

An aerial photograph of a building featuring a prominent octagonal copper roof with a central circular vent. The roof is surrounded by a flat, light-colored roof area. The building is situated on a hillside with some vegetation visible at the bottom.

NC STATE College of Design

NC STATE COLLEGE OF DESIGN

Strategic Plan

2022-2027



MISSION.

The College of Design educates students to become innovators and thought leaders while creating a community for designers, researchers, scholars and practitioners.



VISION.

To pursue excellence in design education, scholarship and engagement to empower a more just, healthy, resilient, flourishing and sustainable future.

THE WORLD NEEDS GOOD DESIGN.

Good design matters. It touches everything around us from the tech in our pockets to the parks in our cities. It drives innovation. It has the power to make life better for everyone. It is the foundation of our future.

At NC State's College of Design, we bring the value of transformative design to the world.

We prepare students for rewarding careers that make a positive impact — environmentally, socially and economically – and create a vibrant design community dedicated to multiple viewpoints, experiences and creative expressions. The creative energy of the college truly comes to life as a result of our different perspectives, and we are committed to showcasing a variety of design experiences.

We nurture creative minds from around the world and task them with bettering our world both here in North Carolina and beyond. Those minds conduct practical, hands-on research and scholarship that increases knowledge, solves problems, drives prosperity and benefits our communities.

There is value in the work we do. As we look towards the next 5 years, we strive to continue to make a real impact on people's lives.



WE DESIGN

for human well-being.

WE DESIGN

meaningful and successful careers.

WE DESIGN

resilient environmental systems.

WE DESIGN

with technological innovation.

WE DESIGN

for beauty.



PRINCIPLES

We...

- Design ethically by relying on varied opinions and ideas, prioritizing representation and by being pluralistic, transparent and accountable,
- Innovate as educators and designers through making and scholarship,
- Collaborate as scholars, leaders, researchers and practitioners,
- Advance resilience and health through environmental, historical, and cultural stewardship,
- Commit ourselves to the rigor and passion of professional practice and the power of design thinking, and
- Pursue meaningful and enjoyable work.



GOALS

The College of Design implements NC State's strategic goals from the Wolfpack 2030 strategic plan as follows:

1. Empower students for a lifetime of success and impact.
2. Ensure preeminence in research, scholarship, innovation and collaboration.
3. Expand and advance our engagement with and service to North Carolina and beyond, defining the standard for a 21st-century land-grant university.
4. Champion a culture of belonging and well-being in all we do.
5. Improve university effectiveness through transformative technologies, cutting-edge processes and actionable data.
6. Lead in developing innovative partnerships, entrepreneurial thinking and applied problem-solving.
7. Elevate the national and global reputation and visibility of NC State.



GOAL 1

Empower students for a lifetime of success and impact.

PRIMARY OBJECTIVES

Educate students to be successful designers:

Measures:

- Number of student design awards
- Keep curriculum and learning outcomes current
- Maintain the breadth of design education through common curricula and experiences
- Maintain accreditation
- Provide opportunities to develop students' professional skills, ethics, leadership, and citizenship

Support students in job placement to begin their career:

Measures:

- Expand participation and disciplinary representation at the job fair
- Hold workshops and portfolio reviews
- Monitor future plan survey responses

Provide an education that prepares students for a complex world:

Measures:

- Expose students to their profession through guest lectures and critics
- Enable access to a broad range of electives
- Promote coursework that increases critical thinking skills
- Number of students engaged in enrichment activities



GOAL 1

Empower students for a lifetime of success and impact.

PRIMARY OBJECTIVES

Engage students in the national and international design dialogue:

Measures:

- Number of students engaging and exceling in the dialogue such as study abroad, conferences, competitions, publications, societies, or internships
- Attracting and engaging with students from North Carolina and beyond.
- Note courses addressing international issues

Support lifelong learning opportunities:

Measures:

- Establish certificate programs
- Number of opportunities / CEUs that are offered
- Number of offerings in certificate programs for non-degree seeking student

Create awareness for students to maintain their connection with the college:

Measures:

- Establish a network of recent alumni

Support the life cycle of alumni:

Measures:

- Conduct regional alumni events
- Identify needs of graduates in advanced careers
- Number of applications and graduates from the DDes program
- Track job placement, service, career paths, and compensation of graduates at 5- and 10-years post-graduation



GOAL 2

Ensure preeminence in research, scholarship, innovation and collaboration.

PRIMARY OBJECTIVES

Broaden the impact of research, innovation and scholarship:

Measures:

- Disseminate findings in publications, conferences and forums beyond the design discipline.
- Increase the work that has impact and is world changing
- Encourage global / international collaboration

Promote funded research:

Measures:

- Assess the structure and organization of faculty SFR
- Monitor facilities and administration return

Recognize collaborative scholarship:

Measures:

- Seek larger multi-PI grants
- Encourage multi-disciplinary projects with multiple PIs

Increase scholarly production:

Measures:

- Recruit PhD students who can assist with teaching and actively support scholarship
- Recruit active researchers and scholars to the faculty



GOAL 3

Expand and advance our engagement with and service to North Carolina and beyond, defining the standard for a 21st century land-grant university.

