



The University of North Carolina System —History and Governance

University of North Carolina System Board of Trustees Workshop

October 15, 2025

North Carolina State University

THE UNC SYSTEM



- PBS NC
- UNC Press
- NC State Education Assistance Authority
- North Carolina Arboretum



256,438

Fall 2025 Enrollment

High School:
1,233 (.5%)

Undergraduate:
203,343 (79%)

Graduate:
53,095(21%)

85.4% In-State Undergraduate Students

73.9% In-State Graduate Students

NC Cooperative Extension

101	NC Extension Centers
25,000	Educational Programs
136,000	Outreach Activities
2.6M	Participants in Activities

64,524

Degrees Awarded 2023-24

43,717

Bachelors Degrees

14,414

Masters Degrees

3,185

Doctoral Degrees



**THE UNC
SYSTEM**

47,426

Total Employment

Faculty:
14,283

SHRA Staff:
22,168

EHRA Staff:
10,975

Total Budget **\$12.10 Billion**

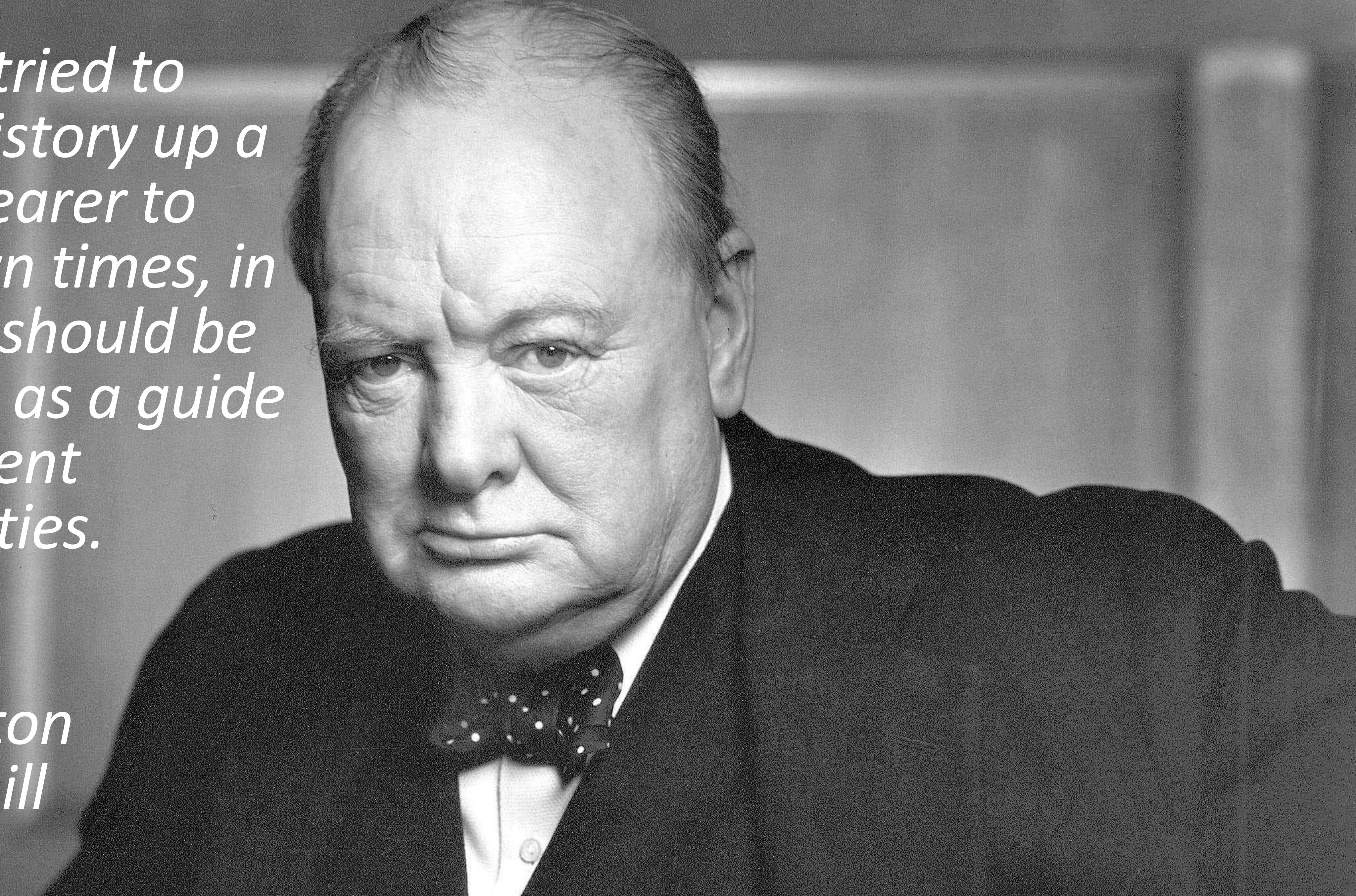
Research Awards **\$2.18 Billion**

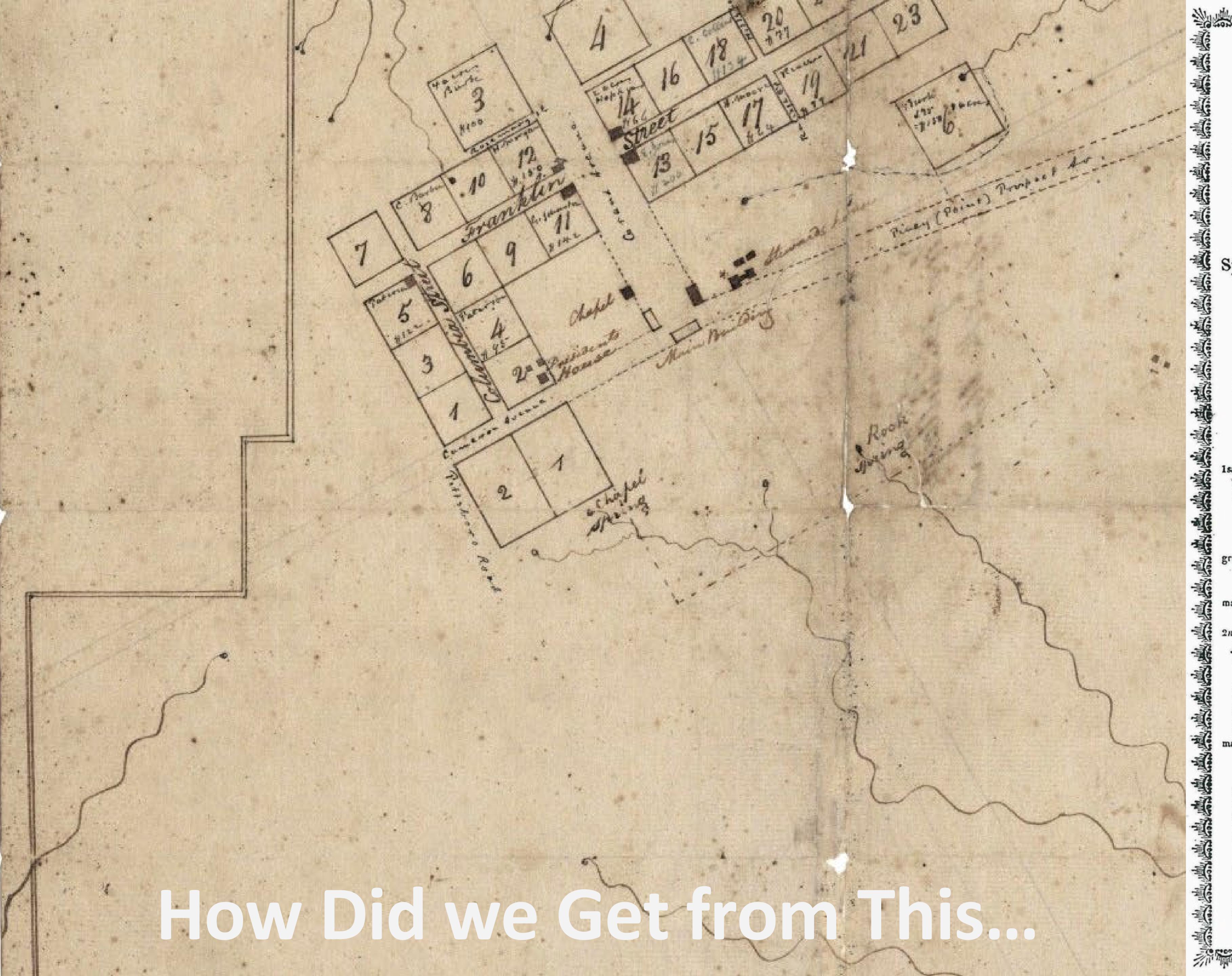
Health Care

2	Health Care Systems
23	Hospitals Operated
6,000	Bed Capacity
56,000	Team Members

*I have tried to
drag history up a
little nearer to
our own times, in
case it should be
helpful as a guide
in present
difficulties.*

*- Winston
Churchill
1929*





How Did we Get from This...

