



## Leadership North Carolina Class XXVIII

Education Session  
December 1-3, 2020

### Speaker Directory

#### **Mr. Dillon Tyler**

Tour Coordinator  
International Civil Rights Center and Museum  
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Greensboro, NC 27401  
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Dillon Tyler currently works for the International Civil Rights Center & Museum, which is housed in the Sit-In landmark Woolworth's building and is a leading site on the U.S. Civil Rights Trail and an International Site of Conscience. As part of the interpretive staff, Dillon takes a leading role in Museum operations as Tour Coordinator and Administrative Assistant. Aiding in a wide variety of areas, he has served the Museum in increasing the efficiency of fundraising, outreach, operations, exhibit design, bookkeeping, and community engagement. Seeking to expand the Museum's message of civil and human rights education and progressive enlightenment, Dillon has actively worked with several government officials, nonprofit leaders, and change makers, enjoying personal connections with former and current politicians including Elizabeth Warren, Bernie Sanders, Beto O'Rourke, Ted Budd, and a number of local, county, and state politicians.

As a victim of a 2006 school shooting which occurred at Orange High School in Hillsborough, Dillon has also broadened his work to include mitigating gun violence. In 2018, Dillon organized and hosted the Marjory Stoneman Douglas students at the International Civil Rights Center & Museum — along with original Sit-In participants from 1960 — to collaborate and discuss intergenerational tactics used to create non-violent change. His work also took him to New York City, where he was invited to speak at a non-violence summit on Staten Island.

Dillon is a native of Durham, NC. He earned his Bachelor of Arts in Political Science with a concentration in Pre-Law from The University of North Carolina at Greensboro in 2016, where he also presided as his graduating class's Tassel Turner. As a student leader, Dillon was active in several organizations, including the Student Government Association (as Senator and President Pro Tempore), and Dean of Students Office Conduct Team. Dillon also enjoyed working for the Walt Disney Company in a college internship program. After graduation, he turned his eye to public service in a larger domain, where he served as a member of the North Carolina Democratic Party's State Executive Committee, Guilford County Juvenile Crime Prevention Council, and UNC-Greensboro Spartan Legislative Network.

In his spare time, Dillon enjoys writing and acting. His stories and projects have been featured in local news publications, The Guardian, and The New York Times.

### **Ms. Brenda Dalton James**

Community Activist and Woolworth's Sit-In Participant  
Greensboro, NC  
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Brenda Dalton James attended Dudley High School in Greensboro, NC. In 1960, while a student at Dudley High School, she participated in the F.W. Woolworth lunch counter sit-ins. She was the 2017 recipient of the Sit-in Participant Award from the International Civil Rights Center and Museum (ICRCM). Ms. Dalton James continues to be a community activist and volunteers with the ICRCM.

### **Mr. Chip Hagan**

### **LNC Founding and Lifetime Board Member**

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Chip is a business lawyer who seeks to help his clients reach their business goals by anticipating and effectively solving legal issues that inevitably occur in today's complicated and ever evolving business environment. His experience is invaluable in providing the best solution at the most opportune time.

Chip's father was an exceptional trial lawyer, and it was while Chip was in the Navy that he realized that he enjoyed being able to advise others on legal issues. After 4 years of serving his country, he attended Wake Forest Law School, and there served as Editor in Chief of the Wake Forest Law Review. Upon graduation, he joined his father in the firm his father had founded. After several years of assisting in litigation matters, he shifted his focus towards assisting businesses as they were formed and grew. This business focus led him to working with foreign companies seeking to do business in the United States, and this international area still accounts for a considerable portion of his practice. Chip also advises family businesses that are facing the challenges of succession planning.

Chip has been extremely active in organizations in his community, having served as Chairman of the Greensboro Chamber of Commerce and helping to found Leadership North Carolina, a statewide leadership organization for which he served as Chairman for 5 years. For 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. That organization has provided over \$12,000,000 in funding to entrepreneurs and created jobs and economic growth for our economy.

Chip and his deceased wife, former U.S. Senator Kay Hagan, have three grown children. One daughter is a geologist, their son is in medical school, and their youngest daughter works with her husband and brother in a solar installation business. Both of their daughters have each given him 3 grandchildren. Chip is an outdoorsman who enjoys hunting and fishing in his downtime.

**Ms. Brenda Berg****LNC Class XXII Alumna**

President and Chief Executive Officer  
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Brenda's passion for education stems from her own experience as a first-generation college graduate. With two children who have attended North Carolina public schools, she is driven by the belief that every child should have access to a great education.

Brenda is the President & CEO of BEST NC (Business for Educational Success and Transformation NC), a nonprofit, nonpartisan coalition of over 100 business leaders with a focus on making education in North Carolina the best in the nation. Through policy and advocacy, BEST NC strives to ensure that every student in North Carolina will graduate with the knowledge, skills, and behaviors to succeed in a competitive global economy.

With over twenty-five years of experience as a business owner, public policy professional, and education advocate, Brenda leads the overall BEST NC vision, strategy, and operations while leveraging her expertise to be the business-to-education bridge in BEST NC's work to transform education in North Carolina.

