LOST BOY FINDS HOME

SCHOOL BUILT BY ALUMNUS INSPIRES YOUTH OF SOUTH SUDAN
Our University in a Very Good Place

In my address to faculty and staff assembled in late August at the University Convocation, I stated that “notwithstanding some challenges…this institution finds itself in a very good place.” I want to reaffirm that declaration in this letter, sharing with you some of my reasons for optimism.

In today’s highly competitive world of higher education, where students have lots of choices, it is heartening to know that interest in UNC Charlotte continues to soar. Completed applications for freshman admission this fall reached 15,600, an 80 percent increase since 2005. As a result of increased interest among prospective freshmen and transfers, improved undergraduate student retention, and only modest declines in our graduate enrollment as a result of state policy changes in the field of education, our overall fall semester enrollment has climbed to 27,251.

To put our enrollment growth in some perspective, from the fall of 2008 to the fall of 2013, of all of the enrollment growth in the 17-campus UNC System, UNC Charlotte was responsible for 48 percent of it.

Our goal with all of these students is to send degree recipients into the world of work as productive and engaged members of the community. We continue to do that very well, awarding 5,898 baccalaureate, master’s, and doctoral degrees last year.

Research has shown the value of higher education not just to the individual, but to the region as a whole. According to the independent Milken Institute, adding just one year of schooling to a high school diploma results in more than 17 percent increases in real wages and in real GDP per capita. Higher education is vital to a region’s economic prosperity.

North Carolina has established a goal of moving into the ranks of the top ten states in the percentage of adults with college degrees. If this lofty goal is to be achieved, it simply can’t be done without the continuing and increasing contributions of UNC Charlotte.

UNC Charlotte is an economic force not only by virtue of our mission to educate the population, but also because our academics, research, and facilities serve as resources for local industry. New data indicate increasing public regard for the work of this institution. In the UNC Charlotte Urban Institute’s annual survey of Mecklenburg County residents this past year, respondents were once again asked how they would rate the University’s value to the Charlotte community. Responses of “excellent,” the highest rating, moved upward by 17 percentage points over the previous year; a combined total of 70.4 percent rank our value to the community as above average or excellent.

We’re solid financially as well. Our bond ratings were reaffirmed this year by the two major bond rating houses, and we had another year of squeaky clean financial audits. We established a new Scholarship Office to make sure that privately donated scholarship funds get to deserving and needy students.

Among many highlights this year, we welcomed our first high school students to the Charlotte Engineering Early College on the CRI campus in collaboration with Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools. The first class of 100 ninth graders entered one of CMS’s most popular district-wide magnet schools, with 165 students remaining on a waiting list. The early college is further proof that UNC Charlotte’s commitment to our region has made us a resource and partner throughout the community – in education, as well as the economic development that results.

Also this year, UNC Charlotte has broadened our base of political support with visits to neighboring communities that need our assistance and send us students. We plan to make three or four additional visits this year.

On the fundraising front, we received $26.4 million from alumni and friends, and we are entering the first phase of a comprehensive fundraising campaign over the next five years.

Looking forward, in 2015 we will celebrate our 50th anniversary of entrance into the consolidated University of North Carolina system. In that first year, we awarded 85 degrees in a dozen baccalaureate degree programs. Since then, we have awarded nearly 123,000 degrees at the undergraduate, master’s, and doctoral levels. That’s 123,000 lives changed for the better, with the support of dedicated faculty, staff, alumni, donors, and other friends of the University working in an institution that has to be considered one of the great success stories of American higher education.

So be assured, we are in a very good place.

Cordially,

Philip L. Dubois
Chancellor
12 Lost Boy Finds Home
More than two decades after fleeing his village in southern Sudan, alumnus James Lubo Mijak remained true to his word by returning to build a school in South Sudan.

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UNC Charlotte students spent their summer participating in a groundbreaking program at the North Carolina Research Campus, exploring the plant pathways of food crops such as blueberries, oats and strawberries.

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Classes are now underway at the new Charlotte Engineering Early College high school built to groom next-generation of energy engineers, the first of its kind in Charlotte.

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For nearly four decades, UNC Charlotte has held the region’s largest, most culturally diverse festival that provides a unique opportunity for festival goers to experience the world in a day.

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Under the leadership of Professor James Tabor in the Department of Religious Studies, a group of 12 students traveled to the Middle East to participate in a summer archaeological dig at Mount Zion.

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A veteran UNC Charlotte faculty member, Jennifer Warner is bringing her experience as a STEM educator to the Honors College, which will help strengthen and expand the program.

stake your claim profiles

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On the Cover:
This South Sudan youth painted the flag of his newborn nation on his face, in celebrating independence in 2011. A UNC Charlotte alumnus who had been one of the Lost Boys of Sudan, has returned to South Sudan to build a school in his home village, with the hope that education brings wisdom, and wisdom brings peace. Photo by antheap.
In this magazine we try to present an editorial package that represents a broad range of topics from a broad range of colleges, centers, institutes and departments; we don’t do “theme” editions per se. Yet, in this edition you can see many stories that depict the global reach of UNC Charlotte. The cover story tells a tale of sweeping significance: a young man cast out of his African homeland by war and genocide, who found a haven and a college education in America, and then returned home to attend to his compatriots.

Then you’ll travel to Asia, for a quick Q&A with a student who has immersed himself in the religion, language and culture of India. You’ll make a quick stop in the Holy Land of the Middle East, where students and faculty spent much of the summer digging in the dirt at a Jerusalem archaeological dig. On the way back home you’ll stop in Arizona, where an architecture professor has designed a land port for Central American immigrants. Your trip ends back home on the UNC Charlotte campus, where for the 39th consecutive year, the International Festival brings the world to UNC Charlotte.

What’s more, you’ll read stories of scientific research with worldwide implications and of a new early college high school that will help local students excel in science, technology, engineering and math.

Maybe there’s a theme to this edition after all: 49ers doing amazing things to Stake Their Claim.

Regards

John D. Bland, Editor
Director of Public Relations
Very few UNC Charlotte faculty members can say they will celebrate their retirement by having an entire garden named after them – but Larry Mellichamp will when he finally goes into the full bloom of retirement at the end of 2014.

Dr. M., as he is affectionately known by many of his former students, colleagues, alumni and community friends, has been director of the UNC Charlotte Botanical Gardens and professor in the Department of Biological Sciences for nearly four decades. His legacy will be honored with the installation of a new garden in his name – The Mellichamp Native Terrace Garden.

A fundraising campaign took root in the spring to raise $150,000 by December 2014 to complete the installation of the garden.

“We are all excited about the opportunity that Dr. Mellichamp’s retirement has presented,” said Botanical Gardens’ Advisory Council member and donor Thomas Nunnenkamp. “We have a unique chance to bring focus on the importance and sustainability of native plants in the residential landscape. And, maybe even more important for some of us, the native plant terrace gives us a very special way to recognize a wonderful educator, plantsman and friend. Nunnenkamp has made a gift to support the project.”

“When we give we make a powerful statement to the University and the greater community,” Nunnenkamp said.

Gifts are still being accepted to support the garden. To learn more about how to make a gift to support the new Mellichamp Native Terrace Garden, contact Mai Li Munoz at mai.li.munoz@uncc.edu or 704-687-0084.

Mellichamp, has written “Native Plants of the Southeast,” which was published by Timber Press.

Billed as a comprehensive guide to the best 460 species for the garden, “Native Plants of the Southeast” features the most beautiful native plants that adapt well to garden cultivation, have multi-season appeal and attract native butterflies, birds and other beneficial wildlife, according to the publisher.

The work includes profiles on hundreds of trees, shrubs, vines, wildflowers, grasses, aquatics and ferns, and it covers the entire southeast region of the United States, including Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, North and South Carolina, Tennessee and Virginia.

Mellichamp joined UNC Charlotte in 1976 as a faculty member in Biological Sciences Department. He completed a bachelor’s degree in biology from UNC Charlotte; his doctorate in botany is from the University of Michigan. He has written a number of technical and popular articles on plants and gardening and has co-authored four books, including “Bizarre Botanicals: Weird and Wonderful Plants You Can Grow.”

Faculty Members Seek Coal Ash Solutions

UNC Charlotte faculty members are among a prestigious group of experts seeking safe and practical solutions for disposing of coal ash.

The University has convened a blue-ribbon panel of nationally recognized experts to serve on an independent board that will review Duke Energy’s strategy and procedures for closing its ash pond basins in North Carolina.

The National Ash Management Advisory Board (NAMAB) will be chaired by John Daniels, professor and chair of the Department of Civil and Environmental Engineering in the William States Lee College of Engineering at UNC Charlotte. A geo-technical and geoenvironmental engineer best known for his work in the reuse of waste materials, Daniels has led numerical, laboratory and field projects for ash management.

Another Lee College professor, Rajaram Janardhanam, recently was appointed to serve on the Coal Ash Management Commission, under the auspices of the North Carolina Department of Public Safety. His term will run through June 2020.

Janardhanam has been at UNC Charlotte for more than 30 years in the Civil and Environmental Engineering Department. His research has focused on geotechnical and geoenvironmental engineering, geotechnical earthquake engineering, flowable fly ash and construction material and engineering.

The nine-member NAMAB was funded by Duke Energy through a contract with UNC Charlotte.
HARPERCOLLINS PUBLISHES VIOLINS OF HOPE

Dr. Jay Grymes, interim chair of the Department of Music, has written a new book, "Violins of Hope: Instruments of Hope and Liberation in Mankind’s Darkest Hour." The book was published by HarperCollins in August and is receiving critical praise. "Violins of Hope" tells the stories of seven violins played by Jewish musicians during the Holocaust. Grymes was inspired to write the book when UNC Charlotte brought 18 Violins of Hope to Charlotte for a series of exhibitions and performances in April 2012.

FACILITIES GET NATIONAL AWARD OF EXCELLENCE

The nation’s top educational facilities organization, APPA, recently presented its 2014 Award for Excellence in Facilities Management to UNC Charlotte. Phil Jones, associate vice chancellor, facilities management, accepted the honor on behalf of the University.

The APPA Award for Excellence is designed to recognize and advance excellence in the field of educational facilities. Award for Excellence nominations are in the areas of leadership, strategic and operational planning, customer focus, information and analysis, development and management of human resources, process management and performance results. Nominated institutions also submit to a site review conducted by an awards evaluation team.

In leading the facilities management team, Jones said supporting the University’s phenomenal growth was a factor in being selected for the APPA Award of Excellence.

ENGINEERING PROFESSOR CREATES INSPIRING ARTWORK

Recently a painting of an SR-71 Mach 3 jet was added to the stairwell in Duke Centennial Hall. It is the latest creation by Peter Tkacik, an associate professor of mechanical engineering and engineering science in the William States Lee College of Engineering.

Tkacik’s artistic pursuits are a hobby, but he sees them as a source of inspiration for engineering students as they learn more about their future profession. His other images include an oversized canvas of the largest gas turbine, built by Siemens in Germany, and a Ferrari engine. He also painted a 48-by-72-inch version of a micro-electric circuit and a four-foot-wide, six-foot-tall version of the Arthur Ravenel Bridge in Charleston for the Electrical and Computer Engineering and Civil and Environmental Engineering Departments, respectively. These two works are displayed in EPIC.

