

2021-2022 Annual Report to the Chancellor

Overview

NC State's College of Education deepened its standing as one of the nation's premier land-grant colleges of education in the 2021-22 academic year, even amid COVID challenges and a leadership transition. Mary Ann Danowitz stepped aside as dean in October 2021, and Paola Sztajn became dean in April 2022 after serving as interim dean. Through this transition year, we continued on a remarkable trajectory of growth while making a transformative impact on North Carolina and advancing the greater good. We opened the academic year with our largest enrollment in a decade, concluded the Think and Do the Extraordinary campaign raising more than double our goal, and reached new highs in the *U.S. News & World Report's* rankings. Our faculty and staff also received numerous national honors, including Distinguished Professor Hollylynne S. Lee winning the prestigious Robert Foster Cherry Award for Great Teaching and Alumni Distinguished Graduate Professor Gail Jones being named a 2022 AERA Fellow. Across the college, we continued to support the work of NC State and moved forward the university's strategic priorities while driving educational change; advancing diversity, equity, and inclusion; and addressing the critical needs of learners across the lifespan, so everyone has the opportunity to achieve their highest potential.

Goal 1: Empower students for a lifetime of success and impact.

We prepare highly effective education professionals who impact countless individuals, families, and communities throughout their careers. In 2021-22, we graduated over 590 students—the most in at least five years—including over 215 students eligible to be licensed teachers in North Carolina. Our graduates join a network of over 5,025 alumni working in public schools in the state, and those who are teachers join colleagues who are rated the highest in effectiveness on surveys of school employers. Our reputation for preparing North Carolina's most effective educators is a reason why we had a record number of applications and opened the academic year with 1,942 students—our largest enrollment in a decade. Among those new students were nine Goodnight Scholars—the highest number of College of Education students ever for an incoming class—and 44 new Teaching Fellows—the largest entering cohort among the eight

institutions that host a program. We expect to exceed our enrollment targets for 2022-23. Among the new undergraduates will be the first cohort in our Transformational Scholarships Program. Supported by a charitable grant from the Anonymous Trust, we will prepare 100 teachers for Eastern North Carolina over the next five years. We spent 2021-22 hiring an inaugural director (Trisha Mackey), planning the program, and recruiting students from Eastern North Carolina who want to teach in the region after graduating.

A major reason why we have exceeded enrollment goals while colleges of education continue to face many challenges is because we have increased financial support for students. In 2021-22, we awarded 181 scholarships—74 to graduate students and 107 to undergraduates. Our total support for students, including scholarships and direct support, was \$1,106,301. This represents a 105% increase in the past five years. Endowments dedicated to student support (both received and pledged) have risen by 96% in the past three years (from \$7.1 million in FY2018 to \$14 million as of Dec. 31, 2021). New scholarships announced include the Dianne Carver Lawing Scholarship, which is projected to be our first full cost of attendance scholarship when the pledge is paid in full. Other gifts include \$85,600 from the PowerSchool Education Fund to provide students in our teacher preparation programs with financial assistance to cover out-of-pocket expenses like licensure exams and background checks. On NC State's 2022 Day of Giving, we received 689 gifts—the most to any fund at NC State that day. Our success on Day of Giving came after the Think and Do the Extraordinary Campaign ended with the college raising \$52.7 million.

College of Education Achieves 251% of Its Think and Do the Extraordinary Campaign Goal

The College of Education raised over \$52.7 million during the Think and Do the Extraordinary campaign to achieve 251% of its \$21 million goal. Gifts that counted toward the campaign have allowed the college to provide dozens of additional scholarships to recruit more students to the education profession and diversify the workforce; establish new professorships to attract and retain leading scholars; launch new initiatives to address urgent educational problems; and enrich the student experience. Because of supporters throughout the campaign, the college established the Transformational Scholarships Program, the Goodnight Distinguished Professor in Educational Equity, and the Belk Center for Community College Leadership and Research. The college also quintupled its endowment from \$2.8 million in 2016 to over \$14 million. “The generosity of our donors and the tremendous success of the college’s Think and Do the Extraordinary campaign have already begun to have a powerful impact that will continue well into the future,” said Professor Mary Ann Danowitz, the college’s dean during much of the campaign.

