

NC STATE UNIVERSITY

College of Education
Belk Center for Community College
Leadership and Research

BELK CENTER HONORED WITH 2026 OPAL MANN GREEN ENGAGEMENT AND SCHOLARSHIP AWARD



Left to right: Jared King, Belk Center; Erin Stonehawk-Hearn, InsideTrack; Kris Burris, The College of the Albemarle; Micara Lewis-Sessoms, Durham Tech; Monica Clark, Belk Center; Patrena Elliott, Halifax Community College; Stephanie Policastro, Belk Center; Sarah Deal, Belk Center. Not pictured: Audrey J. Jaeger and Emily VanZoest, Belk Center; Mike Krause, John M. Belk Endowment.

The Belk Center was selected as a recipient of the 2026 Opal Mann Green Engagement and Scholarship Award, recognizing its collaborative work to support adult learners through the statewide NC Reconnect program!

Presented annually by the NC State Office of Outreach and Engagement, the award honors exemplary community-engaged scholarship and outreach that advance the university's land-grant mission by addressing the needs of communities across North Carolina.

[READ MORE](#)

ON THE GROUND

BELK CENTER AT CSCC 2026

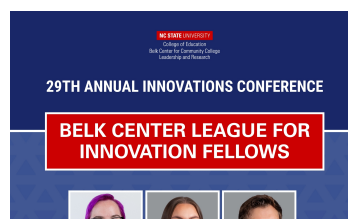
Last week, members of the Belk Center team took part in a variety of sessions for the Council for the Study of Community Colleges conference in Salt Lake City, Utah.

The theme for this year's conference is Elevating Community College Value and Versatility, and the Belk Center participated in presentations and panels on everything from course modality and student success to barriers hindering re-enrollment among adult learners.



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LEAGUE INNOVATIONS AND ACHIEVING THE DREAM





Last Month, our Belk Center Fellows attended Achieving the Dream’s annual [DREAM Conference](#) in Portland, Ore, and the League for Innovation in the Community College’s 29th annual [Innovations Conference](#) in Indianapolis, Ind.

DREAM fellows joined thousands of practitioners in sharing evidence-based approaches that accelerate student achievement and advance economic mobility, participated in an on-site orientation, and collaborated to develop a webinar highlighting key insights and lessons learned.

League fellows convened with educators, researchers and institutional leaders from across the country to explore forward-thinking practices and the most innovative community college programs in the field.

Belk Center at AEFP Annual Conference

BELK CENTER AT AEFP 2026

10:00AM - 11:30AM
FRI. 20 MARCH, 2026



HOLLEY NICHOLS, PH.D.
SENIOR ASSOCIATE
DIRECTOR OF RESEARCH



SARAH A. DEAL, PH.D.
DIRECTOR OF RESEARCH

Belk Center researcher Holley B. Nichols, Ph.D., shared new findings at the Association for Education Finance and Policy Annual Conference (AEFPCON 2026) during the Strengthening Community College Outcomes session on Friday, March 20.

AAS in Business: Insights for a More Targeted Transfer Pathway — a paper written alongside Belk Center Director of Research Sarah A. Deal, Ph.D. — highlights opportunities to better align associate degree programs with transfer outcomes, helping colleges support student success from enrollment to completion.

TEACHING AND LEARNING HUB PRESENTERS

NORTH CAROLINA STUDENT DEVELOPMENT ADMINISTRATORS ASSOCIATION

NC STATE UNIVERSITY
College of Education
Belk Center for Community College Leadership and Research

NORTH CAROLINA ASSOCIATION OF COMMUNITY COLLEGE INSTRUCTIONAL ADMINISTRATORS

JOINT CONFERENCE PRESENTERS

Dr. Jennifer Marquis Elizabeth McKinley Dr. Sarah Parlier

Chris Perry Kristi Reed

Last month, Teaching and Learning Hub Co-Directors and Peer Learning Leaders shared their expertise at the joint conference hosted by the North Carolina Community College Student Development Administrators Association and North Carolina Community College Academic Instructional Administrators Association at Asheville-Buncombe Technical Community College.

We're grateful to see leaders from across North Carolina's community colleges coming together to share practices that strengthen teaching, learning and student success.

EXPLORE THE COMMUNITY COLLEGE DATA HUB!

The Community College Data Hub (CCDH) is a collection of datasets and data-related publications associated with community colleges and their students, administrators, faculty, staff and communities.

Selected by subject-matter experts from the Center for the Study of Community Colleges and the Belk Center, this free and widely-accessible archive of data can be used by a broad range of scholars and scholar-practitioners for secondary analysis and/or institutional improvement.

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Center for the Study of Community Colleges
COMMUNITY COLLEGE DATA HUB

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Community College Data Hub Series

The Community College Data Hub (CCDH) is a collection of dataset and data-related publications associated with community colleges and their students, administrators, faculty, staff, and communities. Data in the CCDH series have been selected by subject-matter experts from the Center for the Study of Community Colleges and the Belk Center for Community College Leadership and Research and created and released by ICPSR. You can also search a broad range of articles and other publications for secondary analysis and/or institutional improvement.

CCDH is a joint project of the Center for the Study of Community Colleges • Belk Center for Community College Leadership and Research • ICPSR

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EXPLORE THE COMMUNITY COLLEGE DATA HUB!

EXPLORE THE DATA HUB

CELEBRATING GRADUATE STUDENT APPRECIATION WEEK

GRADUATE STUDENT APPRECIATION

WEEK



Belk Center graduate students play an important role in advancing our research and supporting our work with community colleges across North Carolina. We're thankful for the insight, energy and dedication they bring to this work every day. Join us in wishing them a happy Graduate Student Appreciation Week!

FAST PACE FACTS







A unique feature of the PACE Climate Survey is the ability to compare a community college's results year-over-year but also across institutions with similar characteristics, such as:

- Census region (northeast, midwest, etc.)
- Size (by enrollment)
- Locale (rural, urban, suburb, town)
- Degree type
- Census division (Middle Atlantic, New England, etc.)
- State

FAST PACE FACT

COMPARING RESULTS YEAR-OVER-YEAR AND ACROSS INSTITUTIONS

WITH SIMILAR CHARACTERISTICS, SUCH AS:

 Census Region	 Size
 Census Division	 Locale
 Degree Type	 State

To administer your PACE Survey, contact the PACE Team at PACE_SURVEY@NCSSU.EDU

To learn more about administering a PACE survey at your community college, visit <https://pace.ncsu.edu/> or email PACE_Survey@ncsu.edu



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