunate we have the resources to prepare for really anything. I think that’s why you see so many tour players moving to this area.”

And why there will be so many women’s college players heading this way. With Clark at the helm and cohesive team out of the gate, Charlotte is quickly becoming a women’s college golf destination.

Tom Whitestone is associate athletic director for media relations for the Charlotte 49ers.

Editor’s Note: Learn how to fund life-changing experiences for UNC Charlotte students at exponential.uncc.edu.
Former Charlotte 49ers track and field standout Briauna Jones was named USA Bobsled 2016-17 Rookie of the Year after her first season as a push athlete with the national bobsled team.

The award was presented at the annual USA Bobsled and Skeleton awards banquet July 1 at the Lake Placid Olympic Conference Center.

Teaming with USA Bobsled's Athlete of the Year Elena Meyers Taylor, Jones won her first World Cup gold medal at the BMW International Bobsleigh and Skeleton Federation World Cup in St. Moritz, Switzerland, in January. Meyers Taylor and Jones' time of 2:16.14 narrowly defeated Canada's Kaillie Humphries and Melissa Lotholz (2:16.15) by a hundredth of a second, Jan. 21.

A native of Summerville, South Carolina, Jones hopes to become the Charlotte 49ers' first student-athlete to make a U.S. Olympic team. The 2018 Winter Olympics will take place Feb. 9-25 in Pyeongchang, South Korea.

Charlotte 49ers head track and field coach Bob Olesen was a member of the 1998 United States Olympic Bobsled team that competed in Nagano, Japan, and encouraged Jones to try for the Olympic bobsled team.

While with the 49ers, Jones was a remarkable track and field athlete, competing in the 60-meter dash, long jump, triple jump and high jump. She was the Atlantic 10 Conference outdoor track and field champion in the long jump and high jump in 2011, and took either first or second place in the A-10 in the long jump and triple jump in all eight indoor and outdoor championships over her four seasons. She was also part of the 4x100 relay team that advanced to the NCAA Championships.

Laia Raventós, a junior on the women's basketball team, has added another gold medal to her illustrious career. The standout point guard was a member of Spain's championship team at the 2017 FIBA U20 European Championship played in Matosinhos, Portugal.

Spain, which entered the tournament as a favorite, lived up to the billing by completing a perfect 7-0 run through the event and clinching the crown with a 73-63 victory over Slovenia. It marked the third career gold for Raventós, having earned gold for Spain at the 2013 U16 and 2015 U18 European Championships.

In this year's tournament, she averaged 4 points, 2.6 assists and 1.4 rebounds. She earned a starting role against Sweden in the group phase and against Lithuania in the Round of 16, averaging 18.2 minutes per game. She finished the event by hitting 48.1 percent of her field goals, including a remarkable 59.1 percent of her attempts inside the 3-point arc.
49ers Celebrate Athletic Milestones

The Charlotte 49ers will celebrate anniversaries for several conference championship and NCAA tournament teams during the 2017-18 season. Among the achievements the 49ers plan to honor:

- The 30th anniversary of the men’s basketball trip to the NCAA basketball tournament, under head coach Jeff Mullins in 1988.

- The 15th anniversary of women’s basketball’s first-ever NCAA tournament trip, under head coach Katie Meier in 2003.

- The 25th anniversary of the baseball program’s first-ever NCAA tournament appearance, under head coach Loren Hibbs in 1993.

- The 10th anniversary of the men’s golf program’s eighth-place finish at the 2008 NCAA Championship, the team’s second-straight top-10 finish under head coach Jamie Green.
Amy Andrews Harrell fashions fascinating career as costumer

Amy Andrews Harrell ('85) had just a few minutes when she called from San Juan, Puerto Rico, to talk about her busy career. The Emmy Award-winning alumna of the UNC Charlotte Department of Theatre was finishing two months of long days on the set of “Speed Kills,” where as costume designer she was helping to transform John Travolta into the multimillionaire speedboat racer and designer Don Aronow. (The movie may be renamed before its release in 2018.)

Travolta is the latest in a long list of superstar actors and directors with whom Harrell has worked. She has served as costume designer, costume supervisor, wardrobe supervisor or key costumer for nearly 50 film and television productions. Steven Spielberg, Meryl Streep, Meg Ryan, Tom Hanks, Jane Fonda, Mel Gibson, Sam Shepard, Nicole Kidman and Daniel Radcliffe are among the many famous people she has dressed.

Harrell grew up in Charlotte in the Hickory Grove neighborhood and attended Independence High School.

“I played trumpet in the marching band,” she said. “In fact, I had played since I was in the third grade and always thought that I would be a music major.”

Aspiring musician Amy Andrews Harrell traded trumpet for theatre.

Photo courtesy of Amy Andrews Harrell
**Project Excel**

But in her junior year, she wrote and designed some skits, and the following summer participated in a Project Excel camp in theater at UNC Charlotte, which ignited her interest in theater. Enrolling in UNC Charlotte’s Bachelor of Creative Arts program, she met theater design professor Bob Croghan and decided to pursue costuming as her life’s work.

“Bob taught us perseverance. To think big. And he instilled in us a thrill and love of costumes,” Harrell said. “I loved my time (at UNC Charlotte) and I still cherish and use what Bob taught me.”

“Amy was a very hard worker and very dedicated,” said Croghan, who is now professor emeritus. “It was a nice time for her to be (at UNC Charlotte). There were five costume majors at once, and that peer experience helped enormously with her growth. There was a lot of good competition.”

After completing a Master of Fine Arts at Southern Methodist University in 1988, Harrell went to Los Angeles. Her first jobs were as a seamstress, sewing for movies like David Lynch’s “Wild at Heart.” (“I sewed the Glinda the Good Witch costume in my living room. I got glitter everywhere!”) But her big break came with a movie that filmed in her hometown: “Days of Thunder.” She served as wardrobe assistant for the NASCAR-themed drama and then was able to join the costumer union.

Croghan believes that Harrell’s caring nature and clever sense of humor stood out in the movie industry. “They assigned her to some of the hardest actors in Hollywood because she could deal with the nonsense,” he said.

**Emmy Award Winner**

Harrell left Los Angeles for New York City in 1996 and began working as a wardrobe supervisor. In 2008, she won an Emmy Award, with costume designer Donna Zakowska, as costume supervisor for the HBO miniseries “John Adams.”

She began costume designing about five years ago and has created work that reflects many styles, places and time periods. “Speed Kills” takes place in Miami between 1960 and 1987, for example, while the Tom Hanks film “Ithaca” (directed by Meg Ryan), is set in upstate New York in the summer of 1942.

She excels, however, in the 19th century. In 2013, she was nominated for an Emmy for her costume designs for the National Geographic Channel docudrama, “Killing Lincoln.” More recently, her designs for the PBS Civil War series “Mercy Street” were included in the 10th annual Art of Television Costume Design exhibition, held at the Fashion Institute of Design & Merchandising Museum and Library in Los Angeles.

In March 2017, the Department of Theatre named Harrell its 2017 Distinguished Alumna, and she returned to her alma mater to receive the honor and to share stories and advice with current design students. Croghan, who attended the award ceremony, later noted that Harrell’s dedication is to the craft, not to her own celebrity: “It’s never about Amy. It’s always about the job, the project, and that’s so important.”

Meg Whalen is director of communications and external relations for the College of Arts + Architecture.
To those unfamiliar with the College of Health and Human Services, the third floor looks like many others in an academic building on UNC Charlotte’s campus. However, behind many of the card-swipe-access doors stand Learning Resource Center classrooms, where simulation labs are transforming the learning process for students and faculty, especially in the School of Nursing.

Traditionally, nursing has used an apprenticeship model, where making and subsequently learning from a mistake may be at the disadvantage of a patient and the learner. Simulation labs challenge this dynamic by placing students into safe environments where they perform supervised clinical simulations, made realistic through the use of technology.

The Learning Resource Center offers several simulation labs, including the Marilyn Greene Smith Living Learning Laboratory, which is designed and furnished like an apartment so students can gain skills in the care of clients in the home setting. There is also the Maternity/Pediatric Resource Lab, which features a high-fidelity patient simulator called a manikin, baby and toddler manikins, and fully equipped infant cribs and bassinets.

