



Leadership North Carolina Class 31

Education Session
December 5 - 7, 2023

Speaker Directory

Mr. William F. Harris II

Principal Scholar
International Civil Rights Center and Museum
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Will Harris is a professor at the University of Pennsylvania and Principal Scholar at the International Civil Rights Center & Museum, where he heads the Initiative for the New Constitution and Project for New Galleries. He is founding director, Robert H. Smith Center for the Constitution, James Madison's Montpelier and former director, Benjamin Franklin Scholars/General Honors at Penn. Previously, he was regular or visiting faculty in political science at University of Michigan, Princeton, College of William & Mary, and Washington and Lee University and in law at Penn and William & Mary. He was also adjunct faculty at the Federal Executive Institute in Charlottesville for the professional development of senior federal executives.

Harris served as creator and academic director of the National Academy for Civics and Government ("Political and Constitutional Theory for Citizens"), funded for 16 summers in Los Angeles, for teachers, by the National Endowment for the Humanities or the US Department of Education. He played a similar role for 10 NEH Landmarks of American History and Culture at Montpelier. He is currently working on the book project *The True Colors of the Solid State* (3 vols.). He is the author of *The Interpretable Constitution* (Johns Hopkins University Press, 1993), "Constitution of Failure" (in the *Limits of Constitutional Democracy*, Princeton University Press, 2010) and "Civic Education Focused on the Values of Civilization: Beyond the Particularities of Specific Polities" (in *Globalism and Civic Education*, German Federal Center for Political Education, 2011), as well as co-editor of *American Constitutional Interpretation* (1st ed., Foundation Press, 1986, with Walter F. Murphy and James E. Fleming). He was the chief consultant for *RES PUBLICA: An International Framework for Education in Democracy* (2005 draft at www.civiced.org) and the *National Standards for Civics and Government* (1994). He has also engaged in civic education or constitutional consulting and teaching in South Korea, Israel, Palestinian Territories, Jordan, Bosnia, Croatia, Moldova, Bulgaria, and Romania.

Mr. Dillon Tyler

Tour Coordinator
International Civil Rights Center and Museum
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Dillon Tyler has worked in numerous nonprofit and government roles in Greensboro and North Carolina. He currently serves as the Tour Coordinator and as a senior docent at the International Civil Rights Center & Museum, a leading site along the US Civil Rights Trail and an International Site of Conscience. Tyler takes a leading role in the museum in areas including fundraising, outreach, operations, exhibit design, bookkeeping, and community engagement.

Within the community, Tyler is the vice chair of Guilford County's Juvenile Crime Prevention Council and an alumnus of the New Leaders Council, which works to recruit, train, and promote young leaders coming from elected office or business and industry. In 2021, Tyler was accepted to the Next City Vanguard conference, an experiential urban leadership gathering of 40 rising urban leaders working to improve cities across sectors, including urban planning, community development, entrepreneurship, government, transportation, sustainability, design, art, and media.

Tyler also serves as a Specialist within the North Carolina Army National Guard, where he is working to earn his commission as an Officer Candidate. Previously, Tyler had roles within the Walt Disney Company, the North Carolina Democratic Party, and the University of North Carolina at Greensboro. In his spare time, Tyler enjoys writing and acting. His stories and projects have been featured in local news publications, *The Guardian*, and *The New York Times*.

Mr. Charles T. "Chip" Hagan

LNC Class I

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Charles "Chip" Hagan helps clients reach their business goals by anticipating and effectively solving legal issues that inevitably occur in today's complicated and ever-evolving business environment. A seasoned attorney, his experience is invaluable in providing the best solution at the most opportune time. Mr. Hagan focuses his practice on providing counsel to business organizations including LLCs and partnerships, closely held companies and family businesses, and corporate governance.

During his time serving in the US Navy, Mr. Hagan realized that he enjoyed being able to advise others on legal issues. After serving his country for four years, he attended Wake Forest Law School where he was Editor in Chief of the Wake Forest Law Review. Upon graduation, he joined the firm his father (a well recognized trial attorney) had founded. After a few years of assisting in litigation matters, he shifted his focus to helping businesses grow, which led him to working with foreign companies seeking to do business in the United States – an international aspect of his practice that continues today. Mr. Hagan

has been extremely active in community organizations, having served as Chairman of the Greensboro Chamber of Commerce. He helped to found Leadership North Carolina, a statewide leadership development organization for which he served as Chairman for five years. Over the last several years, he has served as the Co-Chair of the Piedmont Angel Network, an organization that seeks to provide funding for early-stage entrepreneurs.

Dr. Antoine J. Alston

Associate Dean, College of Agriculture and Environmental Sciences
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Dr. Antoine J. Alston, a native of Rocky Mount, NC, is professor and associate dean for academic studies in North Carolina A&T State University's College of Agriculture and Environmental Sciences. He is a nationally recognized student mentor, agricultural educator, and expert in the areas of diversity and inclusion. He received his Bachelor and Master of Science Degrees in Agricultural and Extension Education from NC A&T State University and his Ph.D. in Agricultural and Extension Education from Iowa State University in 2000 at the age of 24.

Alston's dedication to student success is well known. His work has earned him many honors such as the UNC Board of Governors Award for Teaching Excellence, the Honorary FFA American Degree, the National Association of Agricultural Educators Outstanding Contribution to Agricultural Education Award, the George Washington Carver Distinguished Service Award from Iowa State University, and the North American Colleges and Teachers of Agriculture Teacher Fellow Award. Additionally, he was the first African American to receive a US Department of Agriculture Food and Agriculture Sciences Excellence in Teaching Award, the highest teaching honor from the USDA.