Goal 2: Ensure preeminence in research, scholarship, innovation and collaboration.

With 106 active research projects worth more than \$85.5 million, faculty and staff across the College of Education, including the Belk Center for Community College Leadership and Research and the Friday Institute for Educational Innovation, continue to be the most active researchers among the colleges of education in North Carolina. In 2021-22, we had 30 external proposals funded, totalling over \$13.1 million, with 11 additional proposals recommended for funding and 49 still pending as of June 30, 2022. Research expenditures exceeded \$15.9 million. Our annual research expenditures place us in the Top 5% of colleges of education in the nation. Among projects funded, Assistant Professor Jamie Pearson received a four-year, highly prestigious, \$699,244 U.S. Department of Education IES Special Education Early Career Grant to examine and increase service access and utilization among Black families of children with autism. Associate Professor James Bartlett became the principal investigator on a four-year, \$1.35 million grant from the ECMC Foundation to continue to strengthen postsecondary career and technical education (CTE) research at universities across the nation.

Our scholarship directly applies to pressing educational problems. The Belk Center, for example, released a comprehensive report on how COVID impacted college and career access support for North Carolina's high school students. A group of literacy faculty—Associate Professor Dennis Davis, Assistant Professor Jill Grifenhagen, and Assistant Professor Jackie Relyea—have released a series of papers that provide insights about educators' specialized knowledge for teaching reading. Other key publications from our faculty include *Online learning in mathematics education*, edited by Associate Dean Karen Hollebrands, Assistant Professor Robin Anderson, and Professor Kevin Oliver; five books Professor Carla Johnson edited as part of the STEM Road Map series; and Associate Professor Chad Hoggan's co-edited *Adult Learning in a Migration Society* and co-authored '*We are all Migrants: The Learning Needs of Society in the Wake of Migration*'. In all, faculty held editorships of 10 peer-reviewed journals; published over 150 journal articles, 56 book chapters, and 19 books; presented over 65 research presentations; and were quoted about 30 times in national media outlets, including *USA Today*, *The New Republic*, and *Education Week*.

Faculty are also collaborating with colleagues across the campus on grant funded projects. Professor and Friday Institute Senior Faculty Fellow Eric Wiebe joined the NSF AI Institute for Engaged Learning as a senior personnel in the AI-augmented engaged learning group, while Alumni Distinguished Graduate Professor and Friday Institute Senior Faculty Fellow Gail Jones leads the education research

component of the NSF Science and Technology Center—Science and Technologies for Phosphorus Sustainability (STEPS). She also co-edited the *Handbook of Research on Science Teacher Education*.

Alumni Graduate Distinguished Professor Gail Jones Leads STEPS Center's Education Research

As the leader of the educational research component of NC State's NSF Science and Technology Center—Science and Technologies to Phosphorous Sustainability (STEPS), Alumni Distinguished Graduate Professor and Senior Faculty Fellow of the Friday Institute Gail Jones will receive \$569,883 of the five-year, \$25 million grant from the National Science Foundation. Her work will document and study how students develop core technical and transdisciplinary knowledge and how they learn to work on high-performing teams. She will also track students as they move through their graduate programs and document challenges, successes, and the factors that contribute to their resiliency, as well as study the experiences of women and underrepresented students as they engage in convergence research. "With support from this grant, I plan to study students' self-efficacy and academic self-concept and build a model that can inform the development of career interests and aspirations," said Jones, a 2022 AERA Fellow—the American Educational Research Association's highest honor that recognizes research contributions to education.

Goal 3: Expand and advance our engagement with and service to North Carolina and beyond, defining the standard for a 21st-century land-grant university.

We reached more than 112,000 public school teachers, all 115 public school districts, and all 58 community colleges in North Carolina in 2021-22 through extension and engagement activities. Ongoing initiatives include the Literacy Space, which provides intensive and targeted literacy intervention in after-school settings for K-6 students; the Literacy and Community Initiative, which partners with organizations to amplify student voices through publications; and the Community, Counseling, Education, and Research Center (CCERC), which provides accessible and affordable counseling services to individuals and families. CCERC shifted from face-to-face services prior to the pandemic to distance counseling services post-pandemic, and our counseling students in training provided approximately 2,000 hours of counseling to the community.