Other labs such as the Clinical Simulation Lab and the Nursing Skills Lab feature a variety of models and culturally diverse manikins, as well as fully equipped health care technology to simulate clinical environments.

Lessons for Life
Simulation labs enhance nursing education through fail-safe learning

BY TAYLER GREEN AND WILLS CITTY
The simulation labs are amazing,” said nursing student Devin Yates. “They allow us to practice our skills on a seemingly live simulator before real patients. We can develop our skills and work out any challenges we may have before getting to a human.”

**Scenarios Created**

Learning Resource Director Colette Townsend-Chambers underscores Yates’ point about skills development. “Simulation allows us to create a scenario for students to embed themselves in; they take what they have been given on paper and bring it to life,” said Townsend-Chambers, a registered nurse (RN) and lecturer. “We want our students to be prepared and marketable in the workforce. Simulation is the part of the process to get them ready.”

Nursing students participating in this environment are required to have a nurses’ aide certificate, which requires 50 hours of patient contact. Students formally begin simulation experiences in the first semester of their senior year but receive an orientation in their first semester of nursing school and a day of simulation in their sophomore year.

For many students, the step from learning to application is a significant one. “Through the use of the simulation labs I gained comfort and skills pertaining to direct patient care,” said Shieka Pharr, a recent graduate of the RN program. “The greatest dilemma many new grads encounter is when to act. What I learned as a student and new graduate is that there is book knowledge and then there are skills.”

Working together, future nurses find the labs to be an arena for both self-discovery and teamwork, according to Yates. “Having served in the military and training in many medical areas, I was able to help my clinical group learn to start an IV. Over my time serving I started hundreds of IVs, so my skills are polished. I used those skills to help my class.”

**Expanding Simulation Use**

Townsend-Chambers said the curriculum will soon integrate simulation into nursing students’ junior year.

“We feel it’s important that simulation is integrated into every cohort,” she said. “Whether it’s a patient with heart disease or a pregnant woman giving birth, the students get to go through the paces before they’re out on the real floor.”

Simulations start with a scenario and objectives from an instructor; then, students create a nursing plan and carry out simulations. Students must think immediately and apply information they’ve learned in increasingly rich simulated environments, rather than simply regurgitating memorized information.

Making manikin “patients” look realistic helps with the process. “We apply makeup and recreate body fluids to stimulate how injuries look and feel,” said Townsend-Chambers. “It’s been a process of learning different tricks to make manikins look as real as possible.”

Two students practice inserting an IV.
on how to make things look ‘real’ in order to increase the fidelity and suspend their (the students’) disbelief.”

The Learning Resource Center also aims to create diverse scenarios. Instructors incorporate other health care professionals such as social workers or LGBT patients.

“With diversity challenges coming out, we need to utilize simulation much more than we currently are to prepare our students to be not only competent but culturally sensitive as well in their care for all clients,” Townsend-Chambers said.

Planning for the Future

The College of Health and Human Services (CHHS) is currently completing a strategic assessment involving all simulation resources for each of the four academic units and the college as a whole. Improving the capacity to document student performance within a variety of simulations using video assessments will be a key element in upgrading existing simulation capability. According to Lanny Inabnit, an instructor in the respiratory therapy program, video assessments and debriefs can be powerful teaching tools.

“Students are using the real equipment they’ll use in a critical-care unit. We can really simulate any lung mechanic and then troubleshoot it,” said Inabnit. “The biggest thing with simulation is that it allows students the capability to learn and fail; they can reset after a mistake and not cause real-world damage or danger.”

Another part of the strategy for expanding simulation at the college level is to integrate emerging technology, such as telepresence, room-scale virtual reality, wearable fitness sensors and augmented reality. Integrating new technology will prepare students for workplaces that in the near future will feature a rapidly changing technical environment that could include video consults with clients and fellow professionals or 3-D printing of casts and other medical equipment.

The challenge for the college is to build a network of technological resources and to bring that content into the classroom, in addition to helping faculty see the functionality between the equipment and curriculum.

Council Meets on Campus

During the last academic year, the North Carolina Nurses Association Simulation Council held its biannual meeting at UNC Charlotte. Council members discussed current standards for conducting simulations to increase and enhance students’ clinical learning. They also talked about the promotion of formal education for simulation educators.

“We had about 550 people tour the lab last year,” said Townsend-Chambers, talking about council members and others. “These are experts from the field, and we were fortunate to have them come from all over the state to our school. They were really excited about our manikins and the space we have.”

The council also discussed the promotion of inter-professional simulation, an area in which CHHS wants to lead.

“We’re starting to collaborate more with other departments. In the clinical setting, it won’t just be nurses working with nurses; there are social workers, respiratory experts, physicians, X-ray techs and many other field professionals for nurses to learn to work among,” said Townsend-Chambers.

An Edge for Students

In education today, simulation is an essential tool to help the School of Nursing fulfill many goals — to prepare students for a changing demographic population, serve as part of the solution in health care and serve as experts in the evidence-based practice of nursing science.

In 2016, the school acquired seven new high-fidelity manikins, or patient simulators. Such use of the technology has not gone unnoticed. The School of Nursing was named a 2016 Center of Excellence in Nursing Education, recognizing the school’s innovations, commitment and sustainability of excellence.

CHHS’s commitment to simulation helped earn the school the excellence award and provides students an edge, said Pharr, the recent RN graduate. “I would encourage all students to take advantage of the simulation labs and explore their skill sets while the opportunity presents itself; this will make the transition to practice much easier.”

And health care is all the better for it.

Taylor Green (’17) was a communications intern in the College of Health and Human Services in spring 2017. Wills Citty is the director of communications for the college and for the Cato College of Education.
It was a milestone moment on campus during the summer when for the first time a LYNX train arrived at the UNC Charlotte Main Station, as part of ongoing testing of the system. CATS officials and contractors continue preparations for full operation of the extension, which eventually will bring trains onto campus roughly every seven minutes during peak hours.

UNC Charlotte’s visionary partnership on how to connect the campus to the city’s metropolitan core is garnering attention nationally and could serve as a model for other urban/suburban campuses.

lightrail.uncc.edu is a campus resource on how the Blue Line Extension will provide sustainable transportation options between the University and Center City, as well as other points along the light rail route to its southern terminus near Pineville.

Photo by Jared Moon
22 minute commute from UNC Charlotte to Uptown

11 Stations along the extension

Light rail connects us

All stations are serviced by CATS bus service

LYNX Blue Line Extension (BLE) will open March 2018

Cost: Students pay $50 a year via student fees. Faculty/Staff can opt-in for $75 a year

The pass is all-access: When light rail service to campus opens, all students can ride CATS LYNX light rail, trolley, Special Transportation Service (STS) and buses fare-free.

Safety is a priority: In addition to the robust safety measures already in place by CATS – like advanced, state-of-the-art cameras and security officers on trains – the University is taking additional steps to accommodate light rail’s arrival on campus. Security cameras, extra lighting and blue light phones will be installed at the main station on campus. Additional police officers have been hired and will be assigned to patrol the area, especially during peak travel times and at night.

Getting around campus has never been easier: When you get off the train at the UNC Charlotte Main Station, the all-new Niner Transit bus system will deliver you to your destination on campus. If you would rather transport yourself, the University’s new bike-share program, Charlotte Wheels, is available for your use, with 10 hubs across campus.

It’s accessible: CATS is working with UNC Charlotte to ensure the J.W. Clay/UNC Charlotte and the UNC Charlotte Main stations will be accessible for people with disabilities.
For Crystal Cruz, commencement ceremonies at UNC Charlotte are something of a family tradition — one in which she’s happy to have finally taken part.

In May, Cruz graduated with a degree in marketing, becoming the last of seven Cruz daughters to earn college degrees and the fifth from UNC Charlotte — an endeavor worthy of praise for any family. But it’s especially remarkable when you consider all of them are first-generation college students born to immigrant parents.

