TRAILBLAZERS TURN TASSELS
FIRST LEVINE SCHOLARS CHART FASCINATING CAREERS
Seeking Funds for Salaries, Students, Science

This week, the North Carolina General Assembly convened for the short legislative session, where our elected officials are tasked with making decisions that will influence UNC Charlotte’s success in both the near and long term. We are hard at work making our priorities known.

Our most important legislative priority for this session is a salary increase for staff and faculty. We are very supportive of plans to increase K-12 teacher pay, but salary increases for all state employees must be addressed as well. UNC Charlotte faculty and staff have received only one raise of 1.2 percent in the last five years. This cripples our ability to attract and retain top talent.

It is also essential for UNC Charlotte to obtain support for our growing number of students. 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. Over the past five years, growth in the UNC system has totaled about 6,800 students; one campus – UNC Charlotte – is responsible for 48 percent of that growth. For the fall of 2014, we received 17,000 freshman applications, up from 14,400 for 2013. Additional support is crucial if we are to continue to provide access to higher education for well-qualified students.

As students are increasingly drawn to UNC Charlotte, the demand for the sciences is also outpacing the capacity of our aging science facility. Constructed originally in 1986, that facility can no longer be upgraded in a cost effective way to serve as a modern center for science education and research. Accordingly, our top capital priority for more than five years has been $12.6 million in planning funds to replace it. We will soon reach the point where it is no longer possible for us to accept additional outstanding students who seek degrees in the sciences and engineering.

Finally, as part of the Board of Governors budget request for the state to invest in new “game-changing” areas of research and education, we seek support for our industry-led “Data Science and Business Analytics” initiative. Big Data has transformed commerce worldwide, and we are on the frontier of its applications in the diverse economic sectors that comprise the fundamental building blocks of the Charlotte economy – financial services, retail, healthcare, and energy. As we saw in building our initiative to strengthen the energy cluster in Charlotte – the Energy Production and Infrastructure Center (EPIC) – a dynamic public-private partnership is essential. We seek state funding to hire the faculty and technical staff necessary to work with our industry partners, including the likes of Belk, Bank of America, Carolinas HealthCare System, Deloitte, Lowe’s, SAS, and others, to exploit the full potential of data analytics to strengthen business decision-making and customer relationships.

As North Carolina’s urban research university, we have the distinct ability to shape a thriving and diverse economy and meet the ever-changing needs around us. Our efforts are fortified by the many businesses and industry leaders that partner with us. We rely on this support, along with that of our alumni and the greater Charlotte community, to remind legislators of our critical role in ensuring the prosperity of the region.

Cordially,

Philip L. Dubois
Chancellor
features

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On the Cover:
The first graduating class of Levine Scholars. Established in 2009 through a $9.3 million gift from Leon and Sandra Levine through their foundation, the Levine Scholars Program was created to recruit extraordinary high school students based on scholarship, ethical leadership and civic engagement.
Naturally, a university magazine tells the story of people. Yet it seems that more so than typically – maybe because as I write this we approach the close of another academic year – this edition abounds with stories of those who are living the Stake Your Claim ethos.

For example, read about the student beauty queen who overcame chronic anxiety to become a crown jewel. Read also about the stellar 49er student-athletes and their distinguished athletics director. Read about our first graduating class of Levine Scholars – impressive and so promising. Read about the many students who are recognized for leadership. Keep reading, about the alum who has created a new scholarship to help promising students to someday achieve what he has achieved. Then read … well, just read it all, and know that at UNC Charlotte, Claim Stakers abound.

Regards

John D. Bland, Editor
Director of Public Relations

Clarification: In our Q1 2014 edition we featured a Perspective column by Linda Hargrove, a lecturer and freshman advisor in the William States Lee College of Engineering. However, we failed to identify her with the customary byline. We regret the error and thank Ms. Hargrove for her contributions to UNC Charlotte.
Earlier in March, Peel was crowned Miss North Carolina U.S. International 2014. She won the opportunity to compete for the Miss United States International Pageant being held in Florida, June 24. If she wins, Peel will compete against other state representatives for the chance to represent the United States, in Japan, at the Miss International pageant.

The Miss International pageant is the third largest pageant in the world and their stated mission is to promote world peace, goodwill and understanding.

Born in San Diego, Calif. and raised in Durham, N.C., Peel attended North High School in Durham and competed in her first pageant, Miss North Carolina USA 2013, in November 2013.

“I spontaneously decided to begin competing in pageants,” says Peel. “I had a severe case of social anxiety and I signed up for Miss North Carolina USA 2013 on a whim. They contacted me a year later asking if I was still interested in competing. I said yes without hesitation. That decision changed my life and I will be forever grateful.”

If all goes according to plan, Peel will graduate in May 2015, earning a bachelor’s degree in Communication Studies, with a concentration in public relations. She hopes to open a non-profit academy for children to help them develop social skills and provide them the tools to enhance self-esteem. In addition to her studies, she reads, exercises, travels and volunteers, most recently for the Disabled Veterans (DAV) in Durham.

Peel will be the graduate with the crown, the real one.

“"I HAD A SEVERE CASE OF SOCIAL ANXIETY AND I SIGNED UP FOR MISS NORTH CAROLINA USA 2013 ON A WHIM."
ROSE FINALIST FOR ATHLETICS DIRECTOR OF THE YEAR

Director of Athletics Judy Rose was one of five finalists for the Sports Business Journal’s 2013 Athletic Director of the Year Award. Other nominees included Missouri’s Mike Alden, Arizona’s Greg Byrne, Duke’s Kevin White and Washington’s Scott Woodward. The winner was named at an awards celebration in New York City, May 21.

Rose took the Charlotte 49ers program to its greatest heights in 2013. The year included the beginning of the 49ers first NCAA Division I football team, the opening of a 15,314-seat, on-campus stadium, and the successful move to Conference USA.

The year also saw record increases in fundraising; standing-room-only crowds for the start-up football program; huge jumps in social media followers, brand awareness and marketing revenue; and the creation of a local TV partnership in the nation’s 25th-ranked market.

Named a “Game-Changer” by the Sports Business Journal, a Lifetime Achievement Award winner by the Charlotte Business Journal, and invited to appear on “CBS This Morning” Jan. 10 — Rose was just the third female athletic director of an NCAA Division I institution when she became 49ers athletic director in 1990-91.

She was the first female named to the NCAA Division I Men’s Basketball Committee, serving a five-year term from 2000-2004.

Rose has overseen nearly $100 million in athletic facility upgrades and construction during her tenure. She also played a key role in attracting the 1994 NCAA Men’s Final Four, the 1996 NCAA Women’s Final Four, and the 1999 and 2000 Men’s Soccer College Cup to Charlotte.

On “CBS This Morning,” Rose appeared with two other female collegiate athletics directors, University of Texas Women’s Athletic Director Chris Plonsky and Rutgers University Athletic Director Julie Herrmann. The women spoke with co-hosts Norah O’Donnell and Charlie Rose about leadership, hurdles and accomplishments.

CHANCELLOR DUBOIS VISITS IREDELL COUNTY

Chancellor Philip L. Dubois continued the effort to strengthen connections throughout the region by spending the day in Statesville, April 23, to speak with civic and business leaders. This trip to the Iredell County seat was one of the most recent stops in a series of visits to the 12 counties that comprise the greater Charlotte region.

The day’s agenda included meetings with elected officials such as North Carolina Sen. David Curtis, Rep. Rena Turner and a group of local officials. He also met with alumnus and CEO of Energy United Wayne Wilkins (‘76) and Mitchell Community College President Tim Brewer.

Alumnus and Iredell County Manager Ron Smith (‘94) introduced Dubois as the luncheon speaker to the economic development group Greater Statesville Committee of 100, where he highlighted the connections between UNC Charlotte and Iredell County. UNC Charlotte is the campus of choice for local students with 27 percent of all Iredell County students in the UNC system enrolled here.

Dubois emphasized that UNC Charlotte is not just a convenient choice, but one that affords a quality academic experience and opens doors for students in the region. He also underscored UNC Charlotte’s pivotal role in economic development.

A powerful testament to Dubois’ messages was a meeting later in the day with executives at Doosan Portable Power. Doosan President Mike Ballweber spoke highly of UNC Charlotte interns and graduates they hire, which helps the company keep its commitment to sourcing local talent.

SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY EXPO ATTRACTED BIG CROWD

After months of planning, organizers of UNC Charlotte’s third annual Science and Technology Expo were able to witness the results of their work. More than 5,000 people filled the plaza in front of the Student Union to explore the festivities.

The UNC Charlotte Science and Technology Expo is the finale for the University’s participation in the North Carolina Science Festival, a statewide celebration of science and technology, now in its fourth year.

This year, the University ramped up its Festival participation by expanding on its traditional Science and Technology Expo, which is in its third year. In addition to the Expo, UNC Charlotte offered a seven-event public science lecture series, a four-event film series, and a night of expertly-guided star-gazing at the UNC Charlotte Observatory for its second annual N.C. Science Festival Star Party.

The always-popular Expo remained the University’s grand finale with an expanded set of acts, including robotics, motorsports engineering, rocketry, virtual people, exotic plants and high altitude balloons. The event featured more than 100 hands-on activities and presentations in chemistry, physics, geology, computer science, engineering and biology developed by the University and a host of industry and community organizations.

The UNC Charlotte Public Science Lecture Series ushered in the Festival with a series of lectures covering a myriad of topics.

Recognizing the role that movies play in creating public interest in science, UNC Charlotte added a Science Film Series to its Festival offerings for 2014. UNC Charlotte picked four films, ranging from classic science fiction to modern thrillers, to a sensational documentary and then added some articulate authorities on the movies’ subjects to discuss where fantasy and reality either diverge or converge.
ALUMNI ASSOCIATION HOSTED ‘GREEN TIE GALA’

The Alumni Association hosted an elegant evening for a good cause, April 4. The Green Tie Gala benefited the need-based scholarships named in honor of Gregory Davis (’76). The event, featuring live music, dancing, cocktails, hors d’ouvres, dessert and a mystery box fundraiser, took place at Reel Works Studios at the N.C. Music Factory.

Davis was a 21-year-old high school freshman who had been labeled mentally retarded when he dropped out of school in 1972. He got his GED from Central Piedmont Community College. Four years later, he became one of the first African Americans to graduate from UNC Charlotte’s Religious Studies Department.

Later, Davis earned a Master of Divinity from Duke and a Ph.D. in American religious history from the Union Institute.

Davis went on to oversee minority retention programs at the University with a focus on mentoring first-generation college students. During Davis’ tenure, the minority student population grew from roughly 100 students to representing approximately 20 to 25 percent of the student population.

When Davis retired as director of multicultural affairs in 2008, his decades-long commitment to the University was rewarded with a need-based scholarship in his honor.

NACAS SOUTHERN REGION RECOGNIZES UNIVERSITY’S ZERO-WASTE INITIATIVE

UNC Charlotte’s zero-waste initiative to make Richardson Stadium a facility that ideally produces no landfill waste received the Outstanding Collaboration and Partnership Award from the Southern region of the National Association of College Auxiliary Services (NACAS) Southern region.

The award, which was presented at the association’s annual conference, recognizes “unique, innovative or distinctive partnership that benefits the University and the community.”