SECURES ACCREDITATION

UNC Charlotte has been granted Associate Membership in the National Association of Schools of Music (NASM). Founded in 1924, NASM is an organization of schools, conservatories, colleges and universities with

COMMUNICATION PROFESSOR WINS EMMY FOR ‘THE COURAGE OF CREATIVITY’

UNC Charlotte researcher and associate professor in the Department of Communication Studies Margaret Quinlan and colleagues recently won a regional Emmy Award for “The Courage of Creativity,” a documentary series that explores the role that artists and creativity can play in people’s well-being in health-related contexts.

The series earned its award from the Ohio Valley Regional Chapter of the National Academy of Television Arts and Sciences in the arts/entertainment category, at the 50th Emmy black tie gala at the Hilton Columbus Downtown.

Each segment of the production is at different stages of development. The series features three organizations – DooR to DooR: Healing Arts Program in Chapel Hill, the Arts in Medicine Program at M.D. Anderson Cancer Center and the Collaborative Art International. Each organization provides opportunities for participants to express themselves, connect with others and develop resiliency in the midst of hardship.

The documentary draws from years of research and work, Quinlan said during an interview with WOUB that was televised after the event.

The SR-71 Mach 3 jet painting, at 54-by-108 inches is the largest work created by Tkacik to date. To hang it 40 feet above the marble floor of Duke Centennial Hall, so it is visible at the third-floor level, was an achievement itself. Tkacik, with the assistance of graduate student Jerry Dahlberg, and facilities management personnel Toby Boan and David Elledge, rigged special pulleys and ropes to hoist the painting to its location 18 feet above the third-floor stairwell. They built a 16-foot drill to install the hooks that support the stainless steel frame.

MUSIC DEPARTMENT

Margaret Quinlan, center, won a regional Emmy Award for a documentary series about the effects of art and creativity on health.
approximately 650 accredited institutional members. The organization establishes national standards for undergraduate and graduate degrees in music.

“NASM is the premiere accrediting body for college music programs,” said James Grymes, interim chair of the Department of Music. “UNC Charlotte’s newly granted associate membership confirms that our music program meets the same curricular and programming standards as every major program in the country.”

NASM will return to campus in five years for another full review to ensure that all of their standards are still being met, after which UNC Charlotte will become an institutional member.

**CAMPUS POLICE INTRODUCE IPAD INITIATIVE**

UNC Charlotte’s Police and Public Safety Department (PPS) have launched a new initiative to equip all campus officers with an iPad for use in the field. It is an effort to increase police proficiency through cost-effective measures.

“We are a research-based police department,” said Jeffrey Baker, UNC Charlotte chief of police. “We continually strive to stay out in front by researching methods of policing that can help ensure that we are doing the best in providing a safe and secure environment.”

Traditionally, officers use a laptop in their squad car to assist them with their duties in the field, such as issuing alerts, researching criminal history and accessing specific police databases. However, there are prohibitive costs associated with outfitting UNC Charlotte squad cars with laptops and the necessary infrastructure.

Before the iPad initiative, campus police had to bring all information from the field to the on-campus police station to complete reports and issue alerts.

Baker outlined how the tablets enhance officers’ effectiveness. “iPads provide the ability to have a camera available at all times in the field allowing officers to take immediate photographs of crime scenes or even video footage. The iPads go above and beyond what the average police laptop could provide with the key advantage being mobility.”

College campuses are mandated by federal law to issue timely alerts to the campus community for specific crimes and emergencies, which Baker emphasized as a critical reason to deploy this initiative.

Throughout the iPads deployment, Baker said the department will remain attentive to the research aspect of the initiative to ensure it achieves maximum effectiveness; he added reporting data from this deployment could aid other departments that implement a similar project.

**SOLAR DECA THLON ENTRY A FAVORITE IN STATEWIDE CONTEST**


The Matsumoto Prize is named in honor of George Matsumoto, a founding faculty member at the N.C. State University School of Design (now College of Design) who is well known for many exemplary mid-century Modernist houses he designed across North Carolina.

People’s Choice Award winners were selected by 1,200 individuals in an online vote. The Lebda Guest House in Wilmington placed first; second went to the Dasgupta-Saucier House in Raleigh.

Faculty and students from three different areas, the School of Architecture, the Lee College of Engineering and the Belk College of Business, comprised the UrbanEden design and construction team. Support for the designing and building of the house came from a broad array of University units, as well as many private and corporate funders, including Duke Energy and Ingersoll Rand.

**EDUCATION’S TRACY ROCK GETS TOP TEACHING AWARD**

Associate professor of education Tracy Rock is the 2014 recipient of the Bank of America Award for Teaching Excellence – one of the University’s most prestigious honors for faculty members.

The announcement was made at a reception and awards ceremony Sept. 5, at Bank of America’s Founder’s Hall.

After earning a bachelor’s degree from UNC Charlotte, Rock completed a master’s and Ph.D. from UNC Greensboro. She joined the College of Education’s Department of Reading and Elementary Education in 2000, and during her University tenure, Rock has demonstrated an unwavering commitment to her students and her profession.

According to Rock, getting to know her students is a key to their success. She wants to know: What are students interested in learning? How are their experiences related to the course material? What challenges do they face? She gathers this information at the beginning of every course taught and
uses student answers to guide her through the semester.

As a teacher, Rock mentors her students and colleagues. A recent graduate attested that Rock “went above and beyond to help students learn, grow and excel in her class. She modeled great teaching practices for us to follow in our own future classrooms. She provided specific and helpful feedback on how to grow as a future educator.” A colleague said, Rock “epitomizes rigorous, relevant and engaging instruction.”

Beyond teaching, Rock has proven to be a dedicated leader and an experiential learning advocate. At the departmental level, she led efforts in the elementary education program to revise the structure of the early clinical experiences, such that teacher candidates are now placed in partner schools for a two-week intensive experience in their second semester of the four-semester preparation program.

**TECH ADVANCES PROMPT CHANGE IN STUDENT RECORDS POLICY**

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) was passed 40 years ago, and recent changes to the University’s student education records policy address advances in technology since FERPA became law in August 1974.

Gov. Pat McCrory holds a UNC Charlotte CRC T-shirt surrounded by representatives from UNC institutions that are part of the pilot program, including Carol Rose, CRC marketing specialist (left of the governor); Chelsea Schmidt, a UNC Charlotte CRC student (right of governor); Susan Stahley, substance abuse coordinator, Center for Wellness Promotion (next right); and Rep. Thom Tillis (behind the governor).

McCrory noted at a press conference that UNC Charlotte is a national leader in on-campus prevention and treatment, adding it was the first UNC institution to have a campus recovery center, and it provides scholarships to students receiving substance abuse treatment.

Carol Rose, marketing specialist for the CRC, stated the funding from the governor would enhance UNC Charlotte’s CRC program. “Each year we’ve grown and connected with more students, and now we’ll be able to increase our outreach and hopefully continue to make a difference.”

She estimated of the more than 27,250 students on campus, roughly 400 students are in recovery.

Student email addresses, as well as photographs, videos or other media containing a student’s image or likeness, have been designated under the revised policy as “limited use directory information.”

According to Jesh Humphrey, deputy general counsel with the Office of Legal Affairs, this designation doesn’t impact the ability of faculty or staff to use these types of information for educational purposes.

“We have a number of social media accounts and methods to reach the campus and external partners and often introduce our students and their accomplishments through University websites,” Humphrey said. “‘Limited use directory information’ is defined not only by the type of information that is used but how it is used. Images and email addresses can be used for official University purposes, including our internal email directory, our social media accounts and our websites. No longer, however, will we make email addresses or images of students available to anyone who asks for them with a public records request.”

As commercial entities realized certain student information was public, UNC Charlotte experienced a huge proliferation of them spamming our students via email addresses obtained through public information requests, explained Humphrey. He noted technology made it easier to provide such directory information to businesses. For the majority of time since FERPA’s adoption, organizations obtained such information via computer printouts that required commercial enterprises to rekey the data manually.

Several years ago, the University modified its online directory to cease displaying home addresses and telephone numbers to better protect students. According to Humphrey, UNC Charlotte is the only UNC system school to limit directory information to this level.

Faculty and staff members continue to be individual gatekeepers of student information, and the University does provide training to employees, graduate/resident assistants and other campus workers about FERPA, stated Humphrey.

GOVERNOR PROVIDES FUNDING FOR STUDENT RECOVERY COMMUNITY

Gov. Pat McCrory recently lauded UNC Charlotte’s Collegiate Recovery Community for efforts to address student recovery, underage drinking and substance abuse.

The University was named one of six UNC system campuses to participate in a pilot program with a goal to further deter substance abuse and underage drinking. UNC Charlotte will join ECU, UNC Chapel Hill, North Carolina A&T, UNC Wilmington and UNC Greensboro in the new program. Each campus will receive $125,000 to aid education, prevention and recovery efforts.

McCrory noted at a press conference that UNC Charlotte is a national leader in on-campus prevention and treatment, adding it was the first UNC institution to have a campus recovery center, and it provides scholarships to students receiving substance abuse treatment.

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UNIVERSITY HIRES THREE FOR BIG DATA INITIATIVE

UNC Charlotte recently hired three individuals to support the Data Science and Business Analytics (a.k.a. Big Data) initiative, which is an industry-University-state partnership led by the College of Computing and Informatics and the Belk College of Business with strategic input from the College of Health and Human Services and other academic units.

Mark Armstrong, Rick Hudson and Shannon Schlueuter are the industry/University program coordinator, senior project manager and data scientist, respectively, for the DSBA initiative.

Armstrong is the founder and CEO of IntePoint, a software development and services company that specializes in analytics and business intelligence. During an 11-year partnership with the College of Computing and Informatics, he helped expand the college’s Department of Defense research capacities, and his experience spans education, government, financial and manufacturing sectors.

Most recently a program manager for the Central Intelligence Agency, Hudson was responsible for information systems operating in the ontological realm, denoted under the term “Big Data.” He holds three degrees from UNC Charlotte – a Bachelor of Science in Political Science, a Bachelor of Science in Engineering and a Master of Science in Engineering Management. He also participated in an executive program in science, technology and innovation policy through Harvard University’s Kennedy School of Government.

Schlueuter, who completed a doctorate in bioinformatics and computational biology from Iowa State University, has been an assistant professor in CCI’s Department of Bioinformatics and Genomics since 2009.

UNC Charlotte is strategically positioned to launch its DSBA initiative due to the concentration of large data-intensive industries in the greater Charlotte region, including financial services, retail sales and distribution, health care, energy and advanced manufacturing. The education and training programs will be among the earliest and largest initiatives in the nation to integrate data science and analytics with business processes and decision making.

LEGISLATION AUTHORIZES BORROWING FOR CAMPUS PROJECTS

Recently, Gov. Pat McCrory signed a bill that will enable six UNC system campuses, including UNC Charlotte, to fund construction projects.

UNC Charlotte will issue bonds to finance $129 million to complete four non-appropriated capital improvements that University leaders have identified as critical to campus growth.

“While some schools are seeing their numbers decline, demand for UNC Charlotte is growing dramatically in parallel to the Charlotte region’s rapid population increase,” wrote Chancellor Philip L. Dubois in an op-ed published in the Charlotte Business Journal.

During the past five years, growth at UNC system institutions has totaled about 6,800 students; UNC Charlotte is responsible for 48 percent of that growth. Since 2005, applications for enrollment at the University have increased nearly 80 percent, and they are up almost 8 percent in the last year.

