

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: October 14, 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, primarily since the August quarterly meeting of the Board of Trustees.

Office of the Provost

- **Celebrating Tenure and Promotion:** Faculty recipients for tenure and/or promotion were celebrated on Sept. 19 at a private event with their families, Chancellor Volety, and several academic leaders. The Office of the Provost was proud to recognize 58 faculty who received promotion and/or tenure at this celebratory event.

Cameron School of Business (CSB or Cameron)

- **Student Selected for \$15K PCAOB Scholarship:** One of 676 awarded across the nation by the Public Company Accounting Oversight Board, Meagan Plant was selected by Cameron due to her outstanding undergraduate academic achievement, emphasized by a 4.0 overall GPA. An adult student with a young family, Meagan is completing her MSA at UNCW and has future plans to work for an accounting firm in eastern North Carolina and obtain her CPA license. [Learn more.](#)
- **UNCW Drives \$3.2 Billion Economic Growth in NC:** The study, “Soaring Higher Together: UNCW and Southeastern North Carolina,” produced by Associate Professor of Economics Mouhcine Guettabi, highlights that nearly half of this impact, over \$1.6 billion, was concentrated in the eight counties of the Cape Fear Region. Additionally, the study found that more than 14,580 jobs were supported during the fiscal year 2022, and over 32,000 alumni in the region earned an estimated \$1 billion in additional income from having a bachelor's degree. The findings underscore UNCW's significant role in driving economic growth and enhancing the overall prosperity of the region. (Guettabi is also a regional economist with the Swain Center in the Cameron School of Business.) [Read more.](#)

College of Health and Human Services (CHHS)

- **#1 Producer in the State for Recreation Therapists:** The Recreational Therapy program continues to produce the highest number of Licensed Recreation Therapists in North Carolina! In 2024, more graduates from UNCW have become licensed North Carolina Board of Recreational Therapy Licensure than any other NC university.

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- **Inaugural ABSN Class Launching Next Summer:** The School of Nursing has begun promoting the new Accelerated Bachelor of Science in Nursing (ABSN). The inaugural ABSN class will launch in Summer 2025. [Learn more.](#)
- **3rd Annual Intergenerational Design Challenge:** CHHS Community Engagement, the School of Social Work, the School of Nursing, and the School of Health and Human Services are hosting the Intergenerational Design Challenge (IDC) in October. This year, the initiative brings together Innovation Scholars—students from various majors and older adults—along with students from Gerontology 501, to create innovative solutions aimed at improving local parks and recreation services for older adults. Key community partners include: New Hanover County Senior Resource Center, New Hanover County Parks and Gardens, City of Wilmington Parks and Recreation, and UNCW's OLLI. Following IDC, Innovation Scholars will continue refining their solutions and present their progress during the 2025 Health and Human Services Week.
- **Partnership with Feeding Matters to Launch Consortium:** Feeding Matters, in collaboration with the UNCW, received a \$241,000 award to establish the Family-Centered Pediatric Feeding Disorder (PFD) Research Consortium, focusing on including patient and family voices in PFD research. The consortium will be co-led by School of Nursing Associate Professor Hayley Estrem and Feeding Matters CEO Jaclyn Pederson, with contributions from associate professors Stephanie Duea and Anka Roberto. The project aims to recruit and train patient and family members, establish governance, and prioritize research needs in the field. [Read more.](#)

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

- **M.A. in Interdisciplinary Studies Launching Next Fall:** Applications will soon be open for the revised IDS program, formerly the Graduate Liberal Studies Program. Reorganized and retitled to reflect the latest analyses of similar graduate education programs, the new IDS program will launch in Fall 2025 with a new slate of focused courses and students can choose to simultaneously complete a post-baccalaureate certificate in three areas: Conflict Management and Resolution, Science and Medical Writing or Gerontology. [Learn more.](#)

College of Science and Engineering (CSE)