Perhaps what sets this story apart is that Cruz, the youngest daughter, had never identified as a first-generation college student, much less contemplated the significance of her graduation.

“I’ve never thought of myself as a first-generation immigrant or a first-generation college student, those thoughts never registered in my mind,” she said.

Access, Opportunity

From her perspective, her college experience had been relatively ordinary.

However, that all changed when she heard Chancellor Philip L. Dubois speak about the emphasis the University places on first-generation college students, a concept rooted in University founder Bonnie Cone’s lifelong dedication to provide access and opportunity to every deserving student.

“When I heard him mention first-generation college students, a light bulb went off and I realized, perhaps for the first time, that label applied to my family,” recalled Cruz.

It was suddenly apparent that while her college experience at UNC Charlotte was traditional by all accounts, it stood in sharp contrast to the decidedly nontraditional paths of her older siblings.

The elder Cruzes grew up in a rural town with limited schooling in their native country of El Salvador; the couple fled the war-torn country in the 1980s. However, they understood the importance of education and always pushed their kids to go to college.

“My parents grew up in El Salvador and received a limited
“MY FAMILY HAS FOUGHT TO MAKE OUR LIFE PURPOSEFUL, AND I’M A TESTAMENT TO THEIR WORK.”

education, but they wanted better lives for us,” said Cruz, who spent much of her childhood in Sanford and Charlotte. “I don’t remember growing up and being told you have to go to college, but I remember them saying that if we wanted options, opportunity and a better life, education was the way to go.”

It’s a conviction Cruz now greatly respects considering the obvious burden her parents had to bear to put seven children through college.

Individual Paths

Heeding their parents’ words, the children set their sights on college degrees.

“What I’ve come to realize is that while we’re all first-generation college students, each of my sisters took her own path,” said Cruz. “As each sister forged her way, it made the college experience and process a little more traditional for the next.

“Being the youngest, I’ve benefited the most from what my family has worked so hard for. My family has fought to make our life purposeful, and I’m a testament to their work.”

In graduating, Cruz is proud to carry on her family’s tradition of hard work as she begins work at the corporate office of Belk, Inc.

With five graduates, the Cruz family has assuredly left its mark on UNC Charlotte; however, the University equally has impacted the Cruz family.

“I’ve never doubted that education provides opportunities and options,” she said. “And UNC Charlotte has provided that ‘open door’ to a brighter future for me and my sisters.”

In the Cruz household, family means everything. Therefore, it’s fitting that as the youngest Cruz sibling caps her own family’s impressive pursuit of higher education, she’s welcomed into another: the UNC Charlotte alumni family.

Jared Moon is the feature projects manager in the Office of University Communication.
Thanks to a scholarship, Dana Erato ‘99, ‘01 was able to earn her undergraduate degree at UNC Charlotte, while serving as four-year captain of the inaugural women’s soccer team. She started 63 of the 81 games in which she played, tallying 12 goals and 13 assists for 37 points. Dana also added four game-winning goals and 100 shots during her career and was a member of the program’s first Conference USA Tournament championship squad in 1995.

“I knew the only way I was going to be able to play Division 1 soccer while getting a stellar education was through a soccer scholarship,” says Dana. “UNC Charlotte gave me that wonderful gift, and I knew from the day I signed my scholarship papers that I wanted to do the same thing for another young soccer player one day.”

Today, Dana and her family are making a difference and paying it forward for other student-athletes at UNC Charlotte through an endowed scholarship for women’s soccer.

“I received a wonderful education and had a fantastic experience due to the superb teachers, coaches and support staff I had and all of the campus facilities at my fingertips,” says Dana. “I am so proud to be a 49er!”

Exponential: The Campaign for UNC Charlotte celebrates the dramatic trajectory of growth of our University and our 130,000 alumni. This campaign offers all of us — alumni, business leaders and the University community — the opportunity to shape a future that is even more exciting than our past.

The power of you makes it possible. Join us.
ON OCT. 8, 2016, what would have been Spencer Bise’s 21st birthday, his friends and family came to the UNC Charlotte Botanical Gardens to celebrate his too-short life. Attendees gathered under the scarlet leaves of the titi tree dedicated in his honor to offer their remembrances and condolences.

“The dedication ceremony was very helpful to us emotionally,” recalled organizer and Botanical Gardens volunteer Sydney Hillman (’18). “We were very appreciative to be able to honor him in this way.”

Since 1966, the UNC Charlotte Botanical Gardens has served as an outdoor oasis and vibrant classroom for the campus and broader Charlotte community. The Botanical Gardens is open to the public and offers 6,000 plant species over its 10 acres. Hillman’s connection
demonstrates the gardens’ significance to the campus and its students.

When she arrived at UNC Charlotte as a freshman, the education major with a love for all things green was immediately drawn to the gardens. It soon became her go-to place to relax, meditate and literally smell the roses. After the tragic loss of her good friend and fellow 49er in October 2015, the gardens also became her place of solace.

A Verdant Gem

“The (McMillan) Greenhouse supported me 100 percent during that time,” said Hillman, referring to one of the gardens’ popular sites. She got the idea for the memorial when Jeff Gillman, director of the gardens, asked how he could help. Dedicating a tree in Spencer’s honor seemed like the perfect way to demonstrate her love for her friend and the gardens.

Hillman is joined by others in her appreciation of the unique attributes of this verdant gem. The UNC Charlotte Botanical Gardens has carved out a niche as a center of botany and horticulture in the greater Charlotte metro region; actually, the Botanical Gardens attracts international visitors, but its reputation probably is more accurately described as regional. Certainly people visit regularly from Rock Hill, Statesville, Hickory, Salisbury and other nearby locations.

“Our collection of native carnivorous plants includes everything from Venus flytraps to pitcher plants and sundews,” Gillman said. “Perhaps our most interesting collections are our rhododendrons and azaleas. We have thousands of these in the Van Landingham Glen, and they put on an amazing show when they bloom in the spring. The gardens were actually started by the local rhododendron society, so this is our oldest collection.”

About 40,000 people visit the Botanical Gardens each year, many to seek out the site’s more than 90 secluded spots. Students study on benches, have lunch at a picnic table or nap in a hammock. Off-campus visitors come to learn, meditate or walk their dogs on paths through the pet-friendly gardens.

Bucolic Classroom

Quite often, the bucolic setting serves as an outdoor lecture hall for classes. Professors in poetry, graphic design, geography, earth and biological sciences, and languages and culture studies have all turned the Botanical Gardens into a classroom to encourage students to embrace nature and gain inspiration from the natural world. Assistant Professor of English Matthew Rowney compares the settings to those found in Wadsworth’s “The Prelude.”

To keep the gardens in pristine shape and spread the word about their existence, dedicated volunteers support the site.

“The first time I walked through the gardens was on a cold, drizzly day in March,” said landscape designer Lydia Grupinski. “The gardens were still asleep, but I recognized how amazing it was and knew I wanted to be a part of it.”

Grupinski volunteers as a “Monday Glory” and does everything from weeding, pruning and transplanting to labeling plants and leading tours. Hillman, the student, also guides and instructs visitors. She was the first undergraduate volunteer for the “Flower Friday” program, where visitors receive a free flower and learn about the plant.

Educational opportunities are replete for anyone who wants to gain a deeper understanding of plants and horticulture or simply learn how to grow better vegetables.
Throughout the year, the "At Home in the Garden Series" offers a range of stand-alone short workshops, such as mailbox gardens and pressed flower art.

A 100-credit Certificate in Native Plant Studies is also available. The certificate is one of just a few in the Southeast that provides an intense focus on the cultivation and knowledge of native plants. This initiative has influenced other botanic gardens and universities to offer native plant courses and serves to demonstrate the UNC Charlotte Botanical Gardens’ broader impact.

The Botanical Gardens symposium is becoming a must-attend event for gardeners, plant enthusiasts and those interested in creating broader social change through sustainable practices. On Saturday, Jan. 27, 2018, the symposium will focus on “Urban Roots: Transforming the Urban Landscape.” The symposium will investigate topics ranging from nurturing children's introduction to nature as a learning environment, to cultivating fungi in an environmentally friendly fashion, to participating in the community gardens movement.

