A NEW DIRECTION FOR HISTORICALLY BLACK COLLEGES

STREAMLINING NCCU

TEACHING THE TEACHERS OF THE VISUALLY IMPAIRED

LIFE IN DIVISION I:
BENEFITS AND CHALLENGES
A NEW DIRECTION FOR HISTORICALLY BLACK COLLEGES
Chancellor Charlie Nelms examines the new forces shaping higher education and maps a plan for the days ahead.

THE NEXT GENERATION OF NCCU LEADERS
As baby boomers retire, identifying strong leaders for the future is essential.

STREAMLINING NCCU
With a focus on the university’s mission and an eye on financial realities, NCCU restructures its curriculum and realigns budgetary priorities.

LIFE IN DIVISION I: BENEFITS AND CHALLENGES
Athletics Director Ingrid Wicker-McCree discusses the benefits and challenges of competing at a higher level.

A HISTORY OF RIGOROUS SCHOLARSHIP
With its focus on research, NCCU’s Department of History has long been a launching pad for Ph.D.s.

TEACHING THE TEACHERS OF THE VISUALLY IMPAIRED
Professors Diane Wormsley and Beth Harris are the driving forces behind the only program of its kind in the state.

BEVERLY McIVER: PAYING IT FORWARD
Artist, professor, film star — and her sister’s keeper.

PROVIDING A FOUNDATION FOR FUTURE SUCCESS
Under new leadership, the MBA program gets an overhaul.

ON THE COVER / Spencer Jones, a sophomore from Shelby, N.C., sizes up a putt. Golf is one of 14 sports — seven each for men and women — in which NCCU is competing this year as a full member of the Division I Mid-Eastern Athletic Conference.
Dear Alumni and Friends:

It’s time to report some good news!

North Carolina Central University has embarked on an EEEA — expectations, encouragement, empowerment and accountability — strategy in its support for the all-male Centennial Scholars and the all-female Annie Day Shepard Scholars. While other universities are experimenting with single interventions, we are deploying intrusive advising, mentoring, service learning and learning communities to engage our students in multiple supportive relationships and experiences.

It appears to be working. So far, retention is more than 80 percent for both groups. We began the women’s program in fall 2011. With one semester of data, they have demonstrated a promising average GPA of 2.68 and a retention rate of 94 percent. The Centennial Scholars program was launched in the fall of 2010 and has had a 100 percent retention rate for the first cohort of 57 men with an overall GPA of 3.1. For the second cohort of 150, retention is 83 percent with a GPA of 2.79, and the third cohort, after just one semester, has a retention rate of 97 percent with a GPA of 2.45.

We are working very hard to find the formula that will enhance institutional effectiveness, and particularly student success. It is a fact that nationwide, the graduation rate for African-American college students is 43 percent. However, given the academic profile of the students we admit today, I believe that anything less than a six-year rate of 60 percent is not good enough. This means making significant changes, because it doesn’t take an Albert Einstein to figure out that we cannot continue to do things the same way and expect different results. The EEEA strategy represents a new way forward.

Sincerely,

Charlie Nelms
Chancellor
Lunch Counter from Sit-in Era Rededicated

NCCU REDEDICATED ITS WOOLWORTH’S LUNCH counter on Feb. 5 with a ceremony and a panel discussion that combined a celebration of past victories with reminders that the struggle for civil rights was far from over.

The section of the F.W. Woolworth & Co. lunch counter at which sit-in protests took place in Durham in 1960 is now the centerpiece of a permanent civil rights exhibit in the lobby of the James E. Shepard Memorial Library.

The anti-segregation sit-ins at Woolworth’s and other stores in downtown Durham began Feb. 7, 1960, following by exactly a week the similar protests in Greensboro. The Durham campaign was organized by the NAACP chapter at North Carolina College (now NCCU), led by students Lacy Streeter, Callis Brown and Robert Kornegay.

The exhibit includes two fac ing red plush banquettes, set with white saucers and tall coffee cups. Nearby is the matching lunch counter, with an iced tea dispensing red plush banquettes, set with white saucers and tall coffee cups. In front of the counter are two red swivel seats, both empty.

A portion of the counter was donated to NCCU a dozen years ago, after it was saved from salvage by John Friedrick, then executive director of the N.C. School of Science and Math.

To the panelists who spoke during the discussion, part of NCCU’s Black History Month observances, the movement wasn’t history. It was their lives.

“It was an economic battle,” recalled Vivian McCoy, a civil rights and community activist. “We wanted to break down barriers, but we wanted to break down economic barriers. We wanted to hit them in the pocketbook.”

Virginia Williams, one of three surviving participants in an even earlier sit-in at Durham’s Royal Ice Cream parlor in 1957, said she decided early on “that if I ever get the chance, I’m going to stand up for what I believe.”

“We wanted to break down barriers, but we wanted to break down economic barriers. We wanted to hit them in the pocketbook.”

— VIVIAN MCCOY, A CIVIL RIGHTS AND COMMUNITY ACTIVIST

Dr. Elwood L. Robinson, dean of the College of Behavioral and Social Sciences and longtime professor of psychology, has been named provost and executive vice president of academic affairs at Cambridge College in Cambridge, Mass., effective July 1. Dr. Robinson has been a member of the NCCU faculty since 1984 and dean of the College since it was established in 2006. Raymond C. Pierce, dean of the School of Law, will return to the practice of law when he joins the firm of Nelson Mullins Riley & Scarborough LLP as a partner in July. Pierce has served seven years as dean, in which time the law school has twice received No. 1 rankings for Best Value Law School and has been included in the top five list of those schools offering clinical opportunities to students.

Ayana D. Hernandez joins NCCU as director of public relations. She comes to NCCU from the Raleigh office of Fleishman-Hillard International Communications, where she was vice president. In her four years with the agency, she created and executed strategic communications plans, managed media relations campaigns, and secured placements with top-tier print, broadcast, radio and online outlets.

Hernandez is a graduate of Spelman College with a B.A. in English. She also earned a Master of Arts in journalism and mass communications from New York University.

Kenneth W. Chandler has been named associate vice chancellor in the Division of Institutional Advancement. He comes to NCCU from Winston-Salem State University, where he was director of corporate and foundation relations. He previously worked as a development consultant with TCG Consulting.

Chandler received his Bachelor of Science at Guilford College, his Master of Government Administration at the University of Pennsylvania and his Ph.D. at UNC – Greensboro’s School of Education.

As academic departments and other units continue to complete metrics outlined in NCCU 2020, the university’s strategic plan, a task force has been assigned to develop a dashboard information system for monitoring progress toward the goals set forth in the plan.

The dashboard, which should be in operation by September, will provide a vehicle for campus units to enter data on the status of their work under the five priority areas: retention and graduation; enhancing academic distinction and distinctiveness; community engagement; internal communications using the Quality Service Initiative; and teaching, learning and research.

The dashboard will allow university leaders to use real-time data to assess progress toward each goal. For more information on NCCU 2020, go to nccu.edu/discover/ourfuture.cfm.
Ph.D. Program Gets Set for Fall Launch

NCCU’s first Ph.D. program in more than 50 years is on track for its start-up this fall.

After a vigorous marketing and recruiting campaign, the university plans to enroll eight students in the doctor of philosophy (Ph.D.) program in integrated biosciences.

The interdisciplinary doctorate will be offered on two tracks, a (Ph.D.) program in integrated biosciences, and a program in integrated biotechnology.

In addition, a low-cost marketing campaign that included placing online ads on selected college newspaper websites has drawn a good response.

The eight students who enroll in the program will each receive tuition, fees and health insurance costs will be covered as well.

Their first year will be devoted to full-time classwork. After that, they will have the opportunity to work part-time as graduate assistants in the laboratories, teaching assistants in the classrooms, or research assistants collaborating with senior researchers.

Dean of Graduate Studies

Dec. 10 in a ceremony at McDougald-McLendon Gymnasium.

In a rousing commencement address, federal education leader John Silvanus Wilson Jr. urged the graduates to harness courage to overcome fear. "There is fear and courage inside all of us," he said. "Most of us focus on the obstacles in front of us and we operate out of fear. We need to focus on the goals and operate out of courage."

Wilson is the executive director of the White House Initiative on Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs), an office in the Department of Education whose mission is to strengthen the nation’s 105 HBCUs and serve as a liaison between them and the federal government.

Wilson is a former professor at George Washington University and holds a Ph.D. from Harvard, but he also was trained as a preacher and is the son, grandson and great-grandson of preachers as well. That part of his heritage was on full display as he recounted a life-changing event from his teens, when he leaped a fence he had previously found tough to get over to save a child from drowning.

"Earlier, I focused on the fence and I was driven by doubt and fear," he said. "But when I had to get to that pool, I focused on the drowning boy, and I was driven by confidence and courage.

"Graduates, there will be a lot of fences in your future," he said. "But you need to have a 'what fence?' mentality, a 'what fence?' psychology, a 'what fence?' theology. Do not focus on the fences in life. Focus on what is on the other side of those fences. That’s where life is! That’s where love is! That’s where destiny is!"

Housed in the College of Science and Technology under the leadership of Interim Director Caesar Jackson, professor of physics, the program will draw also on the resources of the Julius L. Chambers Biomedical/Biotechnology Research Institute (JLC-BBRI), the Biomolecular Manufacturing Research Institute and Technology Enterprise (BRITE), and the School of Library and Information Sciences.

