A SHARED VISION:

EDUCATION & ECONOMIC SUCCESS

2025-2026 ANNUAL REPORT

NCICU

NC INDEPENDENT COLLEGES & UNIVERSITIES

CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: William Peace University, Brevard College, Catawba College, Barton College, High Point University

2025-2026 Annual Report

of North Carolina Independent Colleges and Universities

Dr. Paulette R. Dillard

As Chair of the NCICU Board of Directors, I am honored to present our 2025–2026 Annual Report, ***A Shared Vision: Education & Economic Success***. This report highlights the collective impact of our state's independent colleges and universities and the vital role independent higher education plays in strengthening North Carolina's economy and workforce.

Independent colleges and universities continue to expand educational opportunities and prepare the next generation of leaders for our state and nation. NCICU campuses award nearly one in four bachelor's degrees and one in three graduate and professional degrees in North Carolina, demonstrating the significant contributions our sector makes to the state's economic vitality.

Collaboration with the state and other sectors of education is an important factor in our success. Through our participation in the NC College Connect direct admission program, 29 NCICU campuses partnered with our public counterparts to streamline the college admissions process for North Carolina students. During Phase II, more than 9,000 students submitted over 28,000 applications to NCICU institutions, creating new pathways to higher education. This fall, campuses will move into Phase III, strengthening the transition from high school to college.

State and federal financial aid support, combined with gifts from donors and significant institutional aid, make it possible for these students to attend college. We deeply appreciate the additional $7M in state aid the General Assembly has appropriated, bringing the NCNBS to $98.1 M this year and contributing to Independent Futures for our students. Our annual fund campaign raised more than $2.1 million in philanthropic support, helping ICFNC surpass an extraordinary milestone of **$100 million in lifetime giving** since 1953. These investments empower our institutions to innovate and provide exceptional experiences for students.

On behalf of the NCICU Board of Directors, I extend heartfelt appreciation to presidents, trustees, faculty, staff, policymakers, and partners whose work advances the impact of independent higher education in our state. Together, we are expanding opportunities and building a stronger future for North Carolina.

Sincerely, ***Dr. Paulette R. Dillard***

Chair, NCICU Board of Directors, President, Shaw University

NCICU Board of Directors

The presidents of our state's independent colleges and universities comprise the NCICU Board of Directors

- Douglas N. Searcy, *Barton College*
- Jeffery Talley, *Belmont Abbey College*
- Teresa Hardee*, *Bennett College*
- Bradley J. Andrews, *Brevard College*
- Katherine Propst*, *Cabarrus College of Health Sciences*
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- Rosemary M. Thomas, *Chowan University*
- Douglas A. Hicks, *Davidson College*
- Vincent Price, *Duke University*
- Constance Ledoux Book, *Elon University*
- Nate Evans, *Gardner-Webb University*
- Lawrence D. Czarda, *Greensboro College*
- Jean Parvin Bordewich, *Guilford College*
- Nido R. Qubein, *High Point University*
- Valerie Kinloch, *Johnson C. Smith University*
- Herbert L. King, Jr., *Lees-McRae College*
- Summer McGee, *Lenoir-Rhyne University*
- Anthony J. Davis, *Livingstone College*
- Gary M. Brown, *Louisburg College*
- Tony Floyd, *Mars Hill University*
- Aimee Sapp, *Meredith College*
- Stanley T. Wearden, *Methodist University*
- John Maurice, *Mid-Atlantic Christian University*
- Paul J. Maurer, *Montreat College*
- Evan Duff, *N.C. Wesleyan University*
- Scott Bullard, *Pfeiffer University*
- Jesse Cureton*, *Queens University of Charlotte*
- Verjanis A. Peoples, *Saint Augustine's University*
- Gary Daynes, *Salem College*
- Paulette Dillard, *Shaw University*
- Edward Croom, *University of Mount Olive*
- Susan R. Wente, *Wake Forest University*
- Damián J. Fernández, *Warren Wilson College*
- Lynn Morton, *William Peace University*
- Rhett Brown, *Wingate University*

(*) Indicates Interim or Acting President

Year in Review

A Shared Vision: Education & Economic Success 2025-2026

The 2025-26 academic year was productive and exciting, as NCICU convened colleagues and students from across the state to address issues and participate in programs and conferences. NCICU and college and university leaders continued to advocate for support for independent higher education with state legislators, resulting in a $7 million dollar appropriation of one-time funding for the North Carolina Need Based Scholarship (NCNBS), and members of Congress. Independent College Fund staff raised scholarship support and managed grant programs totaling more than $2.1 million. NCICU also increased the number of collaborative programs and meetings among faculty and administrative groups and mobilized 29 NCICU campuses to engage in Phase II of the NC College Connect direct admission program. Under this program, over 9,000 seniors submitted more than 28,000 applications to NCICU campuses.

