UNCG to honor nearly 5,000 graduates at Virtual Commencement

UNCG Greensboro will honor nearly 5,000 graduates - from the May, August, and December 2020 classes - at its Virtual Commencement ceremony on Friday, Dec. 11, at 10 a.m.

The Virtual Doctoral Recognition ceremony will take place Friday, Jan. 15, at 3 p.m.

UNCG awarded 2,809 degrees, as well as 15 Beyond Academics certificates, in May. An additional 678 degrees were awarded in August. UNCG expects to award approximately 1,451 degrees in December, including 1,111 bachelor’s degrees, 286 master’s degrees, 49
doctoral degrees, and five specialist in education degrees. Of the degrees awarded in December, 86 will be conferred to international students.

While the pandemic and associated public health directives currently restrict the ability to gather in person, UNCG is committed to honoring its graduates with a unique, virtual experience – one that has pomp and circumstance, some personalized touches, a welcome from Saturday Night Live cast member Lauren Holt ‘13, and a few more celebrity appearances.

“The Class of 2020 has demonstrated a kind of determination and persistence that will get them through life’s biggest challenges,” said Chancellor Franklin D. Gilliam, Jr. “They have shown tremendous resilience and the kind of compassion and sense of community that speaks well to our collective character – the character of the UNC Greensboro family. We are proud to celebrate them.”

The celebration begins today, Nov. 23, with the launch of UNCG’s commencement website – commencement.uncg.edu. On the new commencement website, Spartans can learn about several members of the Class of 2020. The website will expand in the coming weeks with more student profiles, the addition of commencement programs, as well as colleges’ and schools’ celebration messages from deans, faculty, and alumni. Additionally, graduates and graduation candidates will receive, by email, their very own individual web pages so that they can celebrate and share their pages with family and friends.

The Dec. 11 online ceremony will kick off with a special message from UNCG alumna and Saturday Night Live cast member Lauren Holt ‘13. There will be a welcome from Chancellor Gilliam, a presentation of honorary degrees to recipients Rhiannon Giddens and Emmy Lou Harris, and remarks from student speakers Jurne Smith and Casey W. Johnson. Students can also expect several celebrity shout-outs near the end of the ceremony.

The ceremony includes the traditional conferring of degrees, as well as a virtual tassel turn. Chancellor Gilliam will offer final remarks and Alison Csaji will ring the University Bell to conclude the ceremony.

In addition to the virtual experience, the greater Greensboro community will celebrate 2020 graduates as part of the winter holiday celebrations downtown. There will be special congratulations messages during the Light the Night event on Dec. 4 and 5 and the Balloon Regatta on Dec. 12 and 13.

UNCG will amplify graduates’ social media posts and add them to a curated display on the Virtual Commencement web pages. Graduates are encouraged to:
• Use the hashtags #UNCGGrad and #UNCGWay on photo and video posts.
• Tag @uncg and your school/college/department in graduation-related stories on Instagram, so UNCG can re-post on its accounts.
• Use Class of 2020-themed animated stickers, augmented reality filters, and other digital swag at https://go.uncg.edu/grad-swag.
• Participate in the UNCG Alumni Association’s #UNCGNewAlum contest.

When we are once again able to gather in person, UNCG is committed to hosting special in-person events to celebrate the 2020 graduates. Until then, the University will do everything it can on campus, in the community, and through the power of technology to give Spartans the special day and cherished moments they deserve.

‘Downtown in December’ celebration events announced

The UNCG Horn Choir performs in last year’s pre-pandemic downtown festival.

Downtown Greensboro, Inc. has pivoted their 2020 holiday events in response to the coronavirus pandemic. This year’s holiday experiences have been revamped to provide the community with a safe, socially responsible celebration of the holiday season. Following are some of the scheduled events, with highlights on how UNCG will participate.

