

# NC STATE Design

## 2024-2025 Annual Report

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*The College of Design serves the citizens of North Carolina by providing outstanding, accessible, public design education while raising the college and university profile.*

**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.

This annual report highlights our efforts and success by programs' national rankings, against our goals outlined in our strategic plan, changes to our service environment, advances in instructional programs and research, selected faculty and student successes, and recommendations for the future.

### Brief Program Rankings:

- #9, [Best Bachelor's Degrees in Creative/Design](#), College Rank, 2025
- #39, [Best Colleges for Design in America](#), Niche, 2025
- #1, [Best Schools for Bachelor's Students to Study Environmental Design in the US](#), College Factual, 2025
- #18, [Best Architecture & Related Services Bachelor's Degree Schools](#), College Factual, 2025
- #4, [Best Graphic Design Bachelor's Degrees](#), College Rank, 2025
- #7, [Best Graphic Design Degree Programs](#), Intelligent.com, 2025
- #20, [Best Bachelor's in Graphic Design Degree Programs](#), Tech Guide, 2024
- #23, [Best UX/UI Design Schools in the US](#), Edurank, 2025
- #25, [Best Graphic Design Schools in the US](#), College Factual, 2025
- #6, [Best Colleges for Industrial Design and Product Design](#), Collegetransitions.com, 2025
- #20, [Best Universities for Product / Industrial Design in the US](#), Edurank, 2025
- #23, [Best College for Industrial and Product Design in the US](#), College Raptor, 2025
- #17, [Best Universities for Landscape Architecture in the US](#), Edurank, 2025
- #2, [Best Bachelor's Degrees in Game Design](#), College Rank, 2025
- #5, [Best Bachelor's Degrees in Art and Design](#), College Rank, 2025

- #10, [Top 25 Animation Schools and Colleges in the South](#), Animation Career Review, 2025
- #51, [Best Art and Design Schools in the US](#), Edurank, 2025

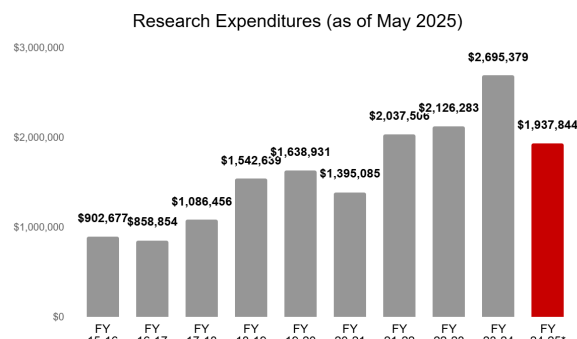
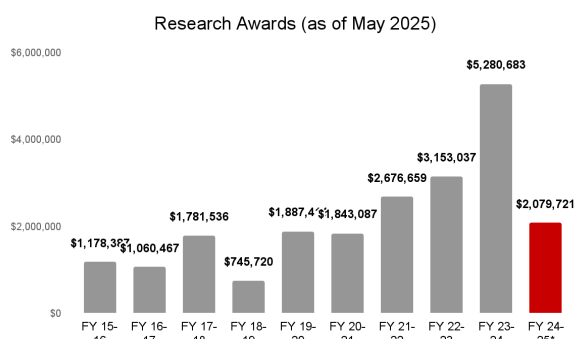
### **Goal 1: Empower Students for a Lifetime of Success and Impact**