The new construction will advance the evolution of UNC Charlotte as a residential campus and will continue to provide construction/renovation jobs in the region, said John Bland, director of public relations, who added the investment will further strengthen the greater Charlotte area and the University for years to come.

The projects include the construction of Residence Hall Phase XIV, in the South Village area of campus, designed as a 400-plus bed residence hall to accommodate growth of the University and support student success and retention; Campus Infrastructure Development Phase II, featuring renovations of aging infrastructure in the University’s chemistry/physics building (Burson), and modernization of infrastructure in several aging buildings in the core of campus; Sanford Hall Renovation, which will bring the 106,096-square-foot, 500-bed residence facility built in 1969 to current building code, and will install a new roof and a brick façade on the exterior; and the Elm/Maple/Pine Renovation, which will update the 252-bed residence facility built in 1987.

Amy Hawn Nelson

URBAN INSTITUTE OFFICIAL AMONG ‘COURAGEOUS LEADERS’

Amy Hawn Nelson, director of research at the UNC Charlotte Urban Institute and director of its Institute for Social Capital, recently was named to the 2014-16 class of William C. Friday Fellows for Human Relations.

The goal of the Friday Fellowship is to cultivate a network of “courageous leaders who connect across differences in identity and ideas to develop new solutions to the complex challenges facing the people and communities of North Carolina through a human relations lens.”

“As director of research at the UNC Charlotte Urban Institute and as director of the University’s Institute for Social Capital, Amy will bring an important voice to the Friday Fellowship community around public policy issues like education, affordable housing and public health, especially from the perspective of a growing urban region,” said Jeff Michael, director of the UNC Charlotte Urban Institute and a Friday Fellow from the 1997-99 class.

The UNC Charlotte Institute for Social Capital is an innovative program created to foster University social and human capital research and to increase the community’s capacity for data-based planning and evaluation. Founded in 2004, it merged with the UNC Charlotte Urban Institute in March 2012. Through collaboration with nonprofit organizations, government agencies and other relevant organizations in Charlotte and Mecklenburg County, the Institute for Social Capital has combined key sources of data into one community database.

The William C. Friday Fellowship honors its namesake, a former president of the University of North Carolina system. Fellows seek to exemplify the leadership displayed by Friday with a goal to move issues forward to benefit the future of North Carolina.
 REGARD FOR UNIVERSITY GROWS IN CHARLOTTE REGION

Data shows that within the Charlotte region, UNC Charlotte is growing in esteem. In the UNC Charlotte Urban Institute’s annual survey of Mecklenburg County residents this past year, respondents were once again asked how they would rate the University’s value to the Charlotte community. Responses of “excellent,” the highest rating, moved upward by 17 percentage points over the previous year to 50.1 percent. A combined total of 70.4 percent rank our value to the community as above average or excellent.

Also, in a recent brand perception study carried out by an external consultant, 61 percent of UNC Charlotte alumni gave the University the highest rating in that study. That’s an increase of 37 percentage points from the 2007 study.

“These public recognitions of excellence are terrific,” said Chancellor Philip L. Dubois.

 DOSTER, WARTHAM AMONG AREA’S MOST INFLUENTIAL WOMEN

Betty Doster and Amy Wartham recently were named to the list of 50 Most Influential Women by the Mecklenburg Times. The publication solicited nominees from the community, and an independent panel of judges selected the final honorees.

Doster is special assistant to the chancellor for constituent relations, and Wartham is director of corporate training in the Office of Continuing Education. This is the second time that Wartham was chosen for inclusion to the list.

According to the Mecklenburg Times, the 50 Most Influential Women spotlights those working within the business, government, education and nonprofit fields in the greater Charlotte region.

 MARKETING CAMPAIGN AIMED AT INCREASING GRADUATE STUDENTS

Graduate certificate programs can provide individuals with an important educational credential in a focused area of study, and the University is seeking to increase program visibility through a new mini-marketing campaign.

The Graduate School worked in collaboration with the Office of University Communications to implement an effort to promote the University’s nearly 40 graduate certificate programs via banners on the Charlotte Observer website through online retargeting and through underwriting on WFAE and other commercial spots on Charlotte-area radio. A number of short videos featuring current graduate certificate students and faculty were recorded; they can be viewed on the University’s YouTube channel.

The campaign, which ran from May-August, is demonstrating results. According to Richard McDevitt, director of marketing in University Communications, the graduate certificate website is experiencing increasing traffic.

University Communications staff Wade Bruton and Brandon Kirkley provided photography and video support for the campaign.

To support the initiative, the Graduate School increased its number of open houses where prospective students met in person with University personnel to learn about the certificate programs and how they can enhance careers, increase professional knowledge and lead to further graduate studies.

 CYBER SECURITY WORK AGAIN EARN NATIONAL RECOGNITION

The National Security Agency (NSA) and the U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) have re-designated UNC Charlotte as a National Center of Academic Excellence in Information Assurance/Cyber Defense Research. In 2008, the University was one of the first in the country to receive this designation.

The College of Computing and Informatics (CCI) is home to the Cyber Defense and Network Assurability (CyberDNA) Center, which is the focal point of cyber security research at the University.

The CyberDNA Center promotes automated analytics and synthesis in the design, configuration and evaluation of mission-oriented security systems; conducts advanced study by integrating multidisciplinary research from security, networking, reliability, risk management, economical, behavioral and physical world communities; and creates deployable tools to facilitate technology transfer and workforce (student) education and preparation.

CCI faculty collaborate with researchers from other colleges and external entities on wide-ranging cyber security topics, including security configuration, policy-driven security management, intrusion detection, prevention, deception and resiliency, threat/fault diagnosis, risk management, applied cryptology, privacy, application and DB security, wireless security, autonomous agents, data mining, visualization and complex adaptive systems.

The college also helped form the Center for Configuration, Analytics and Automation under the National Science Foundation’s Industry/University Cooperative Research Center (I/UCRC) program.

UNC Charlotte has been designated by the NSA and the Department of Homeland Security as a National Center of Academic Excellence in Information Assurance Education since 2001.

49ER ROCKET TEAM WINS TOP NASA DESIGN AWARD

UNC Charlotte’s rocket team, comprised of engineering students, won the prestigious “Vehicle Design Award” at the NASA University Student Launch competition recently held at the Bonneville Salt Flats in Tooele County, Utah.

The 49er team was one of 31 university teams from across the country to enter the competition. Twenty-two of the teams made it to Utah, and of those 17 made it to the launch pad.

According to NASA, the Vehicle Design Award is presented “for the most creative, innovative and well-constructed overall vehicle design for the intended payload while maximizing safety and efficiency.”

The official review of the UNC Charlotte rocket design stated that the team “provided detailed analysis for design decisions, both computer-based as well as analysis done by hand, with all work shown. The team provided accurate and detailed Computer Aided Drawing models that clearly showed how the different systems and subsystems were integrated. The team constructed its own carbon fiber airframe and components,
and the quality of construction and finish was outstanding.”

The Lee College of Engineering team was made up of two electrical and seven mechanical engineer students: Jerry Dahlberg, John Cappalletti, Daniel Deese, Dewey Greer, Benjamin Griffiths, Matthew Perry, Daniel Saulnier, Robert Stone and Caleb Watts.

The requirements for the competition were that teams design and construct a reusable prototype rocket capable of reaching 4,900 feet. The payload had to include, but was not limited to, a ground hazard surveillance camera and a strain measurement system.

The 49er team was funded by the North Carolina Space Grant Consortium, the Lee College of Engineering and its Senior Design program and the Mechanical Engineering and the Electrical and Computer Engineering departments. Support was provided by NexGen, BACE and Carolina Composite Rocketry, too.

STUDENT ANGLERS REEL IN NATIONAL BASS FISHING TITLE

Andrew Helms and Jake Whitaker recently teamed to win the 2014 Carhartt Bassmaster College Series National Championship held at Chatuge Reservoir in Georgia.

Helms, a junior marketing major from Monroe, and Whitaker, a senior civil engineering major from Fairview, caught 15 fish during the three-day team event. Their total catch weight of 38 pounds and 9 ounces topped the second-place finishers by 8 ounces.

“Winning the national championship has been a dream come true. We competed against the top college anglers in the country, and we were fortunate to even qualify for this event. It has been an experience I will never forget, and I look forward to the opportunities that are ahead of us,” said Helms.

Whitaker echoed his teammate’s comments. He said winning the championship would help the UNC Charlotte Bass Fishing Club, known as the Bass Rats, as well as the entire sport club program on campus. “I’ve had a great experience at UNC Charlotte and getting to represent my school at a national level and win doing something I enjoy is something I will always treasure.”

HECHENBLEIKNER LAKE WELCOMES NEW RESIDENTS

When Hechenbleikner Lake re-opened in late 2012, Chancellor Philip L. Dubois said he was eagerly anticipating some new 49ers. They’ve arrived, and they just happen to have gills.

Several largemouth bass, grass carp, blue gill, redear sunfish and other species now can call “Hech” Lake home. Upon learning the news, the chancellor issued this statement: “We have lots of exciting things happening on campus this summer, but I’m not sure any of them make my heart flutter quite like the stocking of Hech Lake. I envision a beautiful new 49er tradition: The Chancellor’s Annual Catch and Release Fishing Derby. Now if I can just get the grounds crew to transform the lawn next to Cato Hall into a putting/chipping green, I’ll never need to leave campus.”

It’s not time to break out the fishing poles yet; catch and release will be allowed once the fish have had time to grow.
In keeping with tradition, the first year back in Conference USA, the Charlotte 49ers athletics department paced the league with five Scholar Athletes of the Year for 2013-14.

The annual awards are voted upon by the faculty athletics representative at each of the member institutions and are presented to the top student-athletes in 18 conference-sponsored sports, based on academics (3.0 or better GPA), athletic achievement and service. North Texas was second to the 49ers with three recipients, while the University of Texas at El Paso and East Carolina each received two awards.

The 49ers' Scholar Athletes of the Year are Alex Calott (men's tennis), Ben Cherry (men's basketball), Tyler Gibson (men's soccer), Zach Greth (men's cross country) and Amanda Videmsek (volleyball).

The 49ers dominated similar honors as a member of the Atlantic 10 Conference from 2006 to 2013. Charlotte won at least four Student-Athlete of the Year awards in each of the six years that the A-10 offered the award. (The A-10 discontinued it in 2011-12). This is the fifth time that the 49ers have had at least five recipients in the seven years that the awards were available since 2005-06. Charlotte earned a high of six awards in 2008-09.

Calott becomes the third 49ers men's tennis player to earn Athlete of the Year accolades. Zvi Lantsberg and Dorian Host were tabbed as Atlantic 10 selections in 2006 and 2007, respectively. Calott also won the Atlantic 10 honor in 2013.

Cherry completed one basketball season with the 49ers after transferring into the program from Tulane. He ranked among the Conference USA leaders in three-point field goal percentage and finished with five double-figure scoring games, including a career-high 20 points against USC Upstate.

Gibson, a 2013 Hermann Award Watch List member, was a key factor in leading Charlotte to the Conference USA men's soccer tournament crown, netting the game-winning penalty kick over Tulsa to receive all-tournament recognition. He was also a third team Capital One Academic All-America, an All-Conference USA Academic Team selection and a Scholar All-South Second Team choice by the National Soccer Coaches Association of America.