"I am thrilled and extremely impressed with the caliber of applicants," Dr. Chanta Haywood, associate provost and dean of graduate studies, said. "Some have master’s degrees already, some are completing their master’s, and there are some undergraduate seniors with impressive research experience."

Members of the faculty have been recruiting at science conferences and universities throughout the region, with particular focus on HBCUs, Haywood said. In addition, a low-cost marketing campaign that included placing online ads on selected college newspaper websites has drawn a good response.

"The marketing is working," Haywood said. "And there’s a good balance in applications between biosciences and pharmaceutical sciences."

The eight students who enroll in the program will each receive tuition, fees and health insurance costs will be covered as well.

Their first year will be devoted to full-time classwork. After that, they will have the opportunity to work part-time as graduate assistants in the laboratories, teaching assistants in the classrooms, or research assistants collaborating with senior researchers.

John Silvanus Wilson Jr., above, delivered the December commencement address. Among the graduates highlighted in Chancellor Nelms’ remarks were John Archer, near left, and Landis Strickland, bottom left.
A NEW DIRECTION FOR HISTORICALLY BLACK COLLEGES

BY CHARLIE NELMS, CHANCELLOR

AFTER FOUR DECADES OF LEADERSHIP in higher education administration, I am confident that the country's historically black colleges and universities hold a piece of the solution to closing the divide in college graduation. The American system of higher education is a diverse mosaic of institutions offering broad access and a great deal of choice. There are more than 4,000 public and private colleges and universities, community colleges and for-profit institutes, but just 105 institutions confer 22 percent of the bachelor's degrees awarded to African-Americans.

HBCUs welcome an analysis that compares actual with expected graduation rates given the profiles of their students. According to research undertaken by the Southern Regional Education Board, HBCUs often outperform similar institutions in graduating students who face economic and academic challenges.

In a speech to HBCU presidents and chancellors last fall, U.S. Secretary of Education Arne Duncan said America's percentage of degree recipients had fallen to 16th place in the world. The American public, he said, "cannot believe other countries are out-educating us, and are doing a better job of investing in their children and work force."

To reverse this slide, President Barack Obama launched the American Graduation Initiative, with the goal of regaining world supremacy in college graduation rates by 2020. To accomplish this, Duncan said, "HBCUs, at minimum, will need to increase their number of graduates by about 50 percent over the next decade."

This is clearly an impossible task if the country does not seriously redress the systemic inequities in the educational system and engage minority communities in the solution.

To map out the areas of focus for a national debate on the future of these institutions, NCCU called leaders in the HBCU community to its centennial symposium in June 2010. From that HBCU Symposium, we developed a proposal for a National HBCU Reinvestment Act, to be implemented in partnership with state and federal governments, major corporations and foundations. Its goal would be to enhance facilities, technology, fiscal and internal controls, instructional delivery, interdisciplinary research agendas in emerging fields, and competitive and responsive curricular offerings.

We then developed a policy paper "Strengthening America's Historically Black Colleges and Universities: A Call to Action" in 2011 to encourage a dialogue concerning private and public investment on a national scale to maximize the efficiency and effectiveness of the HBCUs. We distributed the paper to governors, federal education officials, foundation boards, HBCU presidents and chancellors and University of North Carolina administrators.

We acknowledge the agonizing economic and political climate, but the failure to invest in HBCUs undermines America's economic competitiveness. We also understand that government alone is not the answer. We have called on foundation representatives to invest in HBCUs' human and technical resources so that these institutions might better develop award-winning grant proposals. A $5 million investment at a high-performing but low-wealth HBCU would have a greater impact than it would at richer institutions with endowments hundreds of times that amount.

In return, HBCUs can continue to offer higher than expected minority graduation rates and assistance with issues related to K–12 education in low-wealth communities. Many HBCUs were founded as and still sustain teachers' colleges. North Carolina Central University's H.M. Michaux Jr. School of Education provides professional development for teachers and principals, after-school tutorial programs for disadvantaged students and summer camps in science and math. We also partner with an early college high school housed on our campus. Last year alone, NCCU students provided tutoring services to schools and other community agencies valued at more than $2 million.

Based on the vast experience of HBCUs in creating and sustaining a culture of caring, HBCUs can offer expanded inclusiveness to meet the needs of Latinos seeking degrees. The Hispanic population shares with the African-American community a background of disparity, lack of academic preparedness and a high proportion of first-generation college attendees. HBCUs have decades of experience with these issues, and we have never discriminated on the basis of race. NCCU is actively recruiting Latinos.

This is a disturbing time in the history of this country, one in which truths we once held to be self-evident are routinely called into question. I believe education is still our single best hope for prosperity, and the research suggesting that 60 percent of all jobs will require a college education within the next 10 years bears this out. We must make clear that HBCUs can model the way forward for the growing numbers of Americans who are low-wealth and ill-prepared for college-level work.
When the federal courts ordered the traditionally white universities to desegregate, they did so at a time when the HBCUs could not afford to offer their minority faculty and administrators competitive salaries or facilities. As a result, many of the HBCUs’ best and brightest were drawn away. This continues to be a familiar story at HBCUs across the country. Chancellor Charlie Nelms believes that historically black campuses must strategically engage in the active recruitment of the next generation of minority leaders. In his policy paper, “Strengthening America’s Historically Black Colleges and Universities: A Call to Action,” he challenges HBCUs to aggressively pursue top-shelf administrators with the argument that they should devote their energy, talent, passion and commitment to the cause of minority education.

With these four new administrators in place, look for big changes in NCCU’s strategic direction, curriculum offerings and technology infrastructure.
If the character and culture of HBCUs are to be maintained, these universities must remain in the hands of those who are driven by the mission to make a difference in their students’ lives. That drive to improve the prospects of minority or low-income students is often characteristic of HBCU faculty and administrators, many of whom are minority or first-generation college graduates themselves.

Recently, leadership has risen sharply on the list of HBCU threats as the Baby Boom generation begins to retire. Nelms has successfully put in place several Generation X vice chancellors and deans who will help ensure a dynamic future for NCCU. Here are just a few to watch.

**Topping the list is the new provost, DR. DEBBIE THOMAS.** Before serving as associate provost at NCCU for a year, she arrived with a broad base of experience that included serving as associate provost for institutional effectiveness at Fisk University and as assistant to the vice chancellor of Academic Affairs at the University of Arkansas at Monticello. She was an associate professor and coordinator of graduate programs for the College of Education at the University of Central Florida, and the director of teacher education and certification for Fisk University.

Chancellor Nelms described Thomas this way. “She’s a seasoned administrator, and we’re fortunate that she was available to move into the provost’s role and continue the momentum of change here at NCCU.”

Thomas, who is one of seven children, says, “My dad had a third-grade education and my mom finished high school, but they told the seven of us that education was the key to a better life. So I’m a first-generation college graduate. I have a lot in common with many of the students here…. I feel the same way about NCCU students’ success as I do about the success of my own children.”

**VICE CHANCELLOR WENDELL DAVIS** is another in the cadre of Gen-X administrators to join the NCCU team. As deputy county manager of Durham County from 1999 until his move to NCCU last June, Davis managed about 1,300 employees and an annual operating budget of about $300 million.

Dean Raymond Pierce of NCCU’s School of Law was enthusiastic about Davis’ arrival on campus. “He brings a breadth of financial skills and experience to NCCU that is unquestionably necessary if we are to continue to develop into a world-class institution,” Pierce said.

Davis is also a first-generation college graduate and the 21st of 22 children born to a sharecropping family in eastern North Carolina. He said, “My parents worked hard all their lives to give us the opportunities that they never had.”

Our new dean of graduate studies and associate provost, DR. CHANTA HAYWOOD, came to NCCU from Florida Agricultural & Mechanical University (FAMU), where she was dean of the School of Graduate Studies since 2003 as well as a tenured associate professor.

A 1990 summa cum laude graduate of FAMU, where she majored in English, Haywood earned a Master of Arts degree in African-American studies at Florida State University. She is the author of an acclaimed academic book, “Prophesying Daughters: Black Women Preachers and the Word, 1823-1913,” published by the University of Missouri Press.

“Chanta Haywood is an exceptional leader who rose through the ranks of the professoriate and advanced to the levels of academic administration carving a path of student success and institutional excellence in the many roles in which she has served,” said Provost Thomas. “NCCU is fortunate to have her serve as both associate vice chancellor for academic affairs and dean of graduate studies”

Haywood hails from Camilla, Ga. She is also a first-generation college graduate, but her mother, Mary Jo Haywood, is catching up. She earned her Bachelor of Arts in English from Albany State University.

D. KEITH PIGUES, NCCU’s new dean of the School of Business, has hit the ground running. In his first six months, he has established a new strategic plan for the School of Business emphasizing integrated management, entrepreneurship, globalization and leadership. He has worked tirelessly to expand and improve relationships between the school and the corporate community, and in that process he has enhanced the membership of the School’s Board of Visitors.

Pigues came to NCCU from PlyGem Industries where he was senior vice president.

The author of “Winning with Customers: A Playbook for B2B” (Wiley & Sons, 2010), Pigues received a Bachelor of Science degree in electrical engineering in 1984 from Christian Brothers University in Memphis, Tenn., and an MBA from UNC’s Kenan–Flagler in 1993. A native of Memphis, he is also a first-generation college graduate whose father was an entrepreneur.

Lois Deloatch, vice chancellor for Institutional Advancement says, “The addition of Keith Pigues to the leadership team epitomizes NCCU’s emphasis on bridging scholarship and relevant, real-world experience.”