- In 2024, the College of Design enrolled 218 undergraduate and 81 graduate students. The total student population is 958.
- Students in the College of Design prepare to become successful designers by applying hands-on learning in sponsored studios, where they tackle real-world design challenges with leading companies. This year, the college partnered with companies such as Fidelity Labs, SAS Institute and Under Armour, totaling \$95,000 in grant funding.
- As part of the DUDA Visiting Scholar Program, the School of Architecture and the Department of Landscape Architecture + Environmental Planning (LAEP) launched an urban design and architecture studio based in Mexico City. The studio offered our students the opportunity to visit Mexico City to explore the urban fabric and engage with UNAM design students. The studio was the first of its kind to invite students to witness urbanization, environmental and social challenges, and to consider urban design solutions in a new territory.
- Andrew Holland, a student practitioner in the Doctor of Design program, was selected to participate in the Bloomberg Harvard City Leadership Initiative. This prestigious program, organized by the Bloomberg Center for Cities at Harvard University in collaboration with Harvard Kennedy School, Harvard Business School and Bloomberg Philanthropies, aims to equip mayors and senior city officials to address complex urban challenges and enhance residents' quality of life.
- An interdisciplinary team of students from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, including NC State architecture students Daniel Knorr and Elle Newkirk, won the 2025 Bank of America Affordable Housing Challenge. The Affordable Housing Challenge is a three-month-long academic case competition for students to propose a housing development for low-income residents. It has been held by Bank of America, a major provider of financing for affordable housing projects, since 1992. The competition educates the students on the complexity of developing and financing affordable housing projects. It highlights student proposals that exemplify affordable housing development feasible in the current economic and fiscal climate and that demonstrate excellence in design and sustainability.
- Architecture and Media Arts, Design and Technology students won the national-level Data Storytelling Award from the Association of Public Data Users (APDU). They gave a public webinar on *Squeezed Out: Mapping Diverse Dimensions of Raleigh, NC's Housing Crisis*.

- MADTech students created an arcade experience called Maestro's Theatre that was recently accepted into Super Magfest's Indie Arcade Exhibition. The students designed and built an arcade cabinet and accompanying game, made in Unreal with a retro visual style and hand-painted textures. The music and gaming festival took place in January 2025.

## Goal 2: Ensure Preeminence in Research, Scholarship, Innovation and Collaboration

- Faculty continued to further their scholarship and were involved in 53 publications, including books (3), book chapters (5), publications (14), papers (28) and secured contracts (1). They also participated in artist exhibitions (1) and created films (1).
- Faculty in the College of Design continue to expand their funded research and scholarship. In 2024-2025, the college received \$121,114 in F&A funds from the Office of Research and Innovation. Of those funds, 20% were returned to the dean's office, 45% were returned to the College of Design research office, and 35% were returned to principal investigators (PIs).
- From FY23-24 to FY24-25, there was a 61% decrease in the number of new awards received and a 28% decrease in research expenditures.



- On November 21, the College of Design's doctoral programs brought together students from the Doctor of Design and PhD in Design programs to showcase their outstanding research in a poster session and review titled "Design Probes: Research Strands." Students bridge academia and practice across diverse design fields, and the event showcased the collaborative ecosystem that spans the college's four departments and fosters a vibrant environment for interdisciplinary perspectives.
- Professor Gavin Smith led the creation of the International Learning Lab, which is focused on the creation of partnerships between the US, Australia, New Zealand and the UK. Current efforts include the creation of the International Community of Practice, a consortium of

international partners from the US, Australia and New Zealand focused on the topic of Community-Led Relocation. Terms of reference have been established, which outline participant expectations, roles, responsibilities, and objectives.

- Matthew Peterson (PI) and Helen Armstrong (Co-PI) recently wrapped up a Department of Defense (DoD) project, “Developing Visual Conventions for Explainable LLM Outputs in Intelligence Analysis Summaries.” In collaboration with the Laboratory for Analytic Sciences (LAS), they conceived of a Multiple Agent Validation System that would permit intelligence analysts to evaluate AI-generated summaries of intelligence data.
- Professor Wayne Place was granted US Patent number US12209719B2: Optical elements and systems for reflecting direct beam sunlight while admitting diffuse skylight through building apertures.

### **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**

- Profs. Andy Fox and David Hill led a collaborative, funded studio in partnership with the Town of Manteo, NC. ARC and LAEP students in the studio worked together with stakeholders to envision a more sustainable and resilient town. Students addressed urban design issues to create innovative landscape and architectural solutions that will address future climate change and sea-level rise. Student projects were exhibited at the end of the semester at Manteo's May First Friday event and the Coastal Studies Institute's open house.
- In the spring of 2024, PhD student and instructor Erin White brought students from his D101 Design Thinking course to solve multiple challenges faced at Green Heffa Farms. The students, many of whom are not design majors, addressed challenges such as storage issues, workflow efficiency and social media strategy.