In 2002, Brenda founded Scandinavian Child, a baby products manufacturing and importing business. Prior to founding her business, she had almost ten years of public policy experience in both education and transportation policy and programs. She serves on various boards and education organizations, including the Kenan Fellows Program, the Institute for Political Leadership, and the NC Community College Foundation. Brenda has a B.A. in Economics and a Master's degree in Public Policy, both from Georgetown University.

**Ms. Jennifer Bell****LNC Class XXVI Alumna**

Director of Educational Partnerships, North Carolina  
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Jennifer Bell is a wife, mother of four, an avid runner, and an education nerd. Currently, Jennifer is the Director of Educational Partnerships for North Carolina at SAS. Her work with K-12 schools, community colleges, and universities to use data to drive school improvement, improve student outcomes, and expand research is a perfect fit as it allows her to continue to be a champion for every student.

Before joining the SAS team, Jennifer served the public schools of North Carolina as a high school teacher and data coach for 15 years working in both Wake County Schools and Sampson County Schools. Named the 2011 North Carolina Teacher of the Year, Jennifer is certified by the National Board of Professional Teaching Standards and has served in a variety of educational leadership roles.

Jennifer is a native North Carolinian and is a North Carolina Teaching Fellows graduate of Meredith College in Raleigh. She is also an alumna of Leadership North Carolina Class XXVI. She remains passionate and committed to the continuous improvement of education in North Carolina both professionally and personally.

**Ms. Rebecca Planchard**

Senior Early Childhood Policy Advisor  
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Rebecca Planchard advises on early childhood health, child welfare, and early learning for the North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services Office of the Secretary, working closely across divisions and with other state agencies. During the NCDHHS COVID-19 response, Rebecca is coordinating state efforts on Pre-K through grade 12 school reopening in close partnership with education leaders, as well as providing strategic support to NCDHHS Hispanic/LatinX outreach and coordination, and higher education.

Prior to joining DHHS, Rebecca served as the Early Childhood Policy Associate for the Chicago Mayor's Office, where she coordinated citywide outreach efforts to encourage preschool enrollment and worked across city agencies to advance the Mayor's early education priorities. She also brings experience as an instructional coach for preschool, elementary, and middle school teachers in Dallas-Fort Worth, TX. Rebecca started her professional career in service as a bilingual kindergarten teacher in Fort Worth, TX. Rebecca is originally from Durham, NC. She is a graduate of Duke University with a BA in Spanish, history, and political science, Magna Cum Laude, and the University of Chicago with a master's degree in public policy and a certificate in municipal finance.

**Ms. Banu Valladares**

Executive Director  
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Banu Valladares joined Charlotte Bilingual Preschool (CltBP) in August 2017. Under her leadership, CltBP expanded preschool program capacity from 108 to 144 children in 2018 with the Green Room pilot, enrolling English-speaking students alongside Spanish-speaking students for the first time to accelerate language acquisition and facilitate the flow of social capital. In 2019, Valladares established critical strategic partnerships with MECK Pre-K and ParentChild+, enabling CltBP to provide an extended-day preschool program and a home visiting intervention for the first time, deepening impact for students and increasing accessibility for working families. Valladares has led restructuring of staff roles for efficiency, excellence, and growth, as well as an asset-based redesign of the Family Program. Valladares has grown the CltBP organization to support these successes, doubling the operating budget to \$2M. During her tenure Valladares has also prioritized building an engaged Board of Directors who represent the diversity of our community – now nearly half of CltBP Board members identify as Latinx, two thirds speak Spanish, and members include two CltBP alumni parents.

Prior to joining CltBP, Valladares moved to Charlotte from Venezuela to attend UNC-Charlotte, earning a Master's degree in literature. Valladares gained extensive experience from a career in education, the arts, and the humanities, serving for many years with the North Carolina Humanities Council, the North Carolina Arts Council, and as the Executive Director of SonEdna. She has led statewide arts and education programs, specializing in forming strategic partnerships with national, state, and local agencies. A proven leader with experience in managing statewide programs, resources, and staff, Valladares also has nearly twenty years of experience writing and securing grants up

to \$500K. Her experience also includes providing capacity-building support to community-based African American, Asian American, Latinx, and American Indian cultural arts organizations.

Valladares represents the interests of Charlotte's Latinx families and informs early childhood education policy on the Mecklenburg County Early Learning Initiative Executive Committee, the NC Early Childhood Advisory Council, and the NC Early Education Foundation. She is also a member of the Association of Fundraising Professionals and serves on the Arts and Science Council Board of Directors and the Latin American Future Search. In 2019, Valladares was honored as one of 50 local "Opportunity Champions" by Leading on Opportunity. She is the author of the bilingual book of poetry *Gypsy Child: Dancing Without Veils* (CPCC Press, 2005) and enjoys yoga and hiking.

**Mr. Geoff Coltrane**

Senior Education Advisor  
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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.