Greth was the top runner for the 49ers in the fall, ending the season with a team-high five top finishes. He also made the All-Conference USA Academic Team.

Videmsek capped her career with an All-Conference USA Second Team honor after becoming the 18th player in program history to reach 1,000 career kills, eventually ending her career with 1,025 to place 17th in the record books. She had five matches of 20 or more kills, including a career-best 26 at East Carolina.

**CLASSROOM HONORS ABOUND**

In addition to the five Scholar Athletes of the Year in Conference USA (see main story), University athletes rolled up a host of other academic accomplishments during the 2013-14 school year. Here is the rundown.

**Academic All-America, All-District**
[Capital One/College Sports Information Directors of America]

- Tyler Gibson, Men's Soccer (third team All-America, first team All-District)

**Scholar All-America**
[National Soccer Coaches Association of America]

- Aidan Kirkbride, Men's Soccer

**Post-Graduate Scholarship**
[Conference USA]

- Coye Still, Men's Track and Field

**Scholar-Athletes**
[Intercollegiate Tennis Association]

- Women's Tennis
  - Briana Bodner
  - Lisa Grosselius
  - Dominica Nemec
  - Natsuko Takayanagi
  - Macy Vonderschmidt

- Men's Tennis
  - Alex Calott
  - Jordi Massalle Ferrer
  - Nate Shanok
  - Alex Weber

**Academic All-Conference**
[Conference USA]

- Corbin Shive, Baseball
- Ben Cherry, Men's Basketball
- Zach Greth, Men's Cross Country
- Nicole Morgan, Women's Cross Country
- Aidan Kirkbride, Tyler Gibson, Men's Soccer
- Alex Kubrick, Tori Fubara, Women's Soccer
- Lexi Betancourt, Softball
- Alex Calott, Jordi Massalle Ferrer, Men's Tennis
- Lisa Grosselius, Women's Tennis
- Kevin Calhoun, Zach Greth, Coye Still
  - Men's Track and Field
- Kim Spano, Women's Track and Field
- Amanda Videmsek, Michelle Hovey, Volleyball
H ave fun, Support 49ers Athletics

Want to have fun backing the University’s sports program? Get involved with the Charlotte 49ers Athletic Foundation. In addition to accepting donations to the annual fund, the foundation holds three major events each year. The calendar for 2014-15 is out, so take advantage of these opportunities.

Let Me Play Luncheon
Tuesday, Oct. 28 at the Charlotte Convention Center. For more information or to register, visit www.letmeplaycharlotte.com. There is no cost to attend, but a donation at the conclusion of the event is appreciated.

49er Club Golf Outing
Monday, April 20, 2015 at Pine Island Country Club. A foursome with hole sponsorship is $2,700. For more information or to register, call 704-687-4950.

Great Gold Rush Auction
Saturday, May 30, 2015 at Halton Arena. Cost is $100 per person. For more information or to register, call 704-687-4950.

HOOPSTERS IN CHARLESTON, C ANCUN TUNE-UPS

The 49ers men’s and women’s basketball teams prep for their second season in Conference USA with early season tournaments worth noting. (For their full schedules, go to www.charlotte49ers.com.)

The men’s team, coming off a 17-win season that included the championship of the Puerto Rico Tip-Off, will participate in the Charleston Classic Nov. 20-23. The eight competing teams are Akron, Charlotte, Cornell, Drexel, Miami (Fla.), Penn State, Southern California and South Carolina.

The event features 12 games over three days. ESPN3 will broadcast five games, and ESPNU will air four. The championship game will be shown Sunday, Nov. 23, at 9 p.m. on ESPN2. Charlotte faces Penn State in the first round, Thursday, Nov. 20, at 5 p.m. on ESPNU.

The women’s basketball team begins pursuit of a record 13th straight post-season appearance by heading to Mexico for the Triple Crown Cancun Challenge Mayan Tournament Nov. 27-29. Held at the Hard Rock Riviera Maya resort, the event pits the 49ers against Montana, Wake Forest and Princeton on consecutive days as part of the eight-team tournament.

The women return three starters and 10 letter winners for head coach Cara Consuegra’s fourth season. Among the returnees are seniors Ayanna Holmes and Hillary Sigmon and junior Kyra Gordon. Conference USA All-Freshman selection Lefty Webster is back for her sophomore season.

The men’s squad, led by head coach Alan Majors, welcomes back four starters, including seniors Pierria Henry and Terrence Williams. Charlotte has averaged 19 wins over the last two seasons and owns a win over a Top 15 team in three of Major’s four years at the helm.

49ers Back on WCCB

The 49ers second season of football is under way and once again WCCB Charlotte is the University’s local television partner. For the second straight year, WCCB is televising all six home games and one road game.

WCCB is producing and televising four games, while Conference USA’s newest television partner, Sinclair Broadcast Group, is producing three games and distributing them along the newly launched American Sports Network (ASN).

In Charlotte, WCCB is the landing spot for the three ASN games (Sept. 6 vs. Johnson C. Smith; Sept. 20 at Elon; Nov. 14 vs. Wesley College). For the four remaining home games, the WCCB production crew includes Sam Smith providing play-by-play, Brett Basanez and Jeff Zell splitting color commentary duties and WCCB sports anchor Brandon Davidow serving as sideline reporter.

An eighth game, at Gardner-Webb Oct. 4, will be televised on ESPN3.

Sinclair owns and operates 162 television stations in 78 markets, reaching approximately 40 percent of U.S. television households. Stations include FOX, ABC, CBS, MyTV, CW, NBC, Univision and Azteca affiliates. The agreement with Conference USA encompasses an extensive slate of live sporting events, including football, basketball, soccer and other sports. Thirty C-USA football games will be televised on Sinclair stations.

In addition, Sports Radio 610AM WFNZ The Fan is in its first season as the radio home for 49ers football. The broadcast crew remains intact with longtime Voice of the 49ers Matt Swierad handling the play-by-play, Kevin Donnalley returning for color commentary and Bobby Rosinski serving as sideline reporter.

On home-game Saturdays, WFNZ airs a college football pregame show from the 49ers tailgate village from 10 to 11:30 a.m. with WFNZ Prime Time’s Chris Kroeger and Richard Walker. They host the 49ers Pregame Show from 11:30 a.m. to noon. For road games, WFNZ has a similar format, with the pregame show beginning one hour prior to kickoff.

WFNZ’s sister station, CBS Sports Radio 1660, broadcasts the 49ers Coaches Show on Monday evenings from 7 p.m. to 8 p.m. at BlackFinn American Saloon in uptown Charlotte’s EpicCentre. The show began Aug. 25 with head coach Brad Lambert as the guest.
Lost Boy Finds Home
Alumnus returns to build a school in South Sudan

By Melba Newsome
In 2007, James Lubo Mijak was one year from earning his bachelor’s degree in international studies and political science from UNC Charlotte when he traveled home to the village of Nyarweng in Sudan. It was his first time there since fleeing in the middle of the night two decades earlier. It was not a joyous homecoming.

The brutal attacks of government troops and mercenaries during the Second Sudanese Civil War and subsequent famine and hardship had wiped out the majority of his family. Although Mijak had spent more time in other places than in Nyarweng, he never doubted this was where he belonged. “I still think of this as home,” he said. “This is where I am from and still have what is left of my family.”

Even though the civil war was over, conditions in his village and throughout the war-ravaged area of southern Sudan were nothing short of abysmal. There was not enough food. Heavy seasonal rains destroyed their huts every few years, and people died of preventable diseases. The overwhelming majority of what ails Sudan is beyond the ability of any single person to fix.

But Mijak believed he could make a difference in one significant way. Ninety percent of the people of southern Sudan are illiterate. For the three months of his visit, Mijak used a battered chalkboard to teach the village children under a tree. The work fit perfectly with his mantra and that of other young boys who, many years earlier, had filled Sudanese refugee camps: “Education is my mother and my father.”

By the time he returned to UNC Charlotte for his final year of study and graduation in 2008, Mijak was determined to build a permanent school in his village. Over the next several years, that commitment was tested repeatedly. The fundraising grind paled in comparison to the logistic hurdles of building in a remote area with no infrastructure and wreaked by political strife and corruption. But don’t tell that to a man whose very life is a testament to doing the impossible.

**ORPHANED IN 1987**

Like many people from the remote villages of southern Sudan, Mijak isn’t exactly sure when he was born. He knows he was the age of an American second or third grader when his parents were killed in a brutal attack on his village in 1987. He became one of about 30,000 southern Sudanese boys who fled their homes and villages and made a four-month, 1,000-mile sojourn across unforgiving desert terrain into neighboring Ethiopia. Along the way, thousands died from disease, animal attacks, starvation and war.

An estimated 350,000 Sudanese refugees crowded into Ethiopian refugee camps. That situation lasted until 1991 when the Marxist government that had allowed them to stay was overthrown. The rebel soldiers attacked the camp, and once again, Mijak’s life was upended and put at risk. Many boys died crossing the Gilo River. Some drowned, others were shot and still others were eaten by crocodiles.

When he finally made his way to Kakuma, a United Nations refugee camp in northwest Kenya, he expected to be there for only a few months. It turned into a decade. During that time, aid workers dubbed them “the Lost Boys of Sudan” after the orphans in “Peter Pan” who banded together for survival.

**“FROM THE VERY BEGINNING, I PROMISED THE UNITED STATES THAT I WOULD GET AN EDUCATION AND COME BACK TO HELP MY PEOPLE.”**

His fate improved when the State Department selected him as one of the 3,800 refugees to resettle in the United States. In June 2001, he about 40 others who had never even ridden in a car were brought to Charlotte, given some aid and support for three months and then left largely on their own. A youth minister from St. John’s Baptist Church encountered the young men in a grocery store and invited them to Sunday service. There, Mijak met Phillips and Leslie Bragg, a young couple who answered the church’s call to mentor the newcomers. The relationship evolved into one of mutual friendship, admiration and respect. “Their first families were each other,” Phillips Bragg recalled of the young men. “Their closeness as a brotherhood was very strong. Every now and again, we would help with things such as enrolling in school or basic cooking and driving skills, but they were very independent and never looked for a handout.”

**EDUCATION IN CHARLOTTE**

What Mijak did look for was a formal education that would help him make a difference in his home country. He began his studies at Central Piedmont Community College and transferred to UNC Charlotte in 2006, working two jobs the whole time. He pursued a degree in international studies and political science and still have what is left of my family.”

“From the very beginning, I promised the United States that I would get an education and come back to help my people.”

Opposite, UNC Charlotte alumnus James Lubo Mijak ’08 enjoys the pleasures of family life, even as he struggles to build and maintain a school for children in his fledgling homeland of South Sudan. He is pictured with Nyandheng, his wife; and children Achan (left) and Ngor. Photo by Phillips Bragg
because he saw it as beneficial to a broader understanding of human rights. He attributes much of the unrest in Sudan to a lack of education, which he believes would help the people appreciate and celebrate their differences. He also sees it as a way to put an end to the violence between tribes and different religions.

In 2007, after earning American citizenship and getting a passport, Mijak made his first return visit to Sudan. Seeing the enormous needs, he believed he could help by building a school. “Education is important because education brings wisdom, and wisdom brings peace,” he said. It would also mean the fulfillment of a promise. “From the very beginning, I promised the United States that I would get an education and come back to help my people That was also my dream.”