“With our concentration on the urban environment, we hope to attract typical gardeners, millennials and urban activists — people who want to turn a concrete jungle into a greener environment,” said Gillman.

**Fundraising for Facilities**

Expanding public outreach is a priority. “Our plant collections and our staff and faculty expertise are outstanding, yet we could do so much more to meet the needs of our campus and broader community through improvements and expansion of our facilities,” said Nancy Gutierrez, dean of the College of Liberal Arts & Sciences (CLAS). “Our community could benefit greatly from the construction of a welcome center and new conservatories, to provide more instructional, demonstration and event space.”

The University is in the midst of its fundraising initiative EXPONENTIAL: The Campaign for UNC Charlotte. CLAS and gardens leaders are seeking funding for a 15,000-square-foot visitors center and conservatory to serve as a gateway to this green heart of the campus. The first phase seeks $2.5 million.

CLAS gift officers Judy Lekoski and Ali Dubois are working with Gillman, the gardens director, to raise support for what is envisioned as the largest under-glass conservatory complex between Atlanta and Washington, D.C. The classroom, conservatories and gallery area would substantially increase the Botanical Gardens’ ability to provide more and larger educational and community events.

Why this is important ties to the gardens’ power to relate broadly to the campus and the community, said Gutierrez.

“The foundation of life is built upon the diverse plants that cover the Earth,” she said. “Through our Botanical Gardens, our community gains an appreciation of the symbiotic relationship that exists between people and plants. In this living classroom, we explore the scientific aspects of nature, and also the cultural, artistic and humanistic roles that plants play in our lives.”

Melba Newsome is a self-employed writer based in Charlotte.

**Editor’s Note:** To learn about the Botanical Gardens’ crowdfunding campaign to support creation of a fruit garden, see page 43.
Fundraising is really “friendraising,” which is why social media has increasingly become an important tool for EXPONENTIAL: The Campaign for UNC Charlotte. Social media is altering how people communicate and how organizations reach their stakeholders. Harnessing the power of digital fundraising is one of Shayna Long’s chief responsibilities.

“UNC Charlotte is a leader in digital fundraising strategy,” said Long, who joined the University in 2015 as assistant director of annual giving. She is charged with using social media to reach potential donors.

Her efforts led to Crowdfund UNC Charlotte, an online platform that enables students, faculty, staff and alumni to generate funding for smaller, but impactful projects.

“Crowdfunding is an opportunity for students to reach out through a platform hosted by the University, to try to gain support for the initiatives they see as important while they’re here,” Long explained. “UNC Charlotte students are adept at using Facebook, Twitter and Instagram to communicate with their friends, and UNC Charlotte’s official Facebook page has a reach of 60,000-plus followers. Niner Nation is a strong network of friends who love UNC Charlotte, and digital fundraising campaigns enable us to tap into those friendships.”

Professional Assistance
Each semester, since fall 2015, students and alumni submit applications to be part of Crowdfund UNC Charlotte. Although led by students, alumni or faculty/staff members, projects receive
Want to Aid Crowdfunding Projects?

Alumni and friends of the University have the opportunity to assist Crowdfund UNC Charlotte teams in their fundraising quests, which are part of EXPONENTIAL: The Campaign for UNC Charlotte. Fall 2017 initiatives are:

$12,500 The Derrick Griffith Servant Leader Award
The UNC Charlotte Black Alumni Chapter is launching a campaign to honor Griffith (93), an alumnus who was an outstanding student leader in the early 1990s. Student body president in 1991-92 and 1992-93, Griffith was one of seven people killed in a train derailment in Philadelphia in 2015. The Derrick Griffith Servant Leader Award was established in 2015 in memory of Griffith. Thus far, two students who embody Griffith’s leadership and dedication to the University have received financial awards from this fund.

$5,000 The Helping Hand Project
The Helping Hand Project, a student organization at the University, is seeking $5,000 to purchase 3-D printers and materials to produce full recreational prosthetic arms for children with limb differences. Part of a larger global effort, the Helping Hand Project provides low-cost prosthetic devices to children in need, as well as family support and STEM education promotion. These new printers and materials will improve production time, enabling a prosthetic arm to be fabricated in two to three days versus two to three months. The 3-D printed arms, which will be given to families for free, will have the ability to grab objects, thus making a difference in a child’s life. (Read more about this project on page 12.)
NASA Student Launch Initiative
The 49er Rocketry and Projectile Society brings together a multidisciplinary team of students with various skills to compete in a national rocket-launching competition against several top-ranked universities. The society collaborates with departments on campus to explore and gain real-world experience in the design, manufacturing and testing of complex engineering systems under the guidance of professional and experienced mentors.

The 2017-18 team seeks to enter the national NASA Student Launch Competition in spring 2018 and build upon the success of this year’s club, which placed fifth.

Native and Underused Fruits Garden
The UNC Charlotte Botanical Gardens is raising money to transform a corner within the gardens into an orchard for native and underused fruits. Jeff Gillman, director of the gardens, and Ed Davis, horticultural supervisor and landscape architect, have set a fundraising goal to cover the cost of materials to build the site, including stones, trees, mulch and labor for hardscaping the area.

Admission to the gardens, including its greenhouse, is free to the public. There are three garden sites with 16 collections. They serve as a living classroom for students and a botanical resource for the University and greater community.

Charlotte Teachers Institute Teacher-Created Curricula
Charlotte Teachers Institute (CTI) provides content-rich professional-development seminars for pre-K through 12th-grade teachers in Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools. Led by UNC Charlotte and Davidson College professors, the seminars help about 100 teachers per year to write new curricula by December and then to teach students with it the following spring.

This project will provide support for teachers to implement their CTI-generated curricula. A big obstacle to getting these new ideas to students is limited resources. This project will fund materials for teachers to implement their innovative ideas in the classroom, providing support for energy kits to teach science, books to teach literacy, supplies to teach art, technology to teach math and other projects.

UNC Charlotte Green Energy ‘Baby Train’
Imagine a train that does not produce harmful emissions – that is achieved with a train powered by a hydrogen fuel cell. Hydral, as this type of train is known, emits only water. Last year, Germany made history with the first commercial hydrogen-powered passenger train. Other nations, including England, China, Japan, Spain and Korea, are developing similar technology.

UNC Charlotte researchers and students seek funding to construct a scaled-down “baby train” complete with its own hydrogen fuel cell. This UNC Charlotte green train will assist with the research of this technology and educate rail engineers for this developing field.

Editor’s note: Fundraising goals are current as of the deadline for the production of the magazine; they are subject to change. Learn more at crowdfund.uncc.edu.
It’s a hot Friday afternoon in July and the Coding Boot Camp class was officially over 30 minutes ago. Yet, roughly 20 students are still hunched over laptops in a computer room at UNC Charlotte Center City in Uptown, a testament to their commitment and the instructor’s ability to keep them engaged.

The Coding Boot Camp was created to build a pipeline to fill the demand for coders and developers. The classes are filled to capacity with people of all backgrounds and ages seeking their first, second or third career in coding and web development.

The curriculum runs from the basics, algorithms and data structure, to intensive training in JavaScript, HTML, CSS, jQuery and more. In addition to classroom instruction, students spend 10 to 15 hours each week on outside projects and experiential learning activities while building a professional project portfolio to make them stand out in the employment market.

Web development and coding skills are so foundational to future employment prospects in many sectors that UNC Charlotte Continuing Education would be remiss not to offer the program.

“Demand for these coding skills is significant,” said Asher Haines, UNC Charlotte’s director of Continuing Education. “Individuals who graduate from this boot camp are prepared for junior developer jobs immediately and can look forward to a favorable job market.”

Career Development for Working Adults

Each year, more than 6,000 individuals enroll in courses offered by Continuing Education at UNC Charlotte.

“Most Continuing Education students are working adults who want to accelerate their careers,” Haines said. “Many are career-changers, seeking new skills and credentials. Others are professionals who are required to take continuing education courses for professional development.”

UNC Charlotte Center City, located in the heart of Charlotte at Ninth and Brevard streets, conveniently connects these ambitious individuals to the University so they can attend Continuing Education courses close to where they work and live.

