

# **NC State University Strategic Plan**

## ***Our Mission***

*The mission of North Carolina State University is to serve its students and the people of North Carolina as a doctoral/research-extensive, land-grant university. Through the active integration of teaching, research, extension, and engagement, North Carolina State University creates an innovative learning environment that stresses mastery of fundamentals, intellectual discipline, creativity, problem solving, and responsibility. Enhancing its historic strengths in agriculture, science, and engineering with a commitment to excellence in a comprehensive range of academic disciplines, North Carolina State University provides leadership for intellectual, cultural, social, economic, and technological development within the state, the nation, and the world.*

NC State University was created to improve the lives of North Carolinians. Realizing this responsibility, we have used various strategies to advance the social and economic vitality of communities and citizens, earning state, national, and international attention for our innovation and effectiveness.

During NC State's first century, we developed teaching and research programs aligned with state and national needs. Within our land-grant mission, we developed extension programs that provided direct assistance to citizens, communities, and organizations in every county of the state. By the end of its first century, NC State had emerged as the state's premiere research university for science, engineering, and technology. The flagship for research-based economic and community development across North Carolina, it was also an increasingly important resource for the nation and world. NC State has reached beyond the state's borders, bringing back significant returns in the form of new ideas and resources.

A second land grant on the eve of our centennial, in 1984, provided NC State with a unique opportunity to fulfill its mission even more effectively. Centennial Campus gives NC State the ability to bring its research and extension partners directly onto campus. Collaborating in a unified community, faculty, students, and external partners develop interdisciplinary approaches to address statewide issues. The Centennial Campus partnership concept extends to all corners of the University and exemplifies current best practices in the world for university engagement.

The 21<sup>st</sup> century needs institutions like NC State – an engaged research university committed to advancing the public good. A knowledge center for the growing information-based economy, NC State integrates outreach with relevant research and active teaching, applies global perspectives to local issues, and uses proven, local strategies to address global problems. With a culture of innovation, clear vision, and extraordinary potential, NC State is ideally positioned to be a leader in transforming the land-grant mission for the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

## **Our Vision**

NC State University will transform lives and improve the human condition through innovation and discovery. As an engaged research university, NC State will be a leader in collaborating with community, business, and government partners to develop informed policies and pursue bold strategies.

### *Our People*

NC State will be the first choice of those confronting emerging issues and seeking effective solutions.

- Students will come to NC State to hone their talents and expand their visions, preparing for rewarding lives as innovative and responsible leaders. An NC State education will be known for providing an educational experience unique to an engaged research university, including a multitude of opportunities for contributing in meaningful ways to communities.
- The faculty will raise international standards for 21<sup>st</sup> century scholarship, teaching, and engagement by seeking creative intersections across academic disciplines, incorporating diverse ideas, and using broad perspectives in a fertile exchange of ideas.
- The staff and administration will collaborate with faculty and students to ensure the strength of the University's educational, research, and outreach missions. They will demonstrate vision, strategic thinking, and agility as they elevate best practices for higher education administration.
- Citizens from North Carolina and beyond will come to NC State because it will provide both practical solutions and the intellectual foundations for addressing complex scientific, technological, economic, and social problems.

### *Our Culture*

NC State's culture of innovation will fuel the discovery and realization of ideas as an intellectual community committed to excellence and attuned to an ever-changing, global society. Recognizing the complexity of contemporary challenges, the university will integrate the perspectives of multiple disciplines to both discover and apply the best solutions to current problems, as well as anticipating future problems. Strengthened by a diversity of ideas, perspectives and experiences, NC State students, faculty, and staff will build an inclusive campus community that values both equity and social responsibility.

## **Investment Priorities**

To strengthen its role as an engaged research university, NC State needs to build outstanding research, teaching, and outreach programs in areas of identified state and national needs, renew its commitment to a comprehensive range of academic disciplines, and reinvigorate the undergraduate experience. We need innovative and committed people and a solid infrastructure. Given the economic climate, this means we also need to become even more innovative in developing new resources, and more effective and efficient in utilizing those we

already have. Accordingly, during the next five years we will invest in the following, critically important areas. (These areas are not listed in order of importance.)