Originally a student effort, the zero-waste initiative was embraced by UNC Charlotte facilities management/recycling and gathered steam as more departments joined in support. Auxiliary services, student activity center and venue management, and Chartwells, the University’s food service partner, were among the early adopters to commit time, effort and resources toward achieving the goal of a zero-waste stadium.

The goals of the University’s initiative were to minimize waste sent to landfills and wastewater systems by diverting biodegradable waste to composting or other landfill deferred systems whenever possible, and to maximize recycling efforts with on- and off-campus partners.

To achieve these goals, alternative packaging, even within national brands, sourced through collaboration with suppliers, was used. Only packaging that was compostable, recyclable or 100 percent post-consumer was used. Support and cooperation from companies like Coca-Cola, Bojangle’s, Papa John’s, Below Zero (a third-party specialty food cart contractor) and Georgia Pacific were crucial to the success of this initiative.

NURSING CONFERENCE FOCUSED ON AFFORDABLE CARE ACT

The College of Health and Human Services’ School of Nursing, in conjunction with its alumni chapter, held its third annual Distinguished Lectureship Conference at UNC Charlotte Center City.

The conference, “The Impact of Health Care Reform on Special Populations” featured interactive sessions on the Affordable Care Act and how it will impact special populations, such as women, senior citizens and veterans. There also was also a session on issues related to prevention and costs as well as challenges and solutions for health care.

Susan DeVore, CEO of Premier Healthcare, was a featured keynote speaker. Other speakers were Michael Bleich, the Maxine Clark and Bob Fox Dean and Professor at Washington University, and Laurie Zephyrin, national director for reproductive health for the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs.

DeVore, who obtained a bachelor’s degree from the University of North Carolina at Charlotte and a Master of Management from McGill University, has been named to Modern Healthcare’s 100 Most Influential People in Healthcare and Top 25 Women in Healthcare. She is an executive committee member of the Healthcare Leadership Council.

UNC CHARLOTTE AND PREMIER, INC. PARTNER WITH HEALTH SYSTEMS TO IMPROVE POPULATION HEALTH

UNC Charlotte and Premier, Inc. announced a partnership aimed at helping care providers improve population health in communities nationwide.

The partnership will leverage UNC Charlotte’s academic expertise and unique community health technology, developed and led by UNC Charlotte College of Health and Human Services Professor James Studnicki, as well as the frontline experiences of healthcare providers nationwide, and the PremierConnect™ Enterprise business intelligence and enterprise-wide analytics platform. Data will be housed in the PremierConnect Enterprise cloud-based data warehouse.

Among the first solutions the organizations are developing is a powerful and flexible method for conducting and analyzing community health needs assessments (CHNAs). Nonprofit hospitals are required by the Affordable Care Act to conduct triennial CHNAs to justify their tax-exempt status, and for participation in many federal programs. CHNAs also
help providers target, set and support their community’s health improvement priorities so they can appropriately allocate resources.

Having objective, complete data and the power and flexibility to analyze it is pivotal to the CHNA process. But many traditional CHNAs use fixed weighting for a limited number of static, county-level indicators, such as causes of death or reasons for hospitalization, and require the manual management of large data sets from various sources. As a result, providers may lack the evidence-based data and criteria needed to identify vulnerable sub-populations and appropriately prioritize their community’s health issues.

Unlike the common CHNA, the UNC Charlotte/Premier solution can help providers better identify, understand and predict disparities in care by integrating big data from disparate sources.

The first health system to partner with UNC Charlotte and Premier is Catholic Health Partners (CHP), Ohio’s largest health system with 23 hospitals and 265 other care locations serving 5 million people.

INTERNATIONAL RECOGNITION

Internationally and across the country, scholars and colleagues agree that Ogle is a preeminent leader of Rapid Injection Nuclear Magnetic Resonance (RINMR) spectroscopy research and practice, and he has been a mentor and role model to students and fellow researchers.

Ogle is a world-class researcher in organic chemistry; his studies have answered important questions and provided unprecedented insight and analysis about key synthetic chemical processes that are often central to creating organic compounds like pharmaceuticals and other drugs.

Working with colleagues, Ogle has conducted pioneering studies in the use of RINMR spectroscopy, which allows researchers to observe and measure exactly how two reagents interact during the course of a chemical reaction. As a result of this work, researchers all over the world have a unique perspective into the exact science behind a reaction’s complexities and nuances that always have existed but were never truly understood.

A member of the Chemistry Department since 1984, Ogle was promoted to full professor in 1996. He has authored more than 65 peer-reviewed journal articles; almost all are co-authored by students involved in his work. He has received numerous grants in support of his research from several agencies, most notably the National Science Foundation. He has served as director of UNC Charlotte’s Regional Analytical Chemistry Laboratory (RACheL) since its inception in 1996.

OGLE RECEIVED 2014 FIRST CITIZENS BANK SCHOLARS MEDAL

Craig Ogle, the Charles H. Stone Professor of Chemistry, is the 2014 recipient of the First Citizens Bank Scholars Medal. The prestigious award, presented by First Citizens Bank and UNC Charlotte, honors faculty scholarship and intellectual inquiry, and is UNC Charlotte’s most prestigious faculty award in recognition of excellence in research.

Ogle has made an indelible impact on the field of organic chemistry.

HARSHINI DE SILVA AWARD PRESENTED TO RYAN KILMER

Ryan Kilmer, professor of psychology, is the 2014 recipient of the Harshini V. de Silva Graduate Mentor Award. He was honored at a special ceremony, Feb. 18, at the Harris Alumni Center at Johnson Glen.

A clinical-community psychologist, Kilmer is focused on improving the lives of children, especially those who are at-risk for emotional, behavioral or academic difficulties. He is co-director of the Community Psychology Research Lab, where he works collaboratively with colleagues, graduate students and

UNC CHARLOTTE HOSTED BIG DATA CONFERENCE

UNC Charlotte hosted the conference “Harnessing the Power of Data,” May 13, at the Ritz-Carlton in Uptown Charlotte. The one-day event brought together leading experts from industry and academia to discuss the most recent trends in “Big Data.”

Charlotte leaders note the Queen City is uniquely positioned to serve as a leader in a data-driven economy based on the concentration and spectrum of data-driven industries in the state, including energy, financial services, healthcare, manufacturing, and retail.

The University’s Data Science and Business Analytics (DSBA) Initiative is an industry-university-state partnership designed to broaden and deepen North Carolina’s business analytics talent and stimulate strategic innovation. Its goal is to support high-end job creation and business investment in the Charlotte region and across the state. The Belk College of Business, College of Computing and Informatics and College of Health and Human Services at UNC Charlotte are leading this initiative.

The conference provided attendees information on how firms are integrating Big Data into everything they do to better serve their customers, to create strategic advantages for themselves, improve patient outcomes and to better deploy scarce resources. Additionally, this forum addressed the challenges of technology integration and how to find the human talent needed to be successful in these efforts.
Community partners on various grant-funded projects to improve the well-being of children and families, as well as youth and adolescents transitioning into adulthood, in the greater Charlotte region.

From his first semester on campus, Kilmer cultivated a reputation as a scholar, researcher and mentor. His efforts with students extend beyond their graduation; he remains a resource for his students as they transition into colleagues.

The de Silva Award honors its namesake, an exceptional teacher, brilliant scholar and researcher and devoted servant of her profession and community until her death in October 2000. It is given annually to the faculty member whose commitment to students, research and scholarly inquiry most closely exemplifies the spirit of de Silva.

**BELK HALL EARNED RATING OF TWO GREEN GLOBES**

The University’s Belk Hall achieved a rating of two Green Globes from the Green Building Initiative’s Green Globes for New Construction program.

A rigorous program used to advance and certify a building’s environmental performance and sustainability, the Green Globes are determined through an on-site assessment by a certified third-party. The rating demonstrates “excellent progress in the reduction of environmental impacts and use of environmental efficiency practices.”

Belk Hall is the first state-owned building and sixth overall to earn Green Globe certification for new construction in North Carolina. It is the fourth certified green building on campus with four others receiving LEED ratings from the U.S. Green Building Council (EPIC and UNC Charlotte Center City are LEED Gold certified, and the Bioinformatics Building and Miltimore Hall are LEED Silver certified).

A 426-bed residential building, Belk Hall opened in August 2013. The University demonstrated that the facility exceeded many aspects of national construction industry standards. According to the Green Building Initiative, the building had an 86 percent energy performance reduction.

Other notable features include a white roof to promote indoor cooling and energy-efficient windows that draw daylight indoors. Several types of energy-efficient equipment were installed, such as sensors that power down when an area is not in use.

Outdoor landscaping around Belk Hall is designed so that watering is not required. The University earned Green Globe rating points for the use of recycled materials in furniture, carpets, metal studs and tile, as well as features that improve resident comfort, such as noise reduction and outdoor views.

**NATIONAL VOLUNTEER WEEK**

UNC Charlotte demonstrated its commitment of “Giving Green in the Community” as more than 400 campus members participated in service projects planned for National Volunteer Week, April 7-11.

Coordinated by the Community Relations Department in the Division for University Advancement, the projects involved volunteers helping at several local nonprofit agencies, including Second Harvest Food Bank, the Humane Society, Classroom Central, Crisis Assistance Ministry, the Safe Alliance Shelter for Women and the Carolina Thread Trail.

Together UNC Charlotte volunteers contributed more than 250 service hours to the organizations, which was the equivalent of nearly $6,000 in labor costs.

However, many University volunteers saw themselves as the beneficiaries. Staff member Sharon Horinka worked with Clyde and Ethel Dickson Domestic Violence Shelter.

“I was humbled to spend time with women who’ve tirelessly struggled to find a place they feel safe—something the majority of us take for granted,” said Horinka. “Seeing hope in their eyes and knowing you helped is incredibly moving and meaningful. You can immediately see you’re helping make a difference in their lives. It’s a beautiful feeling.”

Some campus units, such as the Belk College of Business, used volunteer activities to further engage students and alumni. A group of 45 Belk College alumni and students worked along the Carolina Thread Trail.
ENGINEERING PROFESSOR RECEIVED NSF EARLY CAREER AWARD

Na Lu, an assistant professor in the Engineering Technology and Construction Management Department of the Lee College of Engineering, won a $400,000 National Science Foundation CAREER award to further her research to develop cost-effective thermoelectric materials for high-temperature power generation through waste-heat harvesting.

The Faculty Early Career Development (CAREER) Program is the NSF’s most-prestigious award in support of junior faculty. CAREER grants are awarded to faculty who exemplify the role of teachers-scholars through outstanding research and excellence in education. The long-range goal of the program is to build a firm foundation for a lifetime of leadership in the integration of education and research.

Lu, who has been with the Lee College since 2009, holds a Doctor in Construction Education from Clemson University. Her research is primarily in the area of sustainable materials for infrastructural and energy applications. The CAREER award will provide funding to investigate new processing mechanisms of nanostructuring bulk nitrides and oxides to directly convert thermal energy into electricity for high-temperature thermoelectric power generation.

Lu said, “Essentially, what we will be looking at is designing and developing cost-efficient methods to produce materials for power generation by harvesting wasted heat. Currently, 60 percent of energy generated in U.S. is wasted as heat, for instance gas exhaustion in car engines, large manufacturing process, etc.”