**Ms. Julie Pittman**

Teacher, Rutherford County Schools  
2018 Western Region Teacher of the Year  
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Julie Paige Pittman was called to be an educator and community builder. She is a proud graduate of Johnston County Public Schools and earned a Bachelor of Arts in Political Science and Speech Communications, as well as a Master of Arts in Communication Studies, from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. She held teaching positions at UNC-CH, Rutgers University, New York University, and Central Piedmont Community College, as well as worked in professional theater while in NYC. In 2003, she joined Rutherford County Schools as a high school English teacher at R-S Central High School and was selected as the 2018 NC Western Region Teacher of the Year. This year, she is a Teacher on Loan from RCS to No Kid Hungry to be the Education Outreach Manager in North Carolina.

Along with Freebird McKinney, her colleague and co-founder of a new organization EdLeadNC, Julie helps direct Teacher Leadership Academies in Rutherford County Schools and Durham Public Schools. She thrives on motivating students to find their own voices and roles as citizens of this world, as well as inspiring fellow teachers to grow their

skills by expanding their classrooms into the global community. Ultimately, she believes each of us shares a role in supporting and nurturing all students, and thus shaping our collective future.

**Ms. Sabrina Hill-Black**

Principal  
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Sabrina Hill-Black serves as Principal of D.C. Virgo Preparatory Academy, the University of North Carolina Wilmington's public K - 8 laboratory school where she is dedicated to the inclusive commitments of the school staff.

Prior to working to open the school under the university's leadership in 2018, she served as Principal of D.C. Virgo Preparatory Academy Middle School with the New Hanover County School district. Prior to her role as Principal there, she also served as an Instructional Coach and Assistant Principal. She taught within the New Hanover County School system for 23 years, largely in the middle school environment. During that time she held many leadership roles, participated in various professional development opportunities, and extended herself to district initiatives designed to maximize student learning experiences. She earned her B.A. in English with a concentration in secondary education at North Carolina Central University and a M.A. in Educational Leadership at Gardner-Webb University.

Sabrina has co-authored articles in journals such as ASDC Express and continues to engage in opportunities to maximize experiential learning for students within the school and throughout the university and community. She has been recognized locally for her commitment to students and is proud to serve students and families in her hometown in a school named for a community pillar. Sabrina believes in the power to collaborate to build an inclusive, equitable, and accessible school community vested in a kinship model.

**Dr. Debra Dowless**

Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum and Instruction Pre-K to 5  
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Debra Dowless is currently serving as the Assistant Superintendent of Elementary Curriculum and Instruction for Hoke County Schools. In this role, Debra is responsible for developing and assessing the effectiveness of curricula and instruction and providing support for teachers and administrators. Her main goal is to create and foster equitable learning opportunities for all students, starting in Pre-Kindergarten, to help them grow, excel, and succeed in life. Prior to serving in her current role, she served as the Principal of Rockfish Hoke Elementary for eight years, the Assistant Principal of Hawk Eye Elementary for two years, and an elementary teacher in Hoke County for eight years. She has over 24 years of experience in public education and is grateful to have served all of them with the Hoke County School System. Debra earned her BS in Elementary Education from Bloomsburg University in Pennsylvania. She earned a Master's Degree in School Administration in 2004 and a Doctorate in Educational Leadership in 2016, both from Fayetteville State University.

### **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. Bill Carver**

Interim System President  
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Dr. Bill Carver became interim president of the North Carolina Community College System on August 1, 2020. Carver was president of Nash Community College for 14 years until his retirement last year. He spent much of his career in

a variety of roles at Nash, where he served as an instructor, director of the Small Business Center, director of business and industry services, dean of continuing education, and vice president of instruction. He became president there in 2005.

During Carver's tenure as president, Nash Community College expanded its campus and grew enrollment by 42 percent, while increasing online enrollment by 30 percent. He launched successful strategic planning and fundraising initiatives at the college. He earned a bachelor's degree at NC State University, a Master of Business Administration from Campbell University and a Doctor of Education degree from Nova Southeastern University.

### **Dr. Andrew Kelly**

Senior Vice President for Strategy and Policy  
University of North Carolina System  
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Dr. Andrew Kelly serves as the Senior Vice President for Strategy and Policy. Kelly leads the Division of Strategy and Policy, which is charged with enhancing and furthering the UNC system's strategic goals. In addition to serving as a higher-education policy expert to the President and the Board of Governors, he is tasked with developing a robust performance measurement system and proactively identifying new initiatives to promote system goals.

Prior to joining UNC, Kelly was a resident scholar in education policy studies and the Founding Director of the Center on Higher Education Reform at the American Enterprise Institute (AEI). In his roles, Dr. Kelly conducted research on college affordability innovation in higher education and federal and state policy and advised members of congress, state policy makers, and presidential candidates. Kelly has published work in academic journals and in popular outlets such as the Wall Street Journal, the New York Times, the Chronicle of Higher Education, Education Week, The Atlantic, and National Review.

Dr. Kelly is a summa cum laude graduate of Dartmouth College, where he earned a degree in history. He holds a master's degree and Ph.D. in political science from the University of California, Berkeley.