**Tinsel Town** (Dec. 4 – 27, 9 a.m. – 9 p.m.): Tinsel Town will feature 50 uniquely decorated
trees. Intended to promote community, trees will be decorated by local corporations, groups, non-profits, or a family. UNCG Alumni Engagement will decorate two trees in Tinsel Town – one is themed for graduation and the other is a Minerva-themed tree – and Athletics staff will decorate a tree as well. UNCG has designated Spartan Open Pantry as our charitable organization should our tree(s) be among the top five favorites (vote by using the QR code located at each tree). Please come out to LeBauer Park and vote for the UNCG trees!

**Light the Night** (Dec. 4 – 5, 6 – 9 p.m.): This event is the re-imagined version of the Festival of Lights with more socially distanced activities but lots of excitement. UNCG will be included in the festive show of laser lights in the MLK Parking Lot wall near the new Greensboro Selfie Mural. We’re projecting a “Congrats Class of 2020!” message in laser lights. The UNCG Horn Choir will also perform.

**The Balloon Regatta** (Dec. 12 – 13, 12 – 4 p.m.) This event replaces the Annual Holiday Parade with a drive-thru experience on Church Street. Big Spiro will be present, holding a sign with “Congrats Class of 2020!” to celebrate our graduates.

Other UNCG connections will take place during the month, including alumni-owned businesses Chez Genese, Dame’s Chicken and Waffles, MACHETE, and Natty Greene’s participation in 12 Days of Meals, and the Holiday Window Decorating Contest will includes Chez Genese, Greensboro Downtown Yoga, Natty Greene’s, and Scuppernong Books.

As a reminder for all participants: Please maintain social distancing, use hand sanitizer/wash your hands, wear a face covering, and stay at home if you are feeling sick.

**Class of 2020: Monica T. Davis**
Master’s student Monica T. Davis is graduating from UNC Greensboro with an impressive resume: an MFA in interior architecture, a certification in preservation, a job at an award-winning architectural firm in Hawaii, and a legacy as a hometown history hero.

Davis became interested in preservation while living in a converted condo that was originally a laundromat. Modern finishes adorned the historic bones of the building, tying together old and new, and she yearned to learn more.

“It was amazing to me that an old building could be turned into something completely new. Every building has a story, and I want to uncover those stories.”

While searching for schools to pursue a career in preservation, she found that UNC Greensboro was the only school in the state that offered a preservation certificate program, and she was impressed by the interior architecture department’s hands-on approach.

During field school, she got her first taste of preservation by repointing brick piers under the foundation of the Historic Methodist Church on Portsmouth Island, and replacing shingles on roofs in Portsmouth Historic District. As part of the Main Street Fellows Program, she traveled to small downtowns across the state designing facade enhancements for several main street buildings.
“The department really focuses on serving communities, which helped me realize that not only was this a great career choice for me, but I could use my career to give back.”

For her thesis, Davis was researching the effects of gentrification when she stumbled across her hometown of East Wilson on the National Register of Historic Places as of 1988. She had no idea that the district was once home to a major tobacco industry and the largest population of working-class African Americans in the state.

Many of the residents at that time lived in one of 301 shotgun houses, or narrow rectangular homes, usually no more than 12 feet wide. As the tobacco industry moved overseas, most of these homes were left abandoned and eventually demolished. Today, only 88 of those houses remain.

After learning about the cultural significance of the shotgun houses, Davis seized the opportunity to turn the abandoned, historic dwellings into tiny homes that could bring back life and culture to the area. She purchased four shotgun houses and one bungalow in the area, and began the process of gutting and restoring them. She designed the interiors of the homes, deliberately preserving the historic elements such as the original windows, floors, and ceiling. She also kept her floor plans true to the definition of a shotgun house, with circulation between the front and back doors, to honor the culture and architectural style of the community in the ‘80s.

It was important to Davis to involve community members in her project, too. She held workshops on craftsmanship and taught classes on the district’s history through her nonprofit organization, Rebirthing Our Cultural Kingdom.

