

NCICU Navigates Pandemic Year

The 2020-21 academic year is ending successfully this month with commencements taking place across North Carolina – socially distanced, of course. Beginning in spring 2020 and throughout this fall and spring, NCICU's staff has worked with the federal government, national organizations, state government, and our sister higher education sectors to help campuses keep students safe and on schedule in their educational progress. NCICU has served as a conduit between our colleges and universities and the government entities which have been instrumental in helping all of higher education navigate the pandemic.

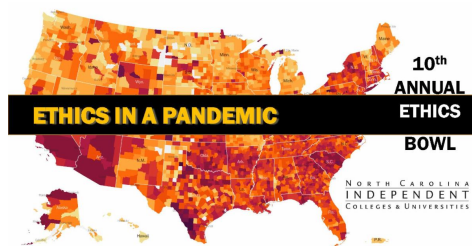
We deeply appreciate the support from Congress, the Governor, and the North Carolina General Assembly in providing financial and policy support which allowed our colleges and universities to reopen last fall and to operate with students on campus this year. We have asked for that support again as we look to the 2021-22 academic year, recognizing that COVID-19 will still be affecting students and families and their ability to attend college. That is why we are requesting an increase of \$11m in recurring state financial aid funding and \$8m in one-time emergency aid for our North Carolina students as we move toward the fall.

During the spring 2021 semester, 33 of our campuses have offered in-person classes and three have maintained remote learning. While some campuses experienced spikes in the number of COVID-19 infections during certain times of the academic year, all addressed the increases immediately. Through the dedicated efforts of outstanding administrators, faculty, staff and students, most campuses experienced a limited number of COVID cases at any one time during the year.

Throughout the pandemic, NCICU was in contact several times a week with the Governor's office and the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS), in addition to participating in regular meetings with the members of the National Association of Independent Colleges and Universities (NAICU) and the Higher Education Workgroup with NCDHHS which included six presidents of NCICU campuses. These meetings allowed us to understand the challenges, pose questions and resolve issues relating to COVID-19 Relief funding, as well as clarifying guidelines and protocols affecting our campuses, faculty, staff, and students. We are grateful for the support from DHHS and their accessibility.

Multiple meetings with presidents, CFOs, Deans of Students, Directors of Human Resources, Admissions Directors, and Chief Academic Officers on COVID related issues have been held throughout the year. All programming was moved to a virtual format, including our Annual Meeting of Presidents, the NCICU Counselors Tour, and the annual Administrative Group Meetings. A Virtual College Fair, in which all 36 campuses participated, was added in the fall.

Despite the tremendous amount of staff time that the pandemic required – particularly on the legislative front – NCICU continued to raise scholarship funds, provide enrichment programs, collect research data, and move grant initiatives forward, as you can see from the following articles.



NCICU Colleges Explore Ethics in a Pandemic

In a most unusual year, students from 15 private colleges in North Carolina participated in NCICU's Annual Ethics Bowl, exploring ethical issues relating to the COVID-19 pandemic. Each Ethics Bowl team consists of four to six students. A campus coordinator works with the students to help them prepare for the competition which typically

consists of four rounds over the two-days, plus semi-final and final rounds – all judged by a panel of corporate, community and government leaders. This year, in the virtual setting, each team made presentations on two selected cases: one involving vaccines and one relating to reopening of k-12 schools. While the presentations were not judged this year, guests who have previously served as judges provided feedback to the teams.

Annual Meeting Features Governor Cooper; Board Transition



Governor Roy Cooper was the keynote speaker at NCICU's Annual Meeting last month. Following his remarks, he presented retiring Wake Forest University president and **NCICU Board Chair, Nathan Hatch**, with the State's highest honor, the Order of the Long Leaf Pine.

Presidents also heard from NC DHHS Secretary, **Mandy Cohen**, NC Community College President, **Thomas Stith**, and **Sandy Baum**, a national expert on higher education finance and student debt, as well as a panel discussion on *myFutureNC*.