Such wasted heat could be directly converted into electricity through thermoelectric (TE) conversion. TE technology has many attractive features, such as being renewable, reliable, scalable and silent. Currently, TE technology uses toxic, rare and expensive elements. The few applications of TE technology are in deep space exploration and military functions.

COLLEGE OF ENGINEERING RECEIVED SOFTWARE GRANT

Analytics leader SAS made a grant of software that includes energy forecasting technologies to the Lee College of Engineering and its allied Energy Production and Infrastructure Center (EPIC).

The SAS grant will be devoted to the energy analytics research being led by Tao Hong, an assistant professor of systems engineering and EPIC associate. According to officials, the software will be an important tool in support of education and research and development in advanced analytics applications for utilities and the oil and gas industries.

“The new SAS grant will offer our students invaluable hands-on experience with the analytics software that hundreds of energy companies use for operations and planning,” Hong said. “That experience with SAS Analytics represents a tremendous advantage in the energy job market. They can go to employment interviews and their first days of work with added confidence from that experience with state-of-the-art technology.”

Johan Enslin, director of EPIC, said the SAS grant will be an important tool in helping prepare the engineering workforce of the future.

Beginning August 2014, a number of engineering courses will use SAS software to introduce descriptive, predictive and prescriptive analytics and their applications in energy forecasting, demand response analytics, outage management, energy trading and risk management.

Ellen McIntyre, current dean of the college, presided over the ceremony and spoke of the indelible mark Calhoun left on the college and her role in advancing the College of Education's reputation and impact within the field of education. Under Calhoun's leadership "Professional educators transforming lives” became the conceptual framework of college programs in teaching and research. Additionally, the college served as a national model, receiving distinguished reviews from the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education and the N.C. Department of Public Instruction.

Calhoun retired in 2013 after 31 years of service to the University.

FIVE STAFF MEMBERS RECOGNIZED AS TOP EMPLOYEES

Changes to the University’s Employee of the Year program were implemented this year resulting in five staff members being recognized at the annual Staff Recognition Luncheon. Ronnie Bell, John Renwick, Brenda Shue, Janis Singletary and James Williams were named Employees of the Year.

This year, for the first time, one Employee of the Year could be picked in each of these categories: devotion to duty (outstanding state government service), innovation, human relations and community/public service. In the safety/heroism category, multiple individuals could be recognized.

Brenda Shue, from the Chancellor’s Office, was honored in the category devotion to duty for her unparalleled level of devotion to her role. She was lauded for her ability to seek out more efficient processes and to take on tasks
without being prompted and that were beyond the normal scope of her duties.

The Student Union, Activities and Recreation Department’s Janis Singletary was recognized in the category of human relations. A nominator noted that Janis is all about helping others through service, by building connections, and often, by organizing activities and social events.

James Williams, supervisor of facilities operations renovations, was acknowledged in the innovations category. He built a business case to restore the Renovations Shop, which was disbanded several years ago. In the past two years, Williams’ idea of a reconstituted Renovations Shop has saved the University tens of thousands of dollars. Williams has been with the University for 16 years.

Locksmith Ronnie Bell was honored for taking action to help a student in distress. His actions to save a student reflect his values and the way he lives his life and epitomizes the intent of the Employee of the Year Award – Safety and Heroism.

John Renwick, a facilities management Zone 4 staff member, also was honored in the safety/heroism category. On June 3, 2013, Renwick spotted a man in a stopped car that was blocking traffic. He discovered the man was in diabetic shock and rendered assistance. After asking a bystander to contact campus police, Renwick found someone with a granola bar for the driver to eat.

**CAMPUS COMPACT HONORS DUBOIS, COOK**

UNC Charlotte Chancellor Philip L. Dubois and James Cook, professor of psychology, are the 2014 recipients of North Carolina Campus Compact’s Leo Lambert and Robert Sigmon Awards, respectively.

A coalition of 38 public and private colleges and universities across the state, North Carolina Campus Compact builds institutions’ capacity to produce civically engaged graduates and strengthen their communities.

The Leo Lambert Engaged Leader Award is given annually to one North Carolina university leader who is committed to creating and sustaining efforts that impact his or her community and campus.

In selecting Dubois, N.C. Campus Compact college leaders praised Dubois’ commitment to make UNC Charlotte a driver of economic and workforce development. They cited Dubois’ work to establish University-industry partnerships that led to the creation of the UNC Charlotte Energy Production and Infrastructure Center. He also has supported the University’s community development activities, which include a partnership with Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools Governor’s Village and the creation of a unique work-study program for military veterans.

Dubois became UNC Charlotte’s fourth chancellor in 2005. His leadership has been instrumental in UNC Charlotte’s efforts to fulfill its mission to address the “cultural, economic, educational, environmental, health and social needs of the greater Charlotte region.”

Psychology professor Jim Cook received the Robert Sigmon Service-Learning Award.

The Sigmon Award recognizes one faculty member from across the state for significant contributions to service-learning, a pedagogical strategy that links community service to classroom study and reflection.

Cook, during his 30-plus years at UNC Charlotte, has created and evaluated projects and partnerships that meet the Queen City’s most pressing human needs. In addition, Cook secured millions of dollars in grant funding to support these projects for which he trained students to be system-wide agents of change and skilled practitioners.

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**BELK INC. GETS DISTINGUISHED SERVICE AWARD**

On May 13, UNC Charlotte presented its annual Distinguished Service Award to Belk Inc. The company has a strong tradition of community service and altruism dating to its founders. As the nation’s largest family owned and operated department store company, Belk is an integral part of the greater Charlotte region, and it has been for more than a century. As Belk marks its 126th year of business in 2014, it continues a rich legacy of philanthropic support and leadership dedicated to community involvement and a commitment to shape the modern Southern lifestyle.

The Belk family, Foundation and company are ardent University benefactors. Last year, Belk, Inc. donated $5 million to UNC Charlotte’s Belk College of Business, which was named in honor of the Belk family and organization in 1990. That donation included endowed faculty components; the Belk Scholars Program, which grooms undergraduate business students for careers in analytics and business innovation; and faculty teaching and research grants.

John R. “Johnny” Belk speaks in acceptance of UNC Charlotte’s Distinguished Service Award.
“I believe it's important for all students to give back what they can, even if that's just a few minutes of their time.”

Patterson recognized for her commitment to the community

By Tom Whitestone

Spirit of Service

Senior Jasmine Patterson won a Conference USA Spirit of Service Award in April.

Giving back to the community brings me such joy so I always try to fit time in my schedule for volunteering,” said 49ers senior track and field star Jasmine Patterson, not giving herself nearly enough credit for the amount of time she has devoted to others during her time at UNC Charlotte.

Conference USA saw fit to give her credit — naming her the Charlotte 49ers’ recipient of the conference’s Spirit of Service Award in April, just weeks before her expected graduation.

Patterson, who recorded top 10 finishes in both the javelin and pole vault during the indoor season, owns a 3.973 GPA as a double major in Spanish and economics. She is also member of the first class of Levine Scholars (see page 15).

The award, however, is not based on athletic or academic achievement. It is based on significant community service, with “significant” being the operative word.

Patterson’s service more than fits the bill.

She has served as a mentor at the Ronald McDonald House, volunteered at Levine Children’s Hospital, worked at Camino Nuevo, a school for children and adults with special needs in Peru; organized a book drive at the International House of Metrolina and served at a local women’s shelter. She also volunteered with the Adaptive Sports and Adventure Program in Charlotte and helped plan and organize a dance marathon on campus that raised more than $35,000 for Levine Children’s Hospital.

“I’m really proud of Jasmine’s award and her dedication to service,” said 49ers head track and field coach Robert Olesen. “Community service, education and personal growth are all integral parts of the collegiate student-athlete experience.”

Patterson made the Dean’s List each semester and received the “Perfect Niner Award” twice for maintaining a 4.0 GPA while competing on the track team.

“I’m so thrilled to have been named a C-USA Spirit of Service honoree,” said Patterson. “Student-athletes are incredibly busy, and it can seem overwhelming to devote free time to service projects. I believe it’s important for all students to give back what they can, even if that’s just a few minutes of their time. Individuals who participate in community service gain valuable skills and self-confidence while contributing to the betterment of their communities.”

Patterson, of Norwood, N.C., plans to enroll in the Ph.D. Audiology program at UNC Chapel Hill in the fall.
49ers Sign Radio Deal with WFNZ

The Charlotte 49ers, through the University's media rights holder, IMG College, have completed an extensive partnership with WFNZ, Sports Talk 610 AM, that will land the school's radio broadcasts on the market's largest sports station.

All Charlotte 49ers football and men's basketball games will be broadcast on WFNZ 610 AM, unless a game conflicts with Charlotte Hornets basketball. Sister station WBCN 1660 AM (CBS Sports Radio) will carry any such conflicts as well as the 49ers coaches' shows.

In addition, the stations will broadcast a selection of baseball and women's basketball games. Both WFNZ and WBCN were ranked in Arbitron's top 20 AM and FM stations in the Charlotte market this past fall, and the two joined WBT-AM as the only AM stations in the top 20.

The three-year deal also includes transmission of pre-game shows throughout the season. IMG College, which operates the nation's largest independent sports radio network, will also produce a daily "49ers Minute" to air on WFNZ during morning drive time.

“We have taken substantial steps to put our program in front of more and more people throughout this region,” said Director of Athletics Judy Rose.

The first broadcast will be the 49ers season-opener in football, Thursday, Aug. 28 at Campbell. Longtime "Voice of the 49ers" Matt Swierad will continue in his role as play-by-play announcer for both football and men's basketball games.

First Football Game Aug. 28

In year two of NCAA 49ers football, Charlotte boasts an 11-game schedule. It features four schools that were ranked or receiving votes in the final 2013 Football Championship Subdivision (FCS) national polls and eight teams that appeared on the inaugural 2013 schedule.

The 49ers will compete, once again, as an FCS Independent before joining Conference USA in 2015. The team opens the season Thursday, Aug. 28 on the road at Campbell.

Overall, the 49ers have six home games and five road games. Three of the six home games are against teams that were ranked or receiving votes in the final FCS national polls: Charleston Southern, James Madison and Coastal Carolina. The home slate is highlighted by the Nov. 8 contest against #7 Coastal Carolina, which won the Big South Championship and reached the FCS quarterfinals.

Home games also include a city showdown with Division II Johnson C. Smith, (Sept. 6); a rematch with top 25 Charleston Southern, (Sept. 27) and a four-game home stand to conclude the season. The 49ers welcome former FCS National Champion James Madison (Oct. 25).

After the home game with J.C. Smith, the 49ers travel to N.C. Central (Sept. 13) and Elon (Sept. 20). After the home game with Charleston Southern, they hit the road again to play Gardner-Webb (Oct. 4) and The Citadel (Oct. 11).

Home games are at Jerry Richardson Stadium and kick off at noon.


Yilmaz Hired as Volleyball Coach

The Charlotte 49ers have hired Gokhan Yilmaz as the volleyball program's 11th head coach. A former Turkish Junior National Team coach, Yilmaz joins Charlotte after six years as associate head coach and training coordinator with Florida State University.