With these four new administrators in place, look for big changes in NCCU’s strategic direction, curriculum offerings and technology infrastructure.
PROGRAMS TO BE RESTRUCTURED OR MERGED
- Mathematics and Physics will be restructured into a single department.
- English and The Modern Foreign Languages will be restructured into a single department.
- The Bachelor of Science in Environmental Sciences and the Bachelor of Science in Geography will be merged to become the Bachelor of Science in Environmental and Geographic Sciences.
- Computer Information Systems and Computer Science degree programs will be merged to a single department in the College of Arts and Sciences.
- The Dance program will be restructured and moved to the Theatre Department.

PROGRAMS TO BE ELIMINATED
While the degrees in these disciplines will be eliminated, elective courses will still be offered and current declared majors will be able to meet their degree requirements.
- Bachelor of Arts in Sociology
- Master of Arts in Sociology
- Bachelor of Arts in Public Administration
- Bachelor of Arts in Art with a Concentration in Teacher Education
- Bachelor of Arts in French

PROGRAM TO BE ESTABLISHED
The Mass Communication program will become the Department of Mass Communication.

COLLEGES TO BE MERGED
- The College of Science and Technol- ogy will merge with the College of Liberal Arts to create the College of Arts and Sciences.

The NCCU Board of Trustees approved these proposals on Feb. 22, and the recom- mendations moved to the next levels of review, the UNC Board of Governors and, where necessary implemented, the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools, NCCU’s accrediting body.

It has been a comprehensive, inclusive and transparent review process,” Nelms said. And it’s not over. This was just the first round of revisions. Thomas has di- rected faculty and administrators whose programs made proposals according to their strategic- or quality enhancement plans that explain how they will enrich their course offerings and take their programs to the next level of excellence, distinctiveness and competitiveness. Those plans are due to her May 1.

THE PIE (PROCESS IMPROVEMENT AND EFFICIENCY): TEAM REPORT
Given the loss of $50 million via bud- get cuts and permanent reversions since Nelms’ arrival in 2007, enhancing excellence becomes a particular chal- lenge. That is why there was a cost-savings analysis conducted in tandem with the academic review by Wonder Davis Pro- cess Improvement and Efficiency Team. Davis, vice chancellor for administration and finance, was also charged at the August 2010 SACS review to identify programs that would identify efficiencies to save at least $1 million that could be then reinvested in areas of greatest need and importance. Some of the university’s priorities for reinvestment include nursing, business, mass communication, critical languag- es, distance education, student support services, faculty professional develop- ment, technology infrastructure, market- ing, housekeeping and career planning and placement.

Davis assembled his team from a broad spectrum of inner-university revi- ews, in addition to administration and finance, including academic affairs, student affairs, legal affairs and information technol- ogy. The PIE (process improvement and efficiency) team report explains how they will enrich their course offerings and take their programs to the next level of excellence, distinctiveness and competitiveness. Those plans are due to her May 1.

As expected, the draft recommenda- tions proposed by Nelms were revised in response to the feedback from the forums, and also through subsequent meetings with affected faculty groups. Here is the final list of recommendations presented to the Board of Trustees by the chancellor regarding the restructuring of NCCU’s academic programs.

LEDING BY EXAMPLE. Nelms has overseen the near-doubling of the credit hours that students take online at NCCU. Under the management of Kimberly Phifer-McGhee, director of distance education, the hours have grown in the last two years from 5,297 to 10,130, and the number of courses offered online increased by 34 percent. NCCU also announced its first Ph.D. program in 50 years, in integrated biosciences. Doctoral students will begin their studies this fall.

In his speech to the University Conference in August 2011, Nelms charged Provost Debbie Thomas to conduct a review of all academic programs with particular attention to low-productivity programs “to guide decisions about which programs to eliminate, consolidate or expand.” Thomas formed the Program Review Commission under the leadership of Associate Provost Bernice Johnson to begin the mammoth job of reviewing NCCU’s program offerings. The analysis was based on the programs’ contribution to student success, the mission and future viability of the institution and the needs of the state. Johnson’s mandate was to determine which programs to restructure, merge, realign or eliminate, and which ones should be enhanced through increased investment.

The total projected cost saving of these nine options is about $1,475,000.
LIFE IN DIVISION I

BENEFITS AND CHALLENGES

A Conversation with Athletics Director
Ingrid Wicker-McCree

In 2011–12, North Carolina Central University entered Division I athletic competition as a full member of the Mid-Eastern Athletic Conference (MEAC). Composed of teams from 13 historically black universities from Delaware to Florida, the MEAC is in the NCAA’s Football Championship Subdivision, or FCS, the second tier of Division I. Football teams in the FCS compete for conference championships but are not eligible for bowl games; those are reserved for the major-conference teams of the Football Bowl Subdivision (FBS).

As NCCU’s first year of competition at this higher level draws to a close, Dr. Ingrid Wicker-McCree, the university’s athletics director, talks with NCCU NOW editor Rob Waters about the rewards and challenges of Division I membership, and predicts a bright future for Eagle teams.
Q. How does it help NCCU to be in Division I?

A. The biggest benefit is that we’re now aligned with schools that share our academic profile. And it so happens that it is a Division I conference. Our profile — with all of our new programs, including our new Ph.D. program — is similar to that of most MEAC schools. Almost all are master’s level and Ph.D. level. The geographic base of the MEAC is broader than the CIAA — Delaware to Florida — so it gives us exposure and an opportunity to recruit students and student-athletes from a much greater recruiting base.

The four-year transition period when we weren’t in a conference was a difficult time, but it did improve our national visibility. Our teams were playing all over the country — often in front of people who didn’t previously know about NCCU. West of Texas there are no HBCUs, so we were able to reach out to a population of students, some of whom might like to go to an HBCU but don’t have that option in their home states, and show them, “Here’s a school you might consider.”

There are some revenue benefits. Starting next year we can receive academic support funds from the NCAA. There’s conference revenue-sharing from the MEAC basketball tournament and the NCAA tournament. And we’ll be increasing our gate receipts now that we’re playing big-conference institutions, and you are guaranteed a specified amount of money to come and compete.

Q. There’s also income from “guarantee” games. Can you explain how they work?

A. It’s normal for FCS schools to compete in guarantee games with major-conference schools. We did it a little in Division II, but now men’s and women’s basketball each play about five guarantee games a year. Football usually plays one, and over the past three years, baseball and women’s volleyball have also received guarantees.

Q. Examples of that would be the football game at Rutgers in September or the men’s basketball game at N.C. State in December.

A. Yes, Rutgers in football. N.C. State and Indiana were examples in men’s basketball this year, and Virginia Tech and UNC-Chapel Hill in women’s basketball. There are benefits to these games beyond the revenue. Our student-athletes get to travel to new places and play in some amazing venues — sometimes on TV. And even though the scores usually might not be what we want, every now and then there’s an upset.

Q. We gave N.C. State a good scare.

A. (laughs) Oh, exactly. They probably will not want to schedule us next year.

Q. At some point, might there be revenue flowing to the academic side?

A. Our goal is to at some point be able to give back to the academic affairs side.

Q. That’s a big difference between the way we handle academic support and the way it works with the major-conference schools, right?

A. Right. N.C. State spends about $1 million a year just on academic support for athletes. We can’t do it without our partnership with University College.

Our first-year and second-year student-athletes are enrolled in University College along with all their classmates, and the college provides all the necessary tutoring, mentoring and other academic support.

Beyond that, we have one full-time director of student-athlete services, a part-time academic counselor and two graduate assistants. The support they provide supplements the resources available to all students on campus.

Next year, we will hire a full-time learning specialist and an additional academic counselor. That will give us three full-time and one part-time staff members and two graduate assistants for the Student-Athlete Services Division within athletics.

Q. What are the costs of moving to Division I?

A. Here’s a snapshot. Five years ago our budget was $2 million. Now it’s $7.2 million. All of our operational costs have increased, but especially our scholarships. They’ve gone from about $300,000 to more than $2.3 million. And our staff has doubled.

NCCU Athletics Director

INGRID WICKER-MCCREE

AS NCCU’S ATHLETICS DIRECTOR SINCE 2008, Ingrid Wicker-McCree has been overseeing all aspects of the university’s transition from Division II to Division I.

Wicker-McCree is a Durham native and a graduate of Jordan High School, where she played on two state championship volleyball teams. At George Washington University, where she earned a bachelor’s degree in criminal justice in 1989, she again starred in volleyball. She received a master’s degree in recreation resources administration from N.C. State University in 1991 and a doctorate in higher education administration from the same university in 2008.

She began her coaching career as a graduate assistant coach of women’s volleyball at N.C. State starting in 1989. She then coached women’s volleyball at N.C. A&T State university for two years before coming to NCCU in 1994 as head coach for women’s volleyball and softball. Her teams won CIAA titles in softball in 1998 and in volleyball in 1999, 2004 and 2005. In recognition of her coaching accomplishments, she was inducted into the NCCU Athletic Hall of Fame in 2004 and was recently inducted into the G.W.U. Athletic Hall of Fame.

As a black female athletics director, she is a minority within a minority. Nationally, she says, about 12 percent of college athletic director are women, and less than 1 percent are black women.

“I believe there are 14 of us now in Divisions I, II and III,” she says. “We see one another about once a year at conventions.”
Five years ago our budget was $2 million. Now it’s $7.2 million.

