High marks for UNCG on System strategic plan goals

The UNC System has released its annual updates for each constituent university on their performance metrics for meeting Strategic Plan goals. The new data, available on the UNC System website, demonstrates that the UNC System is on a steady track to attain its five-year Strategic Plan goals, with student success far exceeding the national average.

For the second year in a row, UNC Greensboro met its annual targets on all five of its priority metrics, and this year the University achieved the feat on all nine Strategic Plan metrics.

“These gains represent our universities’ commitment to success for all students, including our efforts to help far more low-income and rural students get over the finish line,” said UNC System Senior Vice President for Strategy and Policy Andrew Kelly. “The UNC System continues to be a national leader among public university systems on both access and success. The data make clear that this has truly been a team effort, with all universities contributing to our success in effectively serving students from all walks of life.”

Three institutions – UNC Greensboro, UNC Charlotte, and NC State – met or exceeded their annual targets on all five of their priority metrics. Appalachian State University, East Carolina University, UNC Asheville and UNC Wilmington met or exceeded four out of five priority metrics.

For detailed information on Strategic Plan goals and access to individual campus dashboards visit https://www.northcarolina.edu/strategic-planning#dashboard

UNCG announces new provost
UNC Greensboro today announced that Dr. James (Jim) Coleman will become the University’s new Provost and Executive Vice Chancellor beginning August 1. He will also serve as Professor in the Department of Biology.

Coleman comes to UNCG from the University of Arkansas, where he has served in the equivalent role since January 2017. As the chief academic officer at Arkansas, Coleman led efforts to amplify student success outcomes aimed at improving retention, graduation rates, closing achievement gaps, and post-graduation success. He drove the implementation of several strategies, including using data analytics to identify students with the highest likelihood of not completing a degree and launching a proactive, holistic advising program to support those students.

Coleman also played a leadership role in the conceptualization of a $45 million stand-alone student success center. Coleman helped lead the process to identify signature research areas at the University of Arkansas, including a new interdisciplinary and integrative institute, and played a leadership role in the development of a proposal that led to a $23.7 million gift to build research and commercialization infrastructure. During his tenure, research reached record levels of $180 million in 2019, increasing by over $35 million.

He is a proven champion of increasing diversity, creating an inclusive environment, and designing and implementing programs for equity for and among students, faculty, and staff.

“Jim is well positioned to lead academic affairs here as he brings the kind of experience, expertise, and proven results to navigate the complex environment we now face,” said UNCG Chancellor Franklin D. Gilliam, Jr. “Our goal was to hire an entrepreneurial and
forward-thinking provost, experienced in higher education and knowledgeable about its operations and economics, committed to our mission and values, with the personal integrity and drive to build on our forward momentum. We have clearly found that, and more, in Jim. He is passionate about the transformational power of public higher education and the public mission and is, quite simply, the right person for the job."

Coleman’s more than 30 years of professional higher education experience includes service as the provost and professor of biology at Northern Arizona University, dean of the College of Humanities and Sciences and biology professor at Virginia Commonwealth University, vice provost for research and professor of ecology and evolutionary biology at Rice University, vice chancellor for research and biology professor at the University of Missouri, and vice president for research and business development at the Desert Research Institute. He served as program officer for ecological and evolutionary physiology at the National Science Foundation and began his career as a professor of biology at Syracuse University after conducting postdoctoral research at Harvard and Stanford University. Coleman received his Doctor of Philosophy from Yale University’s School of Forestry and Environmental Studies as well as a Master of Philosophy and Master of Science. He received his Bachelor of Science in forestry from the University of Maine.

Coleman is also an accomplished plant physiological ecologist, authoring or co-authoring more than 75 papers that together have been cited nearly 8,000 times. He has been the principal/co-principal investigator on over $64 million of grants and cooperative agreements. He was elected as a Fellow of the American Association for the Advancement of Science.

Coleman will spend the month of July working with Provost Dana Dana on a seamless transition until she steps down on July 31 and returns to the faculty.