The Seminoles captured three Atlantic Coast Conference titles in the last five seasons and advanced to the national semifinals in 2011.

The Seminoles also made a pair of national quarterfinal appearances and advanced to the round of 16 three times. As the lead recruiter at FSU, he played a key role in the Seminoles having the nation’s third-ranked recruiting class in 2012.

“We are convinced that with his track record and experience that he will not only be a great coach but also a great recruiter,” said 49ers Director of Athletics Judy Rose.

Prior to FSU, Yilmaz served as an assistant coach at Arkansas, Northwood, Cameron and Western New Mexico.

Before his U.S. collegiate experience, Yilmaz coached volleyball at five institutions in his native Turkey and served as the head coach of the junior national champions. He was the guest coach on the Turkish Junior National Team, which was runner-up in the World Championships in 2009.

Hoops Recruit: State Player of the Year:

Men's basketball signee Keyshawn Woods has been named N.C. Gatorade Player of the Year and All-Mecklenburg Player of the Year by The Charlotte Observer.

Woods, who signed with the 49ers last November, led Charlotte's Northside Christian Academy to its third straight N.C. Independent Schools Athletic Association Class 2A state championship. Northside Christian Academy was ranked fifth in the MaxPreps national rankings after winning the state title.

A three-time first-team all-state selection, Woods was named Metrolina Athletic Conference Player of the Year after averaging 17.1 points, 4.6 rebounds, 3.0 assists and 1.6 steals per game. He is a six-foot, four-inch guard/small forward and the second Niner to earn the state’s Gatorade Player of the Year Award. Mitchell Baldwin won it in 2001.

Woods also excels in the classroom. He has a 3.79 GPA and is a member of Northside's National Honor Society.

Tom Whitestone is associate athletic director for media relations.
Trailblazers
Turn the Tassel
First Levine Scholars reap robust opportunities, chart fascinating careers

By Phillip Brown

Trailblazing is one way to define the essence of the students who constitute the inaugural class of Levine Scholars. Collectively and individually, they bonded to form a close-knit cadre of scholars determined to make a difference at UNC Charlotte and in the greater community.

Established in 2009 through a $9.3 million gift from Leon and Sandra Levine through their foundation, the Levine Scholars Program was created to recruit extraordinary high school students based on scholarship, ethical leadership and civic engagement. Recipients receive a four-year scholarship, which covers tuition, room and board, stipends for four summer experiences (including ones abroad) and a grant to implement a service project of the scholar’s design.

As trailblazers, the 13 members of the Class of 2014 accepted the scholarship knowing they were the first recipients, said Diane Zablotsky, faculty director of the Levine Scholars Program.

“They are an eclectic group, but they are very individual in their interests and personalities,” she said. “Because they were the pioneering class, they engaged in lots of trial and error...
during their four years, but eventually, they settled into opportunities where they could make a difference and use their grant funding.”

CEMENTING BONDS, CREATING FAMILY

The Levine Scholars point to their first summer, prior to the start of their freshman year, as a critical component of the program. For 25 days, they hiked the Absaroka Range in Wyoming under the guidance of instructors from the National Outdoor Leadership School (NOLS).

“Our backpacking expedition together taught us about leadership, teamwork and wilderness survival,” said Celia Karp, a public health and communication studies major from Bethesda, Md. “The experience gave us the opportunity to build friendships and trust among the cohort, enabling us to enter our first year of college together with an amazing set of friends and peers.”

“TO THIS DAY, WHEN I FEEL OVERWHELMED OR STRESSED, I REMIND MYSELF TO FOCUS ON ‘ONE MORE HILL.’”

Kelley Shealy, associate director of the Levine Scholars Program, accompanied the first class on the NOLS expedition. She said the uninterrupted time together — without the comfort of relatives and the distraction of technology — was a memorable experience. “We spent 12 to 14 hours each day hiking, singing songs, telling stories, laughing and sharing our lives with one another. Most importantly, we learned to appreciate and embrace our similarities and differences.”

Inaugural scholars Jasmine Patterson and Jacob Huffman agreed with Shealy’s observations.

For Patterson, the phrase “one more hill” became a mantra during the excursion. She said it would have been easy to give up on reaching the next point on the map, but classmates encouraged one another to persevere.

“To this day, when I feel overwhelmed or stressed, I remind myself to focus...
Urban Farmer: Jacob Huffman

Charlotte native Jacob Huffman is passionate about sustainability and food systems. A geography and German major, Huffman became interested in urban agriculture early in his collegiate studies.

Before graduating this May, he helped finalize construction of an aquaponics system as part of the Urban Farm Learning Center at Garinger High School in Charlotte. He used his Levine Scholars grant funding to support the initiative.

“My interest in aquaponics derived from a summer internship in Chicago,” explained Huffman. “I worked in food rights issues and learned more about urban food systems. We looked at food deserts (areas of a city with little to no access to fresh fruits or vegetables), and I conducted field surveys and did GIS work in the lab.”

At Garinger, Huffman helped repair the greenhouse working in conjunction with members of 100 Gardens, a local organization that “merges innovative business practices with educational, environmental, agricultural and social justice objectives,” according to its website.

The greenhouse will raise seedlings for the farm, and the project includes composting stations and the aquaponics system. According to 100 Gardens, this system raises plants and fish in an integrated method and can be used to teach science, technology, math and engineering. In addition, it demonstrates zero-waste technologies and provides an alternative to traditional garden programs.

“The goal is to involve Garinger students and bring in community members and teach them how to operate the system,” Huffman said. “The produce grown through the system will support programs of Friendship Trays and 100 Gardens.”

Friendship Trays, in operation since 1976, delivers more than 600 meals daily to elderly, handicapped or convalescing people.

Light greens such as Swiss chard, mustard greens and collards and the herbs basil and cilantro are just a few examples of produce that can be grown through the aquaponics systems, said Huffman.

Looking to the near future, Huffman said he plans to continue to work in urban agriculture, which fits nicely into UNC Charlotte’s mission as the state’s urban research institution.

“Geography taught me to look at the big picture, so I wanted to use my studies to better understand Charlotte and how urban agriculture can be utilized here to bring healthy food to the city’s roughly 70,000 residents who live in food deserts,” he said.

As an undergraduate, Huffman studied abroad in Germany at the Goethe-Institute in Freiburg. He is considering graduate studies in Germany because of that country’s advanced urban agricultural efforts.

Child Advocate: Christina Neitzey

Aspiring attorney Christina Neitzey spent her sophomore, junior and senior years as a volunteer guardian ad litem, a court-appointed advocate for children who have been abused or neglected.

As a guardian ad litem, she focused her efforts on behalf of the children she was assigned. She worked with social workers, parents, foster families, attorneys and judges to ensure the children’s best interests were protected as decisions were made about their futures.

“Typically, I handled one to three cases at a time,” said Neitzey, who is graduating with a law degree from the University of North Carolina School of Law in May. “I was part of this project from the beginning, when it was just an idea being tossed around,” said Neitzey. “It was an incredible experience to bring something like the dance marathon to UNC Charlotte and the city of Charlotte. We wanted this to be something that the entire campus could get excited about as a way to connect students with a cause in Charlotte that really mattered.
We hope this project becomes a tradition that grows bigger and better every year.”

Fellow Levine Scholars Celia Karp, Caitlin Vaverek and Anna Swartz comprised the 49er Dance Mine executive committee. The event, a 12-hour dance marathon, raised more than $35,000 for the Levine Children’s Hospital; more than 550 UNC Charlotte students participated.

Currently, Neitzey is finalizing plans for law school — possible choices are the University of Chicago, Columbia and New York University. While she plans to start her career in corporate law, Neitzey said she will probably pursue opportunities to work in the public sector, too.

Recording Artist: Evan Danchenka

Public transit systems shuttle thousands of commuters daily, and artist and architecture student Evan Danchenka captured noises from across the United States for a project called “TranSound Plaza.”

As an affiliate artist with the McColl Center for Visual Art, Danchenka traveled to Boston, Chicago, New York City, Pittsburgh, San Francisco and Washington, D.C., to develop his “musique concrete” installation. One definition of musique concrete is the combining of found sounds with traditional music to create a new synthesis.

“The sounds of public transit are relentless, and these sounds are distinct from one city to another,” said Danchenka. “They play inherent roles in how an individual identifies with his or her daily life. With respect to Charlotte, the LYNX is part of the city, and there are sounds related to it. The cities I visited have integrated these sounds into the daily lives of its citizens, and they (the sounds) say something about the neighborhoods where the trains go.”

As Charlotte grows and the LYNX expands toward campus, Danchenka wanted to use his installation to encourage transit users to become more aware of their commute and how people identified their sense of place through sound; he said that all LYNX riders partake in this “composition.”

For his final project, Danchenka, who grew up in Harrisburg, N.C., wrote seven compositions that incorporated 90 minutes of video shown on three projectors. “TranSound Plaza” also was displayed in the gallery in the Storrs Building.

During his time at the McColl Center, Danchenka helped with fundraising efforts and interacted with the public thanks to the center’s “open door policy” for artists. He said people would stop by the studio to share ideas and discuss the role of public art in Charlotte. During the 2012 Democratic Party presidential nominating convention, he assisted with “The Quasimodo Project,” a large-scale collaborative effort of Charlotte artists, designers, architects, musicians, writers and other creative professionals.

In addition to his work at the McColl Center, Danchenka occasionally volunteers with the Carolina Thread Trail. And, while part of the inaugural class of Levine Scholars, he will stay on to complete a Bachelor of Architecture, which requires a fifth year of study.

His academic studies and work as an artist have influenced his view of his professional career. “To me, architecture is a collaborative public issue. There’s a social responsibility that goes beyond the aesthetic of the designer,” Danchenka said.

Movement Maker: Jasmine Patterson

Jasmine Patterson used her Levine Scholar civic engagement grant to fund a handcycle for the Adaptive Sports and Adventure Program (ASAP). Powered by a rider’s arms, handcycles are specialized vehicles that can cost up to $6,500.

A UNC Charlotte track and field athlete (see page 10), Patterson volunteers with the not-for-profit organization, which is supported by the Carolinas HealthCare System’s Carolinas Rehabilitation practice. ASAP provides opportunities for individuals with physical challenges to participate in sports and recreation.

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on ‘one more hill,’” says Patterson, who hails from Norwood, N.C. “I can’t do everything at once, but if I focus on the present, I can accomplish more than I ever dreamed possible.”

Huffman noted that the NOLS experience permeated the scholars’ time on campus. They lived together as roommates and neighbors during their freshman year.

“Conflicts arose, which is natural when a strong-willed, diverse group of people live together,” said the Charlotte native. “But we all learned to respect one another’s personal goals and worldviews and supported each other, despite our differences. I think that this is a key element of this scholarship that needs to be understood. We are all very different; we are all imperfect. But we can choose to learn from that and build up rather than break down.”

The NOLS experience is designed to create a family-like atmosphere that fosters camaraderie, loyalty and support — not only within one class but across classes. “It’s definitely one of the defining aspects of the Levine Scholars Program,” Zablotsky said.

**FORGING CONNECTIONS**

Another defining feature of the Levine Scholars Program is the opportunity for participants to build connections on campus and in the greater Charlotte region.