### **Goal 4: Champion a Culture of Belonging and Well-Being in All We Do**

- Organizers of a mental health initiative aimed at targeting the college's First Year Experience program to provide emotional literacy and mental health resilience gave a faculty training workshop at the American Collegiate Schools of Architecture National Conference (ACSA), and presented two conference papers at ACSA and the National Conference on the Beginning Design Student (NCBDS).
- The School of Architecture won the AIAS Outstanding Learning and Culture Award, a national award that speaks to the community of our students.

### **Goal 5: Improve University Effectiveness Through Transformative Technologies, Cutting-Edge Processes and Actionable Data**

- The college moved its digital makerspace from Brooks 202A to Leazar 230 to increase capacity for 3D printing.
- A wellness room was added to Brooks Hall. This reservable space prioritizes wellness for lactation, prayer, and any other activity in which the user may need a quiet, private space.
- Further investments have been made in the Virtual Production Lab, allowing coursework to be taught in the space and opening the space to outside collaborators.

### **Goal 6: Lead in Developing Innovative Partnerships, Entrepreneurial Thinking and Applied Problem-Solving**

- College of Design hosted the 40th National Conference on the Beginning Design Student Feb. 27-March 2 welcoming over 230 faculty and administrators from across the country to campus. The conference was co-chaired by Tania Allen, Sara Queen and Patricia Morgado, and the theme was Tool(ing), showcasing NC State's long legacy in developing and integrating analog and digital tools within design. NCBDS is the premier conference focused on beginning design pedagogy. NC State was selected as a host through a competitive peer-reviewed process.
- The College of Design signed an MOU with the College of Architecture, Universidad Nacional Autónoma De México (UNAM), to promote academic and research activities between the two institutions, affirming the value of international collaboration. As the largest research university in Latin America, situated in Mexico City with 22 million people, working with UNAM will extend the college's involvement in global issues focused on urbanization and environmental challenges, and will increase NC State's presence in Latin America and the global arena.
- The City of Durham has over 600 "paper streets" - narrow strips of land planned for use as a street, but never built. College of Design students partnered with the city's Office of Performance and Innovation to bring new life to these previously underutilized spaces, envisioning micro-parks, art installations, educational outdoor spaces and valuable pedestrian corridors.
- LAS is a collaboration between NC State University and the National Security Agency. NC State College of Design students worked with LAS to learn how intelligence analysts at different stages of their careers might investigate a fictitious bombing scenario. As part of their final

project, the students were tasked with designing an interface to facilitate an analyst's investigation into the scenario.

### **Goal 7: Elevate the National and Global Reputation and Visibility of NC State**

- Faculty have shared their expertise on media outlets including USA Today, the New Yorker, Fast Company, Design360, the DIRT, Landscape Architecture Magazine, The Field, Carolina Public Press, This Old House, WKNC, the Raleigh News & Observer, PBS NC, and CBS's America ByDesign.
- Faculty member Jarrett Fuller hosts a podcast called Scratching the Surface, focused on interviewing designers across disciplines and exploring the intersection of design criticism and practice.
- The College of Design has promoted the successes of its faculty via its website, social media, and to its alumni base.
  - Monthly newsletter sent to 8,454 alumni and friends, with an open rate of 47%.
  - Annual magazine sent to 8,200 alumni and friends.
  - Social media followers: Instagram (8,300), Facebook (4,153), and LinkedIn (3,416). This past year, the communications team targeted a growth increase of 8% in Instagram followers and 10% in LinkedIn followers. The college exceeded its targets, experiencing 8.6% growth on Instagram and 29.8% growth on LinkedIn.

### **Changes to Service Environment**

- With support from an NC State Foundation Grant, the college has focused on improving mental health and well-being in the First Year Experience (FYE) studio by offering a wellness-informed curriculum designed to bridge the transition between high school and college. The curriculum focused on peer-to-peer collaboration to help students regain social skills.

### **Instructional Program Advances**

- No major instructional program advances to note.