**Videos honor Faculty Award recipients**
UNCG Faculty Awards recipients were announced in April, and to honor them, media studies professor Michael Frierson and his students created video profiles of those faculty members. Learn about their research, teaching, and public service.

**Ann Berry Somers: James E. Holshouser, Jr. Award for Excellence in Public Service**

**Olav Rueppell: UNCG Senior Research Excellence Award**

**Dr. Robyn Le Blanc, Dr. Meiqing Sun, Dr. Vasyl Taras, and Dr. Elizabeth Perrill:**
Alumni Teaching Excellence Awards

**Jo Ramsay Leimenstoll, Dr. Blair Wisco, Dr. Tyreasa Washington, Dr. Cristina Moreira, and the departments of Anthropology and Biology:**
Instruction and Education Awards

**Dr. Joanne Murphy: Junior Research Excellence Award**
Dr. Joanne Murphy: Gladys Strawn Bullard Award

Dr. Carmen Sotomayor: Board of Governors Excellence in Teaching Award

Congratulations, Class of 2020

Last week, nearly 3,000 Spartans turned their tassels - virtually - and became UNC Greensboro alumni.

It was a graduation celebration unlike any other. For the first time in University history, the celebration was almost all virtual. There were videos from Chancellor Gilliam and other University leaders, departmental Zoom celebrations, and new social media filters and GIFs. The University sprinkled in a few non-virtual elements - a plane flyover and a “Light the Night” event - to make the celebration even more special for the Class of 2020.

In the future, the University will honor the Class of 2020 in person, with a traditional commencement ceremony. But for now, we’ll continue to celebrate through our screens.

Below is a visual recap of the celebration - some of our favorite videos, photos, and social media posts from the weeklong event. Graduates are encouraged to continue to post their videos and photos on social media with the hashtag #UNCGGrad.

Getting ready for the virtual Math/Stats Department Graduation Celebration. Congratulations Graduates!! @UNCG @UNCG_GradSchool pic.twitter.com/7u6dsfgjcW

— Greg Bell (@GradSchoolGreg) May 8, 2020

I just finished undergrad today & I couldn’t think of a better place to celebrate this time in my life other than back home in my city with my fam. These aren’t my official grad pics, but these will do for now. Thanks UNCG for the past 4 years. 😎 #UNCG20 #UNCGGrad #BryanGrad pic.twitter.com/U7fgDNiRps

— 💖ohan 💖 (jordy_nht) May 4, 2020
How I imagined today would be #uncggrad @UNCG @BryanSchoolUNCG pic.twitter.com/gkDkuibBwk

— Abby Pendergraph (@abbyglenn_143) May 8, 2020

We’re sharing fun clips from the many department celebrations happening in the College of Arts & Sciences.

This one comes from Dr. Kimberly Petersen (and family!) for the @uncg_chem graduates! #uncggrad pic.twitter.com/RT78RgD2Ld

— UNCG College of Arts & Sciences (@UNCG_CAS) May 8, 2020

Mohammed Hossain is a 2020 #UNCGGrad, earning his Marketing degree from @BryanSchoolUNCG.

In addition to securing a job well before graduation, Mohammed racked up an impressive co-curricular resume across campus.

Read more about Mohammed’s achievements: https://t.co/TroQJOOyST pic.twitter.com/8z4NlzTuo0

— UNCG Student Affairs (@UNCG_SA) May 8, 2020

DGI celebrates the Class of 2020! Congrats @UNCG and @ncatsuaggies graduates, we know you’re going to accomplish great things and we’re honored our community played a role in your future. Snap a selfie in front of our windows today to help celebrate these grads (tag us)! #dgso pic.twitter.com/EY8B00HPZN

— Downtown Greensboro (@DowntownGSO) May 8, 2020
Our spring 2020 grads are getting a little extra love today. They’ve earned it!
pic.twitter.com/LUa9Tp0Q39

— Andrew Hamilton (@A_L_Hamilton) May 9, 2020

A sighting!!! Congrats ⁦@UNCG⁩ Class of 2020. Respect.
pic.twitter.com/3dM1zP6CXu

— Chancellor Gilliam (@UNCGChancellor) May 9, 2020
Links to school and program celebrations are listed below. The online ceremony for the School of Nursing will take place May 23.
Outstanding Spartan staff recognized

A number of our Spartan staff have been recognized for their outstanding contributions through the following annual awards:

**Staff Excellence Awards:**

**Julie Vorhees** (UNCG Sponsored Programs)
**Jeff Gillis** (School of Theatre)

The University Staff Excellence Award is presented annually to two deserving permanent non-faculty employees in recognition of their devotion to “Duty, Innovation, Service, Human Relations, and Other Achievements going beyond the call of duty.”