High Point, N.C., native and nursing major Caroline Brewer said the program provided the means to connect with professors and mentors who were instrumental in her academic development and personal growth. “I’m definitely more interested in advanced study than when I started because the program has opened my eyes as to what is available to me,” she said.

Caitlin Vaverek, one of the organizers for the 49er Dance Mine marathon, a 12-hour fundraiser that benefited the Levine Children’s Hospital, said the support from other Levine Scholars and from across the campus was instrumental in fostering the belief that she can accomplish anything.

“A small group of committed individuals can come together to make a significant impact. Not only were we able to start the

**A Quick Look at More Levine Scholars in the Inaugural Class**

Future physician **Anna Bawtinhimer** grew up in the small eastern North Carolina town of Ayden and graduated from Arendell Parrott Academy in nearby Kinston.

She said the Levine Scholars Program offered unique academic and extracurricular paths, and together, the students had a positive impact on the campus and community.

Bawtinhimer, a public health major and biology minor, conducted breast cancer screenings among African American and Hispanic communities in Mecklenburg and Stanly counties for her civic engagement project. She also completed internships in the Mecklenburg County Health Department and in Ecuador, which “altered my perspectives on national and global health care.”

**Caroline Brewer** has accepted a position with the Academy of Maternal and Neonatal Health at Women’s Hospital of Greensboro, the area’s only program focused on maternity care.

When she was a rising sophomore, the High Point, N.C., native completed an internship with Florence Crittenton Services. She also worked as a nurse’s aide at CMC-University, spent a summer alongside a midwife who specialized in out-of-hospital births and traveled to Mongolia to volunteer in a labor and delivery unit.

“All of these experiences provided to me by the Levine Program gave me a unique perspective into maternity care,” said Brewer. “They also gave me an edge when it came to interviewing for my new job.”

By fall 2015, **Vrushab Gowda** plans to be in medical school. He and fellow scholars Austin Halbert and Laura Outlaw plan to create a hardcover book that sheds light on the occupational
variances of U.S. workers, using imagery and first-person narratives.

Although he wishes he could stay at UNC Charlotte for another four years, Gowda, a biology and economics major from Manalapan, N.J., is ready to graduate. During his undergraduate career, he interned at the Environmental Protection Agency, spent weeks shadowing and researching at Harvard Medical School and studied at the London School of Economics.

Celia Karp used a portion of her grant to fund the 49er Dance Marathon, a legacy event of the Levine Scholars Program. The Maryland native also was involved with the Bethesda Health Center, located in the University City area. It provides free services to Charlotte’s Latino population.

“I've been working with the director to develop a program that focuses on increasing self-esteem, social connectivity and improving healthy habits and behaviors among Latina women,” said Karp, who recently received a Fulbright U.S. Student Academic Award for Research.

The honor will fund her studies in Quito, Ecuador, where she will research “how health communication affects women’s perspectives on sexual and reproductive health, impacts their utilization of maternal health programs and contributes to Ecuador’s high maternal mortality rate,” she said.

Economics major Sam McClenney, from Cary, N.C., is working with Queen City Forward to create a summer accelerator program called Impact-U. He said the goal is to offer a crash course in entrepreneurship to college students, individually or in teams. “They will receive mentoring, workshops and a dedicated workspace so they can get the most out of their business/idea.”

In reflecting on the impact of the Levine Scholars Program, he defined it as “students exceeding expectations in every way possible, while creating positive change at their school and city.”

Laura Outlaw is partnering with fellow scholars on “The American Workday,” a photo book that will focus on American workers. She applauded the scholarship program’s ability to allow the undergraduates “to mold our experiences to fit our interests and goals.”

The finance and international business major, who graduated from the N.C. School of Science and Mathematics, has accepted a full-time position with Ernst & Young in the company’s financial services office based in Charlotte. She is from Mount Olive, N.C. “I see the Levine Scholars Program continuing to be successful and attracting passionate and creative leaders that will give back to Charlotte in meaningful ways,” Outlaw said.

Psychology major Cassady Schulte, a graduate of Charlotte’s Independence High School, is gearing up to compete in the World Race. She will spend 11 months partnering with humanitarian organizations in 11 different countries. As a member of a team, she will spend one month in each country on a “race” across land and sea on three continents.

When she returns to Charlotte, Schulte plans to use her psychology background to help Charlotte’s Latino population. “I’m particularly interested in helping this population create positive and healthy home environments for children with special needs or disabilities.”

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Going Nuclear
49ers are helping build the U.S.’s first new commercial reactors in 30 years

By Mike Hermann

At one time or another they were all engineering students at UNC Charlotte. Now, eight 49er graduates are key members of the engineering team building the first new commercial nuclear reactors in the United States in 30 years.

The project is the construction of Plant Vogtle Units 3 and 4 for Georgia Power, a subsidiary of Southern Company. Chicago Bridge & Iron Company (CB&I) and Westinghouse are building the new Westinghouse AP1000 Advanced Passive Light Water Reactors at the existing plant site near Waynesboro, Ga. CB&I is performing the engineering, procurement and construction for the project.

The Lee College of Engineering alumni working for CB&I on the project include Kevin Departhy, George Gora, Chuck Jenkins, Justin Marsh, Gregg Nantz, Dustin Parks, Rebecca Braswell Parks and Weston Trimble.

Below, the 49ers tell what it’s like to work at Vogtle with their classmates, how their education prepared them for the job and what skills current students should cultivate to be successful.

Chuck Jenkins, a 2008 mechanical engineering graduate, was the first 49er on site. At the Vogtle project he is the principal engineer over circulating water, potable water, waste water, sanitary sewer, compressed air, condenser tube cleaning, condensate polishers, raw water, component cooling, secondary sampling and diesel generation.

“It’s great to have a group of us here,” Jenkins said. “Initially, I was the lone UNC Charlotte graduate and many people I talked to thought I went to UNC Chapel Hill. Having a group of us who know the University and appreciate it is nice. It’s also good to have people here to talk about ongoing events at the school.”
REBUILDING PROCESSES
The engineering work at Vogtle is exciting and challenging, Jenkins said. “There is a lot to learn and think about. Also, since this hasn’t been done in a while, we have had to rebuild our processes and ways of doing business. This can be frustrating, but it is rewarding in the end with the experience and knowledge gained. “My education gave me a good technical base, so I could understand and adapt quickly to my roles,” he continued. “The group projects and labs in school helped develop me into a team player and assisted in the group mentality with one of UNC Charlotte’s first systems engineering bachelor’s degrees, has been on the project with CB&I for two years. “My systems education has been valuable in teaching me to work on a lot of different things and pull them all together,” Marsh said. “I’m doing mechanical engineering and design engineering, managing projects and procuring parts and materials for my systems. “At the site, a lot of what engineering is, is the mindset and ability to get things done,” he added. “And to that end the people interactions are key. I love my job. The work is challenging and rewarding. Every day I can see the results of my work come to life in concrete and steel.” Rebecca Braswell Parks, an electrical engineering technology graduate, earned her degree in 2006 through the online bachelor’s of science program. Going to work for CB&I right out of school, she has been at Vogtle since July 2012 as the acting lead for approximately 30 engineers and designers creating balance-of-plant systems. “It is very exciting to be able to be part of the current generation of new build engineers,” Parks said. “I hope that the successful completion of this job will open up more opportunities for other new builds. It’s also nice to be able to share an alma mater with your co-workers, especially considering we are not working in the vicinity of the school.”

“WE ALL SHARE A COMMON THREAD THAT HAS BUILT A BROTHER/SISTERHOOD TO REPRESENT UNC CHARLOTTE AS A LEADING ENGINEERING UNIVERSITY IN THE POWER INDUSTRY.”

2 + 2 PROGRAM
Much of what she learned at UNC Charlotte is relevant to her daily job, Parks said. “I think the 2 + 2 online program provided the leadership and teamwork qualities needed to excel in the industry,” she said. Gregg Nantz, a 2008 mechanical engineering graduate, leads the procurement group that buys material and equipment that has been designed by engineering. “I liken my position and the responsibility it has to the overall success of the AP1000 project,” Nantz said. “It is very rewarding to be part of the engineering team that is leading the way for the re-emergence of nuclear power in the United States.” Forty Niner pride is strong at the site, Nantz said. “We all share a common thread that has built a brother/sisterhood to represent UNC Charlotte as a leading engineering university in the power industry. The William States Lee College of Engineering professors, faculty and staff have developed a learning environment that allows the student to develop resourcefulness and the technical skills required to be successful in the power industry.”

In his advice to current students, Nantz said the skills crucial to producing safe nuclear power are understanding of engineering fundamentals, problem solving, attention to detail, critical thinking, technical accuracy, comprehension of written direction, communication skill (oral and written), time management and the ability to work in teams. Kevin Departhy is a 2012 mechanical engineering grad with a concentration in energy and a minor in physics. He is a site design engineer at Vogtle. “The intense focus not only on theory but on design project experience has given the UNC Charlotte grads an edge when it comes to leadership and working as a team,” Departhy said. “As one of the first to complete the concentration in energy through the EPIC program, I was much better equipped with industry knowledge and project experience.” In his advice to current students, Departhy said to remember success is not all about technical abilities. “You must develop your soft skills and abilities to operate in a team,” he said. “They are just as important.”
Ten exemplary students were acknowledged during the annual Honors and Awards Program in April. The ceremony recognized students’ outstanding achievements in academics, athletics, community service and leadership. Madison Gardner, Robert Valderrama, Ashley Peterson, Paolo Lopez-Collazo and Jonathan Shuman received the Chancellor’s Citation for Leadership and Service. The honor recognized an elite group of graduating seniors for their outstanding leadership and commitment to the campus community. Coye Still IV received the Provost’s Athletic Academic Achievement Honor, given to a student-athlete who has excelled in the classroom and in sports. Jill Foster received the Omicron Delta Kappa Freshman Leadership Award for an outstanding freshman. Jonathan Curry received the Noble Niner Award; it recognizes a student who leads with integrity. Akeisha Moseley received the Chuck Lynch Award, which recognizes student leadership in building relationships and programs while mentoring others. Susan Thomas received the Bonnie Cone Leadership Award, which goes to a graduating senior whose service to the UNC Charlotte embodies the spirit of University founder Bonnie E. Cone.

Photo by Wade Bruton
Pictured from left to right: Foster, Lopez-Collazo, Gardner, Moseley, Peterson, Still, Thomas, Valderrama, Shuman, Curry and Chancellor Dubois.
PORTAL enables businesses to harness campus expertise to succeed

By Paul Nowell

The new PORTAL building is a $35 million investment by UNC Charlotte in innovation, entrepreneurship and public-private collaboration.

University officials predict it will attract talented faculty members, create spinoff companies and support more collaboration with industry partners — both on the UNC Charlotte campus and in the greater metropolitan area.

“PORTAL is our field of dreams,” said Chancellor Philip L. Dubois, who was joined by Gov. Pat McCrory and a host of other University and community leaders at a Feb. 28 dedication ceremony.

The four-story, 96,000-square-foot PORTAL building has a high-profile location at the Tryon Street entrance to the Charlotte Research Institute (CRI), adjacent to the first of two future light rail stops on campus.