Five years ago our budget was $2 million. Now it’s $7.2 million.

And the competition is tougher. We emphasize that the focus needs to be on your academics and your athletics. In Division II, there's more opportunity to participate in campus life. But for the student-athlete in Division I, it is truly business time. You go to class and get your academics done, and you focus on your athletics program. It's much more structured, and it requires you to do more in your "off" time to improve your academic and athletic skills.

Q. Where does the money come from?
A. A little more than half comes from the students. They pay an athletics fee — $624 for a full-time student this year. Football and basketball gate receipts are also a significant source. Private funds—that includes the Eagle Club, individual donations and corporate sponsorships—cover 7 or 8 percent of our budget, and our goal is to raise that to 15 percent. Concessions, parking and vendor fees also contribute to our revenue.

Q. How does revenue balance out?
A. It's becoming more difficult because a Division I program costs significantly more than a Division II program. Many factors affect our revenue. One is enrollment. Under our business plan, we expect a certain level this year, and we've actually 1,000 students below that. Gate receipts, particularly from football, have been lower in recent years because our team hasn't done very well, but we expect improvement there.

I'm optimistic about next year. We have a new coach, and we're marketing that. Our schedule is set, so we can start selling season tickets. And we have big games.

We'll play a guarantee game at Duke — not at home but still here in Durham. We'll play North Carolina A&T here. Every year that we play them home, our gate receipts will be higher. The challenge is the year that they're not here, making sure that our gate receipts meet the projected revenue for the games we have.

Private fundraising is difficult for everyone now, not just for athletics. But we've done well with the resources we have. We're raising more than we have in the past, and we'll have to put more emphasis in this area.

Q. Let's talk about the student-athletes. How have they been affected? What changes for them?
A. The biggest change for them is on the academic side. The Division I requirements for eligibility and maintaining a scholarship are much more rigorous than Division II.

Q. OK, that's the part that's tougher for them. What's better?
A. There are more resources for academic support. As I mentioned, we hope to be up to four full-time academic counselors next year. This will enhance our ability to help our student-athletes succeed academically.

Another positive aspect is that our student-athletes get to travel to more places and play in some great venues. Some of these student-athletes have never flown before or gone outside of North Carolina. Those are experiences they'll always remember.

Q. NCCU student-athletes have always been involved in campus life. They eat and live and go to class with other students. But that's not the way it is with big Division I programs. Is that changing here?
A. There's a difference between MEAC and the major conferences. I think the FCS level is a great place to be, because there's still that balance — there's still a Division II kind of feel because it's not so large. It's still manageable at the FCS level to provide a balance for the student-athletes and make sure they are integrated.

Q. How will being in Division I affect graduation rates?
A. The rates will improve for our student-athletes because of the academic requirements. The six-year graduation rate for the group that enrolled in 2004-05 was 55 percent. That's down a little from the previous year, because during the transition a lot of student-athletes left. They didn't want to commit to three years of not being able to compete for a championship. And we had coaching changes — and so quite a few athletes in that '04-05 cohort transferred, and our rate dropped to 55 percent from about 61 percent.

Our graduation rate is still higher than the university as a whole, and it has been for at least the last 10 years. The NCAA has progress-toward-degree requirements that must be met each semester. The student-athletes' academic advisors must sign off on a degree-audit form verifying their progress toward a degree. This is a requirement for continuing eligibility, and it forces the student-athletes to adhere to their graduation plan.

We'll probably have a few more years in the fifties because of the transition, but in a few years you'll see a significant increase.

Q. How has the recruiting process changed?
A. It's much more rigorous. It costs more. There are 45 NCAA schools in North Carolina, of which 18 are Division I. It's very competitive to recruit top student-athletes in-state because they have so many choices. This has forced us to go out of state. About 40 percent of our student-athletes are from other states. That means more for tuition, and the cost of recruiting travel is greater. It's tougher on the coaches, because they have to be out much more, and on the phone much more.

The coaches have to deal with the challenges of getting high schools to really consider NCCU. High school coaches and AAU coaches have a big influence in an 11th and 12th grader's life. If they're not considering NCCU, they're not going to encourage students to come here. Our coaches have been trying to make sure that the schools and the coaches in North...
showing the story in a different light, a fine job when our teams were on the field. We worked hard to keep them informed. They knew what the process would be. We worked hard to keep them informed.

I think the sports information staff did a fine job when our teams were on the road so much and getting beaten down, showing the story in a different light, focusing on the benefits of the competition and the travel experience. I think our supporters were able to see that better days were ahead.

It’s been difficult for our supporters, because we always had winning programs, even when we were in the MEAC before. So we encourage them to be patient, and try to keep them as close as possible to the student-athletes. We try hard to be transparent. I take more calls from fans and alumni than any athletics director I know. I feel that I need to do that, so they know they can ask. I’ll rather they get a real answer directly from us that they can share. And that will continue — our transparency won’t stop.

**Q. Henry Frazier, the new football coach, is a proven turnaround specialist. But it clearly takes a few years to build a winner. Is there a football-specific strategy for encouraging patience?**

**A.** This year the Eagle Talk sports network show, held every Tuesday at Champys at the Streets of Southpoint, has been instrumental in marketing and promoting our sports programs. Coach Frazier was a weekly guest during football season. He’s personable and he’s willing to get out to the community, speaking and getting involved in projects. Once people listen to him, they understand that he has a very specific plan, a strategy for how he’s going to get us back to winning championships.

As for our fans, I think as long as they see some improvement, they get it. And that’s what I’ve stressed to the coaches: As long as you get better each year, they’ll hang in there with you.

**Q. What have been the biggest challenges of the move to Division I?**

**A.** If you were to ask the coaches, they’d say recruiting. And they would also say academic issues, making sure they meet the eligibility requirements each year.

**Q. What have been the biggest challenges for you as athletics director?**

**A.** (Laughs) It’s funny, however you want to say this: Managing grown folks! Managing people. I love doing it, but it’s a challenge to figure out how to get all the pieces to work. When I worked with the student-athletes as a coach, I’d sometimes think, “I can’t wait till I’m not coaching anymore, because working with 18- to 22-year-olds is crazy.” But in fact, they are comparatively easy to mold and influence. Adults are much more likely to be stuck in their ways, and you have to be crafty to get them to work together.

My challenge is to empower my senior staff to make the decisions that need to be made at their level, to give them the autonomy they need, and to make sure that all the pieces work.

**Q. What has surprised you?**

**A.** That we’re never off. Honestly! Everyone is competing almost year-round. The spring sports practice and compete in the fall and the spring. Fall sports do the same. Even during the holidays, we’re playing more than we ever did in Division II. And that carries over to compliance. In the fall, it used to be that we could just focus on football, cross-country and volleyball. Now we need to be certifying student-athletes for eligibility all through the year.

A positive surprise has been the level of support from the fans and alumni in fundraising. When we merged all our booster clubs into a single athletics booster club, the NCCU Eagle Club, I didn’t expect it to succeed as fast as it did. That was a really positive surprise — to know that people were really ready to support and give.

**Q. Compared with our ACC neighbors, our athletics program runs on a shoestring. What do you wish you had more money for?**

**A.** Let me say this first — I want people to know this because of the expectations. The major-conference schools operate on a level of their own. UNC-Chapel Hill has an athletics budget of $71 million, and N.C. State’s is $54 million. Our budget right now is at $7.2 million. The MEAC average is about $8.5 million, and the average for all FCS institutions is $10 million or $11 million. That’s where we are — not even at the MEAC average. I think that’s important for people to understand. We need to be where the top four teams are in the conference, and those budgets probably average around $9 million.

In planning our move to Division I, our model was Appalachian State — a UNC System school that moved to Division I a few years ahead of us. It meant we didn’t need to reinvent the wheel. That has helped guide us as to where we want to be.

This year, we awarded full or partial scholarships to 185 of our 290 student-athletes — a total of $2.3 million. If I had more money, I would direct it toward providing the maximum number of scholarships for all 14 of our sports. I would apply more to recruiting and academic support. And if there were any left, I’d use some for upgrades and renovation of facilities.

**Q. Are there lessons for NCCU from the scandals in the football programs at UNC and Ohio State (to name just a couple)? Are there dangers out there that we need to be wary of?**

**A.** Oh yes. As we’ve been going through final certification, we have put things in place to prevent some of these issues. Are you ever 100 percent foolproof? No. But these incidents and scandals were happening as we went through certification, so they were on everyone’s mind when the NCAA team came to our campus. They asked, “What do you have in place for training your tutors? Are they aware of NCAA rules?”

Chancellor Nelms and I sat on the task force that UNC President Tom Ross convened to talk about academic integrity, compliance and institutional control. We came up with effective practices for each of the 16 UNC institutions with regard to academic support, tutoring, how to make sure your tutors are evaluated effectively, selecting your tutors and establishing best practices for monitoring compliance. All this has made us more aware and made it easier for us to say to our coaches, “You see what happened over there?” For example, when we remind our coaches that they are not allowed to ask admissions to give special treatment to a recruit, they understand. They know the rules, and they know the rules exist to protect the students — and the coaches too.

**Q. Look down the road five years or so. What are the goals? What would be indicators of success?**

**A.** Our three overarching goals are to graduate our student-athletes, win more than we lose and run a clean program. Those will always be the goals no matter what.