Seasoned engineers, accountants, legal personnel and HR professionals enroll in courses to maintain their credentials, while career-changers seek certificates in high-demand fields, such as project management, HR, web development and many more. There is even a certificate for people who want to tap into the booming craft beer industry.

“Nowadays, bachelor’s and graduate degrees are very foundational career needs,” Haines said. “Because things change rapidly in the digital economy, more and more people come back to the University to upskill. Even if a certificate is not required, it gives them more tools in their professional tool belt.”

Business Partner, Learning Solutions Provider

Corporate and custom training programs connect businesses and organizations to UNC Charlotte Continuing Education. For example, after completing a gap analysis, Continental
Tire corporate training manager David Devore realized the sales force could benefit from specific negotiation training. He set out to find a local university that could customize the course and understand the nature of the work and its challenges. It did not take long for Amy Wartham, director of corporate training in Continuing Education, to create a customized UNC Charlotte training solution for Continental Tire.

“The depth and breadth of programs we offer sets us apart from other entities,” said Wartham. “We have partnered with more than 175 different businesses in all areas, including manufacturing, retail, health care and energy. They range from large businesses to small mom-and-pop organizations. In addition to serving the Charlotte region, we have done training in 21 different states and have had people from at least 24 countries attend our corporate programs.”

That expansive scope was a good match with Continental Tire. “We have 100,000 employees worldwide and several hundred in the Charlotte area,” noted Devore. “UNC Charlotte had a very competitive price and put together the material that melded with our methods.”

**MPA Public Management Academy**

When Haines took the helm in May 2016, he sought to leverage the success of the many existing robust program and then determine what types of programs Continuing Education should be offering that it was not.

“The low-hanging fruit was to reinforce our strong established programs by adding more resources to enhance the quality and allow us to offer them more regularly,” he observed. “This existing program reinforcement also enabled us to invest in new program additions this past year, like design thinking, the coding boot camp and a new certification for aspiring HR professionals.”

Another successful program addition has been the MPA Public Management Academy, in partnership with the faculty of the University's Master of Public Administration program in the College of Liberal Arts & Sciences. The academy filled its first class in spring 2017, and the inaugural program was so popular that registrations for the fall 2018 class filled to capacity shortly after registration opened.

“Unlike the private sector, government and nonprofit managers operate in a fishbowl and public trust is essential,” said Curt Walton, the former city manager of Charlotte and the University’s interim associate provost for Metropolitan Studies and Extended Academic Programs. “Government and nonprofit managers need to know how to handle the inevitable scrutiny. The MPA Public Management Academy is a great resource.”

Haines is sometimes asked how he deals with the inevitable red tape and bureaucracy that comes with running multiple programs at such a large public university. His response that he’s found the opposite to be true tends to surprise people. “I love that we are nimble and have the agility to be responsive to the workforce-development needs of the Charlotte market,” he said.

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*Melba Newsome is a self-employed writer based in Charlotte.*
Continuing

Career-focused Education
Skills to accelerate or transition careers

Offerings:

1. 23 Professional Certificates
2. Continuing Education for Professionals
3. Exam Preparation
   - Certified professional exams
   - Standardized exams for undergraduates and graduates

Popular Certificate Programs:

Craft Beer Business Essentials
Tap into the booming craft beer business

Coding Boot Camp
Launch a career as a Full Stack Web Developer

Project Management
Explore Charlotte’s longest-running Project Management Certificate

Human Resources
Break into the field or enhance a current career

FUN FACT:
Most certificates can be completed in 3-6 months.

Corporate and Workforce Development

High performance workforce development

Offerings:
Customized training and development programs are designed to meet organizational needs

FUN FACT:
More than 175 organizations have participated, including Bank of America, Continental Tire, Red Ventures and Duke Energy.
Custom Training

Highlights:

1. 1,500 employees trained annually
2. Provided development training in 21 states
3. Trainings available on site or at UNC Charlotte Center City

Offerings:

1. Institute of Reading Development boosts reading and comprehension skills
2. Camps provide unique learning experiences in a college environment

Highlights:

1. 1,100 students annually enrolled in the Institute of Reading Development
2. 1,300 campers participate each year
3. 65 camps offering options from STEM to the arts

FUN FACT:

Youth camps boast a 97% satisfaction rate with children and parents.

ContinuingEd.uncc.edu
During the week of July 10, a trillion-ton iceberg the size of the state of Delaware broke off from the Larsen C ice shelf in Antarctica. For the next few weeks, media outlets from The New York Times and CNN to Scientific American and Rolling Stone speculated on the ice shelf’s fate and its consequences.

This was not the first time the Larsen ice shelf was front-page news. In 2002, the Larsen B shelf dramatically collapsed during a mere 35-day period after having existed for more than 10,000 years. Earlier that same year, Marek Ranis read “Ice Memory,” an article in The New Yorker magazine by Elizabeth Kolbert, and would later say he, “started

ICE SAGE

Marek Ranis explores complexity of climate change through art

BY MEG WHALEN

Still images from “Like Shishmaref,” a 16-minute video that juxtaposes scenes of a remote barrier island north of the Bering Straits in Alaska and the Outer Banks of North Carolina.
In the intervening 15 years, Ranis, associate professor of art at UNC Charlotte, has become something of an expert on the Earth’s rapidly changing frozen landscapes. He has had multiple research residencies in Alaska, Iceland, Greenland and northern Norway. He has presented research at the Arctic Circle Assembly, the largest international conference addressing challenges facing the Arctic. When the U.S. Department of State published “Our Arctic Nation,” a collection of 50 essays with one from each state, Ranis was asked to represent North Carolina.

Beginning just months after the collapse of the Larsen B with paintings based on satellite images of glaciers, Ranis has created a vast body of artistic work that has been exhibited in solo and group exhibitions locally and across the globe — cities such as Anchorage, Alaska; Upernavik, Greenland; Sochi, Russia; Harstad, Norway; Marknesse, Netherlands; and his hometown of Wrocław, Poland.

“Marek is not a resident of the North, but he’s not an outsider,” said Julie Decker, director of the Anchorage Museum. “He’s taken a lot of personal risks to get to know people and place. We’ve come to really respect his approach to his research and work.”

Ranis first traveled to Alaska in 2005 and then in 2013 spent two months as an artist-in-residence at the Anchorage Museum. His work has appeared in multiple exhibitions there, and Decker has invited him to co-curate a show in 2019 tentatively titled “Representation of the North: Evolution of the Anthropocene.”

Building Relationships

“What we see here often is artists who come for a short time and then leave,” said Decker. “Marek’s work is a continuing conversation — a dedication to research and reflection and relationship building. That continuum is critical.”

Ranis is the sculpture area coordinator in the College of Arts + Architecture’s Department of Art & Art History, but his own work spans the full gamut of artistic mediums. The “Albedo” project that began with paintings of glaciers like the Larsen B expanded over the years to include carpets, photography, video, site-specific installations and performance art. (“Albedo is a scientific term that refers to the extent to which the light reflects off a surface,” Ranis explained in his “Our Arctic Nation” essay for the State Department. “Ice, like that found at the poles, has a high albedo, reflecting the sun’s rays.”)

Likewise, another long-term project, “Arctic Utopia,” included mixed-media sculptures, videos and interactive installations.

“I strongly believe that the boundaries between disciplines is artificial,” Ranis said in an interview between trips to Alaska and Norway. “Being an artist is like being a constant student: I am always learning. That is freedom — finding new languages, new tools to say what you want to say.”

Begun during his 2013 residency at the Anchorage Museum, “Arctic Utopia” was presented in 2014 as a solo exhibition at the McColl Center for Art + Innovation in celebration of the center’s 15th anniversary. Ranis was one of the first McColl affiliate artists, and it was the McColl Center that nominated him for the Rasmuson Foundation fellowship that provided for his residency at the Anchorage Museum.

“We are proud to nurture Marek’s creative evolution and journey,” said Suzanne Fetscher, founding president and CEO emerita of the McColl Center. “He manifests this new kind of artist that is intellectually engaged in issues and will explore all kinds of mediums to really get to the content, concepts and expression of those issues and best represent their complexity.”