FROM TOP LEFT: • The Commission on Colleges and Universities President Dr. Stephen Pruitt. • NCDHHS Secretary Dr. Devdutta Sangvai, A. Hope Williams and Vincent Price, President of Duke University. • NC Treasurer Brad Briner. • January Administrative Group meeting luncheon.

PUBLIC POLICY

The North Carolina General Assembly convened its "short session" on April 21, and NCICU worked closely with legislative leaders and presidents on policy and budget-related issues. The $7 million the General Assembly approved was additional funding for the NCNBS to return individual financial aid awards to the prior year's level. Other major policy issues NCICU addressed included advocacy on sales tax and property tax issues and modifications to laws governing non-profit corporations, specifically concerning new annual reporting timelines. We also advocated during the drafting of the NC Farmland and Military Protection Act to ensure clarifying language protected campus students and faculty. Conversations are continuing on these issues.

The North Carolina General Assembly adjourned on July 2 but has adopted resolutions setting two to three-day periods each month until late November when it has scheduled a three-week session. Legislative leaders have announced the next session at which votes will be taken will be in November unless an emergency occurs which requires the General Assembly to take action. The legislature will adjourn sine die on December 18.

EVENTS

Throughout the 2025–2026 academic year, NCICU expanded its series of collaborative administrative group meetings and specialized conferences across 19 functional areas. Supported by generous corporate sponsors, these professional development sessions kicked off with a return to the in-person Assessment Conference, followed by the State Undergraduate Research Symposium, both at Elon University. Additional fall conferences were held for more than a dozen group of administrators who met in August, September, October, and December, and the January Communications and Development conference took place at Gardner-Webb University. The administrative group meetings for the academic year concluded with the Sustainability Conference at Catawba College.

The 15th NCICU Ethics Bowl, held at the North Carolina Legislative Complex, explored the timely theme of Ethics in Leadership. The semifinalists included Johnson C. Smith University (JCSU), NC Wesleyan University, Catawba College, and Wingate University. Of the semifinalists, Johnson C. Smith University and NC Wesleyan University competed in the final round, and JCSU made history as the very first HBCU to become the NCICU Ethics Bowl champion. Looking ahead, the 2027 competition will feature The Arthur Vining Davis Foundations

• *TOP: NCDPI Superintendent Maurice "Mo" Green.* • *BOTTOM: Johnson C. Smith University was named champion of the 15th Annual Ethics Bowl after facing NC Wesleyan University in the final round. Catawba College and Wingate University were also semifinalists.*

as the Presenting Sponsor following a recent $75,000 grant.

NCICU engaged in a month-and-a-half-long digital Counselors Tour online through our social media channels for its campuses. This virtual campaign generated over 250,000 impressions across all platforms, and social media followers grew by over 400 across all channels.

NCICU campus leaders gathered in Asheville for the 2026 Annual Meeting, chaired by NCICU Board Chair Dr. Paulette Dillard, to address critical policy, accreditation updates, and the remarkable growth of the NC College Connect direct-admission initiative. The meeting focused heavily on strategic growth while honoring five retiring campus presidents during a pivotal era of leadership transitions. NCICU campuses also expanded their technological capabilities by participating in CIC's AI Ready Network program, a collaborative initiative designed to strengthen independent campuses through the deliberate and strategic implementation of artificial intelligence technologies.

INDEPENDENT COLLEGE FUND OF NORTH CAROLINA

NCICU and the North Carolina Community College System (NCCCS) announced a new grant-funded partnership to facilitate the successful transfer of course credits for students moving from two-year colleges to four-year private colleges and universities in the state.

The new initiative leverages technology to streamline the transfer process and reduce credit loss. Building on the $1.3 million secured last year, a new $210,000 grant from The Cannon Foundation was awarded to cover first-year participation costs, with a full transfer pathways program launch expected in September 2026. This statewide initiative aims to increase credit mobility from all 58 North Carolina community colleges and Louisburg College to NCICU's campuses.

The Independent College Fund of North Carolina (ICFNC), the fundraising arm of NCICU, secured more than $2.1 million in support during the 2025–2026 campaign. This total includes $425,466.32 in scholarship support, $1,206,696 in in-kind donations, and $493,018.26 in programmatic funding. These generous gifts support vital student enrichment initiatives, specific grant opportunities, and critical financial assistance for student scholarships across our independent campuses.