A new initiative is the Belk Center's Teaching & Learning Hubs, a statewide professional learning program developed with Achieving the Dream and North Carolina's Student Success Center. Located in two regions of North Carolina and impacting thousands of community college students in its first year, these hubs support sustainable professional learning activities for community college educators that help increase equitable student success outcomes.

Faculty and staff across the college delivered professional development to educators across disciplines. Events included Dining with Democracy, where teachers learned how to engage in contemporary issues through guided discussions; the Young Adult Colloquium: Celebrating the Magic of Black Characters for K-12 English Language Arts teachers; the Math Summit for K-12 mathematics educators; and the EEPA Speaker Series for educational policymakers and researchers. Our faculty also served on various local and state committees. Professor Jayne Fleener was on the Communities In Schools of Wake County's executive board; Professor Bonnie Fusarelli served on the Governor's Leandro Commission; Assistant Dean Erin Horne was a member of the state Board of Education's Preparation and Entry subcommittee; Professor Stephen Porter served on the N.C. Department of Public Instruction's Educational Research Working Group; and Associate Teaching Professor Angie Smith was a member of the Town of Morrisville's education council.

The Friday Institute offered about a dozen free online professional learning courses completed by over 5,000 K-12 educators and held numerous webinars and events, including the NC PreK-12 Literacy and Equity Summit, NC Conference for Educational Equity, and Virtual Schools Network Summer Institute. The Friday Institute is also engaged in several studies and initiatives focused on the effects of COVID learning loss to support schools, educators, and students.

Friday Institute Helping K-12 Students Recover from Learning Loss Amid COVID

Once public schools in North Carolina transitioned to remote learning because of COVID, the Friday Institute pivoted overnight to work with the N.C. Department of Public Instruction to address remote learning gaps and provide professional development to educators across the state. Since March 2020, the Friday Institute has reached over 80,000 teachers in North Carolina. Now, the Friday Institute is helping K-12 students recover from learning loss because of COVID. In partnership with the N.C. Department of Public Instruction, they are designing and evaluating a course for tutors and examining the impact of summer programs designed to support K-12 student reengagement and academic recovery. They are also helping develop and improve the ASSISTments online tutoring system. "We are excited to be a part of such important work addressing not only academic content learning loss due to COVID but also engaging in forward-looking work building human-led tutoring systems supported by cutting edge artificial intelligence technology," said Friday Institute Interim Executive Director Shaun Kellogg.

Goal 4: Champion a culture of equity, diversity, inclusion, belonging and well-being in all we do.

Equity infuses everything we do. Our efforts begin by building a more diverse, equitable, and inclusive community within our own College of Education. Our Task Force for Advancing Diversity, Equity,

and Inclusion (DEI), chaired by Alumni Distinguished Graduate Professor and Senior Advisor for Advancing DEI Joy Gaston Gayles, formed working groups that identified strategies and recommendations around five areas: undergraduate curriculum/teacher preparation programs/initial licensure, graduate curriculum and experience, faculty and staff professional development, recruitment and retention, and culture climate/sense of belonging. Some of their recommendations have already been implemented. The task force, for example, worked in partnership with the college's Council on Multicultural Initiatives & Diversity (COMID) to host the Courageous Conversations in Community Series, which featured six events related to DEI for faculty, staff, and students within the college.

To create inclusive learning communities across the field of education, we engage in research that helps all learners thrive. Assistant Professor Lam Pham, for example, is partnering with Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools to examine a new school reform model focused on improving student outcomes in the district's 10 lowest-performing schools. The Friday Institute's New Literacies Collaborative released a policy brief entitled "Meeting the Moment: Strategic Recommendations for Literacy & Equity in North Carolina." The Belk Center conducted case studies of colleges that exhibit promise in their approaches to supporting Black, Latin*, and American Indian students, and launched the N.C. Community College System History Project: Trailblazer Profiles, a collection of the oral histories of current and former community college leaders in North Carolina who are Asian, Black, Indigenous, and Latin*.

