



Leadership North Carolina

Class 33 Government Session

November 4-6, 2025
Raleigh

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Leadership North Carolina
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Leadership North Carolina Class 33 Government Session

November 4-6, 2025
Raleigh

Base Hotel

Sheraton Raleigh Hotel
421 South Salisbury Street
Raleigh, NC 27601
(919) 834-9900

Session Goals

1. Provide a framework of local, state, and federal government and their interplay in North Carolina
2. Explain how the legislative, financial, and judicial processes each influence the functioning of government.
3. Present an analysis of the political landscape in North Carolina to explain how politics, campaigns, lobbyists, and grassroots advocacy lead to government outcomes.
4. Demonstrate the importance of accessibility in ensuring participation and representation in government.
5. Highlight opportunities for personal involvement in state and local government.
6. Explore how government connects to education, health and human services, economic development, the environment, and inclusive leadership in NC.

Homework and Resources

Planning Committee

Chris Rivera, Program Chair

Vice President, Business and Workforce Solutions
South Piedmont Community College
Mecklenburg

Adam Caldwell, Co-Chair *Johnston*
Business Development Representative
WithersRavenel

Cristina España, Co-Chair *Wake*
Senior Outreach Advisor, Office of
Intergovernmental Affairs and Outreach
Office of the Governor

Amy Bason *Wake*
Deputy Director / General Counsel
North Carolina Association of County
Commissioners

Susanna Birdsong *Wake*
General Counsel / Vice President of Compliance
Planned Parenthood South Atlantic

Morgan Edwards Whaley *Durham*
Chief Development Officer
Triangle Residential Options for Substance
Abusers (TROSA)

Hank Henning *Guilford*
District Manager, Government and Community
Relations
Duke Energy

James Hunter *Wake*
Vice President, Government Relations
RTI International

Maryam Meseha *Chatham*
Attorney and Founding Partner
Pierson Ferdinand

Melissa Miller *Wake*
Senior Manager Information Service
Martin Marietta Materials

Mary Moore *Wake*
Government Relations
SAS

Molly O'Connor *Chatham*
President, Community Impact
Three Ships

Each planning committee for the Class 33 program year is made up of members from LNC Class 32.

Tuesday, November 4, 2025

Tour: 2110 Blue Ridge Road, Raleigh. Park in lower lot and meet in West (silver) Building. Business casual attire.
Reception: Executive Mansion, 200 North Blount Street. Business attire. [Photo ID required.](#)

2:00 – 4:00 pm	An Introduction to the North Carolina Museum of Art (Optional) Advance RSVP required.	Dr. Valerie Hillings <i>Director North Carolina Museum of Art</i>
5:30 – 7:00 pm	Session Reception at the Executive Mansion (Optional) Advance RSVP required. Photo ID required.	

Wednesday, November 5, 2025

Breakfast and Session: North Carolina Museum of Natural Sciences, Nature Research Center, 4th Floor, 121 West Jones Street, Raleigh. Coat and tie for men, distinguished dress for women, no denim.

Afternoon Session: NC General Assembly Legislative Building, House Chamber, 16 West Jones Street.

Happy Hour (Optional): Watts & Ward, 200 South Blount Street. Casual attire.

Dinner: Sitti (Jiddi Space), 137 South Wilmington Street. Casual attire.

8:00 – 8:30 am	Breakfast (Optional) Advance RSVP Required	Nature Research Center
8:30 – 9:05 am	Setting the Stage	Chris Rivera <i>Vice President, Business and Workforce Solutions South Piedmont Community College LNC Class 32 Alumnus and Class 33 Program Chair</i> Adam Caldwell <i>Business Development Representative WithersRavenel LNC Class 32 Alumnus and GOV Session Co-Chair</i> Cristina España <i>Senior Outreach Advisor, Office of Intergovernmental Affairs and Outreach Office of the Governor LNC Class 32 Alumna and GOV Session Co-Chair</i> LNC Class 33 Writing Team
9:05 – 10:00 am	Civics 101	Kara Millonzi <i>Robert W. Bradshaw Jr. Distinguished Professor of Public Law and Government Associate Dean for Research and Innovation Interim Faculty Lead, Environmental Finance Center UNC School of Government</i>
10:00 – 10:20 am	Morning Break Snack and beverages will be provided	
10:20 – 10:55 am	Leadership Profile	The Honorable Janet Cowell <i>Mayor City of Raleigh</i>
11:00 – 11:50 am	Equal Access to Government	David Payne <i>Communication Access Manager Division of Services for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing NC Department of Health and Human Services</i>