One of the continuing programs is the SAS Software Grant, which provided an exceptional $1.2 million in in-kind support this year, giving 31 NCICU campuses unlimited software licenses and professional training resources to enhance their academic and administrative capabilities. In addition, the North Carolina Sheriffs' Association Criminal Justice Scholarship provided vital $2,000 annual scholarships to dependents of law enforcement or students pursuing criminal justice careers. Through the Council of Independent Colleges (CIC), NCICU received a $25,000 matching grant for The Healthcare STEM Scholarship, which was matched by Coca-Cola Consolidated for a total of $50,000 in support. CIC also awarded a $7,000 grant for the AI Ready network to support professional development in generative AI, and a $10,000 Capacity Building Grant to develop a dedicated, fundraising-focused microsite within the ncicu.org domain.

This is just a glimpse of the activities and achievements NCICU has undertaken throughout the year. NCICU staff serve on numerous cross-sector committees addressing statewide higher education policy and collaborative initiatives. The work we do as advocates for the private, nonprofit higher education sector in North Carolina provides a statewide voice, support, and representation in North Carolina and nationally for our state's outstanding independent colleges and universities and over 84,000 students.

Independent College Fund of NC

A Division of North Carolina Independent Colleges & Universities

Matthew Socha

I am honored to present the 2025-2026 annual report on behalf of the Independent College Fund of North Carolina (ICFNC), aligned with our theme, ***A Shared Vision: Education & Economic Success***. This theme reflects the core focus of our work, directing corporate and foundation partnerships toward reducing financial barriers for students across our state's independent colleges and universities.

A notable milestone in our organizational history occurred this year, as ICFNC officially crossed the **$100 million mark** in total philanthropic revenue raised since our founding in 1953. For the 2025–2026 campaign specifically, our partners contributed more than $2.1 million. This total includes $425,466.32 dedicated to student scholarships, $493,018.26 in programmatic grants, and $1,206,696 in in-kind donations. While this annual total reflects a period of transition as major grant cycles concluded, these contributions remain a vital baseline of support for the state's future workforce.

These outcomes are the result of dedicated collaboration among our Advisory Board members, corporate partners, and NCICU leadership. Their ongoing commitment ensures that these funds and resources are purposefully directed toward supporting student persistence and providing economic mobility through independent higher education.

Looking ahead, ICFNC remains focused on stabilizing and broadening our funding base through new corporate relationships and sustained advocacy. We recognize the evolving fundraising landscape, and we remain committed to demonstrating the distinct value and economic impact of North Carolina's independent higher education sector.

On behalf of the Advisory Board, thank you for your continued partnership and for your critical investment in the success of our institutions and students.

With appreciation,

***Matthew Socha**, Chair, Advisory Board*
Independent College Fund of North Carolina
Audit Partner and Not-for-Profit Industry Practice Leader, Cherry Bekaert

ICFNC Advisory Board

Business and community leaders join 24 presidents on the Advisory Board of Independent College Fund of North Carolina

- Bradley Andrews, *Brevard College*
- Jean Parvin Bordewich, *Guilford College*
- Gary Brown, *Louisburg College*
- Rhett Brown, *Wingate University*
- Scott Bullard, *Pfeiffer University*
- Allan Burrows, *CAPDEV*
- Edward Croom, *University of Mount Olive*
- Jesse Cureton, *Queens University of Charlotte*
- Larry Czarda, *Greensboro College*
- Summer McGee, *Salem College*
- Margaret Wren de St. Aubin, *Wren Foundation*
- J. Bradley Creed, *Campbell University*
- Lindsay Efird, *Universal Leaf*
- William M. Downs/Nate Evans, *Gardner-Webb University*
- Damián J. Fernández, *Warren Wilson College*
- Jeremy E. Fisher, *JP Morgan Chase Co.*
- Tony Floyd, *Mars Hill University*
- Erica Forrester, *CAPTRUST*
- Rob Garofalo, *Truist*
- Evan Duff, *N.C. Wesleyan University*
- Bobby Gauthier, *Forvis Mazars*
- Jan Gottlieb, *McMillan Pazdan Smith Architecture*
- Beth Tyner Jones, *Womble, Bond, Dickinson*
- Lee King, *Lees-McRae College*
- Julian Macaulay, Jr., *Wells Fargo*
- Paul Maurer, *Montreat College*
- Kenneth C. Mayer, Jr., *CPL, Architecture/Engineering/ Planning*
- Frederick K. Whitt, *Lenoir-Rhyne University*
- Kevin Melvin, *IMA Financial Group*
- Lynn Morton, *William Peace University*
- David Nelson, *Catawba College*
- Brooks Raiford, *NC Tech*
- Aimee Sapp, *Meredith College*
- Doug Searcy, *Barton College*
- Diane Short, *TIAA*
- Delores Sides, *Elevate Textiles*
- Tim Smith, *McGriff Insurance, ICFNC Vice Chair*
- Matthew Socha, *Cherry Bekaert, ICFNC Board Chair*
- William K. Thierfelder, *Belmont Abbey College*
- Mary Thornton, *Harvest Table Culinary Group*
- Rosemary M. Thomas, *Chowan University*
- Tammy Thurman, *Duke Energy/Piedmont Natural Gas*
- Thomas Varnadore, *Coca-Cola Consolidated*
- Stanley Wearden, *Methodist University*
- Lynn Williams, *Mt. Olive Pickle Company*