Specifically, we want an 80 percent graduation rate. We want to finish consistently in the top three in the MEAC, and we want to do all we can to make sure that everyone is educated about the rules — students, prospective students, coaches, staff, faculty, alumni, our booster club, our sponsors. —
Members of the Class of 1961 gather for the class photo after their induction into the Society of Golden Eagles.
A History of Rigorous Scholarship

WITH ITS FOCUS ON RESEARCH, NCCU’S HISTORY DEPARTMENT HAS LONG BEEN A LAUNCHING PAD FOR PH.D.S

BY ROB WATERS

YOU CAN LEARN A LOT ABOUT THE HISTORY DEPARTMENT at North Carolina Central University by starting with the research of Freddie Parker, professor and former interim chair of the department. Combining thorough research with all sorts of antebellum publications, Parker has amassed a collection of more than 3,000 advertisements for runaway slaves in North Carolina from 1775 to 1840.

"These documents contained personal details about individual people that didn’t exist anywhere else — where they were born, occupations, names, personal descriptions, health, scars, and so on," Parker says. "I found ways to resurrect human beings who were previously nameless and faceless." His research has yielded two books, "Running for Freedom: Slave Runaways in North Carolina, 1775–1840" and "Stealing a Runaway: Advertisements for Slave Runaways in North Carolina, 1791–1840." History departments at American universities underwent a revolution in the 1960s and ‘70s. Before that, historians tended to concentrate their teaching and research on the powerful — kings, popes, presidents, generals and such. Today, scholars are much more likely to view issues and eras by examining the infan-

TRY, the peasants, the workers and the slaves. NCCU historians, however, were ahead of the trend. "We had pioneers who were teaching African-American history here in the 1940s and ‘50s," says Parker, who earned a B.A. (1975) and M.A. (1977) in history from NCCU and a Ph.D. from UNC-Chapel Hill. "These individu-

als were pioneers in the bottom-up approach later embraced by others in the field." Among them were Helen G. Edmonds, a department chair and dean of the graduate school; John Hope Franklin, who wrote the first edition of "From Slavery to Freedom" while teaching at NCCU; and Earlie E. Thorpe, department chair from 1962 to 1972.

"They taught us," Parker says, "and we became in a sense their children and grandchildren.

Path to a doctorate

The History Department has a remarkable history of its own. Carlton Wilson, dean of the College of Liberal Arts and former chair of the department, estimates that the department has graduated at least 70 to 80 students who have gone on to earn Ph.D.'s — more, he says, than any other historically black college or university with the possible exception of Howard University. And more are in the pipeline. About 20 recent graduates are currently enrolled in Ph.D. programs.

"This year's senior class looks good too," Wilson says. "We have developed a tradition of high ex-

pectations, and a good reputation around the country.

That reputation is built on the work and teachings of historians like Stephanie J. Shaw, a 1977 NCCU graduate who earned a Ph.D. at Ohio State University and is now a history professor there. Among her publications is an award-winning book, "What a Woman Ought To Be and To Do: Black Professional Women Work-

ers during the Jim Crow Era." Historians today know that we need a more complete nar-

rative, " Shaw says. "To tell the history of any country, any group, the approach must be more than top-down. History needs to be bottom-up. Historians are explor-

ing and developing new sources, such as oral histories, and these sources are introducing new ques-

tions. African-American history in particular was underrepresented — and in some cases nonexistent — at many universities until well past the mid-20th century."

Although Shaw left NCCU more than three decades ago, she retains close ties to her alma mater. "Some of my best friends are Eagles, and I still know nearly everyone in the department," she says. And the admiration flows both ways. As Wilson puts it, "Stephanie is an excellent historian who epitomizes the students we develop.

Committed to research

At NCCU, the enthusiasm for and commitment to research is contagious. Students are trained in research techniques, and even undergraduates are expected to engage in original research and attend academic conferences. The master's program is a research degree structured like a Ph.D. pro-

gram, with course work, a language qualification, comprehensive ex-

ams and a thesis.

Master's student Bridgette Robinson, for example, is completing a thesis about the eugenics move-

ment in North Carolina and how it was affected by race and class. She presented a paper on her findings in October to the Association for the Study of African American Life and History.

"You have the space here to do that kind of research," Robinson says. A Washington, D.C., native, she received her B.A. in history from NCCU in 2010 and is on track to get her master's in May. She has been accepted into The Ph.D. program at Howard University.

"The faculty here is very supportive," she says. "We're really close, even professors I've never had a class with. It's like a big family.

James Blackwell, a first-year master's student from Durham, has given presentations at academic
Parker's research has yielded two books, “Running for Freedom: Slave Runaways in North Carolina, 1775–1840” and “Stealing a Little Freedom: Advertisements for Slave Runaways in North Carolina, 1791–1840.” Shepard, of course, was the founder and president of North Carolina College. Spaulding was a top executive at N.C. Mutual Life Insurance and a longtime NCCU trustee. The two men were deeply committed to fighting racial injustice and promoting economic opportunity for African-Americans. But they also needed to keep the college on a sound footing, and that meant taking pains not to antagonize the all-white legislature that provided much of the funding for the public college.

Recognizing that Hocutt's case was strong, the white establishment swung into action. The attorney general and some top private lawyers mounted a vigorous legal defense. And white education leaders urged Shepard and Spaulding to lean on Hocutt and his lawyers to drop the case. But Hocutt, backed by Austin's fiery editorials, refused to back down. So Shepard helped sabotage the case by refusing to release Hocutt's undergraduate transcript, a requirement for admission. The issue, of course, did not go away. Five years later, the Supreme Court ruled that states must either admit blacks to white graduate and professional schools or provide separate programs and facilities of equal quality. In response, North Carolina's white leaders opted to create graduate programs at the state's two largest black public colleges, NCC and the Agricultural & Technical College in Greensboro. Shepard embraced the decision, and within a few years, NCC had a School of Law, a nursing program and graduate programs in such fields as library science, education and the liberal arts. Austin didn't buy it. He predicted, correctly, that funding for the programs would be inadequate and far from equal. A 1938 editorial provides a sample of his style:

“The economical way, the righteous and just way, the sensible way is to admit the handful of Negroes desiring graduate work to the University of North Carolina. The damnable way, the disgraceful way, the unrighteous and unjust way is for the white people of this state to crucify their own souls upon an ignominious cross of deceit by establishing make-shift graduate courses for Negros in Negro colleges.”

Week after week, Austin hammered away, pressing the case for equality in ways that often made Shepard and other members of Durham's Old Guard uncomfortable. On occasion, though, he would acknowledge that Shepard's gentler approach was effective. In one 1938 editorial, he urged a delay in legal action aimed at forcing the state to provide more equal funding for higher education. “Dr. Shepard may be able to do more with an olive branch than others can do with branches of law,” he wrote.

This fascinating debate from more than 70 years ago could easily have been a forgotten piece of Durham's past. It is remembered today only because a historian, NCCU Professor Jerry Gershenhorn, spent many hours sifting through dusty archives and scrolling through ream after ream of blurry microfilm to reconstruct it. He presented his research in an award-winning 2010 article in The North Carolina Historical Review titled, “A Courageous Voice for Black Freedom: Louis Austin and the Carolina Times in Depression-Era North Carolina.”

Gershenhorn, who earned his master's in history from NCCU in 1991 and his Ph.D. from UNC-Chapel Hill in 2000, has been a regular contributor of scholarly articles to the Historical Review and other publications, even as he carries a full teaching load each semester. And in many ways, that dual commitment to teaching and research makes him a typical NCCU history professor.
Stop by the School of Education at NCCU in early fall and you might encounter a line of blindfolded people carrying red and white canes. They are learning the techniques of navigating without sight: determining direction by the location of the sun, recognizing the change in sound of a footstep when they pass an empty doorway, keeping a straight course by using the back and forth motion of a cane to check for obstacles.

These are students enrolled in the Visually Impaired Training Program (VITP), learning how to become orientation and mobility specialists. The program, led by Dr. Beth Harris and the cutting-edge research of Dr. Diane Wormsley, both special education professors, has firmly established NCCU as a vital player in the training of people who work with the visually impaired.

Through the VITP program, NCCU trains individuals as orientation and mobility (O&M) specialists and as teachers of the visually impaired (TVI). O&M specialists are trained to teach people with visual impairments to navigate their surroundings. TVIs are teachers who have already completed their teacher’s certification and want to focus on this small, underserved field.

Under an agreement made between the state and the UNC system, only one of the 16 campuses is permitted to provide training for people who are blind or visually impaired. And since 1997, that campus has been NCCU. Initially coordinated by Dr. Brad Walker, the program currently enrolls 35 students in a master’s-level certification program. The students are teachers seeking a specialization, returning students who want a new career and first-timers hoping to break into the field.

VITP is a hybrid distance-education program. Most classes are conducted online, and the students gather at NCCU for face-to-face meetings once a month. It is during these sessions that Harris has her O&M students spend a great deal of time “under blindfold.” After first learning to navigate the NCCU campus, they progress to exploring a Durham community, taking public transportation to a specified destination and the final challenge of finding their way to a specific location from an undisclosed spot.
Diane Wormsley (left), the Brenda Brodie Endowed Chair of Special Education, is changing the way teachers teach visually impaired people to read.

Student Michelle Erickson (right) gets some practice on a Perkins Braille Writer. Erickson has embarked on a new career of working with the visually impaired after 10 years as an airline pilot.

Harris says they are taught that they must constantly focus on three questions. “They need to always have in mind when working with a client, Where are you? Where do you want to go? How are you going to get there?”