He resides in Reidsville, NC, with his wife Cicely H. Alston, a graduate of Winston Salem State University. They are the proud parents of Kayla Alston, a recent Graduate of NC A&T and current graduate student at Auburn University, pursuing a Master of Science in Wildlife Sciences as a Charles Barkley Graduate Fellow, and Briyana Alston, a Freshmen Provost Scholar majoring in Rehabilitation Studies at Winston State University.

Ms. Mebane Rash

Founding CEO and Editor-in-Chief
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Mebane Rash is the CEO and editor-in-chief of EdNC.org, where you can find essential news, stories, and perspectives about education. A native of North Carolina, she attended our public schools as a kid and currently lives in Deep Gap. Mebane's travel to all 100 counties, 46 states, and 30 countries informs

everything she does. The Friday Institute for Educational Innovation awarded her the 2021 Friday Medal, which honors “significant, distinguished, and enduring contributions to education through advocating for innovation, advancing education and imparting inspiration.”

Ms. Beth Anderson

Executive Director
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Beth Anderson is the Executive Director of Hill Learning Center in Durham, NC. Founded in 1977, Hill Learning Center's mission is to transform students with learning differences into confident, independent learners. Through a range of K-12 student and educator programs, and strategic partnerships with public and private schools, districts, and leaders in the field, Hill aspires to ensure students with learning and attention challenges receive the instruction and support they need, regardless of where they attend school or whether they have a formal diagnosis.

From 2007-2014, Beth was a senior leader at Teach for America (TFA), playing an instrumental role in establishing and building TFA's national development strategy, team, revenues, and relationships through a period of rapid growth. Before joining Teacher for America, Beth was a lecturer at Duke University's Fuqua School of Business, where she was the co-founder and managing director of the Center for the Advancement of Social Entrepreneurship (CASE), and previously a research associate at Stanford's Center for Social Innovation. Beth is currently on the boards of the Core Knowledge Foundation and the North Carolina State Education Assistance Authority as well as the advisory board for CASE. Beth is also a member of the Pahara-Aspen Education Fellowship Spring 2016 cohort of diverse educational leaders committed to reimagining public education. She holds a BA in Classics from Williams College and an MBA from Stanford's Graduate School of Business.

Mr. Gregory A. Richardson

Executive Director
North Carolina Commission of Indian Affairs
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In February 1995, Mr. Richardson was appointed Executive Director of the North Carolina Commission of Indian Affairs, the largest Indian Commission in the United States. Prior to that appointment, he served as the Assistant to the Assistant Secretary for Public and Indian Housing at the US Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), in Washington, DC. Prior to that he served as Executive Director of the North Carolina Indian Housing Authority in Fayetteville, NC.

As Executive Director of the Commission, Mr. Richardson is responsible for the overall administration and oversight of all Commission programs and operations. The Commission administers programs

designed to address Indian Education, Indian Housing, Workforce Development, Domestic Violence, and Indian Child Welfare.

Mr. Richardson was appointed to the Historically Underutilized Business (HUB) Advisory Council on November 2, 2017, by Governor Roy Cooper. He has served on the US Census Advisory Committee on American Indian and Alaska Natives, prior to the year 2000 and 2010 US Census, at the pleasure of the Secretary of the US Department of Commerce. He also served on Governor Cooper's Complete County Committee for the 2020 US Census. He is a March 2015 graduate of the Federal Bureau of Investigation's Citizens Academy.

Mr. Richardson is affiliated with several state and national organizations associated with Indian Affairs: the National Congress of American Indians (NCAI), the University of North Carolina at Pembroke Foundation, the Advisory Committee of the American Indian Center at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, and the United Tribes of North Carolina Board of Directors, and he is Regional Commander of the National American Indian Veterans Association.

Mr. Richardson is an enrolled member of the state recognized Haliwa-Saponi Indian Tribe, attended the historic Old Haliwa Indian School, in Hollister, NC, and is a life-long member of Mount Bethel Indian Baptist Church.

Mr. Richardson holds a BS in Business Management and an Associate Degree in Business Administration. He is a Certified Public Housing Manager and holds a Public Managers Certification from the State of North Carolina.

Finally, Mr. Richardson is considered North Carolina's Chief Advocate for American Indians!

Ms. Elaine Townsend Utin

Co-Founder, Executive Director

LatinxED

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Elaine Townsend Utin - a proud Peruvian-American - is the Co-Founder and Executive Director of LatinxED. Through her roles, Elaine focuses on leadership and identity development to help Latinx youth be creatively, civically, and collegiately ready to lead our future in North Carolina. Her mission in advocating for Latinx students, especially those facing various financial and geographic limitations, originates from her own experiences growing up in rural NC as a 1.75-generation immigrant from a low-income family. Prior to LatinxED, Elaine earned her B.A. in Middle Grades Education at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill as a first-generation college student and a Gates Millennium Scholar. She then worked in South Korea as an elementary teacher via a Fulbright English Teaching Assistantship Award. She received her Master's in Education from the Harvard Graduate School of Education, where she studied Technology, Innovation, and Education and was awarded the 2016 HGSE Intellectual Contribution/Faculty Tribute Award. In 2018, Elaine was additionally recognized on *Forbes's 30 Under 30: Education* list. Some fun facts about Elaine are that she comes from a long matriarchal line of llama herders. Her favorite food has been ceviche since she was 5 years old. And she is the new mom of a very cute baby named Ezra.