Jodie Stanley
*International Support and Language Access Coordinator
City of Greensboro*

Yesenia Cuello
*Co-Founder and Executive Director
NC FIELD*

Tunya Smith
*Director, Office of Civil Rights
NC Department of Transportation*

Cristina España, Moderator
*Senior Outreach Advisor, Office of Intergovernmental Affairs and Outreach
Office of the Governor
LNC Class 32 Alumna and GOV Session Co-Chair*

11:50 am – 12:35 pm Working Lunch – Legislative Simulation Prep

12:35 – 12:55 pm Class Business LNC Team

12:55 – 1:25 pm An Introduction to Lobbying Rufus Edmisten
*Attorney at Law
Edmisten & Webb Law*

1:30 – 2:20 pm Political Playbook for NC 2026 Paul Shumaker
*Founder and President
Capitol Communications, Inc.*

Morgan Jackson
*Partner and Co-Founder
Nexus Strategies, Inc.*

2:20 – 2:40 pm Partnered Networking Walk to the Legislative Building and Security
[Belongings can be left at the Nature Research Center to streamline security at the Legislative Building.](#)
[They can be retrieved after the program adjourns at 4 pm. No food or beverage permitted on the House floor.](#)

2:40 – 3:05 pm The Legislative Process James White
*Principal Clerk
North Carolina House of Representatives*

3:05 – 3:25 pm Mock Legislative Session LNC Class 33

3:25 – 3:55 pm Voices of Legislators The Honorable Sydney Batch
*Senator, District 17
Senate Democratic Leader
North Carolina General Assembly*

The Honorable John R. Bell, IV
*Representative, District 10
North Carolina General Assembly*

Hank Henning, Moderator
*District Manager, Government and Community Relations
Duke Energy
LNC Class 32 Alumnus and GOV Session Committee Member*

3:55 – 4:00 pm Wrap Up and Adjourn

4:00 – 6:30 pm	Free Time	
5:00 – 6:15 pm	Happy Hour (Optional) <i>Self-pay social time coordinated by Class 32. Casual attire.</i>	Watts & Ward 200 South Blount Street
6:30 pm	Class Dinner	Sitti (Jiddi Space) 137 South Wilmington Street

Thursday, November 6, 2025

Breakfast and Session: North Carolina Museum of Natural Sciences, Nature Research Center, 4th Floor, 121 West Jones Street, Raleigh. Business casual attire.

8:00 – 8:30 am	Breakfast (Optional) <i>Advance RSVP Required</i>	Nature Research Center
8:30 – 8:55 am	Morning Reflections	Chris Rivera <i>Vice President, Business and Workforce Solutions South Piedmont Community College LNC Class 32 Alumnus and Class 33 Program Chair</i>
8:55 – 9:05 am	Kudos	LNC Class 33
9:05 – 9:50 am	All Rise – North Carolina’s Judicial System	Ryan S. Boyce <i>Director North Carolina Administrative Office of the Courts</i>
9:50 – 10:05 am	Morning Break <i>Snack and beverages will be provided</i>	
10:05 – 11:00 am	Political Trends and Their Impact in NC	Dr. Christopher A. Cooper <i>Professor, Political Science and Public Affairs College of Arts and Sciences Western Carolina University</i>
11:05 – 11:50 am	The Story of Local Government: Funding, Financing, and Foresight	David Ellis <i>County Manager Wake County</i> Sean Martin <i>Town Administrator Town of White Lake</i> Kevin Leonard, Moderator <i>Executive Director North Carolina Association of County Commissioners LNC Class 26 Alumnus</i>
11:50 am – 12:25 pm	Lunch	
12:25 – 2:20 pm	Budgetopolis	Tracy Miles <i>Adjunct Instructor UNC School of Government</i>
2:20 – 2:30 pm	Wrap-Up and Adjourn	LNC Team