### **Dr. A. Hope Williams**

President  
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Dr. Hope Williams joined NCICU in 1986 and has served as president since 1992. She is an advocate on state and federal public policy issues, represents independent higher education with national education organizations and the other education sectors in North Carolina, seeks scholarship and program support for students and campuses, and fosters collaborative partnerships among NCICU's 36 campuses. She received her postsecondary degrees from Duke University, NCSU and UNC-Chapel Hill.



**Ms. Cecilia Holden**

**LNC Class XXIII Alumna**

President and Chief Executive Officer  
myFutureNC  
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Cecilia Holden has served as the first-ever President & CEO for myFutureNC, a statewide initiative focused on educational attainment, since December 2019. The organization is the result of cross-sector collaboration between North Carolina leaders in education, business, and government. In this role, Holden advances the strategic direction and priorities for the organization; collaborates with cross-sector leaders; develops and drives policy that increases North Carolina's level of education attainment; and builds the overall capacity of the organization.

Holden most recently held the position as the Director of Government and Community Affairs for the State Board of Education. In this capacity, she served as the principal contact and staff for the State Board of Education with state and federal education policy makers and stakeholders, including the NC General Assembly, the Governor's Office, NC state agencies, and the U.S. Congress.

Holden's career includes extensive public and private sector experience. Prior to joining the State Board of Education, she served as the Chief of Staff for the North Carolina Department of Commerce. In addition, her North Carolina public service includes serving as the Special Assistant to the Secretary of Environment and Natural Resources and the Director of Networking Technologies for the Department of Public Instruction. She has a proven track record of establishing and implementing creative strategies to optimize operations, return on investments, and excellence in customer satisfaction.

Holden served as a middle manager with IBM and as the Business Operations Manager for a registered investment advisory firm. During her years with IBM, Holden was a Team Excellence Award winner and an IBM Achievement Club recipient and was selected for the IBM Executive Fast Track program. She built a reputation for implementing high standards for customer service while she oversaw a worldwide network of technical support engineers.

Holden began her career working as a Community Detention Counselor with Wake County Juvenile Court. She later served as the Information Technology Implementation Manager with Wake County, where she was responsible for the Public Safety and Criminal Justice information technology systems for which she received multiple National Association of Counties awards.

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.

Holden is married to Tom Holden and they have a son and a daughter. They are members of Edenton Street United Methodist Church where Holden served on the Administrative Board and volunteers as a youth leader.

### **Dr. Beryl McEwen**

Provost and Executive Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs  
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Dr. Beryl C. McEwen is the provost and executive vice chancellor for academic affairs at North Carolina Agricultural and Technical State University and has more than 28 years of experience in the field of higher education. As the chief academic officer for the university, Dr. McEwen oversees all academic programs—undergraduate, graduate, distance learning, and continuing education. She is board member of the Guilford Merchants Association, the Board of Trustees for the North Carolina School of Science and Mathematics, and the Gateway Research Park.

Dr. McEwen has had a distinguished career in higher education as professor, researcher, and administrator. Her previous positions include Dean of the College of Business and Economics, Vice Provost for Strategic Planning and Institutional Effectiveness, Associate Dean of the School of Business and Economics, and Chairperson of the Department of Business Education.

Her research activities and leadership include oversight of a number of Small Business and Technology Development Center (SBTDC) grants and several NSF STEM-based grants awarded to the Office of the Provost, including the North Carolina Louis Stokes Alliance for Minority Participation (NC-LSAMP) grant and the ADVANCE Institutional Transformation grant.

Dr. McEwen earned her bachelor's degree in business education from the University of Technology, Jamaica, and her master's and doctoral degrees from Southern Illinois University at Carbondale. She has received numerous awards and citations, but most recently, she received the John Robert Gregg Award for outstanding contributions to the advancement of business education and was named one of the Triad Business Journal's 2017 Outstanding Women in Business.

### **Mr. Donald Hartsfield III**

Student  
North Carolina A&T State University  
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Donald Hartsfield is a second-year student at North Carolina Agricultural and Technical State University (NC A&T) where he is pursuing a degree in Bioengineering. A native of Wake Forest, NC, Donald plans to utilize his degree to research alternative solutions to prosthetics that will decrease overall production costs, be more affordable to lower- and middle-class families, and increase efficiency with prosthetics. This past summer, Donald participated in the Biophysics Research Experience for Undergraduates (REU) at Clemson University. During this summer research experience, Donald gained valuable knowledge and experience in understanding chemical redox models for alcohol induced cardiac dysfunction. This involves studying various reactions that can reduce the effects that alcohol has on the cardiac system and finding what drugs will cause this reaction. Next summer, Donald plans to travel to Clemson, SC, to continue his research with Clemson University.

Donald enjoys being actively involved with clubs and organizations at North Carolina A&T. He is a recipient and active member of the Dowdy Scholars Enrichment Program and currently serves as the Director of Events for the Honors Student Advisory Board, Chairman of the Honors Living Learning Community Committee, member of the

Biomedical Engineering Society, member of the University Honors Program, Honors Ambassador and will be an Aggie Ambassador starting in Spring 2021.