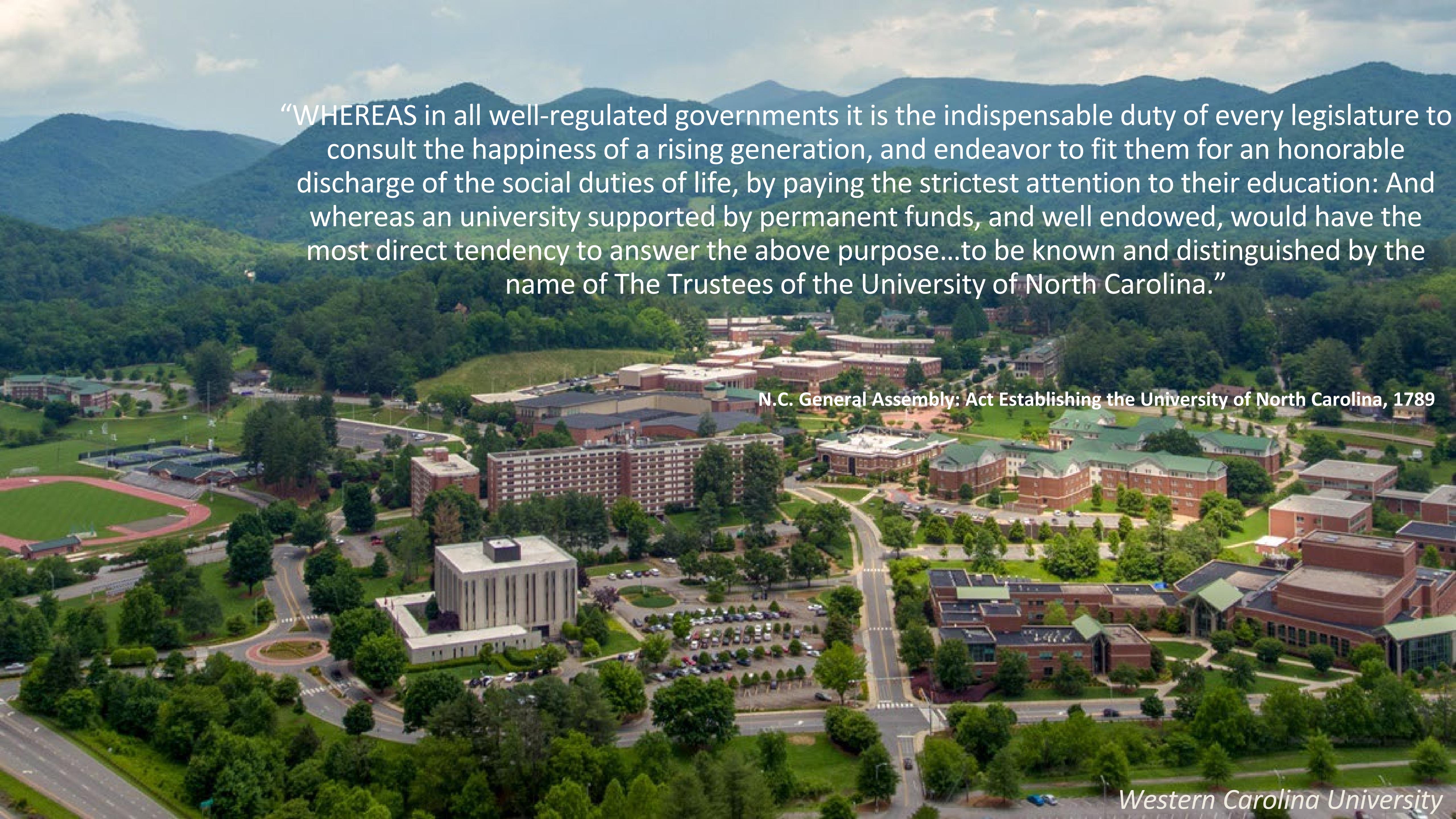


...To This?

“...all useful learning shall be duly encouraged, and promoted, in one or more universities.”

