

AGENDA ITEM

This is not an agenda item.

Situation:

Overview on recent highlights and activities within the Division of Academic Affairs.

Background:

N/A

Assessment:

N/A

Action:

This item is for information only.

Supporting Documentation:

AA Divisional Highlights document



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TO: UNCW Board of Trustees
FROM: Dr. James J. Winebrake, Provost and Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs
DATE: April 17, 2024
RE: Division of Academic Affairs Highlights

Trustees: The information below provides a sample of major highlights and activities occurring in the Division of Academic Affairs, across the academic colleges and primary functional areas, since the February quarterly meeting of the Board of Trustees.

College of Health and Human Services (CHHS)

- **Health Equity Bonner Fellowship Program to Add New Cohort Members and Additional Placement Sites:** HEBF is an up to four-year, scaffolded leadership development opportunity. Cohorts participate in collaborative mentorship, weekly educational programs and community-collaborative, high-impact applied learning activities. Current students spend up to 10 hours per week, at one of the following partner placement sites: MedNorth Health Center, Coastal Horizons, New Hanover County Senior Resource Center, Cape Fear Literacy Council, Cape Fear River Watch, WAVE Transit, Yoga Village, Feast Down East, Northside Food Co-Op, New Hanover County Resiliency Task Force, City of Wilmington Equity & Inclusion Office, Catholic Charities, and Center for Healthy Communities. HEBF launched in Fall 2022 and currently includes 14 students. [Learn more about HEBF.](#)
- **New Degree Approvals:** The Doctor of Physical Therapy Program (DPT) was officially approved by the UNC Board of Governors. The System Office has submitted full endorsement for the Master of Physician Assistant Studies (MPAS) degree program to the UNC Board of Governors for final approval in May.
- **Nursing Program Receives Prestigious Certification:** The Master of Science in Nursing - Nurse Educator program received the prestigious Quality Matters (QM) program-level certification – a first for any nursing program within the UNC system at-large. The MSN NE joins programs at North Carolina State University and University of North Carolina at Charlotte, as one of only three QM-certified programs in the entire UNC System. [QM Program Certification](#) means that the program has demonstrated its commitment to a "gold standard" of quality program design. This achievement for the MSN NE is the culmination of a rigorous five-year collaboration with UNCW's Office of Distance Education and eLearning (DEeL), which is also in the Division of Academic Affairs. [Read more.](#)
- **Uganda Public Health Trip:** Dr. Michelle Cathorall will take seven students to rural Uganda, from late May through mid-July, for an immersive public health work experience. The students will team up with Ugandan students to collect data and implement a malaria prevention program. Participants will live together in dorms and

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spend their days working alongside community leaders and village health technicians. To build upon past and present public health work, including a previous visit to UNCW by Fulbright Scholar Dr. Saidah Najjuma, the program is looking to expand in the coming years to offer a hybrid international research methods course, co-taught by UNCW and Ndejje faculty. Students will collaborate via a virtual classroom.

College of Humanities, Social Sciences, and the Arts (CHSSA)

- **Celebrating Faculty Research and Scholarship:** CHSSA held an inaugural faculty research celebration to showcase the breadth and scope of efforts within the new college. From April 1-4, visitors and community patrons could explore an exhibition of CHSSA materials at the Sherman Hayes Gallery in Randall Library. The celebration concluded with a faculty panel discussion in the Randall Library Auditorium, followed by a closing reception.
- **Exploring the Intersection of Humanities and Artificial Intelligence at UNCW:** In March, an inaugural lecture was held in an annual series that features the relationship between the humanities and Artificial Intelligence. The lecture, titled “Teaching and Learning with AI” featured Simone Plante, esteemed founder of HumAI Capital. This event was co-hosted by CHSSA, the Department of Philosophy and Religion, and the I3S Institute. [Learn more.](#)
- **Theatre Faculty Member Co-Stars on ABC Episode of *WILL TRENT*:** Department of Theatre faculty member, Myke Holmes appeared in the co-starring role “Percy” in the ABC Series *Will Trent*. Season 2, Episode 4 aired on ABC in March and is currently streaming on Hulu.