We are working to prepare equity-minded education professionals and diversify the workforce. We held our second Leadership Institute for Future Teachers (LIFT), a five-day invitational program attended by 28 high school students of color and bilingual high school seniors that was followed by nine months of mentoring. Ten students who have participated in LIFT since the program began in 2020 are NC State students today. We also have expanded our capacity to prepare equity-minded K-12 school leaders for the next six years through a \$4.5 million N.C. Principal Fellows grant awarded to Professor Bonnie Fusarelli, Distinguished Professor Lance Fusarelli, and Associate Director Lesley Wirt.

Preparing Equity-Minded School Leaders, Helping Diversify Education Workforce for North Carolina

Research shows that principals of color are more likely to hire and reduce turnover among teachers of color; but only 11% of school principals nationwide identify as Black and only 9% identify as Hispanic. The College of Education is producing a pipeline of diverse school principals who lead with an equity mindset through the NC State Educational Leadership Academy (NELA), an innovative Master of School

Administration program that is one of only six principal preparation programs in the nation to be recognized as exemplary by the University Council for Educational Administration. The program, ranked No. 14 in the nation by *U.S. News & World Report*, is the most diverse in North Carolina and one of the most diverse in the nation, with students of color making up more than 50% of nearly every cohort. “We know that students learn best when they have role models who look like them and have teachers and leaders who reflect the community in which they’re serving,” said Professor and NELA Director Bonnie Fusarelli. A \$4.5 million grant from the NC Principal Fellows Program awarded in 2021 will enable the college to continue preparing highly effective principals for the next six years. Data shows schools led by NELA principals have seen increases in student achievement and academic growth and decreases in student disciplinary incidences.

Goal 5: Improve university effectiveness through transformative technologies, cutting-edge processes and actionable data.

Units across NC State leveraged our expertise to improve university effectiveness, particularly around areas related to leading in online teaching and learning and in advancing equity. Associate Teaching Professor Angie Smith co-chaired the DELTA Online Learning Working Group. Associate Teaching Professor Michelle Bartlett served as a facilitator and directed the Inclusive Teaching Certificate for the Office of Faculty Excellence. Associate Professor Tamecia Jones initiated and chaired the software development working group for faculty who develop software tools for research or teaching. Assistant Professor Tim Drake delivered a talk on the “Macros of Microaggressions” to the Office for Institutional Equity and Diversity staff. Associate Dean Karen Hollebrands co-organized NC State’s Equity Research Symposium, where more than two dozen of our faculty, staff, and students presented, including Alumni Distinguished Graduate Professor and Senior Advisor for Advancing DEI Joy Gaston Gayles, who participated in the Plenary Panel. Professor Gayles also delivered the keynote address on advancing DEI in research and practice during NC State’s 2022 Research Week.

Our research and extension activities also directly benefit the university. The Belk Center, for example, is working to improve the outcomes of community college students, including those who will be better positioned to transfer to NC State as part of the Community College Collaboration (C3) Program. They partnered with the N.C. Community College System, N.C. Independent Colleges and Universities, myFutureNC, and the Transfer Advisory Committee to convene three working groups that developed recommendations for key transfer policy and practice implementation. The Belk Center also launched the Rural College Leadership Program to deepen their reach in rural North Carolina.

Belk Center Helping Improve Outcomes of Community College Students

With support from the Ascendium Education Group and in partnership with Achieving the Dream, the Belk Center for Community College Leadership and Research launched the Rural College Leadership Program to equip leaders of 10 rural serving community colleges in North Carolina with skills and resources they need to improve student outcomes and close equity gaps. Participating community colleges, including two that are part of NC State's Community College Collaboration (C3), engage in six professional learning events focused on driving transformational change through collaboration and data-driven, equity-minded decision-making, and they receive coaching tailored to their specific contexts and needs. "I am thrilled to join this cohort to learn alongside my peers and work on solutions together that will help us collectively close equity gaps across North Carolina for the students in our rural communities who need us the most," said Brian S. Merritt, president of McDowell Technical College.

Goal 6: Lead in developing innovative partnerships, entrepreneurial thinking and applied problem-solving.