- **New Parasite Found in NC Scallops:** A team of UNCW researchers has identified a previously undescribed species of trematode parasite infecting native bay scallops in North Carolina. The findings outlining the parasite's basic biology and impacts on its host are published in the journal *Aquaculture*. The parasite was first discovered in 2012 by Ami E. Wilbur '85, a professor in the Department of Biology and Marine Biology, who has been studying scallops for 30 years. [Read more.](#)
- **National Recognition for Almeida:** Paulo Almeida, professor in the Department of Chemistry and Biochemistry, is the recipient of a Research Corporation for Science

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Advancement (RCSA) Cottrell Plus SEED Award for 2024. He is among 11 researchers to receive the competitive [SEED \(Singular Exceptional Endeavors of Discovery\) Award](#), designed to support members of the [Cottrell Scholar](#) community in high-impact research activities with an award of \$60,000. Almeida's award is in the Exceptional Opportunities category. [Read more.](#)

- **UNCW Redesignated as a Center of Academic Excellence in Cyber Defense (CAE-CD):** This prestigious recognition demonstrates UNCW's continued commitment to excellence in cybersecurity education, research, and community outreach, and the continuation of programs that prepare the next generation of cyber defense professionals. CAE-CD designation is administered by the National Security Agency (NSA) and the Cybersecurity Infrastructure Security Agency (CISA).

Watson College of Education (WCE or Watson College)

- **WCE Introduces MAT in Special Education:** WCE will introduce a Master of Arts in Teaching program in Special Education in Fall 2025. The program, designed to help address a significant teacher shortage in the field of special education, builds on UNCW's strong bachelor's degree in special education and the successful family of MAT programs that the college currently offers.
- **Welcoming New Student Cohorts:** This fall, WCE was excited to welcome student cohorts for two new programs: a Community College Leadership track in the Educational Leadership doctoral program, and a Bachelor of Science in Workforce Learning & Development. Both programs reached expected enrollment goals.
- **STEM SENC Funded for New Aviation Program:** STEM Southeastern North Carolina (SENC), a regional STEM Learning Ecosystem of which WCE serves as the lead organization, has received a \$50,000 grant from the Burroughs Wellcome Fund for a pre-apprenticeship program in aviation. The program, offered in partnership with the Barrington Irving Technical Training School, will provide five area high school students with 16 weeks of training and an internship in the aviation industry as well as community events.

Global Partnership and International Education (GPIE)

- **UNCW Signs MOU with GITAM:** A memorandum of understanding (MOU) was signed with the Gandhi Institute of Technology and Management (GITAM) in September. Through this agreement, both will host students and faculty from each institution and will participate in joint events and activities. The five-year agreement also allows the institutions to learn more from each other and explore additional ways to collaborate.

Student Engagement, Enrollment, and Retention (SEER)

- **Record Enrollment Increase:** Preliminary census numbers reflect that the university's fall enrollment increased by nearly 5%—860 students—compared with fall 2023. The retention rate has increased by three points to 88%, the highest in the university's history.

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Additionally, removal of transfer roadblocks and partnering with Cape Fear Community College resulted in the highest transfer enrollment ever. [Read more.](#)

Teaching, Learning, and Library Services (TLLS)

- **Celebrating the UNCW Library Grand Opening:** After two years of construction and several more years of planning, the transformed facility is set to better support student success, foster research and provide collaborative spaces. The official grand reopening at the UNCW Library featured a tented Ribbon Cutting Ceremony located on the front lawn of Discovery Hall, with a program of distinguished event speakers: Associate Provost and Dean Lucy Holman, Provost Jamie Winebrake, Chancellor Aswani Volety, and Senator Michael Lee. [Read more.](#)
- **Makerspace Helps Recreate Battleship Parts:** Representatives from the battleship reached out online to talk with UNCW Library Digital Makerspace coordinator about the possibilities of 3D printing and scanning as a creative solution for making adequate replacement parts of authentic and historical ship parts no longer found. [Read more.](#)

Center for Marine Science (CMS)