In addition to his active involvement on campus, Donald continues to contribute much of his time to giving back to his community. He found his passion for helping people while being involved with the Boys and Girls Clubs of America. This opportunity gave him the ability to impact the lives of youth in his community as other staff counselors impacted his life. As a member of the Wake Forest Boys and Girls Club, he is able to learn and develop life skills that he will continue to carry with him throughout his life.

### **Ms. Kennedy Reid**

Student

North Carolina A&T State University

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Kennedy Reid is a second-year Cheatham-White scholar and an honors economics student with a law concentration at North Carolina Agricultural and Technical State University (NC A&T). She is from Greensboro, NC.

Kennedy is very involved on campus and serves on multiple executive boards trying to make sure all students love the institution. Kennedy serves as the Miss Honors of the University Honors Program, secretary of the National Black Law Students Association, Student Government Association Senator, an intern for 100 Collegiate Women, a member of Phi Alpha Delta Law Fraternity, co-chair of the Student Advisory Board, and an Aggie Student Ambassador.

During her time at the illustrious NC A&T, she has had numerous opportunities to attend various conferences and events such as the TIAA HBCU Summit and the USPAA Scholar's Summit, Spotify: The Roadshow.

In addition, Kennedy has been fortunate enough to receive multiple internship opportunities. Last summer, she worked as Programs Lead Intern for HBCU First, where she created two training modules (HBCU history and Social-Emotional Wellness). She also made sure the near-peer mentoring program was ready for its launch. Currently, she is the District Intern for Congressman Mark Walker, where she works with the congressman and his team to handle constituency concerns, nominations, events, and policy issues. Next summer, she has been afforded multiple opportunities. She is currently deciding between an internship with Dell or Reynolds-American.

Along with Kennedy's active involvement on campus and in the professional world, she also works at the local YMCA as the Head Swim Coach of the minority outreach swim team called the YMCA Bears. As a YMCA employee, she works with kids of all ages in the back to school camp. The program helps alleviate some of the pressure on parents during the pandemic. Kennedy spends her free time mentoring younger students, reading, and watching shows on Netflix.

### **Ms. Carrington Rodgers**

Student

North Carolina A&T State University

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Carrington Rodgers is a junior Industrial and Systems Engineering student at North Carolina Agricultural and Technical State University (NC A&T) in Greensboro, NC. She is from Garner, NC. Carrington sparked an interest in engineering during her junior year in high school from her involvement in the National Society of Black Engineers. Once she arrived at NC A&T, she was able to explore many different types of engineering within the organization, which led her to choose industrial and systems engineering.

The summer before her sophomore year, she received an opportunity to work as a research assistant at North Carolina State University in a program called Mentoring Incubator for Undergraduate Research. During that summer, she received recognition by the American Association of University Women, Greensboro Chapter, as a National Conference for College Women Student Leaders scholar. This scholarship allowed her to attend the conference for free and get to explore her leadership skills. Continuing throughout her college matriculation, Carrington was also able to complete an internship amid the pandemic for Lenovo working as Global Supply Chain Intern.

Outside of her plethora of summer experiences, she was also able to demonstrate leadership skills on the campus of NC A&T. Her NC A&T leadership story started with the Cheatham-White Scholarship Enrichment Program which provides her with a full-ride scholarship. As a Cheatham-White scholar, she is given an opportunity to demonstrate leadership and her pursuit of academic excellence through scholarship. She currently holds a position on the Honors Student Advisory Board as the President. Her past positions include Miss Honors, Sophomore Class Council Parliamentarian, and Alpha Lambda Delta Honors Society Chief of Staff. These positions have allowed her to slowly leave her mark throughout the campus of NC A&T. Her lifelong goal is to touch the lives of as many people as she can and live a life of service, especially to the communities that have given so much to her.

### **Mr. Julian Woods**

Student

North Carolina A&T State University

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Julian Woods, a native of Atlanta, GA, is a sophomore English student at North Carolina Agricultural and Technical State University (NC A&T). Julian's academic accomplishments as an Honors student and Dowdy Scholar complement his community and leadership involvement in a meaningful way. He serves as the Political Action Committee Chair for the NC A&T NAACP and as Treasurer for the NC A&T National Black Law Student Association and is a Senator in the Student Government Association. This semester Julian worked actively with the Office of Student Development and the Campus Election Engagement Project as a fellow to identify and implement engaging virtual civic engagement initiatives and programs in the lead up to the 2020 general election. Upon graduation, Julian aspires to attend graduate school to earn his master's degree in Public Policy with a focus on Education Policy and law school to earn his Juris Doctorate degree. He is committed to expanding equitable opportunities for students and families across America.

### **Dr. Anthony Graham**

Provost

Winston-Salem State University

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@DrAntGraham

Dr. Anthony Graham is the Provost and Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs at Winston-Salem State University. Prior to this position, Graham was a tenured full Professor and dean of the College of Education at North Carolina Agricultural and Technical State University. A graduate of Kinston High School, he attended the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill where he earned a Bachelor of Arts degree in English with a minor in mathematics in 1997. Graham attained his Master of Education degree in Secondary English Education in 1999 and his Doctor of Philosophy in Curriculum and Teaching with a cognate in Multicultural Education in 2003 from the University of North Carolina at Greensboro. Prior to his work in higher education, Graham was a high school English teacher.