“A lot of times, preservation isn’t prevalent in African American culture. The cultural heritage of the East Wilson district is significant, so we are rebirthing what has been lost for so long. To be able to preserve the culture and historic character of these homes while educating the people of my hometown is very rewarding.”

Once the restoration process is complete, the tiny houses will be rented out for five years. After that, Davis hopes to give the residents of East Wilson, a predominantly renter-occupied neighborhood, the opportunity to own one of the homes.

“My goal is to give the residents of East Wilson a home that they can be proud of and a nice, safe place to come home to after work.”

Davis has received funding and award recognition for her restoration and preservation efforts, including the interior architecture department’s Best Graduate Student Award, the
National Trust for Historic Preservation Diversity Scholarship, the Atlantic World Research Network Graduate Student Research Grant, and the Building Your Economic Legacy Award from the Gamma Beta Omega chapter of Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Incorporated.

What’s next for Davis? She plans to continue her work restoring the shotgun houses, and eventually start similar projects all across the state. She’ll be monitoring the preservation project’s progress remotely though, as she has recently moved to Hawaii to begin her career with historical architectural firm Fung Associates, Inc., as an architecture designer and historian, working on exciting projects such as converting the governor’s mansion into a museum.

“I’m so thankful for the interior architecture department and my professors for mentoring me every step of the way. It’s because of them that I have an impressive resume, an amazing job, and that I was motivated to buy the houses in Wilson and make a real difference in my hometown. UNCG helped me find my passion.”

Above: Davis in front of 132 Ash St.
Below: See the progression of 132 Ash St. from its original state upon purchase, after the demolition phase, and Davis’s renderings of how the interior will look once restoration is completed.
Join the celebration!

Class of 2020, we invite you to share your #UNCGGrad photos and videos with us on social
media using our new digital swag.

[Click here]

Story by Alexandra McQueen, University Communications
Photography by Jessica Nicole Evans
Videography by Alexandra McQueen, University Communications

Class of 2020: Izzy Kitch

The theater world that will greet UNC Greensboro BFA Design and Technology graduate Izzy Kitch is very different than the one they expected to find when they started the program in UNCG’s School of Theatre two years ago.

The COVID-19 pandemic has turned the world on its head, and graduates who are entering fields that require physical interaction with other professionals, engagement with audiences in closed spaces, and other in-person challenges have had to re-imagine, retool, and rethink how to approach their craft and reach their audience.

“I think COVID has affected us in a way where we’ve had to think of theater in a different way,” says Kitch. “And realizing there are different ways to do things, that we don’t always have to interact with each other physically, to still tell the story in an impactful way.”
Kitch’s major, the Bachelor of Fine Arts in Drama - Design and Technical Production, educates students to be literate in the history, theory, and practice of theater, and to have particular training in designing for the stage and stage technology. And in Kitch’s case, you can add to that list of outcomes being able to pivot on your creative heels during a pandemic.

A key example of this flexibility is evident in how Kitch and other costume designers and performers have learned to incorporate face coverings into their costumes and roles. “A lot of the costumes now have to incorporate masks so it’s safe, so everyone can still be close enough to each other – in that six-feet radius – but also still look like their character,” Kitch says.

Originally from Morrisville, North Carolina, Kitch transferred to UNCG after earning an associate’s degree. And they have thrived here ever since. “My experience being at UNCG has been shaped by working with an intense group of people who really, really want to make Broadway-level productions on a low budget in a fast-paced environment. I loved my time here – I enjoyed every moment of it.”

What’s one of the important lessons they’ve learned while pursuing their degree?

“I want to have a hand in everything that I’m doing, especially when I’m designing, so I have a hard time letting go. I think that one of the biggest things that I’ve learned while here is to take a step back, take a breath, and look at the whole picture, rather than focusing on little things. And I really think this program teaches you that it’s OK to trust other people, to let them help create the vision you’re after, and that we really do work as a team, rather than feeling like everything is on your shoulders.”