- **Open House Held Oct. 5:** Fun for the whole family! CMS's Open House has grown into a well-attended community event, allowing opportunities for guests and UNCW employees to learn more about research underway and, in some cases, an activity to experience it firsthand. Attendees were able to test their ROV (remotely operated vehicles) skills, dig for fossils, explore the benthic zone, and learn more about shellfish, sea turtles, seagrass nurseries, and the ocean observing network.
- **Planet Ocean Seminar Series:** Free and open to the public, these seminars run as in-person and virtual events. In September, Dr. Eman Ghoneim spoke about her recent discovery of a long-lost Nile branch in Egypt. [Watch the recording.](#) Coming up on Nov. 12, Dr. Tamlin Pavelsky will speak about NASA's Surface Water and Ocean Topography (SWOT) Mission launched in 2022. He will also share some of the data and results that are beginning to come out from the mission. [Learn more and RSVP.](#)

Research and Innovation (R&I)

- **The 2024 Research Magazine:** Research and scholarship at UNCW continues to grow, evolve, and excel. The latest UNCW Research Magazine highlights many amazing projects and accomplishments going on across our university! [View online.](#)
- **Center for Innovation and Entrepreneurship Annual Report:** This fiscal year 2024 report highlights achievements from the past year and a glimpse into innovative initiatives and programs underway at CIE. Learn more about the impact CIE is making on a local and global scale, while educating entrepreneurs of all ages along the way. [View online.](#)

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- **Ocean Innovation Conference:** As the state's official coastal university, UNCW is committed to teaching and research that advances our understanding of coastal and marine environments - especially around the sustainable use and protection of our oceans and coastal regions - and this conference is a reflection of that commitment. The 2nd Annual Ocean Innovation Conference on Sept. 17 is a reflection of this commitment. Co-hosted by CIE and the Alliance for the Blue Economy (All Blu), this high-energy conference focused on turning knowledge into action by providing numerous opportunities for attendees to learn from experts, engage with each other, network, and spark new ideas to create ideas and solutions. Over 350 people (in person and virtual) registered to attend, only a fraction of whom were UNCW students, faculty, and staff. [Learn more.](#)
- **UNCW Wins National UEDA Award of Excellence for Place:** Heather McWhorter, CIE director, submitted "Climate Change and Coastal Resiliency – Turning Knowledge to Action" for consideration in the 2024 Awards of Excellence sponsored by the University Economic Development Association. Highlighting CIE's impact with programs like the Alliance for the Blue Economy, the Ocean Innovation Conference, [Idea Test Lab](#), and [NC EcoTech](#), UNCW won the *Place Category*, which recognizes higher education impact throughout the community and region! McWhorter presented at the UEDA 2024 Summit in South Bend, Indiana in October with the other *Place* finalists, including University of Arizona, University of Michigan, and University of Texas at Arlington.
- **Recent Research Stories:**
 - [UNCW Research Earns an A](#)
 - [UNCW Honors Excellence in Research and Innovation](#)
 - [Living with Water at Battleship North Carolina](#)

Recent External Recognitions

- **Dr. Stuart Borrett (R&I, CSE)**, Rotating Program Director, one-year | NSF, Growing Research Access for Nationally Transformative Equity and Diversity (GRANTED) program ([Learn more.](#))
- **Dr. April Braswell (CHHS)**, named American Academy of Nursing fellow ([Learn more.](#))
- **Dr. Kate Bruce (CSE)**, Sam Schuman Award for Excellence in Honors Education at a Four-Year Institution | National Collegiate Honors Council ([Learn more.](#))
- **Dr. Rob Burrus (CSB)**, 2024 Dean of the Year Award | The University Sales Center Alliance
- **Dr. Jamy Chulak (CHHS)**, named an American Association for Respiratory Care (AARC) fellow
- **Dr. Kellie M. Griggs (CHHS)**, named American Academy of Nursing fellow ([Learn more.](#))
- **Dr. Lorraine Lee (CSB)**, elected President | Accounting Information Systems section of the American Accounting Association

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- **Dr. Lisa Luebbehusen Scribner (CSB)**, Honorary Professorship in International Marketing and Consumer Behavior | School of International Business at Hochschule Bremen, Germany ([Learn more.](#))

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