The financial operations of North Carolina Independent Colleges and Universities and the Independent College Fund of North Carolina are audited by certified public accountants.

FACING PAGE, CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: Mid-Atlantic Christian University, Belmont Abbey College, Livingstone College, Lees-McRae College

THIS PAGE, CLOCKWISE FROM LEFT: Elon University, Chowan University, Montreat College

ICFNC Fundraising Charts & Graphs

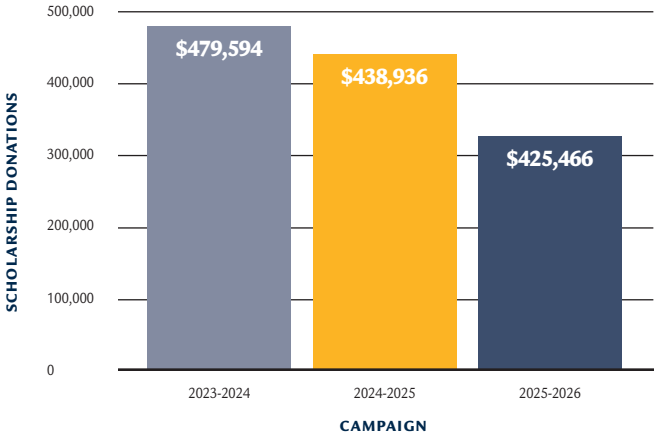
$100 MILLION

& counting for independent higher education since 1953

SCHOLARSHIP GROWTH

NOTE: The 2025-2026 IFCNC Scholarship donations were the third-highest in five years (2021-2022).

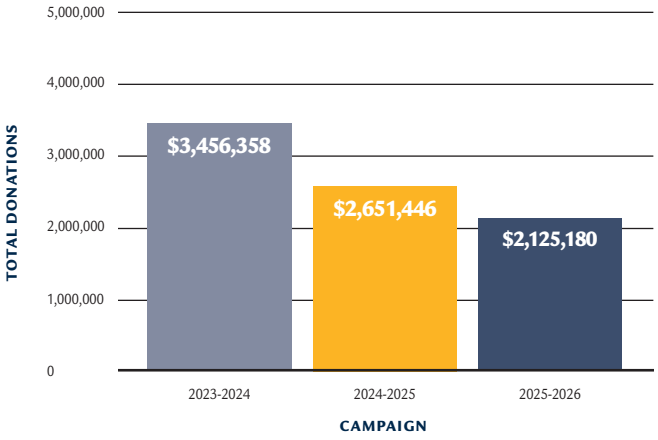
ICFNC Scholarship Donations Raised by Campaign



ICFNC CAMPAIGN PERFORMANCE

NOTE: The 2025-2026 IFCNC campaign totals resulted in the Fund crossing the $100 million milestone since its founding in 1953.