Kitch will leave with a lot of memories of their time here at “the G”. Their favorite? “One of my biggest memories was finally seeing my entire cast of 24 in “The Witches” completely costumed - head-to-toe - in scary, creepy-like, high-fashion. Seeing everything that was on paper turned into this highly dynamic show that we worked so hard on for so many months. Seeing them enter the stage and hearing everyone’s reactions to it.”

Originally thinking they would head to New York City after graduation to work in professional theater, the pandemic has prompted Kitch to rethink their post-graduation plans. They are now looking to attend graduate school for costume design.

Kitch explains, “I would like to take what I’ve learned from my associate’s program with special effects makeup and puppetry and then take my BFA in design and mix them to create really dynamic shows. I think that would be my dream.”
Kitch works on a design in the costume studio.

Kitch with some of their designs, including costumes for UNCG’s production of “Pippin” and mouse puppets for “The Witches”.

Join the celebration!

Class of 2020, we invite you to share your #UNCGGrad photos and videos on social media with us using our new digital swag.

Click here

Story by Matthew Bryant, University Communications
Photography by Martin W. Kane, University Communications
Videography by Grant Gillard, University Communications

Inspired to give: the final weeks of SECC

Photo from the 2019 SECC kick-off.

There are just over two weeks left in the State Employees Combined Campaign and UNCG faculty and staff have pledged $90,779, nearly 52% of the goal of $175,000.

While we can’t gather at the pancake breakfast or browse the silent auction this year, UNCG employees have been inspired to make meaningful donations, and there’s still time to raise the numbers.
345 employees have pledged, and UNCG is currently leading the UNC System schools in participation rate, at 12%. Campaign statistics can be seen here.

The SECC is the only workplace giving program for state employees. It is a direct way to help those in need; sustain local, national, and international health, educational, environmental and social service organizations; and make a contribution to our community.

UNCG faculty and staff members typically sustain a variety of meaningful connections to the 400 charities that benefit from the SECC.

Several from across campus who have donated to the SECC shared their thoughts below about the significance of being a part of this campaign.

“Being part of a collective movement to support our local nonprofit community is needed today more than ever. It is an opportunity to literally and symbolically strengthen the fabric of our community by showing one another that we care. A colleague at a nonprofit recently shared with me what it’s like to get the notice that someone has donated, even a tiny bit of money. She shared, ‘just the fact that someone paused in this busy day and thought about us long enough, and cared deep enough, to send some money our way was a ray of sunshine in some dark days.’”
-Emily Janke, Associate Professor in Peace and Conflict Studies and Director of the Institute for Community and Economic Engagement

“I always give to Backpack Beginnings to support the important work they do in helping feed and clothe children in need. Being part of a School of Education, I am aware of how important these supports are for the health, well-being, and academic growth of the children in our community.”
-Dr. Randy Penfield, Dean of the School of Education

“Donating to SECC allows me to support specific causes, such as horse rescue. Through SECC we can make a real difference with causes not often in the headlines.
- Wade Maki, Lecturer in Philosophy and Director of the B.A. in Liberal Studies Program

“It is important to think of those that have many difficulties in their lives, especially this year. Thus, SECC is a wonderful opportunity for all of us at the University to provide a gift to individuals in our community to provide hope for our future.”
-Dr. John Kiss, Professor of Biology and Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences
End of semester COVID-19 clinics for employees and students

This post was updated November 23, 2020.

Pre-Thanksgiving holiday testing for asymptomatic students will be available on Monday, Nov. 23 and Tuesday, Nov 24. Testing materials have been provided by NC DHHS for these testing clinics.

December testing dates for employees and remaining students have been announced as follows:

- Wednesday, Dec. 2, 9 a.m. – 3 p.m. in the EUC Maple Room
- Thursday, Dec. 10, 9 a.m. – 3 p.m. in the EUC Maple Room
- Wednesday, Dec. 16, 9 a.m. – 3 p.m. in the EUC Maple Room

All of these clinics are for individuals who:

1) Do not have COVID-19 symptoms (are asymptomatic); and
2) Have not been in close contact recently with someone who has tested positive.
If you have symptoms, please stay home and contact your health care provider to determine if you need to be tested.