Cameron School of Business (CSB)

- **Business Week:** CSB hosted its 42nd annual Business Week, featuring more than 200 speakers that spanned many different sectors of business. Keynote speakers included President BJ Losch (Live Oak Bank) and Senior Manager Jenn Knuckles (Campaign Measurement at Netflix). The week of business festivity wrapped up with a service project at the Good Shepherd Center. [See the 2024 schedule of events.](#)
- **Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA):** Through the VITA program, students, in conjunction with the Internal Revenue Service (IRS), assist the general public in preparing and filing their Individual Income Tax returns. During the 2024 filing season, 16 graduate students have volunteered, assisting 100 taxpayers. More than 300 taxpayers have downloaded the free tax software available on the Accounting and Business Law department website. [Learn more.](#)
- **Maritime Cybersecurity Center receives \$625K:** The funding comes from the Fiscal Year 24 federal budget for “Maritime Cyber Security: Standards Advancement, Research, and Workforce Development.” Funds will be used to develop a curriculum program at

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UNCW, for future research, workforce training and the development of national standards. The effort will assist the federal government on an ongoing basis in developing best practices and procedures to cost-effectively reduce cyber risks to the maritime industry. [Read more.](#)

College of Science and Engineering (CSE)

- **Carolina Cyber Network Roundtable with the White House:** Provost Winebrake, Dean Ron Vetter, and the Center for Cyber Defense Education Director Dr. Ulku Clark, participated in the Carolina Cyber Network roundtable discussion with the White House Office of the National Cyber Director (ONCD). Discussion members featured a wide variety of officials and ecosystem experts at Fayetteville Technical Community College. Themes revolved around strategies to strengthen the cyber workforce.
- **Evidence of Early Agricultural Engineering:** Exploration is underway within the lower Cape Fear and Brunswick rivers, to uncover history related to the Gullah Geechee people – descendants of enslaved West Africans who worked in the region’s rice fields. Dr. Joni “Osku” Backstrom, environmental sciences assistant professor, is working with a colleague from the Underwater Archaeology Branch of the North Carolina Office of State Archaeology to traverse the waters searching for (and excavating) archaeological evidence. [Read more.](#)
- **Swash Zone Study Awarded Funding:** To better understand how sand is transported in the swash zone, the U.S. Coastal Research Program (USCRP), via the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE), is funding a groundbreaking research project. Led by Dr. Ryan Mieras, coastal engineering assistant professor, the nearly \$1 million grant includes two collaborating institutions, University of Delaware and University of Texas at Austin. Over the next four years, Mieras and co-investigators, along with three doctoral students, will aim to address critical gaps in computer models that forecast coastal change and flooding. [Read more.](#)

Watson College of Education (WCE or Watson College)

- **Professional Development System Receives National Award for School Partnerships:** Watson College and two partner New Hanover County high schools (Isaac Bear Early College High School and Southeast Area Technical High School), received the 2024 Exemplary PDS Award from the National Association of School-University Partnerships. WCE has made consistent strides in forming solid partnerships with local schools. This award acknowledges the strength of this program, rooted in community teamwork. [Read more.](#)
- **New Ed.D. with Community College Specialization:** Watson College has introduced a new specialization with an emphasis in Community College Leadership. Classes begin in fall 2024. The program builds on WCE’s strong relationships with community colleges in

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our state, successful doctoral program in Educational Leadership and [UNCW/3C](#), a WCE-led university-community college collaborative introduced in 2019. This community college niche is the latest iteration in ongoing growth of the program. [Read more.](#)

- **College Welcomes Waccamaw Siouan Elders to CTP Conference:** In a historic first, the Watson College welcomed 11 Elders from the Waccamaw Siouan Tribe to campus in February. The Elders participated in the UNCW/3C Challenging the Paradigm conference, sharing information about their cultural history and why building stronger relationships with indigenous tribes is a critical factor in creating pathways for Native Americans. More than 100 higher education leaders from across the state participated in the conference. While on campus, the Elders attended a dinner with Chancellor Aswani Voley and other campus leaders.