The blindfold exercise is less about giving students a feel of what it means to be blind than it is about allowing them to practice their training skills. “I watch to see how they direct each other under blindfold,” says Harris. “That says a lot about their ability to work with clients.” They also learn Braille and nine other core skill areas, including assistive technology and recreational skills, as they progress toward a degree.

Getting students from point A to point B is the job of an O&M specialist, but what about when students enter the classroom? Diane Wormsley, the Brenda Brodie Endowed Chair of Special Education, is changing the way teachers teach the visually impaired to read.

Wormsley is a superstar in the field. She is one of 14 members of the Braille Authority of North America (BANA) charged with setting the Braille code for the United States and Canada. BANA determines which dots will be used for which symbols and creates guidelines and rules for use of the Braille code. Her authority includes determining the layout of Braille textbooks.

For 43 years, she has worked in nearly every area of the field. From classrooms to conference rooms, when Wormsley speaks, the visually impaired and those working in the field listen. So when she started presenting a new way to teach the blind and visually impaired to read, people took notice.

Her method is the Individualized Meaning-Centered Approach to Braille Literacy Education (I-M ABLE), and it seems more common-sense than scientific. Students learn in what Wormsley calls a “child-directed way,” where teachers let the children teach them what it is they want to learn. In Wormsley’s method, a standard list of vocabulary words is replaced with words like, “Lady Gaga,” “NASCAR,” and “Sponge Bob.”

Wormsley notes that letters and words do not have the same meaning to blind children that they do to sighted children. “We walk around and see letters everywhere,” said Wormsley. “But unless children who are blind touch the braille, they have no exposure to their own literacy medium, and because of this they don’t have the same emotional investment in learning to read.”

The problem is compounded if a child has a cognitive disability — and research shows that nearly 60 percent of children born blind in the United States have additional disabilities, in many cases because of premature birth. Some students who fall into this category have never had stories read to them, Wormsley says. “People think they aren’t going to learn, especially if they have severe cognitive impairments. My question is, ‘Why not?’”

Her I-M ABLE method has been 30 years in the making. In 1982, Wormsley was one of two teachers in an open-space classroom of nearly 50 children aged 5 to 13 in Papua New Guinea. Within this classroom, multiple languages were spoken. Her challenge was to find a way to engage the students in learning to read.

Drawing from a book called “Teacher” by Sylvia Ashton Warner, Wormsley turned what could have been a chaotic and frightening experience into what she describes as the best teaching experience of her career.

In the book, Ashton-Warner introduces a method she calls “organic reading and organic writing.” Instead of confront-
time, and for others it is learning a few words. But the ultimate goal is to have students writing and reading their own stories. Getting there requires teachers with a special set of skills.

When enrolling in VITP, students choose either O&M or TVI as a concentration, but there is always crossover. According to Harris, half of the counties in North Carolina do not have teachers trained to work with the visually impaired. Adding this special license allows the graduate to work in nearly any school system across the state.

“This is an intense program, from the amount of courses required to the variety of training techniques,” says O&M student Daniel Simmons, a teacher at the Governor Morehead School for the Blind in Raleigh. His work as a teacher has given him informal training in orientation and mobility but not the degree VITP will provide. Simmons is considered by his classmates to be a natural at O&M. The first time he had to navigate under blindfold, he quickly and easily found the sun and began to walk north.

Training as an O&M specialist is especially challenging in part because many of the skills cannot be learned from a textbook. Harris trains her students on sighted guide and cane skills. Sighted guide technique enables a person who is blind to use a person with sight as a guide. The technique follows a specific form and has specific applications. The first step is respecting the wishes of the individual by first asking if they would like assistance. And there also is a specific way to offer your arm: Tap the back of the person’s hand with your hand and wait for the individual to grasp your arm directly above the elbow. Sighted guides should walk one step ahead of the person you are guiding, except at the top and bottom of stairs and when crossing a street. At such intersections, the guides should pause and allow the person to come alongside them. While most of the work is taught online, skills such as these are practiced during the face-to-face sessions with Harris. And the students come from as far away as Ohio.

The traveler from Ohio is Michelle Erickson, who spent 10 years as a commercial pilot before deciding on a career change. About to make captain with American Airlines, Erickson says she woke up one morning and knew that she was in the wrong profession. “I decided that day to quit,” she says. She had friends who were vocational rehabilitation counselors who worked with the visually impaired, and she had often thought about making this a new career path. Erickson flies to North Carolina once a month for the face-to-face sessions.

O&M student Jennifer Weaver, whose father is blind, struggles with her own visual impairments. She completed her undergraduate degree in music performance but was introduced to Harris and VITP by her father. “I spent my whole life helping my father navigate,” she says. “I figured I should probably learn the right way.”

And there is a definite “right way” when it comes to the visually impaired, even down to the color of the cane. In 1930 the first of the state laws regarding the right of blind people to travel independently was passed in Illinois. The law gave blind pedestrians who carried a white cane protection and the right of way. Today there is a form of “White Cane Law” on the books of every state.

Because training programs like VITP are not money generators, graduating just a few students per year, they are often in jeopardy of closing. To attract more students, Wormsley led the VITP faculty in writing and receiving a five-year grant of $500,000 from the U.S. Department of Education Rehabilitation Services Administration in 2008. The grant provides scholarships and stipends for VITP students working with adults.

NCCU also maintains a relationship with the Governor Morehead School in Raleigh. This serves to build a pipeline of master’s-level professionals trained to work in the field of visual impairments. Morehead School provides meeting space, weekend housing to the students during their face-to-face sessions and serves as an internship site for the 360 hours the program requires. And because the campus is designed for instructing students with visual impairments, Wormsley says, “It is the perfect place to practice orientation and mobility.”

Built in 1845, the Morehead School is the eighth-oldest school for the blind in the country, and it was the first to serve the African-American blind and deaf population, beginning just four years after the Civil War.

To fund her work with teaching the blind to read, Wormsley knew that she would need a partner. Despite her background and reputation, finding an underwriter for her research proved difficult.

In 2000 at the encouragement of her colleagues, while working at the American Foundation for the Blind, Wormsley wrote a small book describing her method and it quickly became a best-seller in the field. “I think people connected to the book because it was a way to motivate students,” Wormsley says.

The book and her method were motivating to teachers, but funding organizations remained wary. Repeatedly, she was told that the lack of research in the field meant her project did not qualify for funding.

Under an agreement made between the state and the UNC system, one of the 16 campuses provides training for people who are blind or visually impaired. And since 1997, that campus has been NCCU.

“People didn’t understand the approach and why kids couldn’t learn to read Braille in the traditional manner,” Wormsley says.

She finally found a partner with the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction (DPI) last year. A one-year grant funded through the DPI starting last fall has made it possible for Wormsley to launch an I-M ABLE research pilot effort involving 10 teachers of the visually impaired at 10 schools across the state. They work with visually impaired students aged 8 to 18 who also have cognitive disabilities.

“The work is so personalized that we don’t know all the questions that people might have,” Wormsley says. “And we don’t know if this will work with every student.” The goal at the end of the year is to have 10 case studies that can be used to plan further research in the field of braille literacy. Wormsley and some staff members from DPI observe the teachers and provide technical assistance.

Wormsley says she gives the teachers involved with the project this advice to help stay focused: “If you can read what you can write, that is literacy. Period.”

This project is not the first time that Wormsley has studied the methods used to teach the blind to read. In 2002 Wormsley was a researcher on the Alphabetic Braille — Contracted Braille (ABC Braille) project. Operated through Vanderbilt University and funded by the American Printing House for the Blind, the project was a long-term study of the two methods currently used to teach braille: alphabetic and contracted braille.

Braille is a writing system that enables blind and partially sighted people to read and write through touch. This system uses dots arranged in cells of up to six dots in a 3 by 2 configuration that, when combined, creates words.

Braille is either alphabetic or contracted. In alphabetic braille each arrangement of dots represents one letter, number, punctuation sign or special composition sign. For example, the letter A is represented as a single dot, the letter B by two vertical dots and the letter C by two horizontal dots.

Contracted braille is a space-saving version of alphabetic braille and is primarily used in books, signs and most braille materials. This method employs 189 contractions and symbols to represent entire words. For example, in contracted braille, the word “can” is represented by the same symbol that represents the letter C, two horizontal dots.

Though rarely used, a third form of braille exists and is a personalized system of braille used typically by individuals for their own convenience. It contains more than 300 word contractions and makes great use of vowel omission. Because it has not been standardized, it is not used in publications.

In 2007 Wormsley became the principal investigator of the ARC Braille project. In addition to her braille literacy efforts, she also helped grow the field of Ph.D. work in visual impairments and co-authored a proposal which received $6.3 million from the U.S. Department of Education Office of Special Education Programs. The funds were used to support the National Center for Leadership in Visual Impairments (NCLVI), which funds doctoral programs at 14 universities.

One of the fellows in the NCLVI was Harris. With more than 28 years of experience in the field, she completed her doctorate at the University of Arizona in 2009.

New technology means that the field of visual impairments is constantly growing and changing. The Perkins Braille Writer remains the primary tool for writing braille, but software now exists that can transcribe voice to braille. And some students now use refreshable hand-held braille devices that display raised pins that can be felt by the person reading.