Some important details:

- To provide maximum flexibility, no appointment is necessary for these clinics. Pre-registering with the vendor, StarMed, will help minimize any waiting time. You can pre-register by doing either of the below.
  - Text COVID to (704) 850-6996
  - Visit https://unityphm.com/campaigns/starmed
- When asked if you will be at a testing site, please select “Yes”.
- Participation is completely voluntary.
- A sample will be collected from the nose (nasal swab, not the deeper nasopharyngeal swab) and tested to see if the virus is present (i.e. if you have COVID-19).
- You will receive your results directly from StarMed within 2-4 days.
- You will be given the opportunity to sign a waiver that allows StarMed to report their results directly to the UNCG Case Management Team.
- By law, StarMed must report all results to the public health department. Guilford County Public Health, in turn, will inform us if an employee tests positive.
- Information about what to do if you test positive will be provided on-site. Additional information is also available on our UNCG COVID-19 website. General information about COVID-19 testing is also available here.
- There is no cost for testing. StarMed will file with your insurance for reimbursement.
- Regardless of whether insurance pays or not, you will not have to pay anything.
- As a reminder, test results tell you only whether you have the virus at the date and time you get tested, so students and employees are encouraged to take advantage of all opportunities to get tested.

A Note about Student Testing:

Given the current rates of COVID-19 in the community, there is considerable concern about the potential for increased viral spread during the Thanksgiving holiday. One specific area of concern is the possibility of college students unknowingly exposing their family members to the virus when they travel home for the winter break. As such, UNCG has organized a series of testing clinics throughout this week. All students have received direct communication about these opportunities.

UNCG Counseling Center and Spartan Open Pantry
available to students during winter break

The Counseling Center and the Spartan Open Pantry will have accessible hours and resources for Spartan students who need them over the winter break.

**Winter Break Wellness**
The Counseling Center will host a drop-in space for students who want support for maintaining well-being throughout winter break. Family issues, isolation, loneliness, and sadness are common during this time of the year. Talking with others with similar concerns can provide a sense of community and healing.

Join the sessions on Wednesdays, Dec. 2, Dec. 9, and Dec. 16 from 3 to 4 p.m. at Zoom link [https://uncg-hipaa-edu.zoom.us/j/97220938304?pwd=aGN2d0ZHUXIwSWhvcG00TU1NalF2Zz09](https://uncg-hipaa-edu.zoom.us/j/97220938304?pwd=aGN2d0ZHUXIwSWhvcG00TU1NalF2Zz09)

**Weekly Mindfulness & Meditation**
The weekly drop-in sessions will continue as well, every Thursday from 1 - 1:30 p.m. at Zoom link [https://uncg-hipaa-edu.zoom.us/j/92792757862?pwd=R3ZNeVN6eGJHmc2S2syTytiMTh3Z](https://uncg-hipaa-edu.zoom.us/j/92792757862?pwd=R3ZNeVN6eGJHmc2S2syTytiMTh3Z)
Students can also reach The Counseling Center at 336-334-5874.

**Spartan Open Pantry**

The SOP will remain open each Tuesday and Wednesday from 5 to 9 p.m., with a 6 p.m. to-go meal available both nights. SOP will be closed on Dec. 29 and 30, and will return to normal operations on Jan. 5th.

More information about the Spartan Open Pantry can be found [here](#).

**Lighting and pedestrian improvements scheduled for Spring Garden and Josephine Boyd Streets**

Starting in December, UNCG will begin making improvements to street lighting and pedestrian safety at a couple of locations on campus as follows.

UNCG will coordinate with the City of Greensboro to upgrade the street lighting along Spring Garden Street over the winter break. Starting Dec. 2, the fixtures will be changed over to new LED lights. The project is expected to last 2 – 3 days, with sidewalk and some street closures likely to allow workers and equipment necessary access to make the changes.