Historical Campaign Performance



2023-2024	$3,456,358
2024-2025	$2,651,446
2025-2026	$$2,125,180

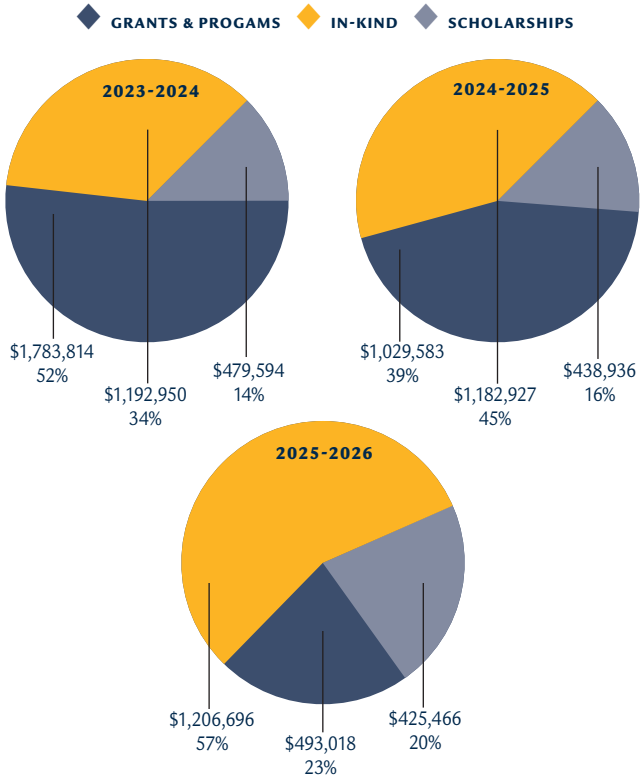
THREE-YEAR COMPARISON OF CAMPAIGN PERFORMANCE

NOTE: The 2025-2026 campaign year proved to be one of sustained achievement, demonstrating resilient support for North Carolina's independent higher education sector. NCICU's overall campaign total reached $2,125,180.58, resulting in the Fund crossing the $100 million milestone since its founding in 1953.

An outstanding commitment to student access drove this success. Donations to the IFCNC Scholarship Fund totaled $425,466.32, marking the third-highest scholarship total in the last five years and solidifying our ability to support students.

Core operational support remains robust, with In-Kind contributions holding steady at over $1.2 million. The consistent philanthropic strength confirms NCICU's vital role in supporting its private,nonprofit campuses and ensuring a high-quality, affordable education for students across the state.

DONATION CATEGORY	2023-2024	2024-2025	2025-2026
Grants & Programs	$1,783,814	$1,029,583	$493,018
In-Kind	$1,192,950	$1,182,927	$1,206,696
Scholarships	$479,594	$438,936	$425,466
Total	**$3,456,358**	**$2,651,446**	**$2,125,180**



2025-2026 Honor Roll

Of Donors & Sponsors

CORNERSTONE
($100,000 and above)

- *The Cannon Foundation*
- *CIC/UPS Educational Endowment Fund*
- SAS Institute*

BENEFACTOR
($50,000-$99,999)

- Arthur Vining Davis Foundations

PARTNER
($25,000-$49,999)

- *Coca-Cola Consolidated*
- The Council of Independent Colleges
- *Universal Leaf Foundation*
- Sarah West and Tom Dominick

ASSOCIATE
($10,000- $24,999)

- Alwinell Foundation Trust
- The Bolick Foundation
- *Broyhill Family Foundation, Inc.*
- James E. and Mary Z. Bryan Foundation
- National Student Clearinghouse
- North Carolina Sheriffs' Association
- *A. Hope Williams*

SUSTAINER
($5,000- $9,999)

- Aramark Corporation
- *BHDP Architecture*
- The R.A. Bryan Foundation, Inc.
- Cherry Bekaert, LLC
- *CPL Architects, Engineers, Landscape Architect and Surveyor D.P.C.*
- Dean Dorton
- Margaret Wren de St. Aubin
- The Dickson Foundation, Inc.
- *First Carolina Bank*
- *Forvis Mazars*
- Huntington National Bank
- *IMA Financial Group, Inc.*
- JPMorgan Chase
- *McMillan Pazdan Smith, LLC*
- Mt. Olive Pickle Company, Inc.
- North Carolina Electric Membership Cooperative
- *NWN*
- W. Trent Ragland, Jr. Foundation
- E.T. Rollins, Jr. and Frances P. Rollins Foundation
- Truist
- *Womble Bond Dickinson*
- Wren Foundation, Inc.

CONTRIBUTOR
($3,000- $4,999)

- *AdvancementEDU*
- BDO, USA, LLP
- *Bridgestone Americas Trust Fund*
- *Brown, Edwards & Company, LLP*
- The Budd Group
- *CAPTRUST*
- The Center for Principled Problem Solving and Excellence in Teaching
- College Foundation, Inc.
- The Duke Energy Foundation
- *EDC*
- *First American Education Finance*
- Fortinet
- French Broad Electric Membership Corporation
- Harvest Table Culinary Group*
- *HUB Investments*
- Jeremy and Katie Fisher
- Jesse and Kay McCartney
- McGriff Insurance
- Kevin Melvin
- NFP Corporate Services
- Old North State Fund, LLC
- Piedmont Natural Gas Foundation
- Progressive Business Solutions Inc.
- Sageview
- Sherrod and Margaret Salsbury Foundation
- Tammy Thurman
- TIAA