Despite all of the changes, Harris says, the central mission is unchanged: teaching people to work with people.
Beulah McIver
Paying It Forward

ARTIST, PROFESSOR, FILM STAR — AND HER SISTER’S KEEPER

BY ROB WATERS

BEVERLY McIVER sees herself in her students. And she is determined to do for them what an instructor did for her when she was a student at NCCU in the 1980s.

“I had a teacher here, Elizabeth Lentz, who believed in me,” McIver recalls. “She said, ‘You’re good at this. Work at it and you can make a career of it.’ She nurtured me. She saw things in my paintings I didn’t see, and invited me to her home to paint on weekends.”

“And I try to do that with students today at my studio. I want to pay it forward and give this to my students.”
McIVER, THE SUNTRUST ENDOWED PROFESSOR OF ART AT NCCU SINCE 2008, has been a well-regarded and successful artist for years. But she has had an especially big and busy time of it lately. Her paintings are now in a major exhibition at the North Carolina Museum of Art, “Reflections: Portraits by Bever -

By McIver,” that runs through June. She and her sister were the subject of an award-winning documentary, “Raising Renee,” which screened at the Full Frame Festival in Durham in April 2011 and was shown nationally on HBO Feb. 22. A few days before the HBO program, she was the subject of a long, flattering profile in The New York Times.

“Raising Renee” also received a special screening in February at NCCU. McIver has the rank of full professor, but teaches just in the spring semester each year. “The semester I’m off I lecture and meet my demands as an artist, ” she says, “but my students are with me year-round.”

McIver teaches her Painting 1 and 2 classes in a studio in the Fine Arts Building. The advanced classes take place in her own studio at Golden Belt, the converted textile mill complex on East Main Street in Durham’s resurgent downtown.

Her teaching goes beyond the creative process. “At NCCU I received encouragement, but I didn’t receive tools for professional development. I try to give my students the tools they need to be self-sufficient as artists when they graduate.

“Raising Renee” also received a special screening in February at NCCU. The film shows how McIver, as her artistic career was taking off, had to redirect her life to care for Renee, her mentally disabled older sister, after their mother died in 2004. For most viewers, the documentary serves as an introduction to the three principals in the portraits on display at the Raleigh museum: McIver herself (more than a dozen of the paintings are self-portraits); her mother, Ethel; and Renee, who’s in her 50s but functions at about a third-grade level.

“My painting has always been intensely autobiographical — my family, my mother, my sister Renee, myself,” McIver says. “It’s my story. Even so, I sometimes hear from total strangers who say they find the paintings very powerful and who say, ‘I see myself in that.’ I feel good having an impact like that on people I don’t know.”

The SunTrust endowment is intended for working artists. McIver has the rank of full professor, but teaches just in the spring semester each year. “The semester I’m off I lecture and meet my demands as an artist,” she says, “but my students are with me year-round.”

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“It’s a business,” McIver says. “If you’re a working artist, you are the CEO, the janitor, the shipping clerk and everything in between. You need to know how to write a grant, find and manage a studio space.

You need to treat it like a 9-to-5 job. At Golden Belt, I expose the students to other artists. I encourage them to encounter the reality of deadlines. I try to take making art out of the realm of class assignments.”

“Raising Renee” and the portraits in “Reflections” make it clear that the period surrounding her mother’s death was a wrenching time for McIver. As she grieved, she also struggled with caring for Renee while balancing the demands of teaching, painting and making a living. But things are better now. A few years ago, McIver arranged for Renee to move into an apartment complex in Greensboro designed for adults with special needs. Their other sister, Roni, works nearby and keeps in regular touch.

“Renee is still doing very well,” McIver says. Renee has developed a career of sorts as a maker of potholders, which she sells at film festivals when the documentary is screened. The two sisters traveled together to New York in February for the HBO premiere of “Raising Renee.” And Renee took a suitcase full of potholders, because more than 100 people had ordered them in advance.
Providing a Foundation for Future Success

UNDER NEW LEADERSHIP, MBA PROGRAM GETS AN OVERHAUL

BY ROB WATERS

A Master of Business Administration degree is the essential credential for many professional careers, an indicator that the holder is equipped with the tools to engage the marketplace, to adapt and thrive amid ever-changing conditions.

D. Keith Pigues, dean of the School of Business, expects no less of himself and the courses he oversees. Flexibility and responsiveness to the marketplace, he says, are as essential for an MBA program as for its graduates. “Our mission is to prepare our students to compete for the best jobs in the marketplace upon graduation,” he says. “But beyond that, we need to provide them with a foundation for future success. We don’t know specifically what they will need to know in five or 10 years, but we can equip them with the critical-thinking and lifelong-learning skills that they will need as they progress in their careers.”

Pigues arrived at NCCU last summer with an unusual resume for a dean: He has no doctorate, though he has taught as an adjunct professor at Kenan-Flagler Business School at UNC-Chapel Hill, where he earned an MBA. What he does have is 25 years of experience in marketing, strategic planning and sales leadership. Most recently, he was senior vice president at PlyGem Industries, a privately held building products company based in Cary.

In announcing Pigues’ appointment, Provost Debbie Thomas said the School of Business was “poised for transformative change and innovation.” She added: “We’re shifting away from traditional leadership to one characterized by strong ties between the corporate and educational sectors.”

The business school has 800 undergraduate majors, and 35 full-time and 10 part-time faculty. Its flagship program, however, is the MBA, and Pigues and the faculty are putting the finishing touches on a major overhaul to the program that is designed to align it closely with NCCU 2020, the university’s strategic plan, to attract students with its course offerings and flexibility, and to train them in ways that are tailored to the demands of the North Carolina job market in general — and the Triangle in particular.

Pigues and Dr. Marilyn A. Morgan, director of the MBA program, held a town hall-style meeting with the MBA students early in the spring semester to describe their plans for the program. They outlined four strategic goals:

- **Integrated Management:** Graduates must possess a sound all-around business grounding. That includes the ability to identify and solve problems, and to know what is needed to make a business successful.
- **Entrepreneurship:** Graduates should be prepared to launch businesses. Many may not actually do so, but they should all have the ability to move an idea or concept to successful commercialization.

Dr. Marilyn A. Morgan
Dr. Kofi A. Amoateng
D. Keith Pigues

Our mission is to prepare our students to compete for the best jobs in the marketplace upon graduation.”

— D. Keith Pigues
Dean of the School of Business
Leadership: “Leadership is the X factor,” says Pigues, adding, “Management and leadership are not the same thing.” Even if leadership is intangible and difficult to define, the program must offer abundant opportunities for students to practice leadership skills and develop confidence in their capacity to lead.

Globalization: Graduates must be prepared for decision-making in a global environment, with an understanding of the forces at work around the globe. They must be at ease and able to work with people from other countries and cultures.

The commitment to globalization was underscored in a show-don’t-tell manner at the meeting when some individual professors gave brief presentations on plans for new and enhanced course offerings, starting in the fall.

Dr. Malavika Sundararajan, a native of India, described a course in entrepreneurship that would emphasize experiential learning. Dr. Alexander Deshkovski (Belarus) outlined a course in financial engineering that would equip graduates with the knowledge to manage cash flow and risk. Dr. Kofi A. Armah (Ghana) described a plan to offer four courses as part of a concentration in finance.

Twenty-five of the 77 students currently enrolled in the MBA program are full-time working professionals, and expanding enrollment by attracting more such students is a goal of the program. “That means more online delivery,” says program director Morgan. “Many faculty are working now to transform their content and create new content for new ways of delivery. If I teach in a classroom, I can enhance the face-to-face courses by introducing material I provide online.”

“We try to adapt to the busy lives of working professionals, and that means being flexible about how we deliver instruction,” Morgan says. “We’re developing plans for the full online delivery of an MBA program.”

But how does that affect the learning experience? Isn’t student-professor contact and student-student contact an essential part of it?

Morgan replies, “If you earned an MBA 20 years ago, this is not the program you knew. The education technology has come so far. You can have virtual team meetings. You can meet and work in groups. Online courses have been taught in high schools for years,” she adds, “so students today are familiar with them — these are our candidates. And five years from now it will be very common.” ☐

Save the date | Oct. 28-Nov. 4
For the latest news and updates, visit www.nccu.edu/homecoming
By the time Rakeem Vick was seven, he knew he was fast, and he started to really like playing football. As his love for the sport grew, so did his dream of playing in the NFL one day. By the time he was earning all-America praise at Friendly High School in Fort Washington, Md., his dream had become a goal.

Yet, that was the same time his coaches started preaching about having a Plan B. Coaches in youth, high school and college athletics know that less than 2 percent of college football players achieve careers as professionals, and they constantly remind athletes to have other options. Vick knew the odds, but he was determined to beat them.

He was not ready, however, to put his Plan B into action so soon.

COMING TO NCCU
Vick's talents brought him all-state and all-America accolades during his senior season at Friendly High in 2006, with 127 tackles to his credit. He was also a leader. As team captain, he led the Patriots to a 14-0 record, the 2A Maryland state championship and a national ranking of No. 22.

His football success and his desire to attend an HBCU landed Vick an athletic scholarship to North Carolina Central University. He made an impact right from the start, finishing among the team's top 10 defenders as a rookie linebacker with the Eagles. He improved steadily as a player and a leader during the next two seasons.

Entering his senior year, Vick's expectations were high. He pushed himself during the off-season to be in top condition and to be a motivational leader. In the 2010 season opener against Johnson C. Smith, he made four tackles and recovered a fumble in a 59-0 rout of the Golden Bulls.