**Gladys Strawn Bullard Award:**

**Tuisha Fernandez Stack** (Office of Graduate Programs)

This award recognizes and rewards members of the student body, faculty, and staff who provide outstanding leadership and service to the University. Their leadership and service are contributions made to the University which go beyond the scope of the normal responsibilities of a student, faculty, or staff member.

**Staff Stars Award:**

This award recognizes staff who are long known for volunteering and service, and who have been observed being kind, thoughtful, helpful, or considerate to their fellow Spartans and the general public.

**David Alcorn** (Facilities Operations)
**Ashton Bare** (Career & Professional Development)
**Ashley Baynes** (Office of Intercultural Engagement)
**Todd Beck** (Environment Health & Safety)
**Mark Bell** (Information Technology Services)
**Denise Bellamy** (International Programs)
Carol Benjamin (Human Resources)
Craig Biles (University Communications/Information Technology Services)
Rachel Dodd Blakely (First Year Experience)
Chelsea Bunch (University Registrar’s Office)
Skip Burford (Grounds)
Philip Byerley (Office of Accessibility Resources & Services)
Haley Childers (Office of Research and Engagement)
Roger Cooper (Parking Operations)
Whitney DeBerry (Student Health Services)
Amanda Everhart (Bryan Undergraduate Student Services)
Sean Farrell (Human Resources)
Tenika Foster (Student Health Services)
Joshua Green (UNCG Police)
Nicole Hall (Career & Professional Development)
Morgan Hayes (Information Technology Services)
Heather Hensley Anderson (Student Health Services)
Christopher Jasso (UNCG Police)
Lisa Jones (Student Health Services)
Mike Jumpe (Facilities Operations)
Brian Knight (UNCG Police)
Timberly Leake (Human Resources)
Courtney Luchey (Students First Office)
Zachary Lynch (UNCG Police)
Lindsay Martin (Career & Professional Development)
Robert McCance (Spartan Mail)
Maria Munoz (Human Resources)
Kevin Ross (Student Health Services)
Whitney Scott (Students First Office)
Neil Shepherd (Music)
Michael Jay Smith (Student Health Services)
Aljoša Stojanović (Campus Enterprises)
Debra Toler (Financial Aid)
T.M. Trantham (UNCG Police)
Katie Vance (Chancellor’s Office)
Wally Vinson (Office of Leadership & Civic Engagement)
Anairea Watson (UNCG Police)
Marge Webb (Human Resources)
Brian Wilson (Spartan Card Center)
Jamie Young (UNCG Police)
Alum offers advice to nursing grads in age of COVID-19

Ginger Carroll ’77

Like anyone else starting a new job, Ginger Carroll hoped for a smooth transition when she began in January as the new chief executive officer of Citrus Memorial Hospital in Inverness, Florida.

However, Carroll was confronted with a global pandemic only a few weeks after her first day on the job. Instead of easing into her new role, she had to oversee her hospital’s response to the coronavirus outbreak, which has overwhelmed health care facilities around the world.

“I can tell you that the virus certainly interrupted my six-month plan of what I was going to do at the hospital,” said Carroll, a Greensboro native who earned her Bachelor of Science in Nursing degree from UNC Greensboro in 1977. “Some of the goals that we had set forth in the first 60 days that I was here sort of got interrupted.”

Carroll said this year’s graduating class of nursing students from UNCG are about to enter a work environment unlike anything she has ever seen before because of COVID-19. Today is International Nurses Day and the 200th birthday of Florence Nightingale, the founder of modern nursing.