A marriage of vision and practicality, PORTAL is an acronym for Partnership, Outreach and Research to Accelerate Learning. University officials describe it as a venue where entrepreneurs can collaborate with peers, faculty members and students — harnessing the power of a research university to plan strategies for success in a contemporary setting.

THE NEXT BILL GATES?

In his remarks at the dedication ceremony, the governor endorsed the University’s vision in developing PORTAL. He said the connection between the academic and business communities was critical to economic development.

“Great entrepreneurs build businesses,” McCrory said. “The next Bill Gates could come out of PORTAL, so I applaud this supportive, dynamic partnership.”

PORTAL is surrounded by several of
the University’s prominent research centers in such disciplines as bioinformatics, metrology, motorsports, biomedical, optoelectronics and energy production.

Similarly, business partners are located in PORTAL, where they pursue research and development partnerships. The building also offers additional space for established companies that want a research and development location at UNC Charlotte.

PORTAL also houses Ventureprise, a venture development organization formerly known as the Ben Craig Center and one of the first university-based business incubators in the nation.

“The economic vitality of our country is built upon the pillars of innovation and entrepreneurship,” said Paul Wetenhall, president of Ventureprise. “The Charlotte region’s long-term competitive position will be strengthened by innovators and entrepreneurs who find great success here.”

The facility includes space for the University’s Technology Transfer Office and the 49er Foundry, a business incubator for student entrepreneurs.

**STUDENT ENTREPRENEURS**

Located on the second floor of the PORTAL building, the 49er Foundry has already showcased some exciting student-led companies. Home to a select group of UNC Charlotte student entrepreneurs, it provides business advisory services, connections and a learning community to support the launch of successful student-founded ventures.

The foundry provides students with an intensive hands-on program designed to launch and scale ventures. If selected into the program, students receive services that include:

- Shared office space, including a work area, private meeting space, conference room access, mailing address, wireless Internet, copier and fax.
- Guidance with customer discovery, business-model canvassing and opportunity assessment.
- Learning opportunities featuring expert resources and Ventureprise entrepreneurs.

The student incubator also provides monthly progress and counseling sessions with formal assessments every six months.

“Students who are selected into the program are provided free space during the launch phase of the business followed by below-market rent once a business model has been found for the first 18 months,” said Devin Collins, assistant director of entrepreneurship and business development at CRI.

A pilot program launched in January 2012 has served 15 student companies to date, he noted. Three of those student companies were featured during the dedication ceremony. Minds Mesh, Noire Naturals and Tapity are all currently generating revenue and have graduated from the incubator.

Minds Mesh is an education technology start-up founded by Chad Stachowicz. The company focuses on enhancing mobile technology and collaborative learning within education institutions and has raised a round of angel investment.

“The economic vitality of our country is built upon the pillars of innovation and entrepreneurship. The Charlotte region’s long-term competitive position will be strengthened by innovators and entrepreneurs who find great success here.”

North Carolina Gov. Pat McCrory joined a host of University and community leaders at the dedication ceremony. Here he poses with Chancellor Philip L. Dubois.
Noire Naturals is an all-natural hair-care products company founded by Ashleigh Thornton. The company has been featured in Seventeen Magazine, and Thornton was the winner of the undergraduate student category in the 2013 Charlotte Venture Challenge.

Tapity is an Apple Design Award-winning company that Jeremy Olson co-founded with his father and brother during his sophomore year at UNC Charlotte. Together, they have built some of the most popular tools in the App Store, including Languages and Grades 2.

COUNSEL FOR TENANTS

Geoff Ables is with C5insight, one of the companies located in PORTAL. He listed some of the top advantages to having his business in the new building.

“Ventureprise helps entrepreneurial companies like ours with all sorts of things that we’re not experts in,” he told Time Warner Cable News 14 during a media tour of the PORTAL building. “So they have people who give us counseling in finances, in company operations, in sales and marketing.”

There are nine companies already in the PORTAL building, and there is space for about 15 more, officials said. The research being done at PORTAL ranges from information technology to medical therapy to energy efficiency.

Another business, Driving MBA, is working to develop a driving simulator prototype, along with curriculum, that will especially focus on teen drivers. Murdoch Morrison of Driving MBA said he plans to enlist the support of engineers at UNC Charlotte. “It just keeps you thinking out of the box to have other people in the building that are doing different things,” he said.

Robert Wilhelm, vice chancellor for research and economic development, estimated about 200 jobs have been created through PORTAL’s collaboration and research with companies. The goal is to produce 2,000 more jobs over the next 10 years, he said.

“We are expecting some good things out of this collaboration effort,” Wilhelm said.

The architectural features of the PORTAL building embody the mission of CRI and Ventureprise. An innovative four-story modern atrium is bounded by offices and meeting rooms.

An abundance of naturally lit gathering spaces — including conference rooms with floor-to-ceiling glass walls located on two atrium-transecting bridges — provide a dynamic environment for networking, creative research and innovation.

Along with large skylights, the PORTAL building has solar panels on the roof for the production of hot water for the tenants. The building also has a cafe, which will provide breakfast and lunch services beginning in summer 2014.

The PORTAL facility allows business partners to plug into North Carolina’s urban research university. The combination bodes well for UNC Charlotte and the entire Charlotte region.

Paul Nowell is media relations manager in the Office of Public Relations.
True Homecoming

Students, alumni, staff and donors collaborate to build Habitat house

By Jenny Matz

With the inaugural football season set to kick off in fall 2013, students from UNC Charlotte’s Habitat for Humanity chapter saw a great opportunity. They launched what they hope will be a homecoming tradition: to construct a Habitat home on campus. Their goal was to provide a deserving candidate a chance at home ownership. To make this vision a reality, the chapter needed to raise $65,000.

Student fundraising generated more than $26,000, and the UNC Charlotte Alumni Association donated nearly $10,000. These efforts were rewarded and matched by University alumni and friends through a $29,000 challenge grant led by Christine (‘82) and Joe Price (‘83).

A former Bank of America executive, Joe Price serves on the UNC Charlotte Board of Trustees and is a member of the Habitat for Humanity International Board of Directors.

His and Christine’s early enthusiasm led to additional support from other alumni and friends of the University: Will and Elsie Barnhardt, Neil and Claire Coty, David (‘77) and Nancy (‘77) Hauser, Bob (‘85) and Jackie Hull, Dhiaa (‘78) and Hope Jamil and Bob (‘88) and Katie Qutub.

With funds in hand, on-campus construction of the house occurred Oct. 1-11, 2013 — which coincided with other homecoming activities.

Several hundred students, faculty, staff, alumni and community members volunteered with construction. On Oct. 13, the house left campus for its permanent location on Onyx Street in West Charlotte. Construction wrapped up at the end of January 2014, and owner Ron Spivey took residence on Feb. 8.

“I feel blessed to have worked with such a dedicated and energetic group of students,” said Spivey at a formal dedication ceremony. “Together we created a home, and together we’ll continue to provide that opportunity for others. I’m proud to be a member of the 49er family.”

Members of the University’s Habitat for Humanity chapter presented Spivey with a framed photo of UNC Charlotte’s historical marker to commemorate the experience.

“We’re excited to help Mr. Spivey achieve his dream of home ownership,” said Maggie Chahoud, special events coordinator for UNC Charlotte’s Habitat for Humanity chapter. “Sponsoring an on-campus build was a huge endeavor and a wonderful opportunity for the entire campus to have a lasting impact in the community,” she said. “We anticipate this is the first of many homes and families UNC Charlotte will be a part of.”

Jenny Matz is assistant director of community relations.

Maggie Chahoud, member of the UNC Charlotte Habitat for Humanity Campus Chapter, presents homeowner Ron Spivey with a framed photo of the University's historical marker to commemorate the dedication.
A Charlotte-based permanent supportive housing program is finding success in its efforts to improve stability for chronically homeless individuals while also helping the community to save money, according to a report from UNC Charlotte’s College of Health and Human Services.

The report “Moore Place Permanent Support Housing Evaluation Study” examined the Moore Place housing program and how it is supporting individuals struggling with the devastating effects of homelessness, especially those suffering from disabling conditions such as mental illness, addiction and physical health issues.

Social work Assistant Professor Lori Thomas led the evaluation team that studied the impact of the Moore Place program on the housing, clinical and social stability of its tenants and on their emergency room and jail utilization. The team, which included experts from the UNC Greensboro, N.C. A&T State University and the University of South Carolina, concluded that Moore Place has succeeded in maintaining a high housing stability rate for its clients. The report also found that the program helped to reduce inappropriate service utilization in hospitals and jails among its tenants -- alleviating a burden on law enforcement and emergency health services.

With 85 apartments, Moore Place is the centerpiece of the Urban Ministry Center’s HousingWorks program. It is based on a philosophy that housing homeless individuals stabilizes their lives and provides the foundation for success. Since opening in early 2012, Moore Place has provided permanent housing and comprehensive support services to individuals with extensive histories of homelessness and a disabling condition, such as behavioral health disorders, chronic health conditions, physical disabilities and developmental disabilities.

Moore Place is the first in the Charlotte area to operate using the “Housing First” philosophy. “‘Housing First’ is ending homelessness for some of Charlotte’s most vulnerable,” Thomas said. “This study adds to a growing body of research that suggests that even the hardest to serve in our communities can be successfully housed and that housing with necessary supportive services not only leads to better outcomes for individuals but is cheaper for the community.”

Overall, the study found:
- Moore Place tenants are dealing with challenges that surpass the vulnerability of those in comparable programs nationally.
- Moore Place is demonstrating high housing stability rates after one year of housing.
- Area hospital bills, emergency room visits, and lengths of hospitalizations have decreased during tenants’ first year of housing at Moore Place. There was a 78% reduction in emergency room visits and a 79% reduction in in-patient hospitalizations, resulting in a 70% reduction ($1.8 million) in hospital bills in just one year.
- Arrests and jail stays of Moore Place tenants decreased during their first year in the program. There was a 78% reduction in arrests and 84% reduction in jail stays.
- Another outcome reported by Moore Place tenants was greater social support among friends, as compared to their circumstances prior to entering the program.

According to the evaluation team, the newly released findings are part of an intermediate phase of the research project. The final phase will continue to document the housing stability of tenants, as well as clinical, social and community impact that may be further associated with the program in tenants’ second year of residency.

Moore Place is owned and operated by the Urban Ministry Center, an interfaith organization that provides an array of services to meet the needs of Charlotte’s homeless population. Later this year, the Moore Place project is slated to expand by an additional 35 units of housing for the chronically homeless.

Latricia Boone is communications director in the Office of Public Relations.
A COMMITMENT
TO POSITIVE CHANGE AND ADVANCED EDUCATION IS A
CROWN-WORTHY FOCUS

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.
KEEPING WATCH focuses on recycling, water and air quality

UNC Charlotte's Urban Institute and the College of Arts + Architecture are raising awareness of issues about our environment and sustainability through a new initiative called KEEPING WATCH.

Directed by Mary Newsom, associate director of the UNC Charlotte Urban Institute, KEEPING WATCH is a three-year initiative to engage the public in conversations about recycling, water and air quality; give a stronger voice to local agencies involved in environmental preservation; and begin a public discussion about solutions in which the entire Charlotte community can play a part.

KEEPING WATCH kicked off March 28 with the launch of “Sustain Me, Baby,” an exhibition about recycling and the impact of plastics at the Projective Eye Gallery at UNC Charlotte Center City.

