

**NC STATE UNIVERSITY**

College of Education  
Belk Center for Community College  
Leadership and Research

## CELEBRATING SIX YEARS OF IMPACT



As we mark **six years of the Belk Center**, we want to express our gratitude to our **colleagues, partners** and **supporters**. Your commitment to community colleges has been instrumental in the success of our mission.

Whether it's working alongside us to distill actionable insights, creating meaningful opportunities for collaboration or empowering leaders to tackle pressing issues in higher education—**your partnership has been an essential part of our journey. Together, we will continue making a lasting difference in the lives of students and communities across the state.**

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# ADULT LEARNER SPOTLIGHT SERIES

NC Reconnect, an initiative of the [John M. Belk Endowment](#), is **changing the lives of adult learners across North Carolina** by helping them overcome barriers and return to the classroom to achieve their educational goals.

In our powerful new video series, students from [Central Piedmont Community College](#), [Haywood Community College](#), [James Sprunt Community College](#), [Robeson Community College](#) and [Wayne Community College](#) share their personal stories.

From tackling financial challenges to finding motivation through family and personal growth, these students exemplify **resilience**.

Watch how key resources like **financial aid**, **tutoring** and **counseling** are making a difference and an example of how we can collectively support adult learners' success.





# BELK CENTER TEAM AT DREAM

Last month's [Achieving the Dream Conference](#) was an impactful few days dedicated to driving change at community colleges nationwide—and an incredible growth opportunity for our Belk Center Fellows!



Each year, the **DREAM** conference is a full circle moment for our [fellows program](#), which was launched in 2017 through a partnership with ATD. It brings together doctoral students to engage in national conversations around community colleges and student success.

Four of our Belk Center Fellows joined us this year, gaining **invaluable opportunities** to exchange ideas and explore strategies that can drive meaningful change in support of faculty and student success across the nation.



We were also excited to have several Belk Center colleagues **lead packed-room sessions** on critical topics, providing community college executive leadership with evidence-based insights to support students and their communities.



**Sarah Deal** and **Monique Colclough** joined **Kristi Short** of Central Carolina Community College and **Brice Melton** of Catawba Valley Community College to discuss how **Teaching & Learning Hubs** are enhancing capacity and establishing a robust support system.

**Holley Nichols** and **Sarah Deal** presented initial findings from our **Ascendium-funded rural college research**, followed by a discussion with **Margaret Annunziata** of

Isothermal Community College,  
**John Enamait** of Stanly  
Community College, and **Brice  
Melton** of Catawba Valley  
Community College on takeaways.



Leaders who participated in [Rural College Leadership Program](#) also shared examples of how they improved student outcomes in their communities through innovative changes such as the ['Be Great in 8'](#) condensed course term and [contextualizing required English courses](#) to align with students' program interests.

Each example shared at DREAM highlighted the power of **leveraging data to inform change, creative and consistent communication** throughout implementation and **planned support structures** for faculty and staff.

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## TEACHING & LEARNING ACCLAIM AT THE BELLWETHER AWARDS





Last week, Monique Colclough joined Brice Melton and Elizabeth Braun of Catawba Valley Community College in San Antonio for the **Community Colleges Future Assembly**. CVCC was a finalist for the prestigious **Bellwether Award** in the Instructional Programs and Services category for its Statewide Professional Learning for Faculty and Student Success program.

The program is transforming professional development across North Carolina's community colleges, helping to build a culture of excellence. **We are proud of the impact that Teaching & Learning Hubs are having across the state!**

**LEARN MORE ABOUT TEACHING & LEARNING HUBS**

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# CELEBRATING CAREER AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION MONTH



## CAREER AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION MONTH

Community colleges are **essential** in preparing students for the workforce through high-quality Career and Technical Education (CTE) programs. By equipping learners with **industry-aligned skills, hands-on experience** and **credentials** for in-demand careers, CTE programs create powerful pathways to economic mobility.

**During CTE month and every month, we celebrate the incredible achievements of CTE programs across North Carolina and beyond.**

[LEARN MORE FROM NC CAREERS](#)

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## SUPPORTING COMMUNITY COLLEGE LEADERSHIP



Last month, we were proud to partner with the [Aspen Institute College Excellence Program](#) to host current and former [Aspen Presidents Fellows](#) on NC State's campus. This year-long executive leadership program empowers community college presidents to drive **student success** at their institutions.

We continue to see the **lasting impact** of this program through its alumni, who are leading meaningful change at **North Carolina community colleges and beyond**.



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## BECOMING AN INNOVATOR

Today's higher education landscape requires a different approach to **community college leadership**. "[Leading Rural Innovation and Change Series: Becoming an Innovator](#)" presents the **Innovator's DNA model** and introduces foundational practices related to the model, based on a study of 17 rural-serving community college presidents who are leading **innovation and change** on their campuses.



## **LEADING RURAL INNOVATION AND CHANGE SERIES: BECOMING AN INNOVATOR**

**A REPORT ON RECOMMENDATIONS FROM INNOVATIVE  
PRESIDENTS OF RURAL-SERVING COMMUNITY COLLEGES**

ZACHARY J. BARRICKLOW, ED.D.  
PAMELA L. EDDY, PH.D.  
AUDREY J. JAEGER, PH.D.

**MARCH 2025**

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**[Read the Becoming an Innovator Report](#)**

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## **BELK CENTER IN THE NEWS**



**EdNC:** [Belk Center highlights North Carolina's adult learners](#)



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706 Hillsborough Street  
Raleigh, NC 27603