FRIEND
(up to $2,999)

- Alera Group
- Allan Burrows
- Bernhardt Furniture Company
- Beth Tyner Jones
- Biltmore Farms, LLC
- Blue Cross & Blue Shield of NC
- Blumenthal Foundation
- *Boldyn Networks*
- The Borden Fund, Inc.
- Samuel and Dixie Boyce
- James E. Brown, Jr.
- CapinCrouse, LLP
- *Capital Development Services*
- Cintas Corporation
- Corporate Risk Management, Inc.
- Coursedog
- Daly Seven
- *The Jeff and Juli Dave Family Donor Advised Fund*
- DLR Group
- EdSight
- *Lindsay Efrid*
- Element451
- Emergent BioSolutions
- First Tryon Advisors
- Fisher\SMB
- 5 Degrees Branding
- *Frances Fontaine*
- *Erica Blomgren Forrester*
- *Jack Frost*
- Robert Garofalo
- Garris Evans Lumber Co., Inc.
- *Robert Gauthier*
- Give Campus
- *Jana Gottlieb*
- *Gwenn and Steve Hobbs*
- Hornwood, Inc.
- HRP Associates Inc.
- Vicki Humphreys
- Inceptia
- Instructure
- IonTuition
- *Rebecca Leggett*
- Amanda and Harold Livingston
- Julian Macaulay
- M&J Foundation
- Market & Message
- Kenneth C. Mayer, Jr.
- National Management Resources
- National Utility Review
- Mitchell and Laura Perry
- Pharos Resources, LLC
- Pfizer
- PrimeSource
- Brooks and Stephanie Raiford
- Liz and Steve Riley
- Diane Short
- Timothy Smith
- Matthew and Erin Socha
- *Jeff and Jan Stoddard*
- *Mary Thornton*
- Transact
- *Tri-Tronics Pro Electronics, LLC*
- TruGreen Commercial Turf Care
- Validity.id
- Thomas and Ashley Varnadore
- VisionPoint Marketing
- The Voluntary Benefits Shop
- Wells Fargo
- Thomas and Dana West
- Lynn Williams
- Workday
- Wyatt-Quarles Seed Company

* In-Kind Gift
Increased Gift

NCICU and each of its independent colleges and universities are tax-exempt under section 501(c)3 of the U.S. Internal Revenue Code. Contributions are fully tax-deductible as provided by law.

NCICU Collaborative Programs

NCICU helps North Carolina's independent colleges and universities connect with businesses through a range of programs that promote best practices, cost savings, the sharing of information and, where appropriate, the coordination of services.

DIRECT CONTRACT AFFILIATES:

Negotiated by NCICU to provide discount pricing to campuses.

- Acadeum
- Adobe Programs
- A+ Moving and Storage
- Allied 100/AED Superstore
- AT&T Mobility
- Arctic Security
- Bartlett James LLC
- Brander Group
- Brightly
- CampusLogic
- CINTAS
- College Foundation, Inc.
- CDW Education
- CITI Training
- Coursedog
- Datavalet
- EnviroSafe
- First American Education Finance
- FSIoffice
- Gray DI (Decision Intelligence)
- Inside Higher Ed Careers
- Lightspeed
- Microsoft EES Agreement
- Microsoft Student, Faculty and Staff Select Agreement
- National Utility Review
- NCICU Tuition Exchange
- NetZero USA Lighting Solutions
- ScholarBuys
- Sqwire
- Staples Advantage
- StormWind Studios
- Survey Monkey
- EverTrue (formerly ThankView)
- Transact Campus, Inc.
- United Healthcare Student Resources
- Vector Solutions
- UWill
- VMware

BUSINESS AFFILIATES:

Companies/service providers that have a current, successful working relationship with at least one NCICU campus.

- AdvancementEdu
- Apogee
- Aramark
- BDO USA, P.A.
- BHDP
- Brown Edwards & Company
- The Budd Group
- Campus Innovation
- CapinCrouse
- CapDev
- CAPTRUST
- Centrica Business Solutions
- Cherry Bekaert
- Cintas
- Coca-Cola Consolidated
- Corporate Risk Management, Inc.
- Coursedog
- CPL
- Daly Seven
- Dean Dorton
- DLR Group
- EDC
- EdSights
- Element451
- Emergent
- First American Education Finance
- First Carolina Bank
- First Tryon Advisors
- Five Degrees Branding
- Fortinet
- Forvis Mazars
- GiveCampus
- HRP Associates, Inc.
- HUB
- IMA Financial Group
- Inceptia
- Instructure
- IonTuition
- Jenzabar
- JPMorganChase
- McGriff Insurance
- McMillan Pazdan Smith Architecture
- National Management Resources
- neteffect technologies
- NFP
- NWN
- Old North Trust
- Paycor
- Pharos Resources
- PrimeSource
- Progressive Business Solutions
- SageView Advisory Group
- TIAA
- Truist
- Transact Campus, Inc
- Tri-Tronics Pro Electronics, LLC
- TruGreen Commercial Turf Care
- USI Insurance Services
- Validity.id
- Womble Bond Dickinson