When Carroll graduated from UNCG, she aspired to work as a critical care nurse in a high-intensity area. She was the first member of her family to enter the health care industry, and after years as a bedside nurse, she moved into a leadership position as a nurse executive.
Now a hospital CEO for the past 16 years, Carroll has a unique perspective on what graduating students can expect once they start working as nurses during a pandemic.

“The first thing I would say to them is trust your education,” Carroll said. “These new nurse grads, they spent four years learning how to care for patients and how to care for themselves and how to prevent illness. And so, they just need to understand that they’ve got this. They’ve been well-trained. They’ve been to an excellent school, and they just need to trust their education.”

Carroll has had to quickly adjust as new information about the coronavirus has been made available and testing for COVID-19 has improved. She said she has changed her plans on an almost daily basis, all while a steady flow of patients have arrived at Citrus Memorial Hospital with coronavirus-like symptoms.

“I can’t recall anything that has happened that health care executives nationally have had to deal with that has been any greater than the impact of this virus,” Carroll said. “Of course, we’ve had disasters. We had tornadoses. We had hurricanes. We had devastating events that have affected pockets of places, but I can’t recall anything that has had such a profound national impact as this event.”

Carroll said new nurses should expect their leadership to be transparent. She has tried to “overcommunicate” with team members at her hospital in central Florida, letting them know about what they might expect.

At the same time, Carroll stressed this year’s nursing graduates must be able to adjust on the fly to deal with the ever-changing public health crisis.

“They also need to be flexible. You just get out of school and you think ‘OK, I need to do these things in this order. This is where I’m going to work,’” Carroll said. “We don’t know what the new norm is going to look like for us. We do know this virus is going to continue for months in our community, and we’re going to continue to see people coming in with illness. But new nurses need to be flexible to change because new information is coming out all the time.”

The School of Nursing offers a Master of Science in Nursing degree with a concentration in Nursing Administration. Students take courses about leadership and management skills essential in health care. [Click this link](#) for more information about the program.

*Story by Alex Abrams, School of Nursing
Photo courtesy of Citrus Memorial Hospital*
$150,000 gift bolsters SAFE Fund for students


These are just a few of the reasons UNC Greensboro’s Class of 1967 created the SAFE (Student Assistance Fund for Emergencies) endowment during their 50th reunion. They wanted to provide a ready “safety net” where 100 percent of the money in the fund would go to students who suddenly faced unexpected, one-time needs that could jeopardize their higher education goals.

With the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, such student needs became more pronounced and widespread as students coped with the loss of employment or resources. Members of UNCG’s Advancement division knew requests to the SAFE fund would become much more frequent. They put out an emergency call to UNCG alumni and friends to help augment the fund, and many stepped up immediately with gifts large and small. But one donor decided to go even further and recently provided $150,000 to the SAFE fund.

“The donor is a long-time supporter of UNCG. When it became known we had students who were going without food, the donor became very passionate about doing something immediately,” says Mary Swantek, an associate director of development. “The donor prefers
to remain anonymous but hopes this gift can help students in need now and will inspire others to give.”

This gift and the others that have been coming in steadily since the call went out have been greatly appreciated by students, says Dr. Cathy Akens, vice chancellor for student affairs.

“Our students are dedicated to putting in the work to complete their degrees and graduate, but there are times when an unanticipated crisis or hardship occurs,” Akens says. “Without the available resources, these sudden events might derail students from their goals. The SAFE fund has allowed our team to provide some relief to students who are experiencing food insecurity, housing insecurity, loss of income, a family crisis, and more. The generous gifts made by our donors will enable us to support more students and help eliminate roadblocks on their path to graduation.”

In the past few weeks, the Dean of Students Office has distributed more than $10,000 from the SAFE fund and is in the process of distributing $50,000 more. In addition, $49,857 was recently added to the fund by the UNC System. The funds are used quickly because there are so many students in need right now.

Since the call went out in late March for contributions to the SAFE fund, 214 donors have provided more than $174,000.

Anyone wishing to make a gift to the SAFE fund can do so at go.uncg.edu/helpstudentsnow.

