



A Message from the **PRESIDENT**

Dear Colleagues:

There's a lot happening as we make our way through a very busy legislative session and head toward the close of the spring semester.

In the last few weeks, we've seen the [repeal of HB2](#), the [promised return](#) of ACC/NCAA championship games in North Carolina, [a national title](#) for the UNC-Chapel Hill Men's Basketball team, the appointment of new BOG members, and the ongoing rollout of our Strategic Plan (now available for your [online reading](#) pleasure; share widely!).

Since we last corresponded, I joined the board of [Higher Learning Advocates](#), a new national organization pushing for federal policies designed to increase college attainment. It's a nonpartisan group with sponsorship from the Lumina Foundation, and I look forward to sharing more about their work in the months ahead.

And in other educational news, Davie [graduated from puppy school](#) this month and resumed the position of "Top Dog" at the President's House. He's now gone several days without destroying any shoes, renewing my faith in the power of learning to transform lives.

Starting this month, I'm going to begin regular coffee chats with staff across General Administration. I want to get to know everyone better and learn more about your work, so you'll be hearing from Meredith Steadman in my office about organizing these small gatherings.

In the meantime, keep an eye on our [Twitter](#) and [Facebook](#) pages, which include updates and feature stories on students, faculty, and alumni of the UNC system.

On the Road

We officially installed Chancellors Thomas Conway at Elizabeth City State University and Cecil Staton at East Carolina University. I love the way these occasions highlight the sense of history and mission that drives each of our institutions and the depth of community support for our work. I've gotten to know Thomas and Cecil well over the past several months, and I'm proud to be here at the start of a new era for each of their institutions.

BOG Chairman Lou Bissette, representatives from the University, and I also made a quick trip to the [AGB gathering](#) in Dallas earlier this month to talk about the federal agenda around higher education. There's much uncertainty about the direction of federal policy, but we're working hard to advocate for core priorities like Pell funding, student loan simplification, and an easier financial aid process.

In Raleigh, at our request and in keeping with the BOG's Strategic Plan, the Goodnight Educational Foundation and the John M. Belk Endowment opened a critical conversation about North Carolina's Education Continuum—the need to develop a truly P-16 system, helping students navigate from preschool all the way to college graduation. Lots of good work ahead, and I'm grateful to Ann Goodnight and MC Belk Pilon for helping strengthen this partnership with our colleagues at DPI and the Community Colleges.

Closer to home, I had the privilege of giving this year's Deil S. Wright lecture at UNC Chapel Hill's School of Government. I spoke about the need to move our digital dialogue in a more productive direction. Give it a [read](#) or a [listen](#), and let me know if you have ideas about how to improve civic life in the online realm!

Jones Street Update

As many of you have heard, the legislature decided to reduce the size of the BOG in the coming years. I think it's [a reasonable move](#) to help streamline policymaking, and I look forward to working with our new slate of BOG members:

Senate

Current BOG members Harry Smith, Marty Kotis, and Steve Long were all reelected, and will be joined by:

- Tom Fetzer of Wilmington, president of Fetzer Strategic Partners and former Raleigh mayor
- Randy Ramsey of Beaufort, founder of Jarrett Bay Boatworks, Inc.
- Bob Rucho of Matthews, a retired dentist and former eight-term legislator

House

Current BOG member Doyle Parrish was reelected, and will be joined by:

- Kellie Blue, Chair of the UNC-Pembroke Board of Trustees
- Rob Bryan, former member of the NC House of Representatives for District 88
- Carolyn Lloyd Coward, member of the Western Carolina University Board of Trustees
- Leo Daughtry, former member of the NC House of Representatives for District 26
- Wendy Murphy, former Chair of the UNC-Wilmington Board of Trustees

In other news, I joined Senator Chad Barefoot and Representative Craig Horn in Raleigh to [announce](#) a revamped North Carolina Teaching Fellows Program. The revitalized program will provide forgivable loans to new STEM and special education teachers who agree to teach in North Carolina.

And of course, we're keeping a close eye on the budget process. I'm hopeful we'll see progress on some of our core priorities around data capacity, deregulation, and new student success pilot programs.

GA Staffing and Organization Update

Jennifer Leung recently returned to her alma mater as UNC-Greensboro's Assistant Director of Financial Planning and Budgets as of April 1, 2017. Debbie Dryer, Director of University Financial Reporting, will serve as Interim Controller until Jennifer's position is filled.

New additions to General Administration include:

- **Akura Anderson**, Executive Assistant to Chief of Staff Meredith Didier, Office of the President
- **Kinna Clark**, Associate Director of Gift Planning Services, Division of External Affairs
- **Katie Gerhardt**, Project Manager, North Carolina State Education Assistance Authority
- **Eric Johnson**, Senior Writer and Policy Analyst, Office of the President
- **NiKeasha Nunn**, Executive Assistant, NC State Education Assistance Authority
- **Chris Pandich**, Studio/Media Asset Engineer, UNC-TV
- **Catherine Truitt**, Assistant Vice President, Academic and University Programs, Office of the President

Nose for News

A little light reading that helps emphasize the importance of the work we're doing. Check out the following:

- [Congratulations](#) to our 2017 Excellence in Teaching Award Winners!
- After a year in office, I [reflected](#) on North Carolina's enduring commitment to education in a *News & Observer* op-ed.
- The weekend review section of the *New York Times* carried a great [first-person piece](#) by a student at Spelman on the value of historically black colleges.
- Also in the *New York Times*, Middleburg College professor Allison Stanger [wrote about](#) the value of politically diverse dialogue on campus.
- And the *Chronicle of Higher Ed* had an excellent and much-discussed [cover story](#) on the economic and educational divide in North Carolina. We're at the forefront of a national conversation about what public institutions can do to tackle these issues.