North Carolina Constitution, December 1776





“WHEREAS in all well-regulated governments it is the indispensable duty of every legislature to consult the happiness of a rising generation, and endeavor to fit them for an honorable discharge of the social duties of life, by paying the strictest attention to their education: And whereas an university supported by permanent funds, and well endowed, would have the most direct tendency to answer the above purpose...to be known and distinguished by the name of The Trustees of the University of North Carolina.”

N.C. General Assembly: Act Establishing the University of North Carolina, 1789

Article IX, Section 9



Clemmie Dixon (CD) Spangler, Jr.
UNC President, 1986 - 1997

Benefits of public institutions of higher education.

The General Assembly shall provide that the benefits of The University of North Carolina and other public institutions of higher education, as far as practicable, be extended to the people of the State free of expense.

1789**1867****1887****1889****1891****1892****1899****1907****1910**

University of
North Carolina

Howard School

Croatan
Normal School

Cullowhee
Academy

Elizabeth City Colored
Normal School
Agricultural &
Mechanical College for
the Colored Race

Slater
Industrial
Academy

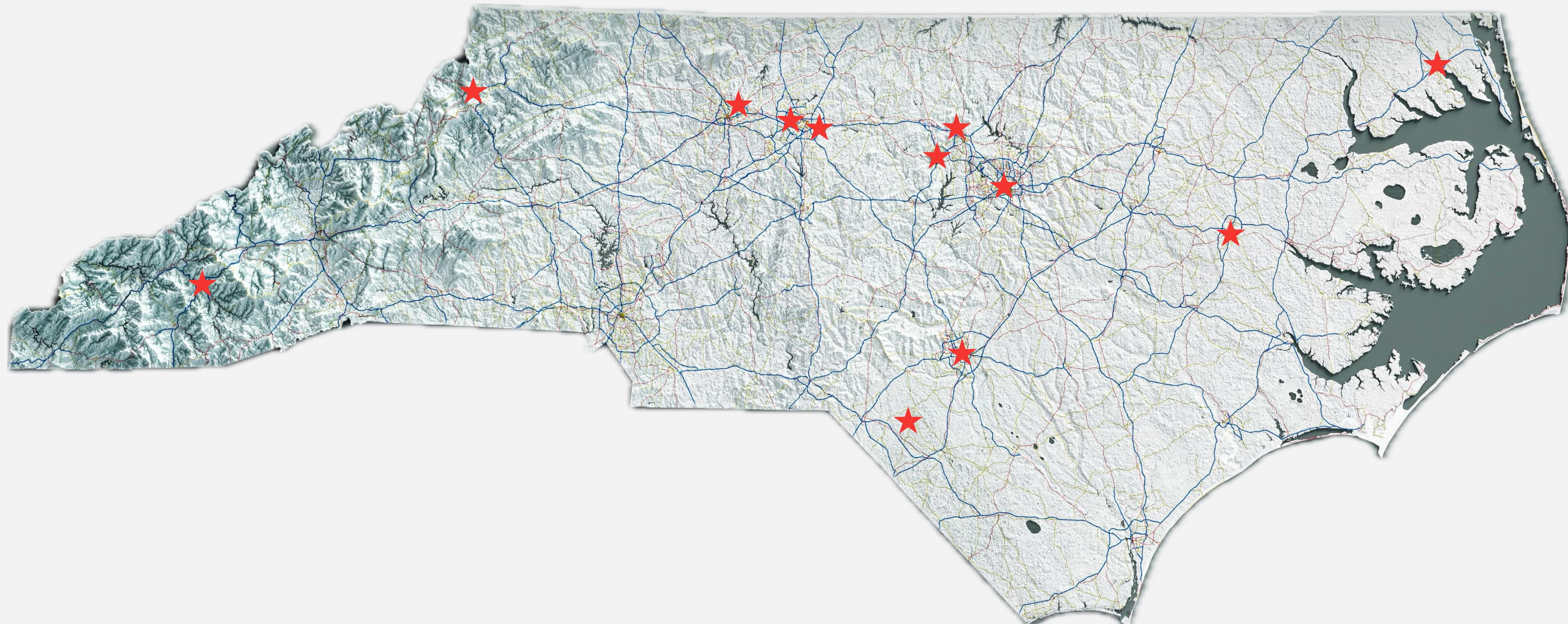
Watauga
Academy

East Carolina
Teachers
Training School

National
Religious
Training School
and
Chautauqua
for the Colored
Race

North Carolina
College of
Agriculture &
Mechanical
Arts

State Normal and
Industrial School





Consolidation

In 1931, faced with the Great Depression, the N.C. General Assembly reconstituted the University of North Carolina

Consolidated University of North Carolina contained the campus in Chapel Hill, Woman's College in Greensboro, and NC State College of Agriculture and Engineering in Raleigh

At the time, UNC Board had 102 trustees, NC State 87, and Women's College 10

"It is safe to say that North Carolina will bear the imprint of Gardner and the General Assembly of 1931 upon its structure for generations to come."