Ms. Lisa Finaldi

Community Engagement Leader
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Lisa Finaldi is the Community Engagement Leader for the NC Early Childhood Foundation (NCECF), leading the NC Campaign for Grade-Level Reading and the Family Forward NC initiative. She is an experienced non-profit leader at the state, national, and international levels.

Prior to NCECF, as National Campaigns Director at Greenpeace US, Lisa directed numerous successful environmental and public health policy initiatives. She designed and led the first global investigation to test ingredients in children’s toys and products, resulting in new consumer protection policies in over 20 countries.

Throughout her career, Lisa has brought together communities, business, government, and organizations to shape cooperative efforts for change. She has unified disparate voices to define and achieve breakthrough solutions to complex issues.

Lisa holds a BS in Journalism from West Virginia University and a Certificate in Non-Profit Management from Duke University. She and her family live in Raleigh. She is a past president of the Society for the Preservation of Historic Oakwood, a founder of NCWARN, and a founding board member of Raleigh City Farm, a one-acre urban farm in downtown Raleigh.

Mr. Geoff Coltrane

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Geoff Coltrane joined Governor Cooper’s administration as the Senior Education Advisor in June 2017. Previously, Geoff served as the Director of Institutional Research and Strategic Initiatives at the NC School of Science and Mathematics, the Director of Program and Policy at the Hunt Institute, and the Research and Communications Director at the NC New Schools Project. Geoff started his career as an elementary teacher in Durham, NC. A North Carolina Teaching Fellow, Geoff earned his undergraduate degree in education from UNC-Chapel Hill and his master’s in public policy degree from Duke University.

A native of Trinity, NC, Geoff and his wife, Sneha, live in Durham with their daughter Asha and son Devak.

Mr. Abe Hege

Principal
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Abe Hege is a principal, podcaster, and author. As a two-time principal of the year finalist, Abe became principal at a school that was in the bottom 5% of growth and in 10-months went to the top 12% of growth in the state and hasn't looked back since! Through a belief that everyone can be great with the right supports and motivation, Abe looks at the People, Systems, and Product to continue to drive scholar achievement, lower chronic absenteeism, and continue to provide equitable opportunities for all scholars. Abe hosts a school leadership podcast called Schools Redefined, aiming to support and enhance the champion leader in all of us! As an author, Abe has published a book called *The Limitless School* geared toward growing and sustaining a thriving school culture. When not leading a school or podcasting, you can find Abe pouring into his most valuable treasure in life: family.

Dr. Kelly Poquette

Music Educator
Alamance Virtual School
2021 Burroughs Wellcome Fund Piedmont-Triad Region Teacher of the Year
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Kelly A. Poquette Ph.D. is a veteran educator with certifications from the American Orff-Schulwerk Association and the Feierabend Association for Music Education. She has received accolades at the district, regional, and state levels, including being named the 2021 Burroughs Wellcome Fund Piedmont-Triad Region Teacher of the Year, where she was one of 9 teachers representing the 100,000 teachers in North Carolina. Over her career, she has taught all grades PreK-12 and currently serves as the K- 5 Music Educator at the Alamance Virtual School in the Alamance-Burlington School System in Burlington, NC. In each class, her students "Sing, say, dance, play, and create in a tuneful, beautiful, and artful way."

Mr. Jhonatan Marin Mesa

1st Grade Dual Language (Spanish) Teacher
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Jhonatan Marin Mesa is a Dual Language Teacher. He holds a Bachelor's degree in Spanish and English teaching from Universidad Pontificia Bolivariana in Medellin-Colombia. He also holds an M.Ed. in

Elementary Education from Elon University in NC. Over his career, he has been recognized as a Teacher of the Year in Cumberland County, Guilford County, and Participate Learning. He is passionate about embracing diversity, infusing technology in our current teaching, and also making our lives sustainable on planet Earth.

Ms. Jennie Bryan

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2021 Burroughs Wellcome Fund Southeast Region Teacher of the Year
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Jennie Biser Bryan is a dedicated educator committed to shaping the future of education in North Carolina. She holds an undergraduate degree in History from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill and a Master of Education degree from Wake Forest University. During her career as a high school AP US History teacher, Jennie has earned many recognitions, including the 2008 James Madison Memorial Fellow, the 2015 Patricia Behring National History Day Teacher of the Year in North Carolina, the 2020-2021 South Brunswick High School Teacher of the Year, the 2020-2021 Brunswick County Schools Teacher of the Year, and the 2021-2022 Burroughs Wellcome Fund Southeast Regional Teacher of the Year.

During the 2023-2024 school year, Ms. Bryan launched the Brunswick County Schools Teacher Scholar Academy, where she guides and inspires future educators through a pathway of CTE courses called Teaching as a Profession. Jennie's passion for public education and her outstanding achievements position her as a leader and advocate for the power of education.

Mr. Carter Adams

12th Grade, Alexander Central High School
Career and College Promise (CCP) Program - College Transfer Pathway
Alexander County

Carter Adams is a senior at Alexander Central High School and is a cohort student at Catawba Valley Community College (CVCC) at the CVCC Alexander Center for Education, where he takes two to three college courses per semester. He also works part-time at Lowes Foods in Bethlehem, NC. He was inducted into the Beta Club at West Alexander Middle School and has maintained his membership throughout high school.