‘Arctic Paradox’

It is the complexity of climate change in the Arctic region that intrigues Ranis most. During his residency in Greenland in 2009, he became aware of the “Arctic paradox.” The melting of ice in places like Greenland and Alaska will bring new opportunities: access to resources like oil and gas, the opening of the Northwest Passage, population growth and greater economic independence. But those advantages come at a cost, not only to those regions, but even to lands much farther south.
In 2016, Ranis completed what Decker has called “one of his most powerful projects,” the 16-minute film “Like Shishmaref.” The work juxtaposes video of the eroded coasts of the Alaskan Inupiaq village of Shishmaref and the North Carolina Outer Banks.

“Thousands of miles apart, both geographically and culturally, these two places share the same destiny — rising seawater levels jeopardizing the lives of both communities, already struggling on very low-lying sea coasts,” Ranis wrote in his “Our Arctic Nation” essay. “This connection between one of the most distant communities in North America and one close to home is for me very representative of what many coastal communities in the United States and in the world are now facing.”

As is often the case in Ranis’s art, people are mostly absent from “Like Shishmaref.” The landscapes are abandoned; no one talks to the camera. But people are at the center of his research. For each project, Ranis records hours of interviews with locals — community leaders, politicians, activists, artists — and their thoughts and experiences and concerns become the foundation of his work. Most recently, he spent weeks interviewing taxi drivers in Anchorage for a card game he is creating for the museum there, then traveled to northern Norway to spend time with a Sami (or Lapp) artist and mapmaker, the subject of his next video project.

“As artists, we have an obligation to be engaged,” Ranis said, reflecting on his work before leaving for Norway. He carries that obligation into the classroom, encouraging his students to read newspapers and develop interests beyond their immediate lives. “They have to understand that there are intellectual, even ethical obligations to engage. Art-making is not just gazing at your own belly.”

Meg Whalen is director of communications and external relations for the College of Arts + Architecture.
Since July 2015, Tim Keane has served as the commissioner of planning and community development for the City of Atlanta.

Big-City Design

Alum Tim Keane relishes leading Atlanta’s planning process

By Mary Newsom

Last year a Charlotte 49er became Atlanta’s planning director. Tim Keane grew up in Charlotte, graduated from UNC Charlotte (’88) and went on to be planning director from 1994 to 1999 in the north Mecklenburg town of Davidson.

From Davidson he went to Charleston, where he worked for the city for about six years, had a brief stint in private industry and returned to the city as director of planning, preservation and sustainability, serving from 2009 to 2015. He was hired in July 2015 to be commissioner of planning and community development for the City of Atlanta.

Mary Newsom, director of urban policy initiatives at the UNC Charlotte Urban Institute, interviewed Keane in her role as editor of PlanCharlotte. Here are excerpts from her story, which initially ran at PlanCharlotte.org.

After you arrived in Atlanta, Creative Loafing Atlanta asked, “Why would a planner in one of America’s most beautiful coastal cities, where officials seem to care about preservation, public spaces and urban design, want to come to a city that bulldozes much of its past and rushes toward its future, planning be damned?” So, why?

I always had an interest in going from a small town to a small city to a big city. Part of the reason to leave Charleston was that Mayor Joe Riley, who was my boss, was retiring. Going to Atlanta — which is not known for planning and where the planning department needed significant change...
and improvement — that was appealing to me. It's a city where, if you can make preservation important, if you can make planning relevant, if you can drive the design of a very fast growing city — then you can have a really big impact.

What do you think Atlanta could learn from Charlotte, or from Charleston?

The lesson from Charleston is preservation — how important that is to a city. We're doing that now in Atlanta. We've had some issues around old buildings since I have gotten there, and every one of them has been protected.

Even a city like Charlotte or Atlanta, where a lot of the fabric has been destroyed, saving what's left is really important. It makes everything better. It's unlikely you're going to design and build a new building that's better than an old one. So, incorporating them in what you do is usually important.

I think giving up on traffic is another important lesson — just saying we're not ever going to solve that problem. So, let's get over it and start working on other things.

You got the City Council to OK your plan to overhaul the whole department of planning and community development. Why? And what's next?

I don't think that department was seen as something that has had a great, positive impact on the city. I was brought there to try to help make a valuable, successful planning department. It needed updating.

One of the things the mayor and I totally agreed on is that we would do Atlanta City Design. Here is the premise: The city has been static or shrinking in population as the region has grown dramatically. We're now a region of about 6 million people and a city of 450,000. The region is projected to grow by 2.5 million people over the next 20 years, but Atlanta's amount of that growth is projected to be quite modest. We want to change that, and we think that we can.

We're doing a design for the city which says we want to capture maybe 25 percent to 30 percent of that growth, which will put the city's population between 1.1 million and 1.5 million people. And a bigger city with a larger population is a better city — if we design it.

You've launched a design studio for the city, Atlanta City Studio, that will move from place to place. It's now at the Ponce City Market. (The studio has since moved to the Cascade Heights neighborhood of southwest Atlanta.) What's the idea?

The mayor has great interest in thinking about design issues. And we have huge public-realm-related design projects to work on. So, we were going to create an office of design and bring in design expertise.

We decided to do the studio because there's a second aspect of this. There's having the design skill within the planning department — check, that's one thing. The other thing was to have us out in the community, because if we're going to be doing this design for Atlanta and saying this city of 1.5 million people is going to be a heck of a lot better than a city of 450,000, people would go nuts. "We can't get around now; it seems really dense here already — how do we handle another million people?"

So, to do it in public at a (pop-up) studio that's out in the community and not buried in city hall was really appealing. •
THE UNC CHARLOTTE ALUMNI ASSOCIATION AWARDS recognize individuals who have made important contributions to the establishment and growth of UNC Charlotte. Award recipients embody the core principles of the University, and honorees have distinguished themselves through outstanding service to the University, their chosen field, humanity and/or society.

All alumni of UNC Charlotte and its predecessor institutions are eligible for an award; however, a person must be nominated to receive consideration.

Nominees are being sought for recognition in 2018 in these categories:

- **Distinguished Alumna/Alumnus Award**
- **Outstanding Young Alumna/Alumnus Award**
- **Humanitarian Award**
- **Distinguished Faculty Award**
- **Honorary Alumna/Alumnus Award**

The Alumni Awards Committee reviews all nominations and makes recommendations to the Alumni Association’s Board of Directors. All awards applications will be considered for three years. Current faculty and staff of UNC Charlotte are not eligible to receive any of the Alumni Awards with the exception of the Distinguished Faculty Award.

The deadline to submit nominations is Friday, Feb. 2, 2018. Any submissions received after this deadline will be considered for the 2019 Alumni Awards Class.

Visit 49eralumni.uncc.edu or call the Office of Alumni Affairs at 704-687-7799 locally or 1-800-PIK-UNCC if out of the Charlotte area for more information.
1970s

Gail Dillard ('78) was awarded the E. Lanier Carson Leadership Award for College Administrators at the Abraham Baldwin Agricultural College where she serves as interim vice president for academic affairs. She received a master’s degree in English from UNC Charlotte.

James White ('73) published the book “Spelling Out the Truth to a New Generation,” which gives a foundation for readers that will encourage a new interest to learning in the 21st century. He earned a master's degree in education from UNC Charlotte.

1980s

Craig Goodson ('80) was named vice president of the Davidson County Economic Development Commission. He previously worked for the economic development commission in Lincoln County and has 25 years of experience in economic development, construction and private development. He worked for approximately 10 years in the banking industry before going to work for the North Carolina Department of Commerce. Goodson earned a bachelor's degree in economics from UNC Charlotte.

Keith Ferguson ('85) was named director of business services of United Network for Organ Sharing (UNOS). Ferguson is responsible for planning, coordinating and supervising all operational activities related to contracts, projects and philanthropy for UNOS. He earned a master’s degree in business administration from UNC Charlotte.