- D.A. Lockmiller, The Consolidation of the University of North Carolina

Oliver Max Gardner
Governor, 1929 - 1933

What Prompted Consolidation?

Leaders of NC had looked to the emerging Midwest universities, which combined traditional liberal arts studies with the scientific curricula of the land-grant movement in a single co-educational environment

Brookings Survey recommended a study of higher ed, with concerns raised about

Coordination / Competition

Program Duplication

Scope Creep

Faculty Salaries and Retention

Tuition and Fee Policies

Great Depression provided the window – and Gardner was uniquely positioned as an alum (and football captain!) of both Carolina and State

"Our problem is not to concentrate upon the minor maladjustments which may be cured by remedial internal administration. Our problem is rather to view the entire higher educational effort of this State in terms of trends extending over generations and to direct these trends into channels which will prevent waste and insure to the rising generations the best training we can provide. This act makes possible ultimately the united support of North Carolina behind one great, unified, coordinated, and intelligently directed enterprise. No other act of the 1931 General Assembly will have a deeper or more enduring effect on the future of this commonwealth."

- Governor O. Max Gardner.

REPORT ON A SURVEY

of the

Organization and Administration

of the

State Government of North Carolina

Submitted to

GOVERNOR O. MAX GARDNER

—

BY

INSTITUTE FOR GOVERNMENT RESEARCH

OF

THE BROOKINGS INSTITUTION

WASHINGTON, D. C.

1930

Results of Consolidation

Moved to a single Board of Trustees

President Frank Porter Graham of UNC assumed oversight of the Consolidated University

The sitting presidents of Woman's College and NC state College became Vice Presidents, and following their retirements, the positions were converted to Deans of Administration, and finally Chancellors in 1945

Finances were centralized under a single controller

A single graduate school and dean was created for the three campuses

A single summer school and director for the three campuses

Humanities, social sciences, and business education were ended at NC State

Elementary Education and Engineering were ended in Chapel Hill

The Library School was discontinued at Woman's College

No male students in Greensboro, no female students in Raleigh or Chapel Hill



Frank Porter Graham

UNC President, 1930 - 1949

Growth and Expansion

Following World War II, the GI Bill created a massive surge in college enrollments across North Carolina and the nation

The three-campus UNC was governed by a single Board of Trustees, and each of each of the other nine four-year public institutions had their own independent board of trustees

Until the 1950's there was no statewide oversight or coordination of higher education.

The North Carolina Board of Higher Ed (BHE) was implemented with some strong features, but was turned into a coordinating/planning body in 1959 following campus pushback