In addition to his educational path, Carter has gained work experience in real estate and roofing during his summer breaks. He worked for The Adams Property Group in Wilmington, NC, where he assisted a real estate broker with various aspects of the real estate industry. He also worked for Premiere Roofing and Gutters in Hickory, NC, where he did various tasks, from installing gutters to assisting customers in their roofing and gutter needs. Carter plans to pursue a business degree after he graduates high school.

Mr. Nate Dahlstrom

12th Grade, Alexander Central High School
AP Academy
Alexander County

Nate Dahlstrom is in his senior year at Alexander Central High School (ACHS). He is also enrolled in the AP academy at ACHS, where he has taken progressively more advanced placement courses. He works part-time at Lowes Foods in Bethlehem, NC, and is an active member and co-president of the Beta Club at ACHS.

Outside of academics, Nate is a two-sport athlete who participates at a high level in both wrestling and football, earning awards at both the team and conference levels. Additionally, he participates in multiple service organizations and consistently volunteers in the community. After high school, Nate plans to attend a 4-year university to pursue a degree in Philosophy with a pre-law focus.

Ms. Sarahy Reynosa-Lanza

11th Grade, Central Piedmont Early College
Mecklenburg County

Sarahy Reynoso is a junior at Central Piedmont Early College. She is the current Executive President of the Student Government Association. Throughout her life she has cultivated a strong foundation of leadership skills that have enabled her to excel in various personal and professional endeavors. From early on, she discovered her passion for leadership as she naturally gravitated toward taking charge of group projects, leading teams, and organizing events, starting as a Beta Club Member, Piedmont IB Middle School Ambassador, and joining the Student Council at Phillip O' Berry, to now being a member of CPEC Ambassadors and SGA Executive President. Her ability to inspire, guide, and unite people toward their goals has been a driving force in her life. Ultimately she decided she wanted to go to Central Piedmont Early College to drive positive change and inspire others to reach their full potential.

Mr. Nolan T. Totten

12th Grade, Greensboro College Middle College
Guilford County

Nolan T. Totten is a senior at Greensboro College Middle College and will graduate in May 2024. Nolan has been a member of the Principal's Advisory Council since 2022. Not only is Nolan a scholar, but he is also a quarterback in football and a catcher in baseball. Nolan's leadership skills have heightened during his attendance at Greensboro College Middle College. The transition from a traditional high school setting to an early middle college has been a game changer for Nolan. He shows up as a proud senior, and he can certainly attest to the benefits of being a scholar in an early middle college setting. Nolan looks forward to taking all leadership, academic, time management, and social skills learned throughout his high school experience with him as he enters college as a freshman in the fall of 2024!

Dr. Susan Gann-Carroll

Executive Director, College and Career Pathways
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Susan joined CMS in August 2016 as the Director of Career and Technical Education (CTE). Gann-Carroll shifted the district CTE strategy from an elective focus to career pathways with an emphasis on industry credentials and work-based learning opportunities. Her passion for this work is driven by her core belief that all students possess gifts the world needs but as adults, we must help them tease out those gifts and define multiple pathways after graduation that lead to an exciting future. This passion, combined with a proven track record of growth in multiple metrics, provided an opportunity in July 2022 to lead the development of a postsecondary strategy for CMS. The Department of College & Career Pathways includes CTE, Advanced Studies, and dual enrollment. This provides the unique opportunity to build a non-competitive strategy to advanced coursework focusing on student interest and post-graduation alignment versus a program centric approach.

Prior to landing at CMS, Gann-Carroll worked for Chicago Public Schools leading whole school transformation for 18 large comprehensive high schools, as well as leading Career and Technical Education. She also served as an Assistant Principal for Benito Juarez Community Academy located in the Pilsen neighborhood of Chicago. Gann-Carroll was called to a career in education as a high school math teacher and then math instructional coach at Wyandotte High School in Kansas City, KS, after 15 years in the business world. Gann-Carroll holds a Doctorate in Education Leadership from University of North Carolina at Charlotte, as well as Masters in both Education Leadership from DePaul University and Secondary Education from Pittsburg State University. She also holds a Bachelor of Science in Marketing Management from Missouri State University. She is the proud mom of 16-year-old twins who keep her humbled and focused on her why each day.

Mr. Jeff Cox

President
North Carolina Community College System
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Dr. Jeff Cox is the 11th president of the North Carolina Community College System and a lifelong champion of North Carolina public education. Prior to leading the System, Dr. Cox served as the President of Wilkes Community College from 2014 to 2023 where he more than doubled the completion rate at the college, raised \$20 million for strategic initiatives, and created a five-year strategic plan seen as a national model for other institutions.

Cox formerly served as the Superintendent of Alleghany County Schools from 2005 to 2014. He also has served as Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum & Instruction for Lee County Schools and an

elementary principal and assistant principal in Union County Schools. He began his career as a high school teacher and coach.

In 2017, Dr. Cox was awarded an Aspen Institute Presidential Fellowship for Community College Excellence. He was one of 40 college leaders in the country selected for this prestigious program through a rigorous process that considered candidates' abilities to take strategic risks, lead strong teams, cultivate partnerships, and focus on results-oriented improvements for greater student success and access.