Starting in January, work will be done for a new retaining wall between Parking Lot 9 and Josephine Boyd Street near the intersection of Walker Avenue to help improve pedestrian safety. More details regarding road closures or temporary changes to parking to follow.

**Office of Sponsored Programs announces NIH peer review panels for UNCG faculty**

Are you working on an National Institutes of Health grant proposal? Want to improve your chances for funding? A 2012-16 study from Columbia University School of Nursing saw a 42% success rate for proposals that received an internal review, compared to 20% for those not reviewed (Kulage & Larson, 2018.) The UNCG Office of Sponsored Programs is pleased to announce a new internal review process for proposal submissions to NIH.

Submitting an NIH proposal and want it peer reviewed? Here’s how it works:

**Phase 1:** Let OSP know your proposal is on the way.
Internal annual deadlines are December 5, April 5, and August 5.
OSP does not need a proposal at this stage. Just provide the following info: Funding mechanism, mechanism deadline, Institute/Center where you plan to apply, and suggested reviewers (internal and/or external).

Phase 2: OSP will assemble a review panel for your proposal.

Phase 3: Submit a working draft of your proposal.

The working draft must include your Specific Aims and Research Strategy. Adhere to page limits and NIH specified sections (e.g. Significance, Innovation, Approach).
Internal annual deadlines are January 5, May 5, and September 5.
Review comments will be provided to you within 2 weeks.

Are you ready?

The ideal proposal for review should be fairly well developed (Specific Aims and Research Strategy) and aiming for an upcoming deadline (1 or 2 deadlines away).
This is for new and resubmissions to NIH (resubmissions for review must include prior comments from NIH reviewers).
This UNCG proposal review process is not for early concepts and ideas (but do we have other ways to help with those).
If you are not sure if you are ready to submit a proposal but want to talk about strategy and your personal readiness to apply, feel free to contact the OSP proposal development team (Aubrey Turner and Julie Voorhees). You may also want to discuss these questions with a faculty mentor and/or your Associate Dean for Research.

An example timeline:

1. Your plan is to submit the proposal for the February or June NIH deadline.
2. And you are fairly certain that you will have a solid draft Specific Aims and Research Strategy ready for review by January 5.
3. Therefore, by December 5th you should let us know your proposal is on the way.

Interested in serving as a reviewer? We need you! Here’s how it works...

Let us know you are potentially able to review. This is a non-binding commitment.
https://forms.gle/A1e4j1zMHh7rnkm48
OSP will recruit and maintain a pool of diverse review panel participants, with the following in mind:

- Diversity of expertise: laboratory, computational and social/behavioral sciences
- Diversity of career stage: from seasoned NIH reviewers to early career faculty (reviewing is a great way to improve your own grant skills!)
- Diversity of backgrounds: Race, ethnicity, and life experiences

Panelists who are invited to review a proposal(s) may accept or decline as their schedule dictates.

- Panelists will be encouraged to view NIH training materials to prepare for reviews.
- NIH peer review overview: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kGhfqgGKgcY](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kGhfqgGKgcY)
- NIH mock study section: [https://youtu.be/Vx6qO8z9swQ?t=1](https://youtu.be/Vx6qO8z9swQ?t=1)

Reviews will be submitted via InfoReady Review.

- In order to streamline scheduling, panelists will not be expected to meet in person.
- Review feedback will be anonymized and shared with the PI and the other reviewers.
- Optionally, reviewers may elect to make themselves available for follow-up discussions with the PI (thus not anonymous)
- Panelists receive $50 per review (and we hope the process of reviewing benefits you too).

Are you willing to be included in a pool of individuals who could potentially review proposals that align with your expertise? Let OSP know: [https://forms.gle/A1e4j1zMHh7rnkm48](https://forms.gle/A1e4j1zMHh7rnkm48)

This program is supported in part through NIH funding (Shelton and Francis: 1UC2GM137434-01).