Meredith College President Jo Allen was elected Chair of the NCICU Board of Directors, effective July 1.

Other executive committee officers elected at the meeting are President **Jimmy Jenkins**, Livingstone College, vice chair; President **Nido Qubein**, High Point University, treasurer; and President **Rhett Brown**, Wingate University, secretary.

Welcome New Presidents



Dr. Christine Johnson McPhail has been named the 13th president of Saint Augustine's University. Dr. McPhail is a nationally recognized, well-respected thought leader in higher education.

Dr. James W. (Jim) Hood was named interim president of Guilford College in February. A Guilford alumnus, Dr. Hood has served on the faculty and in a number of administrative rolls at the college.

Reverse Transfer

Wingate University is the pilot campus for NCICU's Reverse Transfer initiative. Five campuses have signed the Statement of Work (SOW) with the National Student Clearinghouse, and two additional campuses have requested the SOW.

Louisburg College Pilots Finish First NC Program

An innovative program developed by Wake Tech CC, is being piloted by **Louisburg College** for future replication at other NCICU campuses. The Finish First NC (FFNC) program uses a data tool that compiles information that could lead to student degree completions. For the pilot program, the tool is configured to Louisburg's credential requirements, then assesses courses already completed by students. The tool has identified 42 credentials that students at Louisburg could obtain within one semester upon completing the requisite credits.

Eighty-one percent of institutions in the North Carolina Community College System (NCCCS) are using the FFNC data tool to increase student completions.

Teacher Ed, Psychology and Sociology Articulation Agreements Signed with NCCCS



A Teacher Education/Educator Preparation Uniform Articulation Agreement between NCICU and the NC Community College System (NCCCS) was signed in November following votes of approval by both sectors' governing boards. To date, twenty-four NCICU campuses have signed the agreement.

Last month, President Williams and NCCCS President Thomas Stith (pictured left) signed an articulation agreement in Psychology and Sociology. Enhanced by a grant from CIC and the Teagle Foundation, the program ensures students receive the fullest possible information and are carefully advised from their first year at a two-year college until graduation with a bachelor's degree.

The agreements are extensions of the Independent Comprehensive Articulation Agreement that was signed by the two sectors in mid 1990s and will provide a progression degree plan that includes required general education and prerequisite courses that are acceptable to all signatory programs.

Update from the Independent College Fund of NC

As we wrap up our annual campaign, we have taken some time to pause and reflect on the past year. Certainly, the COVID-19 health crisis presented certain challenges, but we pivoted and looked for new opportunities. We are pleased to have raised more than \$2.4M for scholarships, student enrichment programs, and in-kind support, which could not have been possible without our corporate and foundation partners. If you would like to make a gift that will impact the life of a student, please contact Colleen Kinser at kinser@ncicu.org or go to our [website](#).

Grants and Gifts

Faculty-Student STEM Mentoring Program is a pilot program aimed at developing stronger relationships between faculty and underrepresented students who are STEM majors. The primary goal is improving student retention and graduation rates. The program will be funded by a \$39,250 grant from the Council of Independent Colleges (CIC) that requires a match.

NCICU's **Minority Male Mentoring Program** will provide 10 institutions with funding to implement a program designed to increase persistence, retention and/or graduation rates of minority male students. NCICU received a \$27,500 grant from CIC which was matched, in large part, by the VF Foundation, for a total of \$55,000.

Fidelity Investments provided in-kind support to complete an Office 365 SharePoint Configuration and Migration.

SAS donated software to independent colleges valued at \$1.3M.



ICFNC welcomes **Erica Blomgren**, VP, CAPTRUST, and **Thomas Varnadore**, Senior Director, Sales, Coca-Cola Consolidated as our newest advisory board members.



Jeff Stoddard, vice president, SunTrust Bank, now Truist, will complete his three-year term as ICFNC chair on June 1. **Margaret Wren de St. Aubin**, president, Wren Foundation, Inc., will assume the role.

NCICU Welcomes New Collaborative Partners



Coursedog



campuslogic.