When Mijak returned to Charlotte, he gave Bragg a report on his home village that could only be described as dismal. “He told me that, despite the hardship, what the people wanted more than anything was a school,” Bragg remembered.

It was a laudable goal but near impossible under even the best circumstances, and circumstances in Sudan were far from optimal. Where would they start? A series of queries led them to Patricia Shafer, the founder of Mothering Across Continents. Her organization trains volunteer “catalysts” to develop humanitarian projects around the world.

Mijak’s impossible dream became reality when the Nyarweng School opened in 2013, a bright spot amid civil war. It serves approximately 150 students. Photo by Phillips Bragg
Mijak and Bragg met with her in late 2008 and told her about their desire to build a school in Nyarweng.

“Lubo said, ‘If we don’t help the children in this remote rural village, who will?’” recalled Shafer. Despite being moved by his passion, it was Mijak’s practicality that ultimately won her over. “He had worked hard and persevered to get his undergraduate degree,” she said. “In the process, he learned a lot about the relationships between a project like his and systemic issues and solutions around nation building, democracy and ending poverty.”

RAISING NEARLY $350,000

In determined and unrelenting fashion, Mijak and Bragg raised upward of $350,000, one heart-rending story and one “Ration of Hope” dinner (beans and Dinka bread) at a time. They partnered with World Relief to secure a contractor to construct the school. They found people on the ground to assume responsibility for hiring and managing the project, which began in March 2012.

South Sudan had become the world’s newest nation just a year before. Despite also being the poorest nation, there was great promise and hope that as an independent nation, the South Sudanese would have control of their destiny and finally see a peaceful nation on the road to prosperity. But now, just three years later, that hope has all but evaporated. South Sudan is embroiled in civil war, bloodshed and tribal infighting. The Nyarweng School, which opened in mid-2013, stands as a bright spot. Mijak sees it as one glimmer of hope to the country’s future and its development as a new democracy.

Some small details at the school remain unfinished. Getting furniture into such a remote area amid war is difficult beyond belief, and a recent storm damaged the building’s roof. But those challenges have not dampened passion for the school. Roughly 150 children have been attending classes there for more than a year, using concrete blocks and boards for desks and chairs. Food is supplied by the World Food Program. Teachers’ salaries are paid by the fledgling government, albeit intermittently. Only a few of the instructors have a high school diploma.

The fact that the school happened at all is nothing short of a miracle. The challenge remains making a great school where learning is sustained and vibrant. “Lubo, influenced by Dinka culture and his personal experience, sees everything good and bad as another step in the journey,” said Shafer.

Now married and the father of two children, Mijak lives in Juba, the capital city, and works as a community development officer for an oil company. While his work is not connected to the school, he is a position to offer assistance to it. He also has not forgotten the place that made it all possible. “The United States gave me so much. I miss the University and Charlotte a lot,” he said. “Charlotte will always be my second home.”

Melba Newsome is a Charlotte-based writer and frequent contributor to the magazine.
UNC Charlotte chemistry major Alexis Brown spent her summer participating in a groundbreaking program at the North Carolina Research Campus, exploring the plant pathways of food crops such as blueberries, oats and strawberries. And more.

“We are trying to create the super broccoli,” she says.

At 20, she was one of the youngest members of the contingent of interns participating in the program. In all, there were 40 students representing 12 colleges and high schools. Brown, a rising junior, was one of eight UNC Charlotte students in the program. It’s the second year for the innovative program, called the Plant Pathways Elucidation Project, which focuses on how plants, including fruits and vegetables, benefit human health. The $1.9 million P2EP summer internship program started in early June.

Project leaders describe plant pathways as the chemical reactions in plants that help them adapt to environmental stresses such as disease and climate change. The reactions sometimes create compounds that can benefit human health when consumed. They hope to make discoveries that could lead to breakthroughs in the treatment of diseases such as some cancers, heart disease, loss of brain function and macular degeneration.

Angel Tarrier, 29, a senior in biochemistry from Charlotte, learned about the project when she took a tour of the N.C. Research Campus last year and met with student interns who were participating in the research project. When she got home, she immediately sent an email to the organizers expressing her interest in joining this year.

“I am very interested in bio-research and doing this work is an excellent way to introduce myself to this discipline,” she said. “It is challenging work in many aspects because most of us are very new to this kind of research. The instructors are very patient with us and they help us understand how all these divergent aspects can be tied together. It’s really been a lot of fun.”

Cory Brouwer, director of the Bioinformatics Services Division and associate professor of bioinformatics and genomics at UNC Charlotte, described the project as a perfect fit for UNC Charlotte’s mission as an urban research university.

“First of all, it is a great example of what this campus is ready to deliver,” he said. “And it brings together students and faculty for all these universities to collaborate on important research.”

Along with the schools, the initiative includes major corporate partners such as General Mills and Dole Foods.
“We have several PhD students in the program who are working on research while they also get a chance to learn some valuable management and leadership skills,” Brouwer said. “These PhD candidates are gaining experience in how to manage others and how to develop a project and then follow through to get things done.

The requirements are rigorous. Students put in long days, five days a week, for eight weeks. Despite the demands, Brouwer said it was not a problem attracting qualified candidates.

“Virtually every student who was offered an internship accepted it,” he said. “That says something about the quality of this project.”

Research associate Rob Reid is one of the instructors. He said one of the chief benefits for the students is the chance to work side-by-side with university researchers and industry partners. Along with UNC Charlotte, participants in the initiative include N.C. State University’s Plants for Human Health Institute, UNC’s General Administration, the Dole Nutrition Research Laboratory, General Mills and the David H. Murdock Research Institute.

A first-generation college student from Winston-Salem, Brown is amazed the University gave her this opportunity to improve her skills in a real-world setting. “I’ve always been very proud of UNC Charlotte but this is another great example of how they do all they can to help students to succeed,” she said. “The first thing they said to me when I got here was want can I do to help you become a success.”

Paul Nowell is media relations manager in the Office of Public Relations.
“Groundbreaking” was the buzzword when classes got under way Aug. 25 at the new Charlotte Engineering Early College high school on the campus of UNC Charlotte.

Not only is the new Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools program the first of its kind in North Carolina’s largest city, the inaugural class of 100 ninth graders from across Mecklenburg County are delving into a curriculum that focuses on STEM (science, technology, engineering and math) courses, with a special emphasis on energy and engineering.

And they’re doing so in a brand new school building located in the shadow of the University’s prestigious EPIC Building, where University researchers — both faculty and students — are tackling the energy needs of the present and the future in innovative ways.

Most of these ninth graders will embark on a five-year high school career, spending three years on high school courses followed by two more of college classes at no charge.

The new high school is a collaboration between the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools (CMS) and UNC Charlotte as part of the North Carolina Early College High School initiative.

Program leaders envision the school as a blueprint for the future of STEM education in the region, state and even the nation. High on their list of goals is trying to discover ways to bring in more female students, minorities and first-generation college students.

STARTING FROM SCRATCH

Simply starting a new school is a major undertaking itself. “When I talk to people about starting this new school, I equate it to the creation of a football program at UNC Charlotte,” said Michele Howard, former dean of students at UNC Charlotte and the new director of the Early College Program.

“I also was involved in that initiative. I
remember when we started on football, we didn’t have a ball or a coach or a field. When we started this, we did not have a desk or a principal or a school building.

“It’s a big task to create something that did not exist before; it really does take a village to build it,” she continued. “We have had incredible support from both the UNC Charlotte administration, starting with Chancellor Phil Dubois on down. And CMS has been very helpful and involved in every step of the way.”

Principal Will Leach said interest has been incredibly high among students and parents across the school district. There is currently a waiting list of nearly 190 students, and expectations are high for those selected.

“These students are going to have to be accountable,” said Howard. “This is going to be a lot of hard work. In such a small environment, there is going to be nowhere for them to hide. They will be expected to come to class with their homework done and ready to go to work.”

Speaking specifically of the first class, Leach noted: “They were selected by the CMS magnet lottery, and while there are some very bright students, it is not an academically gifted program. A fairly fair selection process was used. The administrators wanted students who were motivated and ready to work.”

SCHOOL DIFFERENCES

While the school is part of CMS, there are some differences. Classes start with a staff of six teachers and will ramp up as enrollment grows over the next several years.

As for judging the success, he said: “We need to put a year under our belt before we start to assess the success of this school.”

Leach, who earned his Master of School Administration from UNC Charlotte in 2000, came to the Charlotte Engineering Early College from Butler High School, where he oversaw the education of nearly 1,200 students at the CMS school.

“Eventually we will have 500 students, and by their fifth year they will be enrolled in only college-level courses,” Leach said of the new school. “The students will earn 24 (high school) credits and 60 or more college-level credits that can be transferred to the college they decide to attend, whether it be UNC Charlotte or somewhere else.”

Both Howard and Leach acknowledge that some students will need tutoring and other academic support to meet classroom expectations. “That’s the joy of being able to work with them in a smaller setting,” Leach said. “Here we will be able to get to know each student personally.”

DEMOGRAPHIC GOALS

In reaching demographic goals, the first class is on target. Of the 100 students, 60 are male and 40 female. The ethnic breakdown is 50 percent African-American, 30 percent white and 20 percent “other,” which includes Hispanic. “We will mirror the (school) district,” Leach said of the ethnic breakdown.

Interest among teachers has been robust. “We heard from folks all over the country,” said Leach, who spent most of May interviewing teachers. Classes started with a staff of six teachers and will ramp up as enrollment grows over the next several years.

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“EVENTUALLY WE WILL HAVE 500 STUDENTS, AND BY THEIR FIFTH YEAR THEY WILL BE ENROLLED IN ONLY COLLEGE-LEVEL COURSES.”

large number of our first class of students come from within 10 miles of the UNC Charlotte campus, but there are students from as far away as south Charlotte and Huntersville. They are coming from all over the district.”

Michele Howard, former dean of students at UNC Charlotte, now serves as director of the Early College Program. Will Leach, principal, earned his Master of School Administration degree from UNC Charlotte.

Employers are eager to see a stream of graduates with strong engineering skills who can move easily into college programs and then into the workforce.

“We are very cognizant of the STEM connection, but everyone wants it to be known that this is an engineering program,” Howard said. “Looking back, the real impetus for this idea came from industry, including major players like Duke Energy and other industry partners. We are telling interested students that if they are want to be a doctor, maybe this is not the school for you.”

“We will be preparing the next generation of engineers,” Leach said.

Paul Nowell is media relations manager in the Office of Public Relations.
As pop singer Taylor Swift is quoted as having said, “Fearless is having fears but jumping anyway.” These new UNC Charlotte students – freshmen or transfer students attending Student Orientation, Advising and Registration – might or might not admit to any fear or trepidation. But they were jumping anyway during SOAR activities this summer.

This fall, UNC Charlotte welcomed 27,251 students, including 5,500 who live on campus, 3,350 freshmen and 2,700 transfer students.

During SOAR sessions, incoming new students work with a student orientation counselor in activities as part of small groups. Their parents take part in a concurrent program aimed at familiarizing them with UNC Charlotte, North Carolina’s urban research university.

“SOAR is a great program for new students; it helps them get a solid start at the University,” said Associate Dean of Students Dennis Wiese. “The program covers not only orientation basics, but really focuses on academics. We’re committed to making sure students get the help and direction they need to be successful.”