In the next game, on Sept. 11, the Eagles faced Winston-Salem State under the lights at NCCU's O'Kelly-Riddick Stadium. As the stadium announcer introduced Vick as the starting outside linebacker, he strode out of the tunnel to the roar of the crowd, shaking his head and tossing his dreadlocks. The intensity that had built up within him all day exploded onto the field.

The game was tied, 27-27 midway through the fourth quarter. With six tackles already under his belt, Vick was exuberant and ready for more. Given a brief rest on the sideline, he was champing at the bit to get back into the game. So when fellow linebacker Anthony Sharp rolled his ankle, Vick grabbed his helmet and was ready to go.

A SEVERE INJURY FORCED RAKEEM VICK TO LET GO OF ONE DREAM. NOW HE TEACHES THE ‘PLAN B PRINCIPLE.’
THE LIFE-ALTERING PLAY

“I remember everything,” Vick recalls. “We were in a cover-three formation. They ran a draw play. It was number nine, their big guy. Marc Lewis and Mark Blakeney hit him first, and then I came up to hit him.”

“I hit him with my helmet and everything started to go in slow motion. It felt like I flew back five yards and my head hit the ground. Once I hit the ground, I knew I was done. I couldn’t move anything but my eyes. I immediately started thinking about my Plan B.”

Athletic trainers and team doctors rushed to his side. The crowd fell silent. Players and coaches knelt in prayer. Vick lay motionless on the field, taking rapid, shallow breaths, unable to wipe the tears streaming down his face.

Sean Thomas, the head athletic trainer, spoke quietly, urging him to be calm. The medical staff began the careful process of placing him on a spine board. Vick asked to see his mother, Angela, and she hurried to his side.

“I was shocked, causing everything to shut down,” he says. “They said I was not paralyzed and they expected me to get movement back.”

The medical term for the injury is transient quadriplegia, a temporary full-body paralysis. Gradually over the next few days, Vick regained some movement. “I got feeling back in my right hand and could move both legs,” he says, “but my left arm was still really heavy and could not move.”

Though not long removed from the fear of lifelong paralysis, Vick began to contemplate a return to the field. “I was already thinking about playing football again.”

The injury occurred in his fourth and final season of collegiate eligibility, but he figured he could qualify for a medical redshirt waiver with the NCAA that would enable him to play one more season at NCCU.

His mother was supportive. The doctors were another story. “They were looking at me like, ‘Are you sure you want to take that risk?’ They kept saying risk,” he says. “I didn’t talk about playing football again too much, but it was in my head.”

Vick moved to Durham Regional Hospital to begin his rehabilitation. With the help of a physical therapist and an occupational therapist, he had to relearn how to operate his body.

He needed help getting out of bed and walking. Regaining use of his hands was especially hard. “It was frustrating. I got tired. My occupational therapist was tough on me. I had to learn how to brush my teeth again, how to put on socks, how to dress myself. I was starting from scratch.”

Over and over, his therapist made him pick up pennies, put a key in a lock, pour water. “I knew I was getting better, because I could start doing the small stuff.”

THE ROAD TO RECOVERY

After a long wait in a cold hospital room, Vick received some good news from the doctors. “They told me that my spine was bruised and my nervous system was shocked, causing everything to shut down,” he says. “They said I was not paralyzed and they expected me to get movement back.”

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THE BIG PLAY

When the 2010 schedule was announced, Vick had circled one particular game on his calendar: the matchup with archrival North Carolina A&T. The annual Aggie-Eagle clash always draws a big crowd, but this one was special. For the first time in 18 years, it was being played on NCCU’s campus. “I didn’t want to miss that game,” Vick says. “I felt like it would motivate the team.”

The game, though, was on Sept. 25, just two weeks after his injury.

Before Vick’s doctors would allow him to attend, he had to show that he could walk. “They put me through a test,” Vick says. “Walking up a hill, walking in the grass — stuff that I may face at the game that I don’t have in the hospital. I aced it!”

By the next summer, he was much improved, although his left hand and arm still felt heavy and were not as strong or coordinated as before the injury. Vick’s doctor presented two options: Have surgery to repair the damage and never play football again, or return to playing football without the surgery and face a high risk of permanent paralysis.

Vick was devastated. He knew his dream of playing pro football was over for good. He kept his composure until he climbed into his car. “Then I went crazy,” he says. “I was cursing, hitting the dashboard, questioning the Lord – asking ‘Why me?’”

After deciding to have the surgery, he shared his resolution with his family. He particularly remembers breaking the news to his 13-year-old nephew, who plays youth football and looks up to Vick, as a turning point. “As I talked with him, it hit me that playing football was not my calling. I had to dig deeper to find my purpose on this Earth. It’s not scoring touchdowns or making tackles. My true calling is using my voice, being a leader. I learned that my greatest gift is to motivate people.”

Cheered by his newfound purpose and with a fresh set of goals, Vick visited the new football head coach, Henry Frazier III. Frazier, seeing a potential leader, offered a job as a student coach, and Vick happily traded his helmet and pads for a whistle and clipboard.

“Surprised me the way my former teammates responded,” says Vick. “They all called me Coach right away and accepted me as a coach. It was a good feeling, knowing that I still had a voice on the team — that I could still motivate.”

ANOTHER MEMORABLE STROLL

While spending the fall semester as a student coach, Vick was also completing a significant off-the-field journey. On Dec. 10, he became the first person in his family to graduate from college, earning a bachelor’s degree in mass communication with a minor in literature. “It was a relief. I really did it,” he says. “Through all of the rehab, I am back and I am better. It’s now time for better things in my life.”

Vick was not so wrapped up in the moment that he lost the significance of his ability to even walk across the platform. “As soon as I got to the edge of the stage after receiving my degree, I knelt down and gave all the praise to God. I gave all thanks to Him right there.”

Vick’s next step? He is enrolled in the master’s program in education technology at NCCU’s School of Education, and planning on another season on the sideline coaching the Eagles.

“Now through coaching, I can still motivate, teach and empower kids through football,” he says. “And I can truly preach the ‘Plan B’ principle. I really did play division I football. I really did graduate from college. There is life after football.”

Visit www.nccueaglepride.com for schedules and events
DR. STEWART B. FULBRIGHT
TUSKEEGE AIRMAN | FIRST DEAN OF NCCU SCHOOL OF BUSINESS

He was one of nearly 1,000 black men trained in Tuskegee, Ala., as pilots, navigators and bombardiers during World War II. He was commissioned as a second lieutenant and pilot in December 1943 and served as a B-25 bomber pilot for the rest of the war. His all-black 477th Bombardment Group was preparing for deployment in the Pacific theater when the war ended in 1945.

After completing his military service, he enrolled at the University of Chicago, where he received an MBA degree in 1947. He joined the faculty of the Commerce Department at North Carolina College (now NCCU) that same year. He subsequently earned a Ph.D. in business administration from Ohio State University in 1953.

He served as acting dean of the Undergraduate School from 1956 to 1962, then returned to the Commerce Department as its chair in 1963. When the department became the School of Business in 1972, he became its director.

NCCU and a longtime colleague. “He was well-liked and respected, and students felt at ease with him.”

Dr. Fulbright remained in contact with his wartime comrades through his active membership in the Tuskegee Airmen, Inc., and was a member of the school’s NCAA Division II national championship basketball team.

DR. STEWART B. FULBRIGHT
NCCU NOW | SPRING 2012

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DR. STEWART B. FULBRIGHT
NCCU NOW | SPRING 2012
Join us Friday, Sept. 14, for NCCU’s inaugural “40 Under 40 Awards” gala. The program will recognize young alumni who have made significant contributions in the arts, entertainment, healthcare, sciences, education, law, business, entrepreneurship, philanthropy, public service and government.

Nominees must meet the following requirements:

• They must have been students at NCCU for at least one academic year.
• They must be 40 or younger as of Jan. 1, 2013.
• The nominator must complete an electronic nomination and provide any supporting information as requested in the application process. Self-nominations are accepted.
• Those chosen must attend the 40 Under 40 Awards Gala on Sept. 14.

Nominations will be accepted online until June 1. All nominees will be notified.

Questions? Email alumni@nccu.edu or visit www.nccu.edu/40under40

Years before her passing on Aug. 6, 2011, Etta Joyce Grant had listed NCCU as the beneficiary of a $50,000 life insurance policy she held with N.C. Mutual Life Insurance Co.

Ms. Grant was a devoted alumna and a successful businesswoman. Born in Durham in 1947, she graduated from Hillside High School in 1965 and NCCU in 1969. She later earned an MBA from the University of Rochester and the designation of Certified Public Accountant. She was a lifetime member of the NAACP, the NCCU Alumni Association, Delta Sigma Theta sorority and St. Joseph’s AME Church.

Naming the university as a beneficiary is just one way you can support NCCU’s mission of student success. You can help NCCU while you secure your own finances in ways tailored to your age, income and assets, and your vision of giving. Such giving techniques are called “planned gifts,” because with thoughtful planning, you create win-win solutions for you and NCCU. For example:

• You can make a gift that costs nothing during your lifetime
• You can get a monthly paycheck for life in return for your gift
• You can give stock and realize larger tax savings
• You can donate your house, continue to live there — and get a tax break

We will be delighted to talk with you about your needs and goals, and suggest ways to blend your family and philanthropic interests. We’re here to help you at any stage of your discovery. Call us at 919-530-6151, email us at giving@nccu.edu or visit our planned giving site, http://www.gftpln.org/Home.do?orgId=5247.