GROUP PURCHASING PROGRAMS:

Organizations/agencies that aggregate purchasing power to provide significant discounts from a number of statewide and national companies and service providers.

- Coalition for College Cost Savings
- Educational and Institutional Cooperative
- State of North Carolina e-Pocurement
- North Carolina Department of Information Technology

President's Message

Dr. A. Hope Williams

The theme of NCICU's 2025–26 Annual Report is ***A Shared Vision: Education & Economic Success***. This focus reflects both the distinct mission of North Carolina's private, nonprofit colleges and universities and the meaningful collaborations that are expanding pathways to college and shaping a dynamic economic future for our state.

NCICU has made significant strides in ensuring affordability and access to college through collaborative efforts with the State of North Carolina, including additional funding for the North Carolina Need-Based Scholarship (NCNBS). These vital funds help thousands of North Carolina students attain the high-quality higher education that best meets their academic goals while contributing to a robust, highly skilled workforce.

Following our initial pilot program for direct admission, NCICU joining *NC College Connect*, North Carolina's first statewide, joint-sector direct admission program, has yielded extraordinary results. In addition, NCICU moved into beta testing for the NCICU Transfer Pathways project to allow transfer students a streamlined way to determine their best fit for attaining their bachelor's degree. We deeply appreciate the funding of the first-year licensing of the software by the Canon Foundation.

Thanks to the generosity of our corporate and foundation partners, we also celebrated a historic milestone this year: the Independent College Fund of North Carolina has officially **surpassed $100 million** in total philanthropic support raised since its founding in 1953. This year's campaign secured more than $2.1 million, including substantial in-kind technology support from SAS and critical student scholarships. We also raised $66,600 for the 15th annual NCICU Ethics Bowl. That competition, themed "Ethics in Leadership," brought students, faculty, and business leaders together to explore complex ethical challenges and refine workforce-ready presentation skills.

Through purposeful legislative advocacy, statewide partnerships, and shared innovation, NCICU remains deeply committed to advancing student access to our state's independent colleges and universities as a direct bridge to career and economic success. This progress is made possible largely due to your steadfast support, and we thank you.