As an educational researcher, Graham focuses on effective pedagogies that engage K-20 African American male students, and he explores the sociocultural and sociopolitical experiences of African American male K-12 students and teachers in United States public schools. During his tenure as a professor, he has published a variety of book chapters, peer-reviewed journal articles, and co-authored a book. He has also procured several sponsored research grants totaling approximately \$11 million, including awards from the National Science Foundation and the United States Department of Education. With these funds, Graham has collaborated with educators and scholars to create initiatives and programs that increase the number of classroom teachers, especially ethnic and racial minority teachers, who enter the teaching profession in under-resourced and hard-to-staff rural and urban schools.

Graham is committed to the uplift of his community and the improvement of K-20 education in North Carolina. He is a member of several organizations including Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity, Incorporated and Sigma Pi Phi Fraternity. He also serves on several boards and commissions, including the Deans for Impact Board of Directors, Senior Services Incorporated Foundation Board, Goodwill Industries of Northwest North Carolina Board of Directors, the North Carolina Professional Educator Preparation and Standards Commission, and the Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation Board of Directors.

## XXVIII Education Session Planning Committee

The following members of LNC Class XXVII formed the committee to plan and implement the 2020 Class XXVIII Education session.

**Kara Acree** *Person*

Policy and Compliance Specialist

Person County Schools

[kgacree@gmail.com](mailto:kgacree@gmail.com)

Kara Acree has been the policy and compliance specialist for Person County Schools since 2017. After teaching high school social studies for 4 years in Virginia and North Carolina, Kara spent 6 years representing public school systems as an associate attorney at Tharrington Smith in Raleigh and more than 10 years in policy/compliance in the Johnston County Public Schools. Although she currently resides in eastern Wake County with her husband and two sons, Kara grew up in small towns in western North Carolina and considers the mountains to be home. Kara earned her law degree from UNC, her undergraduate and Master of Arts in Teaching degrees from Duke University and is a proud lifelong Blue Devil. She enjoys spending time with family and friends, traveling, reading, and hiking.

**Danielle Andrews** *Wake*

Chief of Staff to the President and CEO

Blue Cross and Blue Shield of North Carolina

[danielle.andrews@bcbsnc.com](mailto:danielle.andrews@bcbsnc.com)

Danielle Andrews joined Blue Cross Blue Shield of North Carolina as Chief of Staff to the President and CEO in June 2018. This was a newly developed strategic role for the organization.

At Blue Cross NC, Andrews serves as a strategic advisor to the President and CEO for policy, communications, operations, tactical issues, and other special projects across the enterprise and state. Since joining Blue Cross NC, she has served on several enterprise teams: Drivers of Health (Community Health), executive Strategic Affiliation, Forward Together, crisis management, CEO transition team, and project manager to the Executive Leadership Team. Most recently, Andrews led the company's Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion sprint. Andrews is a graduate of the highly competitive Leadership North Carolina Class XXVII.

Prior to joining Blue Cross NC, Andrews served as the Deputy Director for Quality Measurement and Value Based Incentives within the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS). In this role, she led over 120 employees and managed a \$300 million budget. She led operations for IT and data strategy, communications, human resources and personnel, people and culture, procurement and acquisition, and process improvement. While there, Andrews implemented operations for value-based purchasing programs, meaningful measures initiative and enthusiastically led people and culture initiatives.

Andrews graduated from James Madison University with a degree in Health Care Administration, concentration in Long Term Care and General Business. She received her Masters of Science in Health Care Administration from Marymount University.

In her free time, she enjoys being a soccer and baseball mom, cooking, and reading.

**David Bohm** *Wake*  
Director of Development  
Campbell Law School  
[davidbohmnc@gmail.com](mailto:davidbohmnc@gmail.com)

David hails from Kansas, but he arrived at the hallowed land that is North Carolina as soon as he could upon completing his educational pedagogy. After practicing law in New Bern and then Charlotte within a ten-year span, his growing family took priority and a shift in careers occurred that led him (a spouse, 2 kids, and a dog) to blaze a new trail in the nonprofit space. He began that new trail working for a statewide trade association for attorneys, spending eight years managing teams and running projects as the assistant executive director. He then took a leap of faith to stretch his skill sets by taking on the sole development role for Campbell Law School. He now "enriches lives and transforms communities" by bringing opportunities into the school that prepare the next generation of legal graduates to be successful community leaders.

More important than work accomplishments is David's desire to be an impactful leader at home, in his church, in the community, and even statewide through serving others. He currently serves on the boards of six nonprofit organizations and he focuses on intentionally identifying meaningful ways to bring people together for the purpose of their own personal growth and achievement. David would rather be remembered for his character and integrity than for any position or career. He is infectiously optimistic and believes strongly in leading with purpose and living with intention.