Deirdre McGlone-Webb ('83) is branch manager of South State Bank regional office in Wilmington. With more than 33 years of experience in the banking industry, she is experienced in both small community and regional banks. McGlone-Webb earned a bachelor's degree in business administration from UNC Charlotte.

Connie Mele ('84, '95) has received a lifetime achievement award from the North Carolina Foundation for Alcohol and Drug Studies for her outstanding career in substance abuse prevention and treatment. She currently serves as assistant public health director for Mecklenburg County, where she is responsible for the administration of four divisions, including Trauma and Justice Services and Health Policy and Prevention. Mele earned a bachelor's degree in nursing in 1984 and was among the first group of graduates of the University’s Master of Science in Nursing program.

1990s

Kathy Merritt ('83) was named senior vice president for journalism and radio of the Corporation for Public Broadcasting (CPB). She will lead CPB’s efforts to advance the public radio system and public media's broader collaborative journalism efforts, locally, regionally, nationally and internationally. Merritt earned a bachelor’s degree in English from UNC Charlotte.

Greg Wojciechowski ('86), the CEO of the Bermuda Stock Exchange, was appointed to the Board of Directors of the Bermuda Business Development Agency. He also serves as chair of Bermuda’s Financial Intelligence Agency and ILS Bermuda Ltd. and sits on the Board of Directors of the World Federation of Exchanges. He received a bachelor’s degree in business from UNC Charlotte.

Shirley Disseler ('99, '10) received the annual Meredith Clark Slane Distinguished Award for her outstanding career in substance abuse prevention and treatment.
Teaching-Service Award from High Point University. An associate professor in the Robert and Maggie Stout School of Education, Disseler teaches a variety of undergraduate and graduate courses that prepare students to teach science, technology, engineering and math in schools. She received a master’s degree in education and a doctorate in education from UNC Charlotte.

Matthew Ellis (’99, ’02) was promoted to chief investment officer of MWest Holdings. He will oversee the firm’s acquisition and capital markets group, where he will be responsible for all acquisitions and financings of the firm’s portfolio. He received bachelor’s degrees in economics and geography and a master’s degree in education from UNC Charlotte.

Kevin Greer (’95) was promoted to public services director of Hickory after serving as interim director. He received a bachelor’s degree in civil engineering from UNC Charlotte.

Deana Lewis (’98, ’05) was named principal of Jackson Park Elementary in Kannapolis. She has been part of Kannapolis City Schools since 1999 and most recently served as assistant principal of Kannapolis Intermediate School. Lewis earned a bachelor’s degree in education and a master’s degree in education from UNC Charlotte.

Steven Neuschafer (’96) was promoted to city manager of Dunn, North Carolina. He previously served as assistant city manager. He received bachelor’s degrees in geography and architecture from UNC Charlotte.

Chris Peek (’93) was appointed CEO of CaroMont Health, a Gastonia-based health care company. Peek joined CaroMont from Mecklenburg County, where he served as deputy county manager and chief of staff. He was formerly chair of CaroMont’s board of directors. He earned a bachelor’s degree in business administration from UNC Charlotte.

David Stegall (’96) was named Northwest Regional Superintendent of the Year by the Northwest Regional Educational Service Alliance. Serving as superintendent of the Newton-Conover City School district in Newton, he achieved the highest graduation rate in the history of North Carolina in 2015 at 97.1 percent. He completed a bachelor’s degree in education from UNC Charlotte.

Alicia Thompson (’90) was named managing director of the Atlanta office of Porter Novelli, a global public relations leader. She is responsible for talent management and strategic growth while driving measurable business results for clients. She joined Porter Novelli from Edelman, where she was the general manager of the firm’s Atlanta office. She earned a bachelor’s degree in English from UNC Charlotte.
2000s

Steve Blount (’08) is now the planning and zoning administrator for the town of Granite Quarry, North Carolina. Blount served as a Rowan County commissioner for 12 years and has been a Rowan County magistrate since 2015; he will continue in that role. Blount completed a master’s degree in geography from UNC Charlotte.

Dan Duggan (’00) was promoted to director of sponsorships and exhibits of American Trucking Associations (ATA). He joined ATA in 2013 and recently received his Certification in Exhibition Management. Duggan received a bachelor’s degree in communication studies from UNC Charlotte.

Je’Nen Chastain (’09) was named 2017 Associates Award Recipient by the American Institute of Architects (AIA). A designer with San Francisco’s Heller Manus Architects, Chastain has worked to create thoughtful solutions for projects small and large with a focus on the intersection of design and business practice. She was the 2016 chair of the AIA Center for Civic Leadership. Chastain earned a bachelor’s degree in architecture from UNC Charlotte.

Robert Hall (’08) was appointed to the Board of Directors of the York Technical College Foundation. A member of the management team at DAK Americas, he and his wife, Jan-Rae, endowed the Robert and Jan-Rae Hall Scholarship at UNC Charlotte. Hall graduated from York Tech with an associate’s degree in mechanical engineering and machine tool technology and earned a bachelor’s degree in mechanical engineering from UNC Charlotte.

Andrew DiBitetto (’08) was promoted to head coach of the UNC men’s golf team after serving as an assistant for the past six years. DiBitetto was an honorable mention All-America for the UNC Charlotte golf team. He earned a bachelor’s degree in management from UNC Charlotte.

Barrett Mosbacker (’05) was named head of school for the Westminster Christian Academy. Prior to this position, he spent 10 years as the superintendent of Briarwood Christian School in Birmingham, Alabama. He also founded Covenant Day School in Matthews, North Carolina, and served as headmaster at Presbyterian Christian School in Hattiesburg, Mississippi. Mosbacker earned a doctorate in educational leadership from UNC Charlotte.

Jed Orman (’06) was named senior vice president and market executive of the Fidelity Bank team in Davidson County, where he will be responsible for developing and managing commercial banking relationships, as well as overseeing the sales efforts of the Lexington and Thomasville branches. Orman earned a master’s degree in business administration from East Carolina University and a bachelor’s degree in economics from UNC Charlotte.

D.G. Smith (’02) was commissioned by the Folio Society of London, England, to illustrate a new edition of Daphne du Maurier’s gothic romance novel “Rebecca.” This edition depicts the famous setting of this classic of 20th-century fiction, the Manderley estate. Smith earned a bachelor’s degree in fine arts from UNC Charlotte.

Denise Patterson (’00, ’07) was named superintendent of the Asheville City Schools. With more than 20 years in public education, she has served as an assistant superintendent for the Hickory City Schools, an associate superintendent for the Union County Public Schools, an assistant principal and principal in the Lincoln County Schools. Patterson received a master’s degree in elementary education and a doctorate in educational leadership from UNC Charlotte.

Chris Terry (’05) has joined Legacy Senior Living as regional vice president of operations. He will oversee operations for Legacy Senior Living facilities serving Tennessee, Virginia and Georgia. Terry completed a bachelor’s degree in history from UNC Charlotte.
Justin James ('17) was named principal of Corriher-Lipe Middle School in Landis, North Carolina. Previously, he was an assistant principal in Mooresville City Schools. He completed a Master of School Administration from UNC Charlotte.

Taylor Luegers ('12) was named head women’s basketball coach for McMichael High School in Mayodan, North Carolina. Luegers currently teaches eighth-grade math at Western Rockingham Middle School and has served as head coach of the middle school team for the last two years. He received a bachelor’s degree in special education from UNC Charlotte.

Josh Tucker ('12) was promoted to information and technology application manager of Davidson’s, one of the nation’s leading firearms wholesalers. He will manage and improve Davidson’s information capabilities. Tucker earned a bachelor’s degree in computer science from UNC Charlotte.

Angie Vu ('16) joined the full-service digital marketing and technology firm Taylor/Gray as an account manager. She will collaborate with new and existing clients to strategize, manage and deploy branded tactics. Vu earned a master’s degree in business administration from UNC Charlotte.

Jeffrey Zackeru ('13) has joined the dental practice of Lindsay Yancey Jr. as an associate dentist. He is a member of the American Dental Association, the Academy of General Dentistry and the North Carolina Dental Association. Zackeru graduated from the East Carolina University School of Dentistry and earned a bachelor’s degree in biological sciences from UNC Charlotte.