Growth and expansion of public higher education came to a head in the 1960's



East Carolina University



Winston-Salem State University

1789

University of
North Carolina

1867

Fayetteville
State Teachers
College

1887

Pembroke
State College

NC State
College of
Agriculture and
Engineering

1889

Western
Carolina
College

1891

Elizabeth City State
College

The Agricultural and
Technical College of North
Carolina

Woman's College

1892

Winston-Salem
Teachers
College

1899

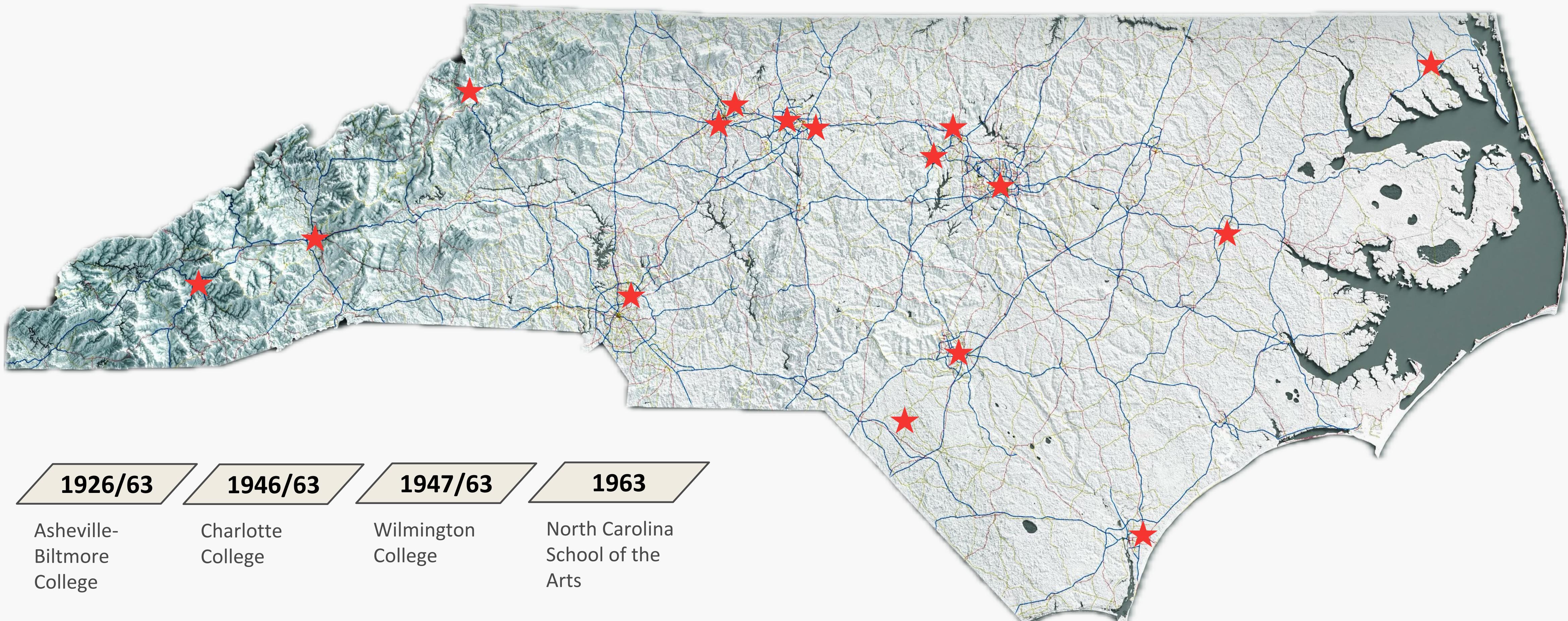
Appalachian
State Teachers
College

1907

East Carolina
College

1910

North Carolina
College at
Durham



Growth and Expansion

UNC Greensboro

1. Integration begins following *McKissick v. Carmichael* (1951) & *Brown v. Board* (1954)
2. Governors Commission on Education Beyond High School (Carlyle Commission) formed to address questions of community colleges, higher ed planning, and the junior colleges in Asheville, Charlotte, and Wilmington (1961)
3. North Carolina Community College System Created (1963)
4. Co-education and name changes in the Consolidated University (1963-65)
 - A. The University of North Carolina at Greensboro
 - B. The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill
 - C. North Carolina State University at Raleigh
 - I. The University of North Carolina at Raleigh
 - II. North Carolina State, the University of North Carolina at Raleigh
 - III. North Carolina State University of the University of North Carolina at Raleigh
 - IV. North Carolina State of the University of North Carolina at Raleigh

Tension Builds, Expansion Continues



5. Expansion of UNC
 - I. University of North Carolina at Charlotte (1965)
 - II. University of North Carolina at Asheville (1969)
 - III. University of North Carolina Wilmington (1969)
6. East Carolina upset that Charlotte elevated to University status, makes a play for ascension to university status independent from UNC structure
7. Between 1967 and 1969, the other 9 four-year institutions were elevated to “regional universities” and granted authorization to award doctorates
8. Governor Scott Created a Commission to study the structure and organization of higher education in NC. The Committee reaches gridlock, recommends deconsolidation of UNC, establishment of 40-person Board of Regents (coordinating), and 16 independent campuses with their own board of trustees. UNC opposes the plan. (1971)

Gridlock and then Resolution

9. The Damnedest Football Game You Ever Saw
10. Cotton Robinson of Purdue advocates for a single, stronger governing board. All sides agree to talk.
11. Agreement – strong central authority, single statewide Board of Governors (BOG), lump sum budget, boards of trustees authorized for each institution, but with authority provided only on delegation from the BOG
12. Legislative approval is achieved—governor's role removed from public higher education governance almost entirely



Second UNC Consolidation

“In order to foster the development of a well-planned and coordinated system of higher education, to improve the quality of education, to extend its benefits and to encourage an economical use of the State's resources, the University of North Carolina is hereby redefined in accordance with the provisions of this Article.