**Clinton Carter** *Out of State*  
Chief Financial Officer  
Huntsville Hospital Health System  
[clinton@clintoncarter.com](mailto:clinton@clintoncarter.com)

Clinton Carter serves as Chief Financial Officer of the Huntsville Hospital Health System in Huntsville Alabama. Prior to assuming that position, he was the Senior Vice President for Finance & Administration and Chief Financial Officer at the University of North Carolina (UNC) System Office. Previously, Carter served as the State Finance Director and Chief Financial Officer of the State of Alabama as a cabinet member for Governor Kay Ivey. As the State's top finance official, Carter served as an advisor to the Governor and the Legislature in all financial matters and was charged with protecting the financial interests of the State of Alabama. He was responsible for the administration and oversight of the Department of Finance and served on various advisory boards and authorities. Carter formerly served as the Deputy State Finance Director with the administration of Governor Robert Bentley and as the CFO and Vice President of Finance and Business Affairs at the University of North Alabama.

A Certified Public Accountant (CPA) in Alabama, Carter holds an MBA from the Wharton School of the University of Pennsylvania, a BBA in Finance/Accounting from the University of North Alabama, and completed the Institute for Educational Management program at Harvard University.

Personally, Carter is married to the former Rebecca Porter from Florence, AL, and is the proud father of triplets . . . Caroline, Elizabeth, and Henry.

**Kim Graham** *Mecklenburg*  
Community Development Officer  
First Horizon National Corporation  
[kim.graham@firsthorizon.com](mailto:kim.graham@firsthorizon.com)

Kim started in the financial services industry upon graduation from college and began her banking career at Wachovia Bank in their Management Development Program. She has worked for BB&T, Bank of America, CommunityOne Bank, BNC, Pinnacle Financial Partners and currently works for First Horizon as the Community Development Manager for the Mid-Atlantic Region.

She is an honor graduate with a Bachelor of Science in Mathematics with a minor in Computer Science from Johnson C. Smith University. Kim is an active community volunteer with several non-profit community organizations to include local Alpha Lambda Omega Chapter for Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc.

**Reggie Harper** *Johnston*  
Manager, Analytics and Business Intelligence  
Martin Marietta  
[reggie.harper@martinmarietta.com](mailto:reggie.harper@martinmarietta.com)

Reggie is a results-focused, solutions-oriented, pragmatic professional with more than 25 years of experience in building world-class Analytics, Business Intelligence, and Data Warehouse solutions for a cross-section of industry verticals and companies including Aetna, BASF, Boeing, Campbell Soup, IBM, IKEA, LabCorp, Martin Marietta, MetLife, NASA, Time Warner Cable, TRANE, Verizon, and Wells Fargo. He holds a Bachelor's Degree in Computer Science from Cheyney University of Pennsylvania, a Master's Degree in Software Engineering from Penn State University, and is currently pursuing a Master's of Business Administration from the University of Illinois. He is also currently serving on the LNC Board of Directors.

Reggie was born and raised in the Philadelphia, PA, area and has lived in Clayton, NC, for the past 20 years with his wife, Carolyn. They have three children – a son (UNC Charlotte grad) and twin daughters (UNC Charlotte freshmen). Reggie is very active in his local church and community. His hobbies include cooking, playing golf, reading, and working out.

**Dewana Little** *Buncombe*  
Business Development Administration Associate  
Self Help Credit Union  
[dewana.little@self-help.org](mailto:dewana.little@self-help.org)

Dewana Little is a third generation native of Asheville, with a deep love for her city and the tenacity to influence positive changes for disenfranchised communities. She loves working with and/or in service to people. Equitable inclusion and access are passions of hers, due to the fact that she has personally experienced many of the barriers that have historically impacted women and communities of color. "Recognize Your Greatness!" is a statement that she often uses to inspire and motivate people and groups to recognize the value of self in order to reach their potential.

Dewana has stated that "her vision is for this city to become a model for the nation of 'equity and inclusion,' more specifically 'racial equity and inclusion,' in every category. The mission of Self-Help, her place of employment, speaks to her passion for community development and helping 'underserved' communities". She is a community leader and advocate for equal opportunity and the inclusion of all, regardless of gender, sexual orientation, race, or



socioeconomic status. Her work with environmental organizations taught her about the political aspects of environmental justice and conservation.

Dewana is also a strong advocate for building awareness around privilege, and the many forms that it takes, and the systematic racism that penalizes cultural differences that are strengths to the greater economy and community. Dewana Little is, finally, the mother of two boys and a baby girl. She is, most of all, "uniquely herself," which is all of the above and more.

**Susan McCracken** *Watauga*

Director of Career Development and Economic Engagement

Appalachian State University

[mccrackensd@appstate.edu](mailto:mccrackensd@appstate.edu)

Susan McCracken began her career in public higher education in 1992 with Upward Bound at Appalachian State University. Since that time, she has served in several university-level leadership roles. For 16 years, she worked with college access programs including Upward Bound, GEAR UP, CFNC, and the NC College Access Challenge Grant. A pre-Covid "pivot" in 2010 allowed her the opportunity to serve as the Director of External Affairs for Appalachian where she was the legislative liaison for 6 years. In 2015, she assumed leadership for the Career Development Center at Appalachian and is currently Director of Career Development and Economic Engagement.