- **Develop a faculty and staff of the highest quality.** Committed and creative people are vital to our vision. The foundation of knowledge-based engagement in the 21<sup>st</sup> century depends on attracting, developing, and retaining excellent scholars, teachers, and researchers, as well as talented and creative staff members. We view diversity among faculty and staff as crucial to quality. It not only provides a welcoming community for all students and partners, but also promotes the broadest perspectives in our teaching and learning community. Competitive compensation, professional development opportunities, and a supportive and productive work environment are critical to attracting and retaining high-quality faculty and staff.
- **Build research and graduate and professional programs aggressively in proven and emerging areas.** A vibrant research enterprise is crucial to building an excellent faculty, as well as effective teaching and outreach programs. Consistent with NC State's role within The University of North Carolina, we will make focused, strategic investments in research and graduate programs in clearly defined areas of state and national needs, building national and international recognition for our strongest research programs. We will deepen and expand our greatest disciplinary strengths, while being alert to emerging areas and issues, and to the pressing need for imaginative and effective interdisciplinary collaborations across campus and beyond. Finally, we will commit to excellent professional programs across campus, programs that are both consistent with our land-grant mission and critical to the future of our students, our state, and our nation.
- **Strengthen our commitment to a broader, more comprehensive range of disciplines.** Consistent with our heritage as a land-grant university, we have traditionally focused our research and graduate programs in areas most closely aligned with the economic needs of our state. But 21<sup>st</sup> century challenges require a broader and deeper knowledge base to be able to effectively address all dimensions of the complex issues of our times: ethical, aesthetic, environmental, social, and others. We will strengthen our commitment to transform NC State into a comprehensive university, developing additional outstanding scholarly and teaching programs in the liberal arts, basic sciences, social sciences, and fine arts.
- **Enrich undergraduates' educational experience through their active engagement with society.** We seek to give students a transforming educational experience and a foundation for a lifetime of learning. We will help them develop the critical thinking and communication skills, broad perspectives, and adaptability they will need to address the complex social and economic problems in their lifetimes. Building on our research, extension, and interdisciplinary successes, we will offer well-integrated programs, international and multicultural experiences, and engaged learning in a technology-rich learning environment.
- **Foster innovation-driven economic development.** Business and community leaders across North Carolina and the nation are adjusting to significant changes in population and economy. From the creation of new ideas, technologies, and

companies, to the advancement of existing firms, we will engage these leaders as partners in developing well-defined strategies for sustainable growth.

- **Promote knowledge-based public policy.** After a century's experience providing local extension, and with the more recent success of the Centennial Campus concept, NC State's next challenge as an engaged university is to engage more fully in public policy. Public policy ultimately determines the success or failure of knowledge-based strategies that can improve and sustain the quality of life of individuals and communities. We will help the state's and nation's leaders develop public policies that are well informed by solid scholarship and practical knowledge.
- **Strengthen K-12 science and mathematics education in North Carolina.** A sufficient number of well-qualified K-12 teachers, particularly in mathematics, science, and technology, is critical to North Carolina's future. An additional challenge is to enrich students' learning through technology. In partnership with schools, communities, and other colleges and universities, we will expand our teaching capacity, research programs, and outreach activities that support excellence in K-12 education statewide.
- **Integrate global perspectives into our programs and functions.** As North Carolina and the nation become more diverse and more intimately connected through global economic, social, cultural, and political networks, NC State has the responsibility to integrate international dimensions into students' university experience. It also has a complementary responsibility to contribute to the international research community. Global and multicultural awareness is critical for partnerships in knowledge-based economic and social development and is necessary to keep pace with worldwide change.
- **Strengthen the university's resource base.** We will secure our future by building our endowment and developing private support from a wider variety of sources. We will use our public and private resources effectively and efficiently, leveraging both to attract additional investments and commitments from our public and private partners. We will regularly review processes and programs across campus, seeking opportunities to economize so that we can expand in areas that promise excellence. Strategic growth is not possible without strategic choice.
- **Strengthen the university's core infrastructure.** We will develop and maintain a physical and technological environment that is efficient, aesthetically appealing, environmentally sustainable. Our campus needs to exemplify 21<sup>st</sup> century research, teaching, and learning. From its laboratories and classrooms to its walking paths and transit systems, a thoughtfully planned campus is the hallmark of a great university. It enhances the quality of life for everyone who works, studies, or visits here.