In 2001, Dr. Cox earned his Doctoral Degree in Educational Leadership from the University of North Carolina at Charlotte. He also has a Master's in School Administration and a bachelor's degree in English—Secondary Education, both of which he earned from Appalachian State University. Dr. Cox and his wife, Reba, have three sons—Dylan, Evan, and Zach—and four dogs.

Dr. David J. English

LNC Class 21 Alumnus

Acting Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs and Chief Academic Officer
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Dr. David English currently serves as Acting Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs and Chief Academic Officer of The University of North Carolina (UNC) System. Home to the nation's oldest public university, today the UNC System contains 16 universities, the nation's first and top-ranked residential public high school, 2 hospital systems, and annually educates roughly 240,000 students. In this role he oversees academic affairs, student affairs, enrollment management, and licensure of non-public and out-of-state colleges and universities. He is the staff lead to the Board of Governors Committee on Educational Planning, Policies, and Programs, which holds responsibility for academic planning, student services, educational policies, health affairs, and academic information technology. English previously served as the Executive Vice Chancellor and Provost of the University of North Carolina School of the Arts (UNCSA), Director of the state-wide college access program CFNC.org at the UNC System Office, and as an Assistant Director of Admissions at Appalachian State University.

He was a member of Leadership North Carolina Class XXI and of the ElevateNC: Higher Education Policy 2021-2022 Cohort. He was selected as the Appalachian State University Young Alumni Award Recipient in 2018 and as the NC State University Higher Education Distinguished Alumni Award Recipient in 2019. English is a Professor in the Division of Liberal Arts at UNCSA and a Teaching Professor at North Carolina State University, in the Department of Educational Leadership, Policy, and Human Development. He earned his PhD from North Carolina State University in Educational Research and Policy Analysis, his MA in Higher Education Administration, his BS in Industrial Technology, and his BSBA in Management and Computer Information Systems from Appalachian State University.

Dr. A. Hope Williams

President

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A. Hope Williams is president of North Carolina Independent Colleges and Universities (NCICU), the state office of the 36 private, nonprofit colleges and universities in North Carolina. She works closely with the State of North Carolina and the federal government, and with the North Carolina public K-12 and higher education sectors to address education and related public policy and funding issues. In addition, she oversees fundraising for scholarships and grants and the development of collaborative programs for the benefit of NCICU campuses. She joined NCICU in 1986 and has served as president since 1992.

Dr. Williams received her undergraduate degree from Duke University, an MPA from North Carolina State University, and a Ph.D. in Education from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. She is a member of the Governor's Education Cabinet, received the 2023 Trailblazer Award from the NC ACE Women's Network, and was named a 2017 CEO of the Year by the Triangle Business Journal. She is immediate past chair of the boards of MCNC, the North Carolina Aquarium Society, and the National Student Clearinghouse Research Center and chairs the board of Dupont Circle Investments. She also serves on the boards of the National Student Clearinghouse, College Foundation, Inc., the National Advisory Board of the Institute for Emerging Issues, the NCWorks Commission, the myFutureNC Commission, Communities in Schools of North Carolina, the Coalition for College Cost Savings, and the North Carolina Governors School Foundation.

Dr. John Paul Black

SVP, Student Services and Workforce Development

Lenoir Community College

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Dr. Black is a graduate of Elon College with a Bachelor of Arts in Foreign Languages. He holds advanced degrees from East Carolina University, with a Master of Arts in English Linguistics and a Doctorate in Higher Education Administration with a concentration in Instructional Design. In addition, Dr. Black holds certifications with Microsoft as a systems engineer and trainer.

Dr. Black's work experience includes 24 years with the NC Community College System. Dr. Black began his career at Alamance Community College, providing outreach to recent immigrants from Mexico and Central America. Dr. Black supported regional employers with educational services for agricultural and textile industries. For the past 20 years at Lenoir Community College, Dr. Black has served as an instructor and administrator in various roles, including Dean of Arts and Sciences, Dean of Student Services, Vice President of Workforce Development and Continuing Education, and Vice President of Instruction, and he currently serves as Senior Vice President for Student Services and Workforce Development.

Before joining Lenoir Community College, Dr. Black worked for seven years in Central America, Europe, and the US as a technical trainer and consultant for Microsoft Official Curriculum. Dr. Black's experience with Microsoft Official Curriculum included developing and implementing training programs for manufacturing and financial services companies, on-site training for US Army personnel stationed in Germany, and modernization projects for government agencies and banks in Central America.

Ms. Cecilia Holden

LNC Class 23 Alumna

President and Chief Executive Officer
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Cecilia Holden serves as the President and CEO for myFutureNC, a statewide initiative focused on the state's educational attainment goal. Among other past public service, she served as the Chief of Staff for the North Carolina Department of Commerce and Director of Government and Community Affairs for the State Board of Education. Her private sector experience includes a career with IBM, as well as a Registered Investment Advisory firm. Holden holds a Master's in Business Administration from Duke University, a certificate in Public Administration from the University of North Carolina School of Government and a Bachelor of Science degree in Computer Science and Business from the University of North Carolina at Wilmington.

Dr. Dudley Flood

Retired School Administrator
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Dr. Dudley E. Flood was born and reared in Winton, NC. Since 1970, Dr. Flood has lived in Raleigh, NC. He began his career as a teacher of math, science, and English at the eighth-grade level. He later taught high school social studies and coached high school basketball and football. He served for three years as principal of a school covering grades 1 - 12 before joining the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction as a specialist in school desegregation and race relations.