**Steve Morley is Space Utilization and Planning Director**
Following Judy’s Smith’s retirement, Steve Morley is UNCG’s new Space Utilization and Planning Director.

Morley has spent the entirety of his 20-year career in higher education focused on teaching and learning, student growth and development, and the transformation of campus environments to best support institutional mission. Steve began his career as a student development faculty member and served in numerous Student Affairs roles, eventually as Dean of Students. In this role, Steve led a department of 50 colleagues, facilitated holistic, co-curricular learning experiences for students, and implemented facility renovations and construction that aligned strategic planning and institutional mission with the physical campus environment.

In his most recent role, Morley has served as Director of Campus Planning for Credo Higher Ed, an inter-disciplinary consulting firm based in Whitsett, North Carolina. During Shis tenure he has worked with over 20 campuses across the country to maximize the utilization of their existing space resources and plan for additional space resources needed to fully support the mission of the institution. Utilizing a highly participatory process to these planning processes, these plans have received 100% governing board approval.

Morley remains active in a number of professional organizations, presenting at conferences...
on topics from student success to learning environments to space planning. As a current Ph.D. candidate in Higher Education Leadership at Indiana State University, he is completing his dissertation on institutional identity as expressed in the campus environment.

**UNCG News and Campus Weekly process for research study recruitment announced**

Faculty members with a study recruiting participants can reach out to the Office of Research and Engagement once a year to have a recruiting news post created. The post will appear on the ORE site, on UNCG News as either a story or a campus note, and in a Campus Weekly email.

If requests for recruitment posts arrive at an unmanageably high frequency, the office may switch to posts that list multiple recruiting studies at once. Due to limited resources, student-led studies are not eligible for this activity.

To be eligible, online recruitment must be included in your IRB-approved strategies. The IRB reviewer will receive the final post language and must approve it before the post can go online.

To submit your request to ORE, contact Sangeetha Shivaji at s_shivaj@uncg.edu.

**University Libraries to host winter professional development seminars**

University Libraries is teaming up with departments across UNCG for a series of Winter 2020 professional development 30-60 minute workshops for instructors, graduate students, and staff through Zoom Meetings on how they can help with virtual research and online teaching.

For more information and sign ups, go to: [http://go.uncg.edu/winter2020libpd](http://go.uncg.edu/winter2020libpd)

They are also all available on the UNCG workshops page: [https://workshops.uncg.edu/](https://workshops.uncg.edu/)

To see the recordings of past UNCG virtual workshops offered, go to the UNCG Libraries webinars page: [https://uncg.libguides.com/webinars](https://uncg.libguides.com/webinars)
Call for ‘Webinars Worth Watching’ Graduate Student Competition

Virtual programming and presentations, such as webinars, are becoming more and more common in education and the workforce. But how many webinars have you been to that are boring, where you end up browsing the Internet? Graduate students need to be able to present their work and research digitally, as well as communicate the information effectively and quickly within the virtual programming tool.

The UNCG Graduate School and University Libraries will host a competition for face-to-face and online graduate students to determine who can give the most effective webinar or virtual presentation in 10 minutes. This is a call for proposals to all of the UNCG graduate programs, and 25 students will be selected to compete. Over 1 week, the competition will run virtual webinar sessions of 4 - 5 students in each session, with a winner in each session. At the end of the week, there will be one virtual session of 4 - 5 students and a winner declared. For information about this webinar competition, including recordings of last year's competitors, go to http://go.uncg.edu/www

Graduate students can sign up at http://go.uncg.edu/w3signup by Wednesday, Jan. 27, 2021. Optional virtual trainings on conducting effective webinars will be offered on Feb. 3 - 5. The competition will run Feb. 22 – 26, with the finals held on Friday, Feb. 26, 2021.

Spartan SPEAR program seeks faculty and staff to help new students

All UNCG faculty and staff with a desire to help new students have the opportunity to serve as honorary Spartan SPEARs during the first two days of classes.