Every summer more than 5,000 students and 3,500 family members take advantage of SOAR, and the numbers are growing.
For nearly four decades, UNC Charlotte has held the region's largest, most culturally diverse festival. Marking its 39th year on Sept. 20, the annual International Festival provides a unique opportunity for festival goers to experience the world in a day. With more than 50 nations represented, the colorful festival enables individuals to engage in a vast array of activities including art, costumes, games, music and dance, and of course, food.

Since its inception in 1975, the festival has served to celebrate the ever-expanding cultural landscape at the University and throughout the region.

“To me the festival is about people sharing their culture,” said Marian Beane, senior coordinator for international engagement at UNC Charlotte. “The celebration of the ethnic diversity we have at UNC Charlotte and in the Charlotte community is at the core of what the festival represents.”

Beane is uniquely qualified to speak on all matters regarding the festival; she’s been a part of festival planning since its inaugural year.

In 1975, the University was much smaller with a student body that lacked a strong presence of international students. To combat the lack of cultural diversity, the University created the Center for International Studies. It was charged with cultivating and growing the international experience at UNC Charlotte for students, faculty and staff, as well as the larger Charlotte community. Today, UNC Charlotte is the most diverse campus in the UNC system. Beane, at the time a newly appointed international student advisor, was a part of the program committee that opened a festival with an international focus could be the perfect public event to highlight the importance of the international experience on campus and throughout the city.

“At that point there were roughly 200 international students on campus, and the community had only a few, well-represented cultural groups,” Beane recalled. “So I reached out to everyone I possibly could to encourage them to participate in the first festival.”

BRINGING PEOPLE TOGETHER

In late September 1975, the first-ever UNC Charlotte International Festival took place near Atkins Library.

“It was such a wonderful sight to see the country groups full of pride celebrating a collection of cultures,” expressed Beane, reminiscing about the first festival. “I remember the German group had a beer garden, the French group offered a wine tasting and the Italian group had a Ferrari on display.
We probably had around 15 to 20 nations represented at the library that day.”

Through the years, the festival has grown, along with cultural presentations of participating nations. Some of the unique presentations have included antique cars from around the world, prancing Colombian Paso Fino horses—known from their unique ambling gait or stepping motion, giant puppets and an array of large African masks.

While displays and nations have varied throughout the years, the core purpose of the festival remains the same—bringing people together for the celebration of countries and cultures.

“Over time the international student population and ethnic community of Charlotte have grown adding to the rich fabric of the festival, and I think that’s a testament of the joy and pride people get just being a part of this festival,” said Beane. “They appreciate the fact that the focus is on the people who are here and that have come to interact with other people and cultures from other parts of the world.

“They do so with an open mind and to experience and celebrate something that is different than what they’re used to. As well as to say they’re a part of the larger community as a whole while celebrating their cultural identity. That is what is core to the festival,” she added.

Building on the success of the first year, the International Festival has grown to become an important tradition at UNC Charlotte, as well as one of Charlotte’s premiere cultural experiences. To today, the festival requires strong engagement by many University staff as well as hundreds of student volunteers, who all take pride in knowing the annual event continues to fulfill its original purpose of cultivating and growing the international experience at UNC Charlotte.

CULTURAL DYNAMICS

Virtually every region of the country has its own cultural dynamics, but with UNC Charlotte’s International Festival, the goal is to put a spotlight on the strengths of the University and Charlotte’s cultural diversity.

“The festival is not a place for political statements or for working through difficult, long-standing conflicts. It’s here to say ‘this is our culture and we’re here to celebrate and honor everyone that is here,’” said Beane.

The international experience is near and dear to Beane’s heart. She loves seeing different cultures interact and receives great satisfaction in helping host a festival where people come to experience new things.

There’s one festival in particular that exemplifies that satisfaction and perfectly represents, for Beane, the true purpose of the International Festival. In fact, she still gets emotional every time she recalls the 2001 festival, which occurred following the events of 9/11.

“There was a serious discussion whether or not to hold the festival as we were concerned it might present a less-than-ideal platform for a potentially negative public display,” Beane said.

After some deliberation, the decision was made to have the festival.

“And it was a great festival,” Beane said, holding back tears. “The part that was most striking to me was, during the festival, I usually walk around, and certain times I would just get this full feeling of emotion because it was incredibly wonderful to have everyone celebrating their cultures with so much pride, especially in the wake of the events earlier that month.”

With the festival running smoothly, Beane prepared to begin one of the best International Festival traditions, the Parade of Nations.

“There’s always anticipation leading up to the Parade of Nations, and we’ve always traditionally done it in alphabetical order,” Beane explained. “It was then that I realized the first group out would be Afghanistan and anxiety filled my body.”

The Afghan community in Charlotte is relatively small, and over the years has been represented by only a gentleman and his family. Each year, his booth consisted of him laying out Afghan carpets and invite festival goers to share tea and conversation.

Beane remembers being reticent to commence the Parade of Nations, but she called out the first country.

Continued on p. 30
Digging Jerusalem Amid Unrest
Edited by Paul Nowell. Photos by Rachel Ward

Under the leadership of Professor James Tabor in the Department of Religious Studies a group of 12 UNC Charlotte students traveled to the Middle East in June to participate in the University’s summer archaeological dig in Jerusalem at Mount Zion. The program is now in its fourth year.

“We headed to the Holy Land this summer with more excitement about the work ahead of us than worries about our extended stay at the religious crossroads of the volatile Middle East,” said Rachel Ward, a senior anthropology major and the official photographer of the project.

“Each of us experienced the thrill of unearthing a variety of artifacts,” said Ward, one of 13 members of the UNC Charlotte contingent. “Providing intense context for the experience were detailed tours of holy sites. For me, Sunday school lessons and university-level comparative religion studies...
came to life in ways that often made me feel quite small.”

The Mount Zion project is an ongoing, multi-year archaeological excavation in the ancient city of Jerusalem that represents a rare opportunity to expose the history of the city in a way beneficial to all cultures and religions that hold it sacred. UNC Charlotte is the only American university licensed to carry out such excavations in Jerusalem. Tabor and Jerusalem-based archaeologist Shimon Gibson, research professor at UNC Charlotte, co-direct the project.

“The UNC Charlotte Education Abroad program runs for two weeks whereas the dig itself goes for a month each summer and some students choose to stay longer. It consists of archaeological field work, lectures, and specially guided tours of Jerusalem, the Galilee, and the Judean Desert including the Dead Sea and Masada,” Tabor said.

“The students get a rare opportunity to explore the ancient remains of three civilizations – Jewish, Christian and Islamic. Mount Zion offers students an intimate experience in the Old City with its historic Jewish, Armenian, Christian and Muslim quarters, and is minutes away from the resources of Hebrew University and the wider metropolis of modern Jerusalem, both Jewish and Palestinian.”

While excavating artifacts would be exciting enough for most students, the visitors from UNC Charlotte soon found themselves on the front end of the latest conflict in the region – one which was still occurring in late August.

“The summer program coincided with the tragic killings of three Israeli teenagers and the apparent retaliation murder of a Palestinian boy, whose funeral procession occurred just a few blocks from our hotel,” Ward said. “We felt reasonably safe. Israeli soldiers seemed to be everywhere. And we are only beginning to process the experiences we shared as we lived and worked amid some of humankind’s most significant history.”

The area chosen for archaeological study is situated close to a number of important places in the history of the city, namely the Praetorium where Jesus was tried before Pontius Pilate, and the House of Caiphas and the other priestly families in the Upper City of Jerusalem in the first century CE. In the Byzantine period, the area was situated at the southern end of the Cardo Maximus, which was a grand columned street and in its vicinity Justinian built a very large church in the 6th century. The crest of Mount Zion was a focus for the building of houses in the Early Islamic Period. The Crusaders and the Ayyubids built their fortifications across the crest of the hill, and in the early 13th century, the local Sultan destroyed the gate-tower, which was located in the area of the excavation.

Along with the UNC Charlotte group, students from other universities as well as non-student adults, including several from the Charlotte community, also made up the approximately 40 participants in the month-long excavation. Tabor and another group of UNC Charlotte students will return in 2015, and the excavation is slated to last another three years.
In her final year at UNC Charlotte, Melissa Farling went to Central Prison.

As an architecture student from Old Tappan, N.J., Farling was enrolled in a fourth year architecture studio class taught by Ken Lambla, now dean of the College of Arts + Architecture. The focus was “justice architecture,” and students had to do large-scale research projects.

Farling chose to study death row and over several months repeatedly drove to Raleigh to observe facilities and to interview the warden and inmates at Central Prison. “I was very interested in rehabilitation and whether architecture could help at all in rehabilitation,” she said. “I was also focused on this idea of human dignity.”

Her project fit perfectly with the course. “One goal of the studio at this level of the curriculum is to demonstrate how behavioral research is an essential component of architectural programming, and thus design concept development,” Lambla recalled. “The School of Architecture has always maintained that expanding research in the behavioral consequences of architectural space is at the center of good design skills.”

It was not Farling’s first look at the prison environment. The previous year, Professor Eric Sauda had challenged his students to combine architecture with another passion. “Architects sometimes tend to be very insular,” he said. “I was trying to get students to understand it from a different point of view. Anything they were passionate about would have meaning attached to it, and that would be evident in the architecture.”

Farling’s other passion was psychology, and she wanted to study a restrictive environment to see what relationship there might be between design and behavior. She began to look at prisons and continued to work the following year in the most restrictive of environments, death row.

FIRE IN A CELL

“I have specific memories of my interviews at Central Prison,” she said. “The most profound was an interview with an inmate who would continually set fire(s) in his cell, so that he would be sent to the infirmary, because it was the best way for him to get out of his cell and into a different environment.”

Farling graduated from UNC Charlotte in 1988 and moved to Arizona, where...
she completed her master’s degree and launched a career investigating the effects of architecture on behavior. In June, she became a Fellow of the American Institute of Architects (AIA), an honor awarded to architects “who have made a significant contribution to architecture and society on a national level and who have achieved an exemplary standard of excellence in the profession,” according to the AIA. She is co-chair of the AIA Academy of Architecture for Justice Research Committee and a member of the Academy of Neuroscience for Architecture Advisory Council.

Farling has focused her career on large-scale public projects, applying research to designs for correctional facilities (including low to maximum-security adult and juvenile facilities), courthouses, K-12 and higher education facilities and behavioral health hospitals. “The biggest lesson from these efforts is understanding my responsibility as an architect,” she said. “It should be to make a positive impact, whether the goal is rehabilitation in a prison, enhancing learning in a school or providing respite in a home.”

Farling often works with neuroscientists, psychiatrists and psychologists. In 2008 and 2009, she was part of a team that examined how to reduce stress and improve mental function in the Sonoma County Jail in Santa Rosa, Calif. A jail’s intake area is a place of high stress. “A person can be in any state — upset, drunk, frightened,” Farling said.

**VIEWS OF NATURE**

Studies had shown that views of nature — even a large photo mural of a beautiful outside scene — could create a less stressful environment. The Sonoma County Jail had no windows in its intake area. So Farling’s team looked to see whether such a mural would benefit the jail’s officers. They measured officers’ heart rates, feelings of stress and mental fatigue before installing murals and afterward and found remarkable results. Having a view of nature — even an artificial one — reduced their stress and improved their performance.