During his 21 years of service with the Department of Public Instruction, he earned promotions first to assistant and then associate state superintendent. After retiring from Public Instruction on December 31, 1990, he served for 5 years and 3 months as executive director of the North Carolina Association of School Administrators. Since April 1996, he has been a lecturer and consultant to groups throughout the country and abroad. He has also been a visiting professor at Meredith College and at the University of North Carolina at Wilmington, and he has taught in the Principals Executive Program at the University of North Carolina.

Dr. Flood earned a bachelor's degree from North Carolina Central University, a master's degree in educational administration from East Carolina University, and a doctorate degree from Duke University.

He has studied further at Elizabeth City State University, the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, and Hampton University.

Dr. Flood has spoken in all 100 of North Carolina's counties. He has spoken or conducted workshops in 48 of the 50 United States, in Bermuda, the District of Columbia, Canada, and Germany. His writings have been published in more than 25 journals, and he has authored three books.

Dr. Flood has received more than 350 awards for civic service. He has been presented the Order of the Longleaf Pine Award (North Carolina's highest civic award) by three different governors—Governor James G. Martin, Governor James B. Hunt, Jr., and Governor Mike Easley. He has received the Outstanding Alumni Award from both North Carolina Central University and East Carolina University, and he has received the Doctorate of Humane Letters from both North Carolina Central University and the University of North Carolina in Asheville.

Dr. Flood served for twelve years on the Board of Governors of the University of North Carolina. He currently serves on the NC Minority Cancer Awareness Action Team; the Public School Forum of North Carolina Board; the Wake Education Partnership Leadership Council; the UNC Press Advancement Council, and on several other boards and committees. He is a member of Phi Beta Sigma Fraternity and of Sigma Pi Phi Fraternity. He is also a member of Martin Street Baptist Church in Raleigh, where he serves as Sunday School teacher. For fifty-five years, he was married to the late Barbara Thomas Flood, whose inspiration he credits with any success that he has experienced.

Dr. Deanna Townsend-Smith

Senior Director

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Dr. Deanna Townsend-Smith has been working in education for over 20 years. In 2014, she earned her doctorate in Educational Leadership. She has worked and gained expertise in a variety of roles, including as a teacher, mentor, new teacher coach, administrator and, most recently, as the Director of Board Policy and Operations for the North Carolina State Board of Education. Prior to that role, Dr. Townsend-Smith served as the assistant director in the NC Office of Charter Schools. Deanna has a passion for education and has dedicated her life's work to the field. Most of her career has been spent in North Carolina, where she resides with her husband and son. In her spare time, she enjoys spending quality time with friends and family, reading, and traveling.

In her capacity as Senior Director, Dr. Townsend-Smith advances and expands the current programmatic and policy efforts of the Flood Center in an effort to achieve its mission of addressing issues of systemic racism by advocating for structural changes in policy and practice to build an equitable education system that meets the social, emotional, and academic needs of NC's diverse student population.

Class 31 Education Session Planning Committee

The following members of LNC Class 30 make up the planning committee for the Class 31 Education session.

Mrs. Crystal Adams *Alexander*

Director, North Carolina Oral Health Collaborative
Foundation for Health Leadership and Innovation
crystal.adams@foundationhli.org

Crystal Adams joined the Foundation for Health Leadership and Innovation in 2021 and is the Director of the North Carolina Oral Health Collaborative (NCOHC). Prior to joining NCOHC, she was the Department Head of the Dental Hygiene Department at Catawba Valley Community College (CVCC). She serves on several committees, such as the North Carolina Dental Society Council on Prevention and Oral Health and the North Carolina Institute of Medicine (NCIOM) Oral Health Transformation Task Force - Steering Committee, and she has been involved with policy changes that focus on increasing access and equity in oral health care.

Crystal holds a Master of Arts in Higher Education from Appalachian State University and a Bachelor of Science in Organizational Leadership from Mountain State University. She earned her Applied Science of Dental Hygiene degree from Central Piedmont Community College and her Dental Assisting Diploma from Wilkes Community College.

Mrs. Erin Brewer *Nash*

Executive Director of Corporate and Community Outreach
Barnhill Contracting Company
ebrewer@barnhillcontracting.com

Erin is a new mom to Banks, wife, and the Executive Director of Corporate Outreach at Barnhill Contracting Company. A native of Greensboro, Erin Brewer has over ten years of experience in education and nonprofit leadership in a range of positions in Chapel Hill, Raleigh, Clayton, and Rocky Mount. In 2019, Erin joined Barnhill to maximize corporate and community impact through employee and community outreach and by supporting nonprofits across North Carolina.

Devoted to lifting up the community, Erin is highly engaged with causes through serving at Redeemer Church, mentoring underserved youth, or through service on the STEP Board of Directors, ECPS District Transformation Committee, and the Rocky Mount Chamber of Commerce Board of Directors (past).

Dr. Dana Chavis *Robeson*

Executive Director of CTE
Hoke County Schools
dchavis@hcs.k12.nc.us

Dr. Dana B. Chavis has dedicated the past twenty-two years to working in public education. A dynamic instructional leader, she has made a positive impact on hundreds of students and educators. Her current

work as Executive Director of Career and Technical Education is allowing her to serve a diverse population of staff, students, parents, community organizations, and businesses.