With deep appreciation,

Dr. A. Hope Williams

President, North Carolina Independent Colleges and Universities

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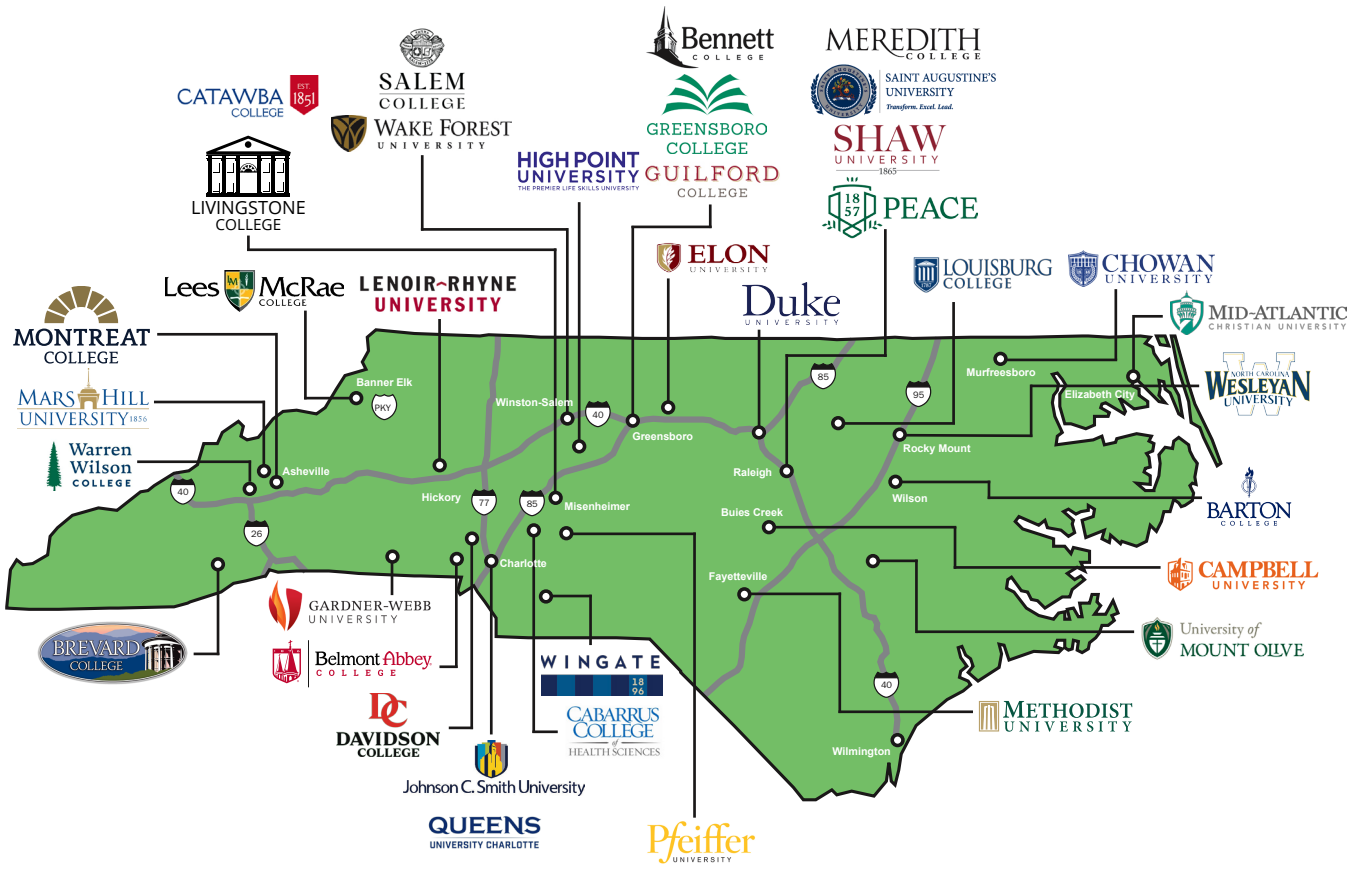
NCICU STAFF:

- **A. Hope Williams**, President, *williams@ncicu.org*
- **Denise Adams***, Director of Special Projects & Digital Learning Initiative, *adams@ncicu.org*
- **Steve Brooks***, Senior Advisor, *brooks@ncicu.org*
- **Lexie Daniels**, Associate Director, Independent College Fund of NC & Assistant Director of Finance, *daniels@ncicu.org*
- **Vicki Humphreys***, Director of Information Technology, *humphreys@ncicu.org*
- **Colleen Kinser**, Director, Independent College Fund of NC, *kinser@ncicu.org*
- **Phil Kirk***, Community Relations Advisor, *kirk@ncicu.org*
- **Rebecca B. Leggett**, Director of Programs & Special Assistant to the President, *leggett@ncicu.org*
- **Carrie Mata***, Director of Research, *mata@ncicu.org*
- **Alexis A. Thompson**, Administrative Coordinator, *thompson@ncicu.org*
- **Thomas R. West**, Vice President of Government Relations & General Counsel, *west@ncicu.org*
- **Demarcus Williams**, Director of Communications, *demarcus.williams@ncicu.org*
- **Rocky Yearwood***, Project Manager, Multiple Employer Plan, *yearwood@ncicu.org*

* *Part-time/grant-funded position*

NC Independent Colleges and Universities



Independent higher education in North Carolina includes coeducational colleges and universities, colleges for women, historically black colleges and universities, and one two-year college. These include liberal arts, comprehensive and research institutions.

NORTH CAROLINA INDEPENDENT COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES
INDEPENDENT COLLEGE FUND OF NORTH CAROLINA

530 N. Blount Street • Raleigh, North Carolina 27604

Phone: 919.832.5817 • *Web:* www.ncicu.org

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North Carolina Independent Colleges & Universities *(NCICU) is the statewide office of private, nonprofit colleges and universities. NCICU supports, represents, and advocates for North Carolina independent higher education in the areas of state and federal public policy and on education issues with the other sectors of education in the state. It also raises funds through the Independent College Fund of North Carolina for student scholarships and enrichment experiences, provides research and information to and about private colleges and universities, conducts staff development opportunities and coordinates collaborative programs. Presidents of each of the colleges and universities comprise the NCICU Board of Directors.*