We leverage partnerships and collaborations to address educational problems that affect learners of all ages, such as those related to literacy, a STEM-prepared workforce, and digital learning. Associate Professor Dennis Davis and Assistant Professor Jackie Relyea received a \$1.4 million grant from the U.S. Department of Education's Institute of Education Sciences for their project "Supporting Reading Comprehension for English Learners Through Inquiry-Based Language Focused Instruction." Assistant Professors Erin Krupa and Robin Anderson, for example, are preparing high school students to be entrepreneurs through the NSF-funded project "Design and Pitch Challenges in STEM: Merging Entrepreneurship and Mathematics Learning." The Friday Institute has partnered with NCVirtual to develop the Virtual Schools Network to support virtual local public schools across North Carolina.

Among other innovative partnerships, the Artificial Intelligence (AI) Academy added Booz Allen Hamilton as a partner to train their employees to meet a growing demand for talent in artificial intelligence. Launched in 2020 and led by Professor Carla Johnson, the AI Academy is now working with about 25 industry partners and over a dozen government and education partners to prepare 5,000 AI professionals. For NC Reconnect, the Belk Center partnered with the John M. Belk Endowment, myFutureNC, and 10 community colleges to identify effective strategies for reaching and supporting adult learners. Our roster of external partners and collaborators across the College of Education include Cisco, Duke Energy,

Honeywell, IBM, Microsoft, N.C. Chamber, PBS North Carolina, the N.C. Department of Health and Human Services, and the N.C. Department of Public Instruction, among others.

We also partner directly with school districts across the state to impact K-12 education. Through the NC State Education Scholars program, about 15 of our graduates have gone on to work in five school districts facing teaching shortages that provide a \$10,000 financial award to those who teach in their districts for at least two years. Through the Yadkin Wolfpack Literacy Partnership, 18 teachers from Yadkin County completed their master's degree to become literacy leaders in their district.

Helping Improve Literacy Across North Carolina

College of Education faculty are working to improve reading proficiency across North Carolina by improving how teachers teach literacy. Associate Professor Dennis Davis and Assistant Professor Jackie Reylea developed the Building Knowledge and Language through Inquiry (KLI) Framework to help teachers better support English language learners in upper elementary school who can benefit from instruction in complex aspects of written language, which are crucial for reading comprehension. Through the KLI Framework, students connect texts used in reading interventions to science and social studies content that appears elsewhere in the curriculum, furthering their opportunities to develop background knowledge, particularly as they discuss content-rich, nonfiction books with their peers and reading intervention teachers. "Our intervention is designed to build a framework to provide them with equitable and meaningful access to comprehensive, multifaceted literacy instruction to become more proficient and engaged readers," Reylea said. Davis also led the Yadkin Wolfpack Literacy Partnership. Through that program, 18 teachers from Yadkin County Schools completed their master's degree in New Literacies and Global Learning, with a concentration in K-12 Reading, in May 2022. Funded by a \$575,183 grant from the Mebane Charitable Foundation, this program helped participating elementary and secondary teachers gain expertise needed to effectively implement evidence-based literacy instruction, pursue advanced licensure as reading specialists, and become literacy leaders within their district at no cost to them. "I know a lot of us feel like we're not only stronger teachers, but we're stronger leaders too," Kennedy Neiderer '22MED said.

Goal 7: Elevate the national and global reputation and visibility of NC State.

We've emerged as one of the nation's best public colleges of education because of the outstanding work of our faculty, staff, students, and alumni, and the growing awareness of their widespread impact. We ranked No. 28 in the *U.S. News & World Report's* 2023 Best Graduate Schools rankings—our highest ranking ever—and had four programs nationally ranked in the Top-25 in education speciality categories.

As a reflection of the quality of our community, our faculty were recognized with nearly two dozen national awards or honors. Distinguished Professor and Friday Institute Senior Faculty Fellow Hollylynn S. Lee received Baylor University's Robert Foster Cherry Award for Great Teaching. Alumni Distinguished Graduate Professor and Friday Institute Senior Faculty Fellow Gail Jones was named a 2022 AERA Fellow—the American Educational Research Association's highest honor. She was also awarded the Distinguished Contributions to Science Education Through Research Award from the National Association of Research in Science Teaching.