Dr. Chavis believes every student deserves adults who strive for the best. The most rewarding part of her career is collaborating with other adults to increase learning opportunities for all types of learners. As a leader she has properly managed resources to ensure equity for all students. In addition to strong business and industry partnerships, she is well equipped to handle the fiscal side of education because of her professional training and experiences in business administration.

Dr. Chavis brings an eclectic mix of academic, leadership, and community and workforce development successes. She is committed to working with staff, students, and communities to implement methods that best meet the learners' needs to improve outcomes and opportunities for all students.

Dr. Christine Reed Davis Cabarrus

Associate Vice Chancellor and Dean of Students
The University of North Carolina at Charlotte
crdavis@uncc.edu

Dr. Christine Reed Davis is the Associate Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs and Dean of Students at UNC Charlotte. Throughout her 25+ year career in Student Affairs she has held positions at Central Connecticut State University, Boston College, George Mason University, and the University of Georgia. In her current role since 2013, Christine serves a population of 30,000 students and leads 27 professional staff within six program units. Christine acts as a Deputy TIX Coordinator, is an active participant in behavioral intervention and threat assessment, and is the primary point of contact for crisis management including families who experience the death of a student. In addition, Christine was instrumental in UNC Charlotte's response, recovery, and ongoing support of students impacted by the April 30, 2019 ,campus shooting that took the lives of two students.

Christine earned her B.A. in Psychology from Central Connecticut State University, M.Ed. in Student Personnel in Higher Education from the University of Georgia, and Ed.D. in Educational Leadership from UNC Charlotte. For her research around faculty and staff experiences in supporting the transition of student veterans into higher education, she received the Legacy of Leadership Award from the Cato College of Education at UNC Charlotte and the national Melvane D. Hardee Dissertation of the Year Award from NASPA: Student Affairs Administrators in Higher Education. In 2023 Christine was awarded the Employee of the Year Award in the category of Devotion to Duty from UNC Charlotte. She is also a graduate of the Crisis Management in Higher Education program at Harvard University and the Leadership Development program with the Center for Creative Leadership. Christine lives in Charlotte, NC, with her husband of 26 years, Scott, and her 15-year-old daughter, and she has a son who is a graduate student at NC State.

Dr. Moses Fox Mecklenburg

Executive Director, Campus Affairs
Central Piedmont Community College
moses.foxiii@cpcc.edu

Moses Fox III is an enthusiastic servant leader who is guided by Ethos; Care, Compassion, and Critique within his personal and professional life. As a transplant from the Mississippi Delta, Moses has learned

to love the different terrains across the state. The past 21 years in North Carolina have allowed Moses to embrace much of the landscape spanning the state's 100 counties.

Moses is the husband of Tiffany, father to Yahzmin M. (14) and Moses IV (13). He is instrumental in both educational and recreation efforts, serving as an academic connector for his children and others within his community. Additionally, he has spent the past seven years mentoring and coaching youth in track and field, basketball, and flag football.

Moses is active with the Men's ministry at Friendship Missionary Baptist Church in Charlotte, NC. He is also a life member of Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity, Inc. and an advisory board member of the North Carolina State Employees Credit Union.

He has dedicated more than 20 years of his professional career to providing communication and capacity-building strategies to students and families throughout North Carolina. He has published articles on Ethics and Ethical Decision Making. Moses loves being outside when the leaves and temperature change at the onset of autumn in North Carolina.

Mr. Ed Hunt Robeson

Sustainable Agriculture Coordinator
The University of North Carolina at Pembroke
edward.hunt@uncp.edu

Ed grew up on a small farm in Robeson County, NC. As a youngster, he knew he wanted to be a part of developing and creating opportunity in his home county. Once high school was completed, he pursued a degree at a local community college in Forest Management (AAS), then on to work on a BS degree at WCU, and finally a MS degree at NC A&T. His diversity in education led him back home to begin working on the many opportunities that UNCP has.

Over the last 4 years Ed has successfully created working collaboration projects with NC A&T, NCSU, Clemson, and FSU. These projects deeply connect curriculum, communities, and economic progress for the region.

Ed is passionate about building economic vitality in NC and creating successful graduates from UNCP.

Dr. Sara Imhof, Program Chair Wake

Senior Director
North Carolina Biotechnology Center
saraimhof@gmail.com

Sara is an interdisciplinary and collaborative leader; a catalyst and opportunity creator; a strategic organizer; an impactful messenger and facilitator; and a health and life sciences policy advocate. Professionally, Sara serves as Senior Director and a leader of the Focused Initiatives Team (FIT) for the North Carolina Biotechnology Center. Her primary responsibilities include conducting Federal Affairs Outreach and Engagement, leading interdisciplinary and multi-institutional collaborations, and leading the North Carolina Precision Health Collaborative (NCPHC).

Critical recent Federal Affairs efforts include successfully leading a multistakeholder Coalition to receive \$25M federal dollars under the Economic Development Administration's Build Back Better Regional Challenge. Sara also secured the advancement by both Senators Burr and Tillis of a Directed Congressional Spending request for NCBiotech's Military Outreach & Veterans Engagement (MOVE) program. Finally, Sara is facilitating a multistakeholder effort to house the newly created federal Advance Research Projects Agency for Health (ARPA-H) in North Carolina. With the NC Precision Health Collaborative, Sara champions a growing statewide precision health ecosystem that delivers leading technology innovation and proven thought-leadership in the field, across North Carolina and the U.S.