The Board of Trustees of the University of North Carolina is hereby redesignated, effective July 1, 1972, as the "Board of Governors of the University of North Carolina."

- North Carolina General Statutes Chapter 116, Article 1, The University of North Carolina

The University of North Carolina Mission



The University of North Carolina is a public, multicampus university dedicated to the service of North Carolina and its people. It encompasses the 16 diverse constituent institutions and other educational, research, and public service organizations. Each shares in the overall mission of the university. That mission is to discover, create, transmit, and apply knowledge to address the needs of individuals and society.

University of North Carolina Governance

Board of Governors

Plans & develops a coordinated system of higher education for NC

Responsible for overall determination, control, supervision, management, and governance of constituent institutions

Develops and presents a single, unified recommended budget for all the constituent institutions

Determines each institution's functions, educational activities, and academic programs

Responsible for hiring the President

Hires all chancellors upon nomination by the President



Boards of Trustees

Appalachian State University



Promote the institution's sound development within its prescribed functions

Help the campus serve the State in ways that complement other UNC institutions

Support high performance and excellence across all areas of operation

Exercise powers and duties as defined and delegated by the Board of Governors

Provide input to the Board of Governors on institution-specific matters

Provide support to the chancellor on issues of management and development

The President of the University of North Carolina

Chief executive and administrative officer of UNC

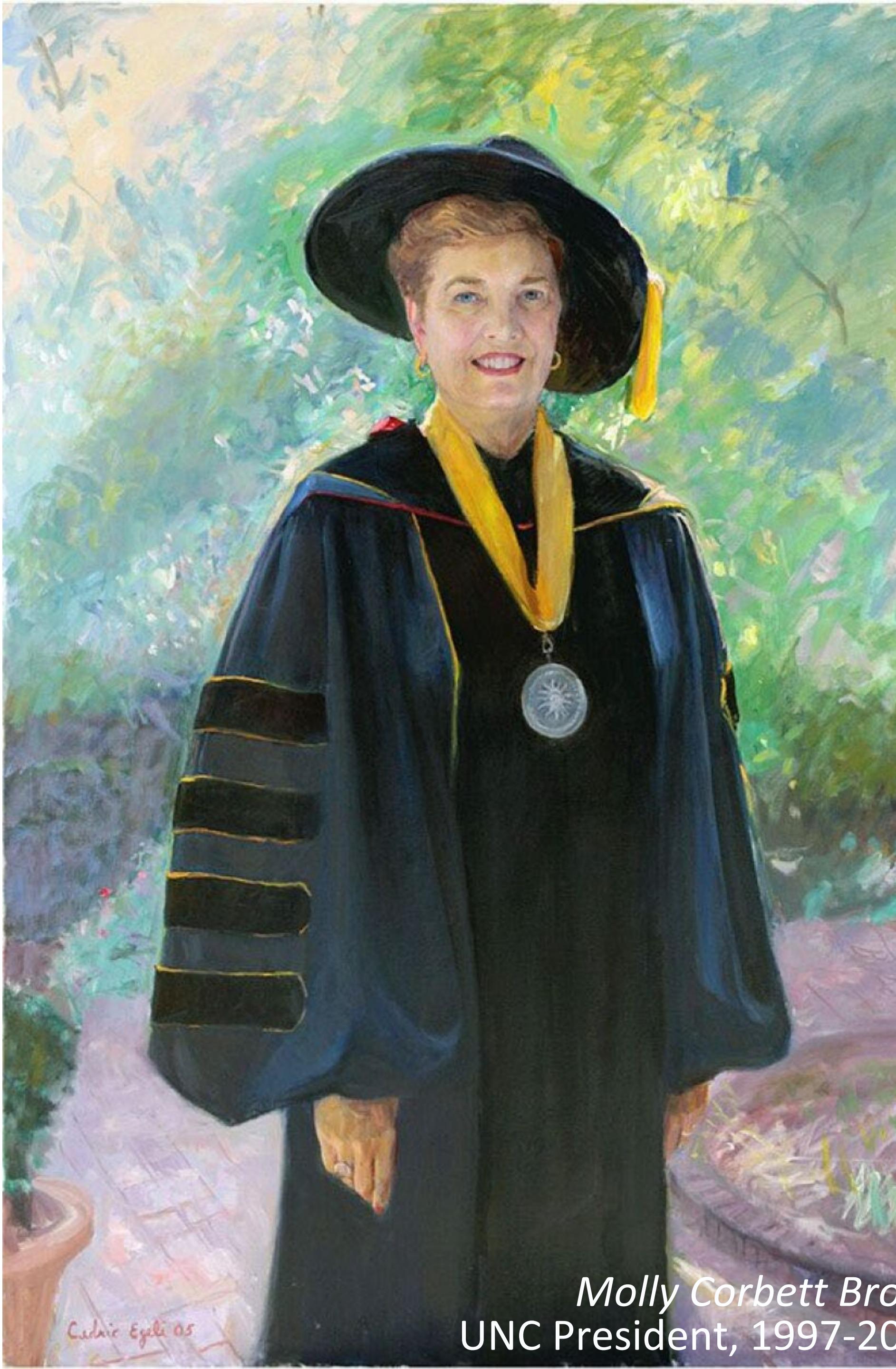
Manages affairs and executes policies across the UNC System and its institutions, subject to the Board of Governors and the Code