For the third straight year, Associate Professor Anna Egalite was ranked as one of the Top 200 education scholars who had the biggest influence on educational practice and policy in *Education Week's* RHSU Edu-Scholar Public Influence Rankings. Among other honors, W. Dallas Herring Professor and Belk Center Executive Director Audrey Jaeger was one of five recipients of the 2021 Alexander Quarles Holladay Medal for Excellence. Department of STEM Education Head Aaron Clark was named the Technology and Engineering Teacher Educator of the Year by the International Technology and Engineering Education Association; Department of Teacher Education and Learning Sciences Head Jessica DeCuir-Gunby was awarded Fellow status by the American Psychological Association (APA); Associate Professor Jessica Hunt was recognized with a Gold Award at the 2022 Serious Play Conference for a game-based learning curriculum she developed; the Friday Institute's New Literacies Collaborative won a Facilitators' Choice Award in the 2022 STEM For All Video Showcase; Assistant Professor Lam Pham received the Emerging Scholar Award from the American Educational Research Association School Turnaround and Reform Special Interest Group; Professor and AI Academy Executive Director Carla Johnson received the George Mallinson Distinguished Service Award from the School Science and Mathematics Association; and Alumni Distinguished Graduate Professor and Senior Advisor for Advancing DEI Joy Gaston Gayles was featured on the cover of the March 2022 *Diverse Issues of Higher Education* and named one of 25 women making a difference in higher education.

Our faculty were elected to prominent positions, including Professor Gayles as president of the Association for the Study of Higher Education, Associate Professor James Bartlett as president of the Association for Career and Technical Education Research, and Professor Kevin Oliver as vice president of finance for the Association for Educational Communities and Technology's Division of Distance Learning.

College of Education Ranked No. 28, 4 Speciality Programs Ranked in Top 25 Nationally

The College of Education tied at No. 28 in the *U.S. News & World Report's* 2023 Best Graduate Schools rankings—the college's highest ranking to date. Among just public schools of education, the College of Education tied at No. 16 in the nation. The college's overall ranking has increased from No. 59 since the 2017 rankings. The College of Education also had four programs ranked in the Top 25 in the nation in education specialty categories: Educational Administration tied at No. 14; Secondary Teacher Education tied at No. 18; Elementary Teacher Education tied at No. 22; and Curriculum and Instruction tied at No. 24. "The *U.S. News'* rankings recognize the great work our faculty, staff, students, and alumni continue to do to live out NC State's land-grant mission. It also shows our college's ability to adapt to meet North Carolina's evolving educational needs," said Dean Paola Sztajn.

Looking Ahead

In the year ahead, we will work on a new strategic plan aligned with Wolfpack 2030: Powering the Extraordinary. In the meantime, given our land-grant mission and the urgent educational challenges facing North Carolina, we are fervently addressing several priorities. One, we are striving to recruit and prepare more teachers for North Carolina. We're committed to addressing the unmet financial needs of our students, especially in light of how financial need undercuts our state's need for teachers. We are considering several audacious philanthropic goals, including what it would take for all our future teachers to graduate debt free. Second, there is a statewide need to improve K-12 student reading skills. Our faculty's literacy research, ongoing projects like the Literacy Space, and the recently completed Yadkin Wolfpack Literacy Partnership have given us new insights into how to impact literacy, and we are uniquely equipped to be North Carolina's leader in literacy education.

In the coming year, we will also welcome several new faculty to our college, including Florence Martin as a professor of learning, design and technology and Maria Coady as the inaugural Goodnight Distinguished Professor in Educational Equity. Professor Coady will draw on two decades of work in rural, multilingual education to address a growing need in North Carolina. Additionally, Professor and 2022 UNC Faculty Fellow Kevin Oliver became head of the Department of Teacher Education and Learning Sciences on July 1, 2022, and we will engage in searches for an assistant dean for operations, an executive director of the Friday Institute and associate dean for translational research, and several faculty positions to support enrollment growth. As we continue to evolve to become an even stronger college, we will remain focused on our land-grant mission to make a transformative impact on society and advance the greater good.