**Campus Weekly summer publication schedule**

Note: This post and schedule was edited May 11.

During the summer months, the Campus Weekly enewsletter comes every other week instead of every week. The Campus Weekly summer schedule will begin the week after the May 13 email.

The following is the Campus Weekly schedule for the summer months:
- May 27
- June 10
- June 24
- July 8
- July 22
- August 5

Campus Weekly resumes weekly August 19.
Dr. Sally Koerner

Dr. Sally Koerner (Biology) received new funding from the USDA NIFA Agriculture and Food Research Initiative for the project “Assessing impacts of patch-burn grazing management on sustainability of multiple agroecosystem services.”

Frequently, cattle production comes at the expense of plant and wildlife biodiversity, with cattle management goals at odds with environmental health and conservation (Derner et al. 2009, Toombs and Roberts 2009, Fuhlendorf et al. 2012). In grasslands that can carry fire (mesic grasslands), annual burning and grazing (ABG) is a common management technique (With et al. 2008) to increase forage production for cattle (Allred et al. 2011)

However, ABG homogenizes vegetation (Koerner and Collins 2013) reducing habitat quality for native flora and fauna (Fuhlendorf et al. 2010). Patch burn grazing (PBG) is a new management strategy that promises to allow land owners to prioritize cattle weight gain and promote conservation and sustainability practices. PBG employs fire and grazing interactions to create a “shifting mosaic” of forage across a landscape through time (Fuhlendorf and Engle 2004). In an unfenced management unit, fire is used to lure grazing animals to a portion (patch) of the unit that has recently burned (Weir et al. 2013), while unburned patches experience reduced levels of grazing.

The patchiness of disturbances across a PBG landscape leads to heterogeneity of vegetation and potentially many other components of the ecosystem. Heterogeneity at large spatial scales, like that created in vegetation by PBG, is important for ecosystem health as it leads to greater diversity, ecosystem connectivity, and stability of ecosystem function and services (e.g., (MacArthur and MacArthur 1961, Loreau et al. 2001, Scasta et al. 2015). Importantly, in addition to its purported benefits for wildlife and natural resources, PBG still provides equivalent cattle production to more traditional management practices, such as ABG. Yet evidence for many of the potential benefits of PBG for bird, small mammal, insect, and plant communities is limited or equivocal, and PBG’s belowground effects (e.g., soil health, carbon sequestration) remain completely unexplored. Here, we propose to examine the effects of
PBG on the health and sustainability of a grazing ecosystem utilizing long-term PBG experiments in tallgrass prairie.

Long-term goal: Assess the ability of PBG to increase ecosystem health and services at a landscape-level in order to ultimately understand the sustainability of PBG for long-term conservation of natural resources.

Supporting Objectives:

1. Assess the effects of PBG management on ecological properties, processes, and services (including understudied belowground components) at both the landscape and patch (individual burn units) scale.
2. Determine whether PBG enhances coupling of various ecosystem components at the landscape scale.
3. Investigate how ecosystem coupling affects ecosystem services in the context of PBG.
4. Examine landscape level ecosystem services generated by long-term PBG at multiple sites throughout Eastern Kansas.

Overall, the project will integrate above and below-ground findings across trophic levels to assess the impact of management choices on important landscape characteristics. These results will be vital for land managers, policy makers, and stakeholders seeking to enhance food production, while simultaneously protecting and conserving environmental health. Ultimately, conserving environmental health will ensure the long-term sustainability, and security of, food production in the US.

**Newsmakers: Nichols, honeybee research, Bickham**

Whether researchers with timely insights or students with outstanding stories, members of the UNCG community appear in print, web and broadcast media every day. Here is a sampling of UNCG-related stories in the news and media over the week:

- Father-daughter nursing duo Les and Sara Nichols were profiled by WFMY News2. [The piece.](#)
- Work by UNCG to protect honeybees was highlighted by the North Carolina Biotechnology Center. [The article.](#)
- Dr. Teri Bickham spoke to WFDD about transitioning voice classes to virtual instruction. [The feature.](#)