The Spartan SPEARS volunteer program has assisted new students with navigating campus on the first two days of classes for many years, and this upcoming semester is no exception. Volunteers wearing lime green t-shirts are strategically positioned around campus to give new students directions and answer questions. The safety of our volunteers and our students is of the utmost importance to us. All of the volunteer stations will be outside, will wear face coverings, and SPEARS will maintain a 6-foot distance from students they are assisting.

Our newest Spartans still need a bit more support this January learning the campus and finding their classes. Spartan SPEARS will be around campus the first two days of classes, Tuesday, Jan. 19 and Wednesday, Jan. 20. In addition to giving directions and answering
general questions, SPEARS will also be equipped to distribute face coverings to students who may have forgotten to bring one or who need an extra one.

Faculty and staff interested in volunteering for a 1-hour shift on Jan. 19 or 20 can sign up via this Google form. For now, the names of interested volunteers are being collected and will receive more information soon with the opportunity to select shift dates and times. Volunteers will be provided everything they need to be a RAWKstar SPEAR, including basic training instructions, the famous lime green t-shirt, and a bag of face coverings to give out to new students.

For more information, contact Rachel Dodd Blakely in New Student Transitions & First Year Experience at rmblakel@uncg.edu.

Dr. Edna Tan

Dr. Edna Tan (Teacher Education and Higher Education) received new funding from Rutgers University (Prime: National Science Foundation) for the project “EHR Core Research: Fostering deep learning, identity, and agency: Minoritized students learning biology in personal and community-relevant contexts.”

The goal of this collaborative project seeks to engage middle-school learners in an extended and coherent inquiry-based learning experience in biology deliberately designed to enhance epistemic agency and consequential community-based learning. By engaging learners in participation meaningful to their communities and placing a clear focus on emphasizing their epistemic agency, the project will aid them in developing epistemic, disciplinary expertise over time, in tandem with supporting positive identity work. This project, led by a seasoned research and development team from Rutgers University, UNCG, and the Concord Consortium.
Dr. Stephen Sills

Dr. Stephen Sills (Center for Housing and Community Studies) received new funding from Guilford County Schools for the project “Fannie Mae Innovation Challenge: Safer Together Green Housing.”

UNCG Center for Housing and Community Studies will be a partner on the Guilford County Schools application to the Fannie Mae Challenge. The researchers’ innovative idea is to extend the community’s existing collaborative work around affordable housing into high school Career and Technical Education (CTE) classrooms, to prepare a young work force to attain careers in construction and business with a keen understanding of why safe, affordable housing is scarce and declining; the critical role safe housing plays in families’ stability and prosperity; and how to create and rehabilitate affordable housing using GIS to develop projects and applying LEED standards to their design.

This project attempts to solve the problems of preparing a workforce to drive innovation in the housing industry and building a stronger pipeline of rehab and construction projects to provide more very low income students with stable home and school experiences. The project will offer students a dual study in construction and business, engaging CTE students with MWBE subcontractors to apply developing construction skills on housing rehab projects. The project applies classroom learning to the real world issue of our community’s acute shortage of affordable housing and engages CTE students in proposing and testing solutions.

The role of UNCG CHCS will be to 1) collaborate in development of geospatial technology/social determinants lessons for CTE students; 2) host GCS students for an introductory geospatial technology workshop; and 3) assist in identifying single-family rehab projects for student project-based learning.
Newsmakers: Anderson, Maher, new art collaboration, Sills, Godwin

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:

- Dr. Jamie Anderson was interviewed by the News & Record about his musical work and his experience in China. [The piece](#).
- The Sport Review spoke to Dr. Jaclyn Maher and other experts on the importance of sports to college students. [The article](#).
- Yes! Weekly highlighted the new collaboration between CVPA and Industries of the Blind. [The feature](#).
- Dr. Stephen Sills was one of several housing experts who spoke to WHQR about workforce housing. [The piece](#).
- Baseball head coach Billy Godwin was quoted in a News & Record piece about a new version of an iconic bat. [The article](#).