Undergraduate Education and Faculty Affairs (UEFA)

- **Faculty Awards Celebration:** An inaugural occasion, the Faculty Awards Celebration will be the new event to announce and celebrate faculty recipients of [major university faculty excellence awards](#). Previously, these were announced during the annual Fall Faculty Meeting. The separate annual research reception, highlighting research awards, is held annually in the fall by Research and Innovation.
- **Upcoming Student Showcase:** Undergraduate and graduate students will showcase research and creative works at the spring Showcase of Student Research and Activity – a bi-annual presentation event by the Center for the Support of Undergraduate Research and Fellowships (CSURF). As part of showcase week, the Graduate School will also feature a Three Minute Thesis (3MT) competition event for graduate students working on theses or dissertations. The showcase will take place on Saturday, April 27, 2024, from 1-3 p.m. in the Watson Education Building. [Learn more.](#)

Teaching, Learning and Library Services (TLLS)

- **Library Expansion is Underway:** The [Randall Library expansion](#), an 80,000 square foot addition, is nearly ready for move-in! Next, the original library building will be closed for renovation starting May 8. The Library will continue to offer services through [modified formats over Summer 2024](#).
- **2024 Innovation in Instruction Award:** Members of Randall Library and the Office of Distance Education and E-Learning (DeeL) won the Library Instruction Round Table's 2024 Innovation in Instruction Award, from the National American Library Association (ALA). This prestigious award recognizes the partnership between the library and University College, who came together to develop a four-part information literacy curriculum for First Year Seminar and Transfer Seminar (UNI 101 and 201). This project was led by Brittany O'Neill, along with team members, Sam Zelick and Jennifer Sias (Distance Education and e-Learning), as well as Kelsey Axe, Kate Morgan, Rob Tripp and

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Jenny Whitney (University College). The award includes \$1000 in cash, a plaque and a \$500 travel stipend to attend the 2024 ALA annual conference. [Read more.](#)

- **Rigorous 5-Year Collaboration Leads to Prestigious Certification:** The prestigious Quality Matters (QM) program-level certification for the Master of Science in Nursing – Nurse Educator program (mentioned earlier in this document) is a result of the culmination of a rigorous five-year collaboration with UNCW’s Office of Distance Education and eLearning (DEeL).

Center for Marine Science (CMS)

- **CMS Welcomes U.S. Secretary of the Interior:** The U.S. Secretary of the Interior, the Honorable Deb Haaland, from the U.S. Department of the Interior and Director Liz Klein, of Bureau of Ocean Energy Management visited UNCW in February. Their visit underscores the center’s national prominence in conservation efforts, as well as UNCW’s role as the state’s coastal university. [Read more.](#)
- **Funding Received for State-of-the-Art Equipment:** The Per- and Polyfluoroalkyl Testing (PFAST) Network program office has received funding for an additional two years. Dr. Ralph Mead and Dr. Chad Lane have been awarded approximately \$475,000 from the NC Collaboratory to purchase a Thermo Iso-Orbitrap Exploris 240, with nanoflow liquid chromatograph and a separate liquid chromatograph fraction collector. This research enables UNCW to measure PFAS contamination at concentrations that were previously undetectable. [Read more.](#)

Student Engagement, Enrollment and Retention (SEER)

- **Academic Advising:** Academic advising at UNCW is undergoing a reinvention process. The first phase rollout – which will launch in 2024-2025 – will involve a new Council on Advising, a new Center for University advising, the hiring of several new advisors, and the integration of academic advising with other types of student support, such as career advising and mental healthcare.

Research and Innovation (R&I)

- **Blue Economy Index Now Live:** The index is [live on Bloomberg terminals](#)! The UNCW Blue Economy Index, made up of publicly traded sustainability companies earning ocean revenue, was built by a team of four finance students and Assistant Professor of Finance Dr. Miran Hossain. The “Blue Economy” index highlights a unique economic sector, with companies chosen and grouped together based on both economic growth and ecosystem preservation. [Read more.](#)

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Recent External Recognitions

- **Dr. Yaw Chang (CSE)**, National Class of Emerging Innovators | National Academy of Inventors ([*Learn more about Dr. Chang's work.*](#))
- **Dr. Julie-Ann Scott-Pollock (CHSSA)**, 2024 Award for Excellence in Teaching | University of North Carolina Board of Governors ([*Learn more about Dr. Scott-Pollock's work.*](#))
- **Dr. Schuhmann (CSB)**, Member of the Pool of Experts (PoE) | United Nations ([*Learn more about Dr. Schuhmann's work.*](#))

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