Want to submit a Class Note?
If you’re a proud 49er alum and have exciting news, we want to know. Join the Alumni Association’s online community to submit news and to stay engaged with the University by visiting 49erAlumni.uncc.edu. Additionally, you can submit news via email to 49erAlumni@uncc.edu. Accompanying photos are encouraged.
The Duke Energy Foundation has committed $2 million to the University’s Exponential Campaign, specifically to support the Charlotte Engineering Early College (CEEC) and the Women in Computing Initiative.

As part of the gift, CEEC will receive $900,000. The funds will support the Duke Energy Summer Bridge Program, the Duke Energy STEM Summer Research Experience and the Duke Energy STEM Scholarship.

In addition, the College of Computing and Informatics’ Women in Computing Initiative will receive $750,000. The money will support the Duke Energy STARS (Students and Technology in Academia, Research and Service) Leadership Corps Scholarship.

The remaining funds will support other UNC Charlotte programs, such as Let Me Play that benefits women’s athletics, the Women + Girls Research Alliance, the Senior Design Projects Fund and the EPIC Affiliates Program.

Total Giving Exceeds $20 Million

Including this latest commitment, Duke Energy’s total giving to UNC Charlotte now exceeds $20 million.

“The Duke Energy Foundation continues
to do an incredible job of finding innovative and meaningful ways to collaborate with UNC Charlotte. This commitment is another example of Duke Energy’s profound connection to this University and our students,” said Chancellor Philip L. Dubois.

“I cannot express how important it is for initiatives like the Charlotte Engineering Early College and Women in Computing to benefit from the support of partners such as Duke Energy,” he said. “These cutting-edge programs enhance the value of the University in the greater Charlotte community, as well as the state and the entire country.”

The Duke Energy Foundation provides more than $30 million annually in charitable gifts, many of which include a focus on science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) fields for students and workforce development, helping ensure businesses have a pipeline of diverse talent.

“Investing in STEM programs at UNC Charlotte creates a solid foundation for the economic vitality of the entire state,” said Lloyd Yates, Duke Energy’s executive vice president of customer and delivery operations and president of the Carolinas Region. “Duke Energy is building a smarter energy future for the state, and that requires a diverse group of engineers and computer scientists, like the students supported by these programs, to help us lead the way.”

Program Specifics

The Duke Energy Summer Bridge Program will target students that CEEC wants to retain and keep on track by offering a summer math course between grades 11 and 12. The course will focus on strengthening math competency and preparing students for additional math courses in grade 12.

The Duke Energy STEM Summer Research Experience program will be offered to a select group of students who are committed to staying at CEEC through the final year of the program, called the 13th grade. These students will participate in a research experience that pairs them with research faculty in a STEM discipline and graduate-student mentors. Participants also will take a summer math course to either help them advance to a higher level or stay on track.

The Duke Energy STEM Scholarship will be used to support graduates from CEEC to enter and complete a STEM baccalaureate program at UNC Charlotte.

The Duke Energy STARS Leadership Corps Scholarship will support women computing majors who participate in a multi-year program to expose them to the broad applicability of computing through civic engagement and service learning.

Jennifer Howe is the divisional communicator for University Advancement.

INVESTING IN STEM PROGRAMS AT UNC CHARLOTTE CREATES A SOLID FOUNDATION FOR THE ECONOMIC VITALITY OF THE ENTIRE STATE.”

Pictured left to right: Duke Energy’s Lloyd Yates, CEEC students Jasmin Rios Lopez and Britney Rich, CEEC Instructor Deanna Cureton and CEEC principal Will Leach at the gift-announcement reception.
Progressive past transforms the future

The University City community excitedly anticipates the coming CATS LYNX Blue Line Extension, yet Charlotte is no stranger to public rail lines. At the turn of the 20th century, streetcars rolled down Uptown’s bustling Trade and Tryon streets, playing a pivotal role in growing and shaping the young city. The streetcar connected Charlotteans in a new and innovative way and allowed neighborhoods like Dilworth, Elizabeth, Wilmore, Wesley Heights and Myers Park to develop. The LYNX Blue Line continues this history of progress, connecting the Queen City to the academic, cultural and athletic offerings of UNC Charlotte, North Carolina’s urban research university.
How UNC Charlotte cultivates award-winning scholars

BY JOAN F. LORDEN, PROVOST AND VICE CHANCELLOR OF ACADEMIC AFFAIRS

This past academic year, a record number of UNC Charlotte students have been recipients of prestigious national and international awards including two Barry Goldwater Scholarships, one Ertegun Scholarship and one National Science Foundation Graduate Research Fellowship. An undergraduate was selected to attend the Fulbright Summer Institute in Scotland, another student was named a Newman Civic Fellow and a doctoral candidate was selected to attend the Clinton Global Initiative University.

The nationally recognized success of our students not only demonstrates our ability to recruit bright minds to UNC Charlotte in the first place but also is a reflection of the innovative programs and opportunities we offer in order to make our students competitive for these awards.

As a compliment to the intellectual work students do in the classroom, students can amplify their educational experience while here through undergraduate research, community-based learning, university professional internships and study abroad. These programs help students make the connections that will make them competitive no matter what their post-graduation plans.

Undergraduate Research

We offer several opportunities to participate in the research process. The Undergraduate Research Conference, held in April, encourages students to present products of the hard work they conducted throughout the academic year. Likewise, the Summer Undergraduate Research Symposium, held at the end of July, is an opportunity for students conducting summer research to present their work in a poster format. This symposium includes participants in summer research programs including the Charlotte Research Scholars, the Charlotte Community Scholars, the Summer Program to Increase Diversity in Undergraduate Research, the NanoSURE Research Experience for Undergraduates (REU) Program, the Biology and Biotechnology REU Program, the Crime Analytics REU Program and the Mechanical Engineering Summer Research Program.

Faculty mentorship is key to student success in undergraduate research. Faculty mentors provide guidance through one-on-one instruction, individual meetings, lab time and review of work product. Mentors work with students to devise a research plan that will help them achieve their academic and professional goals and create prospects for students to build the necessary skills to succeed.

This year, we are establishing an Office of Undergraduate Research to help students better navigate the world of research opportunities and work with departments to integrate undergraduate research into the curriculum.

Community-Based Educational Experiences

As North Carolina’s urban research institution, UNC Charlotte is uniquely positioned to introduce students to robust community-based educational opportunities. Because we are situated in a complex, dynamic and globalizing city, our institution is alive with possibilities to learn and grow.

UNC Charlotte has earned the reputation engaged role it plays in community problem-solving. Students can explore opportunities in community-based learning at multiple steps throughout their academic journeys. Many courses offer service-learning experiences. As an approach to teaching, service-learning combines academic coursework with direct engagement in the community and intensive reflection about engagement experiences.

Community-based learning is a great way to prepare for a career after graduation. The University Career Center offers a wide range of resources for students, alumni and campus partners through their career model, the Career Success Story. Connecting students to local internships in the Charlotte area is one way the Career Center helps students to explore their interests and potential career options and gain valuable work experience in the field.

University Professional Internships

In a city like Charlotte, internship opportunities abound, but as a large and growing institution, UNC Charlotte is almost a city in itself with opportunities on campus that encourage students to explore career settings. Whether a student’s interests are in accounting or art, on-campus internships through the University Professional Internship Program (UPIP) can provide an opportunity for connecting courses in a major to practice in a field.

Study Abroad

At UNC Charlotte, we are educating 21st century leaders who are globally confident and inter-culturally competent. Whether they are studying to be teachers, doctors, engineers, computer scientists, journalists or architects, our students must have a strong understanding of the global political, economic and social landscape and the ways in which global conditions affect our everyday lives. Therefore, we offer a diverse range of study abroad opportunities for students. During the 2016-17 academic year, 750 UNC Charlotte students studied abroad in 41 different countries in programs from two weeks to a year.
Charlotte Wheels, the University’s new bike-sharing program, is another way to navigate campus – combined with Niner Transit and the coming CATS Blue Line Extension, 49ers have several transportation options to move around campus and connect to the heart of Charlotte.