PRIMARY OBJECTIVES

Frame a statewide design engagement network:

Create engagement activities directly with high schools, institutions and organizations

Measures:

- Increase engagement and outreach from schools that receive Title I funding or are located in a Tier 1 or Tier 2 County based on NC County Distress Rankings
- Document engagement activities of faculty, staff and students, including through labs and initiatives.
- Design projects to support the phases of designing, assessing, and disseminating
- Provide training on the phases of an engagement framework

Engage multiple communities:

Use design to empower communities through responsible and ethical decision-making

Measures:

- Number of communities, people served
- Number of recognitions of community engagement
- Number of educational opportunities



GOAL 3

Expand and advance our engagement with and service to North Carolina and beyond, defining the standard for a 21st century land-grant university.

PRIMARY OBJECTIVES

Engage various industries:

Serve the needs of a wide variety of industry partners through research and collaboration

Measures:

- Number of industry partners engaged by sectors, such as high-tech, clean manufacturing
- Number of educational opportunities provided for industry and collaboratory partners
- Inform Leaders Council recruitment with industries served



GOAL 4

Champion a culture of belonging and well-being in all we do.

PRIMARY OBJECTIVES

Promote individual wellbeing:

Measures:

- Support for faculty and staff development
- Adjust workloads of faculty and staff
- Provide resources to support health and well-being of the college faculty, staff and students
- Advocate for compensation commensurate with peer institutions

Promote community representation, well-being and belonging:

Measures:

- Expand opportunities for student access, recruitment, enrollment, retention, success and completion
- Create opportunities for belonging while fostering an environment of trust and respect
- Integrate an array of worldviews and perspectives into design education
- Conduct curriculum reviews that ensure multiple viewpoints are considered
- Ensure role models in the college (i.e. faculty, staff, speakers, mentors) understand and are reflective of the student body they support



GOAL 5

Improve university effectiveness through transformative technologies, cutting-edge processes and actionable data.

PRIMARY OBJECTIVES

Clarify college and department criteria, policies and procedures:

Measures:

- Survey how efforts are helping users navigate day-to-day operations

Engage in financial and human resources best practices:

Measures:

- Adhere to college deadlines to meet university requirements
- Communicate and document required HR training
- Acquire financial software to manage financial data
- Create a director-level position to assist all HR related issues and maintain data to inform the college's hiring plan

Seek philanthropic resources to support the college's changing aspirations and needs:

Measures:

- Meet the annual university goals for the college
- Develop strategic relationships to connect with the college
- Maintain a robust pool of prospects
- Communicate Development and External Relations (DER) operational focus to the college
- Continue refinement of Leaders Council structure



GOAL 5

Improve university effectiveness through transformative technologies, cutting-edge processes and actionable data.

PRIMARY OBJECTIVES

Align organizational structures to support the college's changing aspirations and needs:

Measures:

- Identify structures and databases of relevant data for collection and analysis
- Identify ways to simplify the collection and/or entry of data
- Identify, document, and unify the technology and capabilities in the college and university to increase awareness, access and utilization of resources



GOAL 6

Lead in developing innovative partnerships, entrepreneurial thinking and applied problem solving.

PRIMARY OBJECTIVES

Collaborate with and engage other colleges, universities and external constituents with design and research:

Measures:

- Number of partnerships
- Evaluate partnerships for leadership opportunities
- Publish findings of the collaborative work
- Increase number of design curricular offerings to non-designers

Align facilities and technology with contemporary work processes supporting research and growth:

Measures:

- Benchmark COD facilities against other college, design programs and universities
- Identify opportunities for improvement / upgrade
- Obtain support needed for new processes, equipment and technologies
- Update existing equipment and technology



GOAL 7

Elevate the national and global reputation and visibility of NC State.

PRIMARY OBJECTIVES

Measures:

- Provide the data to support the university Quacquarelli Symonds (QS) metrics

Elevate the national and international impact of conferences, workshops and symposia:

Measures:

- Participate in existing conferences, workshops and symposia
- Bring impactful individuals to college sponsored events
- Adjust staffing and resources to support larger, more impactful events
- Promote and market events to actively elevate awareness
- Provide resources for the international dissemination of scholarship

Disseminate college scholarly and engagement works to multiple audiences through multiple channels:

Measures:

- Document and communicate the process to achieve dissemination through multiple outlets
- Expand coverage into other platforms and channels (i.e., local news, contemporary outlets, competitions and festivals)

This document was revised in April 2025 in response to revisions to the NC State University Strategic Plan and in alignment with the UNC System's Equality Policy.

NC STATE College of Design

DISCIPLINES AND PROGRAMS OFFERED AT NC STATE COLLEGE OF DESIGN:

Architecture | Art + Design | Design Studies | Graphic Design | Industrial Design
Landscape Architecture | Doctor of Design | PhD in Design

ENROLLMENT NUMBERS:

Total enrollment: 931 | Undergraduate: 628 | Graduate: 303
Faculty-Student Ratio: 1:10

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