Susan lives in Boone and loves every day in the mountains! She is deeply engaged with several community organizations, including St. Lukes Episcopal Church and the recently renovated Appalachian Theatre. She has two daughters who keep her informed of "all things Gen Z." Alice is a first-year college student studying dramatic arts at UNC Chapel Hill and Katie Mac is a junior Communication/Public Relations major at Appalachian. Being in LNC is one of Susan's most memorable professional and personal experiences.

**Rebecca Planchard** *Wake*

Senior Early Childhood Policy Advisor

NC Department of Health and Human Services

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(Session presenter—see bio above.)

**Johnathan Shaw** *Mecklenburg*

Senior Vice President-Business Development Group

Wells Fargo Advisors

[shaw.johnathan@outlook.com](mailto:shaw.johnathan@outlook.com)

As a business leader with Wells Fargo Advisors, Johnathan is both diligent in his process and committed to his profession. He joined Wachovia Securities a predecessor of Wells Fargo Advisors in 2002 where he has held positions in brokerage, client service and consulting. With over 20 years of experience, Johnathan currently specializes in providing consultation on practice management, business development, and retirement planning concepts.

Johnathan was born in Wilmington, NC, and raised in the small town of Riegelwood, NC. He obtained his Bachelor's degree from The University of North Carolina at Charlotte, majoring in Organizational Communications with a Minor in Marketing. He also completed both the Wells Fargo/UCLA Anderson School of Business Diverse Leaders Program

and the Wells Fargo Transformational Leadership program. He is married to his college sweetheart, Carmen, and they are the proud parents of a son, Jaxon.

**Eddie Stuart** *New Hanover*

Vice Chancellor for University Advancement  
The University of North Carolina at Wilmington  
[stuarte@uncw.edu](mailto:stuarte@uncw.edu)

Eddie has served as Vice Chancellor for University Advancement since 2013 but has been with UNCW for just over 20 years. While at UNCW, he has have served as Director of Development for Major Gifts, Senior Director of Development, and Assistant Vice Chancellor for Major Gifts before being named Vice Chancellor in the summer of 2013. Working with an amazing advancement team at UNCW, the university has seen significant increases in both private support and alumni engagement activity, raising just over \$108M in support of UNCW's students, faculty, and staff during his tenure as vice chancellor. Prior to coming to UNCW over his 25-year career in development, Eddie has worked for a national health charity, a K-12 private institution, and a chamber of commerce. He earned a BA in Strategic Communications from Elon University and a Master's of Public Administration from UNCW. Eddie and his wife, Amy, live in Wilmington and have three children. He enjoys all things water-related, especially fly fishing, surfing, and exploring the beauty of the North Carolina coast with his family.

**Sherry Washington** *Mecklenburg*

Senior Program Coordinator  
Central Piedmont Community College  
[sherry.washington@cpcc.edu](mailto:sherry.washington@cpcc.edu)

Sherry Washington is the Senior Program Coordinator for Customized Training Program at Central Piedmont Community College (CPCC), where she has been planted for the past 21 years. Prior to joining CPCC, Sherry joined the ranks of being a military spouse immediately following graduation from Winston-Salem State University (WSSU). She worked in the federal government in various capacities and with the Department of Defense while traveling stateside and abroad. She currently has twenty-eight years of public service experience.

Sherry is passionate about the community she lives in—she's currently an Elected Treasurer, Delegate, Policy Platform Chair and former Insurance Chairperson for SEANC District 13; Advisory Board Member for the State Employee's Credit Union, where she is the former chairperson; Vice President of Avensong Crossing Homeowner's Association; Democratic Judge for Mecklenburg County Board of Elections for Precinct# 201; Member at Large for Charlotte Airport Community Roundtable for Charlotte Douglas International Airport; and Graduate of Charlotte Leadership Academy and Charlotte Planning Academy through the City of Charlotte and Mecklenburg County and Order of Eastern Star.

She holds several degrees: A.A.S. from Central Piedmont Community College (CPCC) in Accounting, B.A. from Winston-Salem State University (WSSU) in Business Administration concentrating in Accounting, and M.S. from North Carolina Agricultural and Technical State University (NC A&T) in Adult Education specializing in Community Education.

She resides in Charlotte with her husband and their pooch named King.

**Alicia Williams** *Guilford*  
Chief Human Resources Officer  
DMJ and Co. PLLC  
[awilliams@dmj.com](mailto:awilliams@dmj.com)

Alicia is an experienced HR professional with a history of guiding for profit and nonprofit organizations in their human resources management. She is the Chief Human Resources Officer at DMJ & Co., PLLC. Alicia is passionate about employee rights and helping employees grow to their fullest potential. She spends her free time playing with her Siberian huskies, Sasha and Zella, and enjoys traveling throughout the Caribbean islands. Alicia also loves cheering for her North Carolina A&T Aggies.