### **Distinctive Characteristics**

NC State is distinguished not only by its achievements and contributions but also by our values and by the ways we carry out our mission. As economic and social challenges grow more complex, intertwined, and globally oriented, NC State will continue pursuing its most successful core strategies as an engaged research university.

- **Provide access to our programs and resources.** We welcome qualified students seeking the NC State experience. We offer educational opportunities through quality online and distance education. To ensure that an NC State education is affordable, we direct financial aid to students with the greatest need. To enrich our community of learning, we admit students from diverse cultures, backgrounds, beliefs, and experiences, and provide them with an inclusive and nurturing environment.
- **Integrate students' learning and living experiences.** From living-learning villages and study abroad, to cultural offerings and athletics, from the health center to the Gallery of Art and Design, NC State develops the entire individual through a rich variety of activities outside of the classroom that intersect with the academic experience.
- **Generate innovative and useful solutions that improve the lives of North Carolinians and others facing related social and economic challenges.** The state's economy is swiftly becoming a global, knowledge-based economy whose leading edge is fueled by the merging of technology with the physical and biological sciences. NC State plays a central role in improving the quality of life for North Carolinians by creating better ways to manage the economy and environment in areas especially challenged by these changes. As an engaged university, we are also committed to making our specialized knowledge and expertise easily available through extension and engagement services both on campus and across the state.
- **Form strategic partnerships with industry, agriculture, government, business, educational entities, non-profits, alumni, and other constituencies outside of the university.** Building on the models provided by extension networks and Centennial Campus, we will continue to pursue partnerships and entrepreneurial strategies that improve the quality, reach, and impact of our research and scholarship. By engaging with our partners, we also enrich the learning experience for our students.
- **Emphasize science, technology, engineering, and mathematics.** These fields are central to jobs, opportunities, and success for our graduates and are NC State's major contribution to higher education. We will continue to emphasize these historic strengths in an interdisciplinary and globally aware context.
- **Support curiosity-driven investigations.** Our enthusiasm for problem solving is matched by a commitment to basic research. Such work helps nourish the best of the human spirit, and universities remain among the few institutions dedicated to stretching the frontier of knowledge for its own sake. Such work is often foundational to understanding and ultimately solving practical problems.
- **Integrate multiple disciplines.** It has become clear that 21<sup>st</sup> century problems are complex. They need multifaceted solutions. If the social, economic, ethical, design, communicative, and environmental dimensions of a problem are not adequately addressed, then scientifically wrought solutions may fail.

- **Employ e-learning to enrich learning.** NC State's climate of innovation fuels new strategies for using technology to expand learning across campus and beyond. Technology-mediated teaching and learning expands the information available in and out of the classroom, broadens students' perspectives and knowledge, and enlivens communication among students and faculty. We remain committed to taking strategic advantage of technology whenever and wherever it can enhance the quality of learning and teaching.
- **Promote an innovative administrative environment shaped by our academic vision.** In the face of increasing competition for a shrinking pool of resources, we develop new resources creatively and make the best use of those we have through efficiency and effective partnerships. The University's infrastructure – its policies, business services, facilities planning and management, financing, and budget administration – is designed to be user-friendly and supportive. These services are intended to encourage agility, engineer creative solutions, avoid waste, allow intelligent risk taking, and demonstrate accountability.
- **Conduct ourselves according to the highest ethical principles.** All members of the NC State community are committed to fostering an atmosphere of integrity, fairness, and respect while exploring the moral dimensions of intelligence. Responsible research, responsible teaching, responsible learning, and responsible service are vital to NC State's mission of transforming lives and improving the human condition.

NC State will foster scholarship for the 21<sup>st</sup> century – in teaching and learning, in research, and in extension, engagement, and economic development. Our remarkable community of scholars, in disciplines ranging from science and technology to the arts and the humanities, not only preserves the past but creates the future. We are the state's science, engineering and technology flagship, and we take pride in the cultural literacy and management skills of our graduates. By expanding minds and igniting imaginations, NC State will develop an educated and entrepreneurial workforce and the leaders of tomorrow.