Newsom said the environmental challenges Charlotte and the surrounding areas face require attention from the whole community to solve them. “One of the goals is to produce interactive online data visualization to support organizations as they create solutions, and to allow citizens to learn how our environment is being affected in a variety of areas,” she said.

Working with historians, writers, artists, scientists and environmental experts,
KEEPING WATCH will explore three local environmental issues: plastic waste and recycling (KEEPING WATCH on PLASTICS, 2014), urban streams (KEEPING WATCH on CREEKS, 2015), and air quality and the value of trees (KEEPING WATCH on AIR, 2016).

Most of each year’s events will take place around Earth Day, which occurs every April. Events include exhibitions, film screenings, panel discussions, a fashion show and neighborhood happenings. PlanCharlotte (plancharlotte.org) and the institute (ui.uncc.edu) will also publish a series of online articles examining key environmental issues as part of the project.

KEEPING WATCH involves many community and supporting partners, including the Blumenthal Foundation, a Charlotte-based private foundation that supports community, environmental and arts programs in Charlotte and North Carolina.

Philip Blumenthal, director of the Blumenthal Foundation, said, KEEPING WATCH brings nontraditional partners together to collaborate on programs and events that allow environmental groups to reach beyond traditional audiences.

“The project’s creative initiatives provide opportunities to connect and resonate with people and show them that they need to care about these issues,” he said.

Candice Langston is director of development for the College of Arts + Architecture.

KEEPING WATCH: More Info
For a list of upcoming events and more information, visit keepingwatch.org. Key organizations supporting KEEPING WATCH are:

- Funding and Resources
- UNC Charlotte Urban Institute
- UNC Charlotte College of Arts + Architecture
- Arts & Science Council
- Blumenthal Foundation
- Foundation For The Carolinas
- Knight Foundation Fund at Foundation For The Carolinas
- North Carolina Arts Council
- Community Partners
- Catawba Riverkeeper Foundation
- Charlotte Museum of History
- City of Charlotte
- Clean Air Carolina
- Discovery Place
- Keep Charlotte Beautiful
- McColl Center for Visual Art
- Mecklenburg County Solid Waste
- North Carolina Dance Theatre
- Slow Food
- Sustain Charlotte
Continued from p. 15

challenges to participate in a variety of sports and recreational pursuits, including handcycling, rugby, water and snow skiing, tennis, golf, power soccer and kayaking.

Patterson first learned about ASAP while doing an internship with the Audiology Department at Carolinas HealthCare. She researched the program and was impressed with ASAP’s efforts.

“As a student-athlete, I’m an outdoors person and involved in sports, so I started volunteering this past summer,” Patterson said.

In addition to helping with seasonal sports programs, Patterson participated in Cycle to the Sea, an annual ASAP fundraiser that consists of a 180-mile ride from Monroe, N.C., to Myrtle Beach, S.C. “Cycle to the Sea is one of the program’s largest fundraisers, and it generates money to support the other programs,” noted Patterson, whose grant also funded various operational expenses at ASAP. “During the event, my major role was to fill in where needed.”

Robbie Parks, who participates in ASAP programming, is thankful Patterson used her grant to support the program. “It makes the difference between whether someone like me can compete or sit on the sidelines,” he said. “The handcycles help me stay active, increase opportunities for me to maintain a healthy lifestyle and provide a chance to ride with family members or other able-bodied riders so we can enjoy a fun activity together.”

Growing up in Norwood, N.C., Patterson planned “all my life” to go to UNC Chapel Hill, but she couldn’t pass up the Levine Scholarship. “It would afford me so many opportunities that I wouldn’t have anywhere else,” she said. “From the support, to the internships, to the volunteer opportunities, it has been an amazing experience.”

With her undergraduate career complete, Patterson, a double major in Spanish and economics, will get the chance to go to UNC Chapel Hill for graduate studies. She will work toward a doctorate in audiology.

Coming into UNC Charlotte, Patterson planned to follow her mother’s career path as a speech pathologist. Through the Levine Scholars Program, she spent a summer in Cusco, Peru, where she worked with a speech pathology department in a school for children and adults with special needs. After interning with Carolinas HealthCare System, Patterson opted to pursue audiology.

After completing her doctorate, Patterson said she hopes to return to Charlotte to work in pediatric audiology and volunteer with Charlotte’s international population.

inaugural dance marathon, but we were able to do it with the backing of the community and the University,” said Vaverek, a graduate of St. Thomas Aquinas High School in Plantation, Fla. “It (the dance marathon) combined leadership and civic engagement in a way I have never experienced, and it serves as another example of how the Levine Scholars Program helps shape the lives of everyone involved.”

Together, the first class of Levine Scholars decided to volunteer at the Ronald McDonald House (RMH) of Charlotte, which opened in 2010 during the group's sophomore year.

On the first Friday of each month, a team of scholars would plan, shop for and prepare a meal for the families residing at the house. According to officials, the number served varied from 25 to 50.

“We tried to stick with the requests of families staying at RMH,” noted nursing major Brewer. “We have prepared baked spaghetti with garlic bread and fried chicken with mashed potatoes and green beans. The families loved it.”

RMH of Charlotte staff members appreciated the partnership, too.

“Not only are they reliable workers who can be counted on to do the job right, they are creative minds who are looking for ways to do more,” said Ariadne Harris, RMH volunteer services director. “They come as a team and exhibit great teamwork and leadership.”

Harris noted that RMH hosted a Levine Scholar as an intern for the past three summers. Noting their work was excellent — thoroughly researched, carefully explained and neatly presented — she also valued the learning opportunity for them. “Working hands-on with pressing community issues helps a student prepare for work life,” Harris said. “They engage in problem solving and exploration of themselves, which helps them understand others and provides new ways for them to look at their surroundings.”

Jennifer Moore, coordinator of the Adaptive Sports Adventure Program (ASAP) and a licensed recreational therapist, also sees how the Levine Scholars Program can forge strong bonds between the University and area nonprofits and not-for-profits.

Scholar Jasmine Patterson volunteers with the organization and was instrumental in opening lines of communication between UNC Charlotte and ASAP, which provides sports and recreational programming for individuals with physical challenges. Meetings between Moore, Patterson and 49ers athletics officials led to the University committing to host the Strokes for Spokes tennis tournament in fall 2014.

Perhaps in the future, the University and ASAP will partner on an adaptive sports club at UNC Charlotte, said Moore. Some of ASAP’s aspiring college students have left the area for institutions with such recreational offerings. Alabama and Pennsylvania are the closest states with college-level adaptive sports program, which means having such a program at UNC Charlotte would be beneficial, she noted.

“Nonprofits need volunteerism and student interns, and because Carolinas HealthCare System is a teaching facility, we can provide clinical experiences in a health-care setting,” said Moore, whose program is supported by the hospital system. “UNC Charlotte’s involvement with community programs is important for the

“NOT ONLY ARE THEY RELIABLE WORKERS WHO CAN BE COUNTED ON TO DO THE JOB RIGHT, THEY ARE CREATIVE MINDS WHO ARE LOOKING FOR WAYS TO DO MORE.”
growth of its students and the institution. Community engagement helps connect the dots for students so they learn more about how we provide services to the community.”

Moore added that the involvement of the scholars can help organizations such as hers “grow to the next level, with the community being the ultimate benefactor.”

Levine Scholars director Zablotsky noted with civic engagement at the forefront of the program, the University is demonstrating its connections to the Charlotte region.

“UNC Charlotte students are involved in the city, but our scholars are connected to the nonprofit community in a more holistic way,” explained Zablotsky. “During the past three summers, they have interned in 35 organizations, and we ask the nonprofits to introduce the scholars to the inner-workings of the organization. We want them to meet the board and learn as much about the nonprofit world as they can, so they can continue to contribute to these types of organizations throughout their lives.”

Leon Levine, founder of Matthews-based Family Dollar Stores, and his wife, Sandra, provided the funding to establish the Levine Scholars Program through their foundation. He said it was never too early to expose young people to community engagement.

“Doing so enables them to identify those issues about which they are most passionate,” Levine said. “The community has always been so important to the success of Family Dollar Stores, and it has always been core to our life philosophy to give back to that community.

“I hope this program creates a new level of excellence in academics and community service for UNC Charlotte and our entire region,” he continued. “We know that these scholars will graduate and enter the workforce becoming community leaders capable of changing the landscape in a tremendously beneficial way.”

**EXPRESSING GRATITUDE**

The students are grateful for the opportunity. An unbelievable chance to impact the greater Charlotte community is how engineering major Jon Wainwright characterized the program, while Sam McClenny, an economics major, lauded the program’s opportunity for him to see the world and how other people live in it.

Public health major Celia Karp focused on the “exceptional gift of education.” She said the Levines gave her and the other scholars the resources to succeed in their aspirations and endeavors.

“I have had an amazing four years at UNC Charlotte, with fascinating coursework, internships, international travel and volunteer experiences, and I cannot imagine my undergraduate experience any other way,” Karp said. “Their investment has shaped the trajectory of my life and has instilled in me the principles of leadership and ethics fundamental to my future.”

Laura Outlaw, a finance and international business major, appreciated the personal interaction with the Levines.

“I feel exceptionally fortunate to have had the opportunity to learn from them and be a small part of their lives,” said Outlaw. “Their service to Charlotte, focus on family and kindness to others is inspiring. I hope they believe their investment in our education has been worthwhile.”

UNC Charlotte Chancellor Philip L. Dubois is grateful to the Levines as well.

“Having a benefactor for such a scholarship program makes all the difference. When Leon and Sandra Levine made the donation to create the Levine Scholars Program, we described it as a transformational event. We still do.

“The Levines have a legacy of civic involvement and using their financial resources to benefit the entire community,” he continued. “We try to embody their example as an institution through our commitment to address the cultural, economic, educational, environmental, health, and social needs of the greater Charlotte region.”

**Caitlin Vaverek** has received a Fulbright Teaching Assistant Fellowship to Nepal for the 2014-15 academic year. The Florida native’s goal is to pursue graduate studies in international development or public policy with a concentration in nonprofit management.

Opportunities for civic engagement are the best part of the Levine Scholars Program, she said.

“Working with the leadership class at James Martin Middle School, serving dinner every month at Ronald McDonald House, participating in food drives, planning sustainability conferences, interning throughout Charlotte and so many other engagements allowed us to give back to a city that has given us so much,” Vaverek noted.

Engineering major **Jon Wainwright** will continue on at UNC Charlotte as he pursues a master’s degree in the William States Lee College of Engineering.

Wainwright, who grew up in New York, achieved the rank of Eagle Scout in high school. For him, excellence and service define the Levine Scholars Program. He said he and his fellow scholars were selfless with their time and excelled at “whatever we set our minds to.”

As an undergraduate, Wainwright did internships with Discovery Place and Hendrick Motorsports. He also participated in an archaeological excavation at Mount Zion near Jerusalem.

**Phillip Brown** is internal communications manager in university communications.
Investing in future engineering leaders is the goal of a new merit-based scholars program made possible by the family of Craig and Darla Albert. Their timely reflection and appreciation of UNC Charlotte’s influence on their lives, as well as their careers, were the impetus to make this donation.