Sara formerly served as Director of Education and Grassroots Advocacy for The Concord Coalition, Senior Analyst, Health Care, at the Government Accountability Office, Executive Director of the Iowa Counties Public Health Association, and Assistant to the Director for the Center for Macular Degeneration at the University of Iowa Hospitals and Clinics.

Sara earned a Bachelor of Science degree in Nursing, a Master of Arts degree in Health Promotion, and a Doctorate in Health Management and Policy, at the University of Iowa. She is a graduate of Leadership North Carolina Class 30, program chair for Leadership North Carolina Class 31, and a member of the Leadership North Carolina Board of Directors.

Dr. LaVie Leasure *Guilford*

Associate Provost for Undergraduate Education and Dean of University College (interim)
Winston-Salem State University
leasurela@wssu.edu

LaVie is a life-long advocate for young adults, women, and education. She is currently serving as the interim Associate Provost for Undergraduate Education and Dean of University College at Winston-Salem State University. She is adamant about providing equitable opportunities for students and works toward challenging students and adults to engage in projects that promote and enhance the learning experience.

LaVie is a Greensboro native. She is married to Al, with whom she proudly parents two daughters: Ciara and Camille. LaVie loves to laugh, sing, shop, and listen to those who need to be heard in an effort to resolve problems.

Mr. Prudencio IV Martinez-Mengel *Lenoir*

Director of Latino Outreach and Recruitment
Lenoir Community College
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Prudencio IV Martinez Mengel was born and raised in Puerto Rico. He holds a B. S. in Biology from the University of Puerto Rico-Mayagüez Campus. He completed graduate studies at ECU with a M.A. in International Studies and a Graduate Certificate in Economic Development, focusing on cross-cultural communication and Latin American issues. He has conducted studies in the Caribbean, Australia, and Perú, and pursued his interest in traditional knowledge and social practices across different cultures.

He is a trained Spanish Interpreter, with experience in the medical, cultural, and scientific environments. He has been involved with the Latino community in North Carolina for the past fifteen years. Prudencio has been a member of the City of Greenville Human Relations Council and currently serves on the University of North Carolina's NC TraCS Community Advisory Board.

He graduated as the Stanley Frank Award winner of Leadership North Carolina Class 30. He was recently nominated by Governor Roy Cooper to serve in the Governor's Advisory Council on Hispanic/Latino Affairs and completed the 2023 LatinxED Fellowship. He is currently the new Director of Latino Outreach and Recruitment at Lenoir Community College in Kinston, NC. Prudencio endeavors to seek out new ideas that encourage education and understanding between people and their cultures. His heart holds the ideal of a brighter and more inclusive future for all Latinos in North Carolina.

Mrs. Carmella Melton *Durham*

AVP, Head of Internal Communications & Employment Brand
Blue Cross and Blue Shield of North Carolina
carmella.melton@bcbsnc.com

In her role, she is responsible for developing and implementing a strategic approach to internal communications and recruitment marketing that informs, engages, and inspires talent throughout the employee journey, promoting the Blue Cross NC employment brand externally, and counseling senior leaders on communication best practices.

Prior to joining Blue Cross NC, she was the Community Relations Program Manager for the City of Durham Fire Department where she was responsible for planning, implementing, and managing all community relations and public relations functions.

She is the previous Chair of the Board of Directors for the Durham Technical Community College Foundation and an active volunteer at Voyager Academy, a K-12 charter school, and the Brightleaf Bullsharks Swim Team (shout out to other fellow swim team parents).

Carmella received her Associate of Arts Degree from Durham Technical Community College in Durham, NC; Bachelor of Business Administration degree with a concentration in Marketing from Meredith College in Raleigh, NC; and a Master of Business Administration degree from Pfeiffer University in Misenheimer, NC. She lives in Durham with her husband, a retired City of Raleigh Firefighter, and two daughters (10 & 13).

She is an avid traveler, and her favorite destination is always the next destination she plans to visit!

Dr. Rachel Smith *Columbus*

Director of Strategic Initiatives
The News Reporter
rachelsmith.nc@gmail.com

A passionate supporter of public education, Rachel spent 16 years as a K-12 educator. After graduating from Appalachian State University, she began her career as an elementary school teacher in Chatham and Columbus counties before transitioning to a middle school lead teacher and then into school

administration. Along the way, Rachel earned her masters in Instructional Technology from N.C. State, administrative licensure from the Sandhills Leadership Academy, and doctorate in Educational Leadership from East Carolina University. She served as principal of Edgewood Elementary School in Whiteville City Schools for five years - including the interesting years of leading through a global pandemic.

Rachel currently serves as Director of Strategic Initiatives at The News Reporter, Columbus County's community newspaper. She is passionate about expanding health, wellness, and education opportunities for others. She founded the Columbus County Farmers Market 5k, serves on the YMCA Steering Committee, brought Girls on the Run and STRIDE youth running programs to Columbus County, is chair of the AR Ammons Poetry Contest, leads local scouting units, hikes to raise funding and awareness for Cystic Fibrosis (in honor of her niece, Ada) and advocates for mental health - especially of mothers and educators. Rachel and her husband, Justin, also stay busy with their two children, Scott and Julia, and their many activities and enjoy traveling.