That study and other research impacted the design of one of Farling’s most significant projects at Jones Studio in Phoenix, where she became project and research director in 2007: the Mariposa Land Port of Entry on the border between Nogales, Ariz., and Mexico. It opened in August. “The project is all about balancing security with a dignified, welcoming entry into the U.S.,” Farling said. Knowing the importance of natural light and views of nature, the design team created a large and lushly landscaped oasis in the center of the facility, visible from throughout.

Farling is a contributing author of “AIA’s Sustainable Justice 2030: Green Guide to Justice,” which urges a sustainable approach to courthouses, police stations and correctional facilities. Her focus, she said, “is on a broader definition of sustainability that takes the individual into account,” and she encourages design that includes daylight, views of the outdoors, natural building materials, vibrant colors, clear sightlines and noise reduction.

Her next project examines lighting in correctional facilities, where lights are on all day and night, potentially disrupting circadian rhythms. What impact might the color and type of lighting have on behavior and health?

“How do you want people to come out (of prison)? Better or worse?” Farling said. “How do you break the cycle? You have to look at it holistically. I am very optimistic that architecture can support rehabilitation. It’s an ongoing exploration for me to understand how what we do makes a positive impact. Architecture is not passive.”

Meg Freeman Whalen is director of communications and external relations for the College of Arts + Architecture.
While new to the University Honors Program, Jennifer Warner is a veteran UNC Charlotte faculty member. In assuming the UHP directorship, Warner brings a STEM perspective to the program and to the Honors College. Warner first arrived on campus as a graduate student 20 years ago to pursue a master’s degree in biology. While a full-time faculty member in the Department of Biological Sciences, Warner completed a Ph.D. in curriculum and instruction from UNC Greensboro.

“As a former undergraduate coordinator and vice chair of the Department of Biological Sciences, I’ve worked with Levine Scholars and many pre-professional, high-achieving students,” said Warner. “Traditionally, the University Honors Program caters to all majors but has focused primarily on the humanities and liberal arts. My challenge is to bring my experience as a STEM (science, technology, engineering and mathematics) educator to a highly successful program and to augment the curriculum.”

Originally founded in the College of Liberal Arts & Sciences 31 years ago, the University Honors Program is now housed in the Honors College. It is designed to serve all majors and historically has been a destination for incoming freshmen and transfer students interested in honors education.

The Honors College is in its third year of working with individual colleges to expand academic honors offerings. In addition, the Honors College plans to launch an intensive student awareness campaign, dubbed “The Honors Experience,” starting with the fall 2014 semester. Honors College executive director Malin Pereira worked with the Office of University Communications on the campus marketing effort that will include promotional items and other Honors Experience-branded merchandise, as well as a revamped Honors College website.

“We’re seeing growth in the numbers of honors students, and we’ve had great success in working with various colleges to offer college-level programs for all their majors,” said Pereira. “For UHP, Jennifer will provide direction as the program redefines itself as the destination honors program for students who want to do reading, writing and critical thinking that is broadly interdisciplinary while participating in the strong community service component.”

For Warner, who assumed the director’s duties in July after Connie Rothwell’s return to the University Writing Program, her immediate focus is on learning the program and its roughly 300 students.

“It’s an amazing program already, but I have the opportunity to see what can be added to it,” she said. “My primary goal is to help students better understand how UHP is beneficial across all disciplines. For example, prospective pre-med students can form valuable connections to other disciplines and engage in community service projects that set them apart from other medical school applicants.

“For those students who might say they plan to focus on departmental honors, I want them to understand how UHP can be a complement to that experience. They can do both, and they gain value from both,” Warner continued. “Our goal is to make honors programming more accessible to as many students as we can and provide them with options.”

As the hub for the University’s most highly qualified, most motivated students, the Honors College continues to provide challenging experiences for these students. The focus recently resulted in two undergraduates receiving prestigious Fulbright Scholarships.

Celia Karp was awarded a Fulbright U.S. Student Academic Award for Research to study health communication effects on Ecuadorian women’s perspectives on sexual and reproductive health, and Caitlin Vavarek received a Fulbright Teaching Assistant Fellowship for the 2014-15 academic year.

Honors College officials plan to continue building on such successes.

Honors College students are the University’s most highly qualified, most motivated students.
Graduate faculty members like Diana Rowan are solving global issues, all while mentoring students in Charlotte. Community partnerships and opportunities are a few of the many benefits graduate students receive at UNC Charlotte. That's something you just can't replicate from a lecture through a computer.
The Alumni Association is now accepting nominations for the 2015 Alumni Association Awards. Alumni are recognized within these distinctions: Alumni Hall of Fame, Distinguished Alumnus(na), Outstanding Young Alumnus (na) and Humanitarian Award. The Alumni Association Awards also include the Distinguished Faculty Award and Honorary Alumnus(na) Award. The 2015 awards will be presented at the Alumni Awards Banquet in April.

Last year’s recipients include: Ed Davis, Ed.D ’02; Harry S. Kirk, ’51; Michael L. Wilson, ’93 (Alumni Hall of Fame), Shelia B. Dillon, ’75 (Distinguished Alumna), Adrienne D. Barnette, ’04 (Outstanding Young Alumna), Robin Hill Emmons (Humanitarian Award), Albert A. Maisto, Ph.D. (Distinguished Faculty) and Elinor Caddell (Honorary Alumna).

The Alumni Association Awards were established in 1985 to recognize those who have made important contributions to the establishment and growth of UNC Charlotte, embody the core principles of the University and have distinguished themselves through outstanding service to the University, their chosen field and society. All alumni of UNC Charlotte and its predecessor institutions are eligible, however, a person must be nominated to receive consideration.

To nominate a Niner and to learn more about these awards, visit alumni.uncc.edu/awards
1950s

Michael H. Palmer, Ph.D., ('53) has been inducted into the Rhododendron Society at Appalachian State University. That is the highest honor conferred upon an alumnus by ASU’s Reich College of Education, where Palmer earned a master’s in English. He later received a Ph.D. from the Peabody College of Education at Vanderbilt University. In 2011, Palmer was inducted into the Caldwell County School Hall of Honors. During a career that included teaching for 32 years at Louisburg College in Louisburg, N.C., he participated in four Fulbright Scholarships that took him to Hungary, India, Mexico and several countries in Central America.

1970s

Vance Poteat ’78 was presented the Edward G. Roddy Outstanding Teacher of the Year Award at Merrimack College in North Andover, Mass. Poteat teaches in the Department of Electrical Engineering and Computer Science. For 20 years, Poteat worked for Bell Telephone Laboratories as a technical manager before transitioning into higher education. He holds two patents and has published more than 40 articles. Poteat received a Bachelor of Science in Electrical Engineering from UNC Charlotte. He also earned an A.A.S in industrial and electrical engineering from Wayne Community College and a Master of Science in Computer Science from Rutgers University.

1980s

Amy Cannon ’87 is the new Cumberland County manager, the first woman to hold the position. The Fayetteville Observer reported the Board of Commissioners unanimously voted Cannon into office. As manager, she will lead 2,300 employees across 34 departments and oversee a $500 million budget. Cannon received a Bachelor of Science in Accounting from UNC Charlotte.

‘THE THISTLE & SHAMROCK’ RADIO HOST APPOINTED A MEMBER OF THE BRITISH EMPIRE, GOT HER START AT UNC CHARLOTTE

When she was a young exchange student from Scotland in the early 1980s, Fiona Ritchie volunteered at WFAE-FM during her time away from her duties as a teaching assistant in the Psychology Department at UNC Charlotte. At the time, the University held the license for the station.

One day, Ritchie came to the station managers with an idea for a new show featuring traditional Celtic and folk music from her native Scotland, Ireland and the rest of the British Isles. Flash forward more than 30 years, and one can still find her National Public Radio weekly show “The Thistle & Shamrock” on nearly 400 stations around the world.

Recently, Ritchie was appointed a Member of the Order of the British Empire (MBE) by Queen Elizabeth II in the 2014 Birthday Honours “for services to broadcasting and traditional Scottish music.” In September, UNC Press will publish Ritchie’s book, “Wayfaring Strangers: The Musical Voyage from Scotland and Ulster to Appalachia.”

The book is co-authored by former UNC Charlotte vice chancellor Doug Orr, who shared her passion for Celtic and folk music and who has remained close friends with Ritchie during the years.

Stu Cole is in his second season as the third base coach for Major League Baseball’s Colorado Rockies. According to an Observer article, Cole has coached and managed for minor league teams in the Rockies’ organization since 1996. He was drafted by the Pittsburgh Pirates out of high school in 1984 but opted to play for the 49ers. During his junior year in 1987, he led the 49ers in batting average, runs and homers, and was named to the Sun Belt’s all-conference team.

Shawn Kelley ’89 was named executive creative director for HMH Agency. Kelley will provide strategic direction and counsel for the full-service marketing communications firm’s clients and oversee creative teams in the company’s Portland and Bend, Ore., and Charlotte offices. He received a bachelor’s in creative art from UNC Charlotte.

Bob King ’84 was recognized by the 2014 edition of Chambers USA: America’s Leading Lawyers in Business for the area of Environment. King is a partner at the firm Brooks Pierce. He received a bachelor’s degree in English and history at UNC Charlotte.

Carol Rhea ’83, ’86 is the new incoming president of the American Planning Association (APA), an organization that provides leadership in the development of vital and prosperous communities. She will be responsible for leading the 13-member APA Board of Directors in governing the association and setting strategic goals. She received a Bachelor of Science in Earth Science and a Master of Arts in Geography from UNC Charlotte.
1990s

Jase Darling accepted a position as coordinator of digital media with the Charlotte Hornets. According to an Observer article, Darling was the first employee hired by the rebranded Hornets. Darling is responsible for editing and posting much of the video and other digital content on the Hornets’ website. While at UNC Charlotte, he majored in history. Darling earned his certification from the Connecticut School of Broadcasting in Charlotte.

Brett Keeter ’99 recently took over as director of Congressman Patrick McHenry’s 10th U.S. House District office. In his new role, Keeter will serve as McHenry’s connection to local governments in the 10th U.S. House and to constituents. He previously has served McHenry as legislative director during the congressman’s time in the state House of Representatives and as regional director for the congressional office. Keeter received a Bachelor of Arts in Political Science from UNC Charlotte.

Lecia Shockley ’98 was named Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools Teacher of the Year. A second-grade teacher at Selwyn Elementary, Shockley was a member of the Teaching Fellows Institute Class of 2011. She began her teaching career in 1999 at Derita Elementary. Shockley received a Bachelor of Arts in Elementary Education from UNC Charlotte.

2000s

Staci Brice ’08 was honored by Catawba County Schools as Elementary Teacher of the Year. A second-grade teacher at Webb A. Murray Elementary School in Hickory, Brice earned a bachelor’s degree in education from UNC Charlotte.

LaPronda Spann ’05 was selected for the 2014 Women in Business Achievement Award by the Charlotte Business Journal. Principal and chief executive of Lain Consulting, Spann consults on nonprofit establishment and management, including planning, grant writing and board development and education. Her company, Lain Consulting, was selected as the Minority Business Enterprise of the Year by the city of Charlotte and Mecklenburg County at an event that recognizes business owners who have demonstrated exemplary leadership and sound business strategies. Spann received a master’s degree in health promotion and disease prevention from UNC Charlotte.