“There comes a time in life where you realize you’ve been fortunate, and you want to give back to the institutions that helped you,” he noted. “UNC Charlotte gave me more than an excellent education; it gave me a unique perspective on leadership I didn’t fully realize until later in life.”

Patterned after the University’s prestigious Levine Scholars Program (see page 12), the Albert Engineering Leadership Scholars Program will recruit top engineering students through a shared process with the Levine Scholars Program. By leveraging the infrastructure that recruits and screens academically strong students through the Levine Scholars Program, the Albert Scholars Program will expand on the Levine program with a special emphasis on engineering.

Beginning the fall of 2014, two high school seniors will be awarded the Albert Scholarship. The recipients will be known as Albert Scholars and receive funding to cover tuition and fees, housing and meals, books, a laptop computer, summer experiences, participation in the Lee College of Engineering Leadership Academy, study-abroad opportunities and a professional development stipend.

CASTING A WIDE NET

“I feel it’s important to recruit students locally and nationwide so that we ensure a myriad of unique talents and perspectives,” Craig Albert said. “Having lived in North Carolina, I’m convinced there are a lot of really talented people throughout the state that might not have the means to go to UNC Charlotte, and I really want to reach those individuals.

“Additionally, recruiting students throughout the country allows us to engage individuals that are adventurous and willing to go where the challenges are, a trait that is invaluable within the engineering world,” he added.

Through the Albert Scholars Program, the Lee College of Engineering will be able to increase its share of top talent, raise its stature as a choice for high-achieving students and elevate student performance and expectations across the college.

The Albert Scholars Program will focus on applied learning with a high threshold of academic rigor. Participants will develop strategic competencies necessary for leadership, reinforced through specific opportunities for student professional development. The program will encourage a student’s academic life, community engagement, social skills and critical thinking, all the while emphasizing leadership skills throughout the program.

LEADER AT BECHTEL

After graduating from the University’s Lee College of Engineering in 1985, Albert joined the manufacturing company, Westinghouse, as a project engineer. He was later appointed manager of business development for Westinghouse’s government business. In 1998, Albert accepted a position with Bechtel, a leading global engineering, construction and project management company, and the largest engineering and construction firm in the United States. He is currently the president of Bechtel Systems & Infrastructure, the company’s government services arm and he is a director on the Bechtel Group Board.

Albert, who requested the program focus on fostering leadership skills, said, “I’ve seen how important leadership is in accomplishing great things, and I believe the best leaders in our country have good technical backgrounds in addition to good leadership skills. I think engineers, because of their technical background, have the potential to be the best leaders, so I want to teach engineers about leadership so they can leverage more than their own personal capability.”

The program will provide students a wide-range of resources that emphasize leadership, soft skills and ethical behavior,
with the goal of making engineering graduates multi-dimensional and well prepared to succeed in the workplace.

Albert Scholars will take part in the Lee College of Engineering Leadership Academy, an extracurricular program that provides experiential learning modules that participants complete over a two-year period. Leading industry executives, faculty members and alumni facilitate activities and mentor participants, providing real-world perspectives on engineering leadership.

Additionally, Albert Scholars will have access to a professional development stipend of $6,000 after the first year. They can use it for further learning opportunities, such as international study or a summer research initiative.

INVESTMENT OPPORTUNITY

In setting up the scholarship program, Albert is keenly aware of where UNC Charlotte is today — its growth and regional impact, its maturation as the state’s urban research university and its national status in applied research.

“Back in the ’80s when I attended the University, the city of Charlotte was still trying to get its legs, and I always said the school was in the country near the city,” noted Albert. “Now, it’s a school in the city near the country with full access to everything Charlotte has to offer.”

The University’s ability to provide research support to the region’s business community provided an exciting investment opportunity, Albert said.

“I want to give to UNC Charlotte because the University was integral in shaping and molding me as a person and in my career, but also because I think the University is in a really good position to help others,” he explained. “You can see the influence and direction of industry, and that it had an input in the growth plan of the University in terms of how the campus has been built and what programs are offered.

“One of the advantages of being a young, urban research university committed to excellence is that the University is more nimble in its ability to shape itself to meet the needs of industry, its students and the surrounding region,” he added.

That ability to shape itself, even in its earlier years, made a lasting impression on Albert. “…I felt there was a lot of freedom, and I had interactions with professors that I felt were very genuine,” he said.

“I liked the candor and sincerity of the staff, and for me, it felt like we’re finding our way together, as a community, with really good teachers, really good curriculum and really good facilities — which are even better now,” he said.

LASTING IMPRESSION

One particular experience with a faculty member made a lasting impression on him by demonstrating how important good leadership is and how subtly it can be applied.

Albert took a lab course where the instructor — a graduate student — stressed legible handwriting. He went back and forth
"I WANT TO TEACH ENGINEERS ABOUT LEADERSHIP SO THEY CAN LEVERAGE MORE THAN THEIR OWN PERSONAL CAPABILITY."

with the instructor for the entire semester, submitting lab reports with the correct science and engineering results but with questionable penmanship. Ultimately, he received a C for the lab. "It was the only C I got in four years," Albert recalled.

He approached a senior faculty member in the engineering college at that time to plead his case. "Do you know you have a student-teacher that gave me a C in his lab class — the only C I’ve ever gotten — all because of my handwriting in spite of my reports being right?” Albert remembered saying.

The professor responded in an understanding manner. "He gave you a C for handwriting?” he asked.

"Yeah, can you believe that?" Albert replied.

"But he told you that handwriting was important, and yet you still didn’t fix your handwriting, and now you want me to change it?" the professor asked.

"Yeeaaah!" Albert exclaimed.

What the professor said next Albert remembers hitting him right between the eyes. "You know, for somebody with such a high grade point average, you might not be as smart as you think you are,” the professor said.

After a long awkward pause the professor concluded the conversation. “That will be all, Craig, thank you,” he said.

In part because of this frank interaction and the sincere and honest University culture that allowed him to experience this situation, Albert said, he is giving back to UNC Charlotte and modeling the Albert Scholars Program the way it is.

The exchange also shaped Albert so much that he tells that story to young Bechtel employees to teach the importance of good leadership and how you can’t ignore all the facts just because you don’t think they should apply.

**SHARING INSIGHT, EXPERIENCE**

“We all come out of college and inevitably face the real world with all of its trials and tribulations,” he said. “If I can feed my insight and experience back to the University like it so skillfully did to me, to hopefully provide useful feedback, it will make the next generation of students that much further along and that much more prepared.”

The Albert family hopes this donation will provide new and deeper opportunities to UNC Charlotte students, while encouraging...
other alumni to consider giving back, too. Cultivating a giving culture at the University can enhance the University’s efforts to meet the needs of its students and the region. “The best thing about the Albert Engineering Leadership Scholars Program, beyond the tremendous opportunity it affords to extraordinary students, is the example Craig and Darla Albert set for both students and alumni alike,” said Niles Sorensen, vice chancellor for University Advancement. “During the last 25 years, after graduating from UNC Charlotte, Craig has forged an extraordinary career, and I think it is hugely aspirational for our students to look at his career and see what is possible for them. “Craig’s example and decision to give back to UNC Charlotte and our students means, I hope, that 25 years from now, today’s students — in the middle of their own successful career trajectories — will look to UNC Charlotte for the opportunity to give back to the next generation for students, providing them same opportunities for success,” Sorensen added.

Albert hopes the program helps UNC Charlotte land top young engineering talent from around the region and country. “It’s about attracting the best, developing the best and getting UNC Charlotte recognized for doing that,” he said. “That’s the goal.”

Jared Moon is communications coordinator in university communications.
Four Titans

At the April 21, 1990 installation of James Woodward as the third chancellor of UNC Charlotte, four titans of the University gathered: Miss Bonnie Cone, UNC Charlotte’s founder; first Chancellor Dean Colvard; Woodward and second Chancellor E. K. Fretwell. UNC Charlotte has always been blessed with outstanding leaders. Philip L. Dubois is now in his ninth year as the fourth chancellor of the University.
Not surprisingly, there has been considerable coverage surrounding the Dan River coal ash spill and the broader issue of coal ash management. As someone who has worked extensively with coal fly ash (CFA) since I was a graduate student, I want to provide context around the properties of coal ash, its beneficial reuse, and the need for a coal ash management plan.

Coal fly ash is a fine, powdery substance that is produced from burning coal for generating electricity. Lately, a lot of misconceptions about CFA have caught my attention in the wake of recent events. For example, the prevailing narrative that describes CFA as a toxic sludge when in actuality the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency does not designate CFA as a hazardous waste. Toxicity, in fact, depends mostly on concentration and exposure. Check your multi-vitamin and look at the ingredients. You will likely find boron, chromium, copper, selenium—all of which are also found in soil and that some people point to as the reason why they believe CFA to be hazardous.

CFA can be beneficially reused. Its properties make it a useful construction material and additive for stabilizing soil. Nationally, the second largest use of CFA is for structural fills or embankments, as is proposed for the Charlotte airport. Other uses include concrete/grout (the number one use), waste stabilization, roofing materials, and agricultural applications. In many applications, CFA is frequently placed in direct contact with existing or excavated soils, such as fill material for bridge abutments, retaining walls, roadways and parking lots. If you want high-strength concrete that cures without excessive heat and lasts longer, then you use CFA—not as a filler, not to minimize a waste byproduct, but because of its desirable properties.

Numerous projects that have beneficially reused CFA have been completed across the country without any reported problems, including 21 construction projects involving two million or more cubic yards of CFA. The CFA proposed for the Charlotte airport would be enclosed in a state-of-the-art liner system that seals the ash between synthetic barriers, providing a level of environmental protection that exceeds typical requirements for engineered structural fills. Arguably, the extent to which CFA is handled as a solid waste versus a beneficial product is a function of the utilization needs of the construction industry, not the disposal needs of electric utilities. Interestingly, many other countries consider coal ash a commercial product. Reuse rates throughout Europe approach 100 percent. Regardless, like cement or any other construction material, CFA must be managed, regulated and enforced properly to ensure the safety, health and welfare of the public and our natural environment.

These principles were brought to the forefront following the Dan River incident causing the beginnings of an important conversation: the need for a responsible coal ash management plan. A plan that protects against an event like Dan River and determines the level of risk posed by unlined ash ponds throughout the state (and country) in order to best address those that are of most concern. Above all, a plan that outlines how to reuse and dispose of CFA sustainably and responsibly.

There is a robust body of knowledge that can inform such a plan. Students and faculty in UNC Charlotte’s Energy Production and Infrastructure Center have contributed significantly to the relevant technical literature, case histories, and standards that address all facets of CFA management, use, and disposal. EPIC stands ready to help with the hard work needed to sort through the issues, inform policy, and develop science and engineering-based solutions.

Lastly, such a plan will need a commitment from political leaders and policy makers -- within and outside the industry -- as well as utility companies to combine efforts to find a long-term, sustainable solution for coal ash. Together, we can find a responsible solution to this national issue.
QUINTESSENTIAL TO UNC CHARLOTTE ARE GEESE AND THEIR WEE GOSLINGS, LARGELY OBLIVIOUS TO PEOPLE AND SOMETIME DEFIANTLY SO.

Photo by Wade Bruton.