### **Research**

Key research activity:

- Moore, Robin, Michigan Department of Natural Resources, Parks and Recreation Division, Natural Play and Learning Development Program, \$133,336
- Delcambre, Carla, NC State Parks | Design Strategies Study: Phase One, \$150,000

- Gulling, Dana, Integrating CMU into Architecture Design Studio Curriculum (2024-2026), \$99,756
- Cosco, Nilda, Grow Outdoors - GO SC, \$181,475

## Faculty

- Faculty were the recipients of numerous awards, including those from professional organizations and educational institutions, and spoke at conferences, panels and other speaking engagements. Please see a brief summary of notable achievements:
  - Faculty were the recipients of awards (19).
  - Faculty were involved in speaking engagements, including keynote speakers (4), guest lecturers (7), conference presentations (17), lectures (7), panel discussions (8) and other speaking engagements (10).
  - Faculty held leadership roles as jurors (2), on boards (4) and on task forces (2).

## Students

- Students in the college were the recipients of both academic and professional awards. Please see a brief summary by discipline below:
  - **Architecture:** Five student teams won AIA Aspire Awards, eight student teams won AIANC Student Design Awards, and students won first and second place in the Fentress Global Challenge. Maggie Kroening received the CREW Network Foundation Scholarship.
  - **Graphic & Experience Design:** Students were nominated for a UX Design Award for their work in a sponsored studio with LAS. Olha Novikova won a gold award from the Collegiate Advertising Award for her design work with Campus Enterprises. Two students were selected as 2024 Social Innovation Fellows.
  - **Landscape Architecture and Environmental Planning:** Two student teams won ASLA Awards for 2024, and two students received the ASLA Honor Award for design excellence for 2025. One student won the 2025 NC ASLA architecture award for excellence. Melissa Dominguez won an award at the NC State Sisterhood Dinner. Kelby Stallings was selected as a LAD Olmsted Scholar.
  - **Media Arts, Design and Technology:** Graduate Student Amber Jonshon won an award for her project at the SONA Immersive Storytelling Festival at Carnegie Mellon University.
  - **PhD in Design:** Cornelius Ojo was chosen as a SECASC Global Change Research Fellow and was offered a place in the KIETS Climate Leaders Program. Juwan Ha received a travel grant for the national ASHRAE Conference. Hossein Saedi serves as a member of the board of the Journal of Landscape Architecture and Regional Planning.

- **Doctor of Design:** Andrew Holland was selected to participate in the Bloomberg Harvard City Leadership Initiative. Kaleena Sales was invited to be a juror for 365: AIGA Year in Design and Flux by AIGA Baltimore, two nationwide student design competitions.

## Fundraising

- As of 6.30.2025, the college has raised \$1,243,020 in philanthropic gifts for FY25. The college had a successful Day of Giving in 2025, raising \$193,688 from 283 gifts, receiving 100% board participation and winning two challenges throughout the day.
- Notable major gifts for this fiscal year included the following:
  - \$100,000 from Linda Warren Jones to the David F. Jones Memorial Scholarship Endowment
  - \$100,000 from Stephen and Lisa Robertson to the Stephen Robertson Design Scholarship
  - \$60,000 in total commitments from Larry and Betsy Best to create the Larry Best Graduate Design Scholarship Endowment and a current use fund
  - \$50,000 from David and Jane Van Galen to create the David M. and Jane A. Van Galen Graduate Fellowship Fund Endowment.

## Administration

- The Executive Director of Philanthropy left the college, and the position remains vacant.

## Recommendations and Concerns for the Future

- **Concerns:**
  - Accommodating 18% growth in undergraduate enrollments - space, equipment and safety
  - Acquisition of emerging technologies such as virtual production and digital fabrication
  - Changes to federal funding models
  - Changes to state funding models
  - Update Design Library to serve current needs.
  - Multiple faculty retirements (approx 25%) leading to faculty turnover.
  - Hiring an associate director for the Natural Learning Institute (NLI) has been impacted by recent hiring decisions.
- **Recommendations:**
  - Approve Undergraduate Program Enhancement Fee
  - Respond to accessibility concerns identified in accreditation reports.