Crystal Lail ’14 has been named full-time principal at Elizabeth Lane Elementary School in Matthews. Lail had been serving as a resident principal at Elizabeth Lane since last August. Lail received a Master of School Administration from UNC Charlotte. She also holds a bachelor’s in elementary education from East Carolina University.

Paul McDaniel ’13 has been recognized by the Consumer Electronics Association (CEA) blog as one of 11 twitter accounts covering skilled immigration reform to follow. McDaniel is accompanied on the list by a U.S. senator, New York Times and Associated Press writers, and other researchers like himself. His twitter handle is @ pnmcdaniel. He recently received a Ph.D. in geography and urban regional analysis from UNC Charlotte.

2010s

Elijah Dunbar ’11 was named Crossroads Charter High School’s 2014 Teacher of the Year. Dunbar has taught in the Social Studies Department since joining the faculty two years ago. He holds a Master of Arts in Secondary Education from UNC Charlotte.

ALUMNA WINS PERFORMANCE COMPETITION

Amber Carpenter, music alumna and harpist, won first prize in the Rosen-Schaffel Competition for Young and Emerging Artists presented by the Appalachian Summer Festival and Appalachian State University.

Carpenter graduated from the UNC Charlotte Department of Music in 2013 with a Bachelor of Music in Music Performance (harp) and a minor in voice. She completed a graduate certificate in vocal pedagogy in May 2014.

Public and private colleges/universities in North Carolina can submit up to eight performers – rising seniors or recent graduates – for the competition. From those entries, seven finalists were selected by a distinguished jury that consisted of four conductors with ties to North Carolina.

In the competition, Carpenter tied for first place with mezzo-soprano Diana Yodzis. Carpenter’s award includes a $2,000 cash prize and the honor of returning to Boone next summer to perform a concerto during the Appalachian Summer Festival.
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Leave your grill at home but still have all the fun. The best tailgate in town is at the big white Alumni Village tent. Family friendly with tons of food, fun, and even an adult beverage or two. And at only $20 a pop, it’s only 8 cents a minute for a kicking time and zero clean up.

Sign Up Now: http://alumni.uncc.edu/tailgatepackage

ALUMNUS KYLE WHITE - A HERO AMONG US

Kyle White ('13) is one of many returning military veterans who have advanced their futures at UNC Charlotte following his service to the nation. Providing veterans educational opportunities is in the University’s DNA, beginning with its post-World War II founding to serve vets under the GI Bill.

UNC Charlotte's founder, Bonnie Cone, would proudly call White one of her “Bonnie's Boys” for achieving his degree in finance from the Belk College of Business and beginning his career in Charlotte with the Royal Bank of Canada.

But White received a distinction that stands out from nearly all other men and women who have served in the U.S. armed forces. He was awarded the Medal of Honor by President Obama earlier this year. At that time, he became just the seventh living recipient of the nation's highest military honor from the war in Afghanistan.

Moving forward, White said he wants to be an advocate for the men and women in uniform who will continue to come home from the Middle East and elsewhere. His goal is to help them understand the opportunities the current GI Bill provides them and to urge them to pursue the best possible university educations. In White's case, that was what he found at UNC Charlotte, and UNC Charlotte is proud to claim an American hero as a member of the Niner Nation.

A detailed account of the battle can be found on the Army's official website dedicated to White: www.army.mil/medalofhonor/white.
Joseph Albertson spent this summer studying Hindi in Jaipur, India, with a fellowship from the American Institute of Indian Studies. This was his second fellowship from the institute, which also funded his studies in Jaipur in the summer of 2013. Albertson is pursuing his master’s degree in religious studies at UNC Charlotte. He earned his bachelor’s degree magna cum laude in religious studies, also from UNC Charlotte.

**WHY ARE YOU INTERESTED IN INDIA AND LEARNING HINDI?**

As an undergraduate, I was really drawn toward classes about religion. I was especially drawn toward the aesthetics and the mythology of Indian culture. I first began learning to read in Sanskrit in the Religious Studies Department at UNC Charlotte. I learned about this fellowship from another student and became interested in learning Hindi. The North Indian culture, that’s what I have been writing about as a graduate student. Hindi was an avenue for me to more deeply explore the themes that I have been studying in the graduate program.

**WHAT HAS LEARNING A NEW LANGUAGE IN A FOREIGN COUNTRY BEEN LIKE FOR YOU?**

It’s a very humbling experience to go to India with very little knowledge of Hindi and try to get by because you just feel like you’ve regressed so far in your ability to communicate with people. Learning how to do that lets you gain a different understanding of yourself and who you are and how you fit into the world. Our department and University particularly emphasize that students have to go out into the world and start applying the ideas they study in class.

**HOW HAD YOUR STUDIES PREPARED YOU FOR THE FELLOWSHIP?**

I think what I’ve learned in the Religious Studies Department and in liberal arts more broadly is that we learn to find ways of rendering the strange familiar and the familiar strange. What I mean by that is, I went to India (the first time) with a whole concept of what it was like. I had spent a lot of time reading about it. I was very drawn to it. But, once I got there, I think I was prepared to find all these ways to complicate my notion of what India really was or what it was supposed to be like. In liberal arts we try to give people a more complex view of what they are looking at.
What is your legacy?

It was often said that Dr. Bonnie E. Cone converted a shoestring and a ball of twine into a university. She believed that fundraising must be an educational priority and she made a planned gift through a bequest in her will to UNC Charlotte.

You can too. Please contact John Cullum, directly at 704-687-8003 or john.cullum@uncc.edu for more information.

plannedgiving.uncc.edu

Not intended as legal, tax, or investment advice - please consult with your CPA, Financial Planner or Attorney.

Opposite, As a former residence of the Maharana of Udaipur, the Shiv Nawas Palace resort provides a regal experience for travelers. Famous for its beauty, traditional Rajput architectural styles, and for being featured in the James Bond movie Octopussy, this hotel attracts tourists seeking Mewar history as well as proximity to royalty.

How do you think your fellowships have changed you?

I know what it’s like to live in two different symbolic systems. In a general way, that’s a good thing to bring back to people. I think I give an avenue for people to think about a different system of living, a different culture. I also bring back ways for people to turn that around and think about themselves and their own situation.

It is important to study Indian culture so that we can have a better understanding of what goes on in India and so we can have better relationships with people in India and from India. I also think it brings different perspectives of our own lives, of our own cultures, that we can then begin to engage with our own cultures in a more critical way. One thing that has changed about me is that I am more vested in pushing people to go outside their comfort zones to try to achieve their goals even though they may seem unreachable at the time.

This Hindu temple near Jaipur in northern India symbolizes the religious aspect of Joseph Albertson’s fellowship experience, which also included studying the Hindi language.

What is your legacy?

It was often said that Dr. Bonnie E. Cone converted a shoestring and a ball of twine into a university. She believed that fundraising must be an educational priority and she made a planned gift through a bequest in her will to UNC Charlotte.

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Not intended as legal, tax, or investment advice - please consult with your CPA, Financial Planner or Attorney.
The venerable Belk Gym is taking a “time out” for renovation that started in May. The building is closed for the duration of renovations but is expected to reopen fall 2015.

Built in 1970, Belk Gym is named for the late Thomas M. Belk, a legendary business and civic benefactor who, with Miss Bonnie Cone and other local leaders, helped establish UNC Charlotte. It serves a variety of campus recreational and academic needs. The facility houses a four-court gymnasium for basketball, badminton and volleyball as well as racquetball courts, a spinning room and a weight room. The indoor swimming pool features six 25-yard lap swim lanes with a shallow area for water aerobics and kayak roll training.

The renovation will bring an additional 8,000 square feet of dedicated fitness space, air conditioning for the gymnasium courts, improved accessibility to the swimming pool, and other interior and exterior enhancements.

Academic functions stake your claim profile see improvements. Expanded classroom space and better equipped classrooms and laboratories will support students pursuing degrees in kinesiology, athletic training, exercise science, respiratory therapy and outdoor adventure leadership.

Come visit next fall and witness the transformation!
Charlotte's Immigrants: Who are They, Really?

By Owen Furuseth and Heather Smith

Last February the Charlotte Mayor’s Immigrant Integration Task Force met for the first time. Around the same time, Charlotte Chamber President Bob Morgan signed a letter by the U.S. Chamber of Commerce and the Partnership for a New American Economy to U.S. House Speaker John Boehner, urging him to move immigration reform forward this year. This summer, what many consider a full-blown immigration crisis developed on America’s southern border.

While chances are slight for federal action to address current immigrant policy challenges, the question of how our local leaders respond to a growing stream of foreign-born Charlotteans has taken on increased importance.

One of the first challenges for task force members is to develop a clear understanding of who Charlotte’s immigrants are. The popular impression is that our city’s immigrants are overwhelmingly from Latin America and largely working in blue-collar service jobs. Moreover, critics of immigration tend to portray these newcomers as undocumented and reliant on public services and assistance.

The reality is far more complex. Charlotte is a globalizing city; as such, it attracts new residents, both domestic and international, from across the socio-economic spectrum. So, yes, the person taking your order at the neighborhood fast-food restaurant may have a foreign accent, and the crew moving materials around a Westinghouse Boulevard warehouse may be listening to Afro-pop on the radio. But the cardiologist at Carolinas HealthCare System treating your spouse and the center city banker selling capital market products around the world are also increasingly likely to be immigrants.

Using the U.S. Census Bureau’s most recent American Community Survey, we can develop an overview of foreign-born Charlotteans. A conservative estimate is that they are close to 130,000 of your neighbors, making up around 14 percent of Mecklenburg County’s total population. About half (50.7 percent) of these immigrants arrived in the United States before 2000. Yet, nearly 6 percent of the immigrants have arrived post-2010, a testament to the city’s continuing attraction as a place in which to secure work and build quality of life.

The region of birth for immigrants to Charlotte-Mecklenburg is varied. A slight majority (51.5 percent) were born in Latin America. But more than 27 percent were born in Asia, including large proportions coming from India and China. Europeans make up 10.9 percent, followed by Africans at 8.4 percent.

The data do not bear out the popular image of immigrants as poor and confined to low-wage jobs. The median household income for immigrants is $54,419, or 96 percent of what the median native-born Charlotte family earns. Six percent earn more than $200,000, with another 18 percent making more than $100,000. Many are poor; almost 12 percent make less than $15,000, and the next 10 percent make less than $25,000.

More than one-quarter (26.9 percent) of local immigrants work in the management, business, science or arts occupations, generally what are called professional fields. Fewer are employed in natural resource, construction and maintenance occupations, 19.6 percent. These are generally categorized as blue-collar jobs.

If we take into account educational background, language skills and citizenship status, Charlotte’s immigrants from Europe occupy the top rankings, followed, in order, by Asian, African and Latin American immigrants. If we cross-reference these groups against native-born Charlotteans, the European and Asian newcomers are comparatively better off than natives on several educational and economic measures, while Africans and Latin Americans score below the U.S.-born group.

Looking at the myriad factors affecting immigrant integration, the facts show Charlotte-Mecklenburg’s immigrant community is far from monolithic.

What this means is that we need to be strategic if we are going to become a “welcoming city.” A “one-size” policy or plan that targets immigrants born in one region is not the way to go. The good news is that through efforts like the Mayor’s Immigrant Integration Task Force, many of the city’s leading agencies and institutions are working together to move Charlotte and Mecklenburg County forward to reach its full potential as a leading 21st century global community.

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