Represents UNC's ideals and spirit to the state, region, and nation

Official administrative spokesperson to alumni, news media, the education community, and the public

Presents and explains University policies, recommendations, and requests to the General Assembly, the Governor, state officers/commissions, and the federal government

Leads the 17 chancellors and the heads of UNC Health, PBS NC, and the NC State Education Assistance Authority



Molly Corbett Brooks
UNC President, 1997-2005

Chancellors of UNC System Constituent Institutions

Administrative & executive head of the institution; exercises executive authority, subject to the UNC President

Implements policies of the Board of Governors and the Board of Trustees

Reports annually by June 30 to both boards with a detailed operational report for the prior year

Accountable to the President for institutional administration and for enforcing System decisions, actions, policies, and regulations

Primary channel of communication between the President and deans, chairs, directors, other administrators, faculty, students, and employees



Why Trustees are Critical for University Governance

The North Carolina model requires trustees who are engaged, committed, and focused on the continued growth and development of their institutions

While the BOG is the ultimate policy-making entity, each BOT has significant responsibility for their institution

Key to success is balancing local priorities with a state-wide perspective

Higher Expectations: The North Star

Categories

- Access
- Student Success
- Affordability & Efficiency
- Economic & Community Engagement
- Excellence & Diverse Institutions
- Performance Funding and Chancellor Incentive: **on-time graduation, reduced student debt, increased efficiency**

Action Items

- Trustees should read, understand, and align campus plans to the System plan
- Performance against *Higher Expectations* should help serve as organizing logic for Board actions
- One-page dashboard each meeting with trends and targets
- Tie approvals (budget, programs, capital) to metric impacts
- Embed metric movement in Chancellor goals and Board workplan



HIGHER EXPECTATIONS

UNIVERSITY OF NORTH CAROLINA SYSTEM
STRATEGIC PLAN FOR 2022-2027

Organizing Principles and Ideas

Categories

Trustees are statewide leaders, not only campus boosters

Work to advance your campus mission AND System coherence (transfer, program mix, shared services)

Think about student/taxpayer ROI; minimize duplication where outcomes lag

Organizing Ideas

- 1) Annual board workplan tied to UNC System cycles
- 2) Student-success dashboard with leading indicators for performance metrics
- 4) Data-informed approvals that consider the impact on *Higher Expectations* strategic plan metric
- 5) Culture commitments: no surprises; one voice; prep norms; meeting discipline



UNC Wilmington

Takeaway: Keep the Main Thing, the Main Thing

Affordability

Reduce student debt by keeping the cost of attendance affordable, and increasing on-time graduation

Student Success

Improve student retention, credit hour completion, and on-time graduation

Cost-per-Degree

Increase the productivity of state investments





The NC Approach Works

#1 – America's Top State for Business (CNBC)

#6 – State support for four-year public higher ed in the US (SHEF)

#4 – Affordability (Avg. T&F)

#10 – Student Success (4-Year Grad)

#11 – Access (% Pell)

“...enrollment is up,
retentions are up,
graduation rates are up,
public support is up, private
support is up, research
funding is up, tuition has
been flat for nine years in a
row, and student debt levels
are down.”

“That is a tremendous
success story”

- *Peter D. Hans*
UNC President, 2020 -





THE UNIVERSITY OF
NORTH CAROLINA SYSTEM

*As goes our University, so
goes our State.*

*They are inextricably linked in
a dance together.*

— *William C. Friday,*
UNC President
1956 to 1986



North Carolina
School of Science
and Mathematics

THE UNC
SYSTEM



NC STATE UNIVERSITY



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