

ANNUAL REPORT

July 2022- June 2023

**UNC**Rural

About UNC Rural

OUR MISSION

To promote and strengthen existing community-campus partnerships and align them with the needs of rural communities and to facilitate new partnerships for a thriving rural North Carolina.

OUR VISION

To connect, support and engage community-campus partnerships to advance the well-being of North Carolina's rural communities.

OUR HISTORY & COMMITMENTS

UNC Rural was founded in 2019. It began as an Office of the Provost initiative created during the Carolina Next: Innovations in Public Good strategic planning process.

The work of UNC Rural is integral to UNC's values and mission to "enhance the quality of life for all people in the state."

UNC Rural is intentional in our efforts to be a pan-university resource and host for rural community-academic partnerships. We strive to build and maintain strong relationships with external partners in business, education, health, government and other key sectors.

We are committed to being a valuable resource for rural communities through partnerships.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

- 2 ABOUT UNC RURAL
- 3 SERVING NORTH CAROLINA
- 4 UNC RURAL STAFF
- 5 PROJECTS
- 7 COMMUNICATIONS OVERVIEW
- 8 LOOKING AHEAD

Serving North Carolina

OUR RURAL NC COMMUNITIES

UNC-Chapel Hill is a national leader in community-engaged scholarship and UNC faculty and staff are part of community-academic partnerships in all 100 counties in North Carolina.

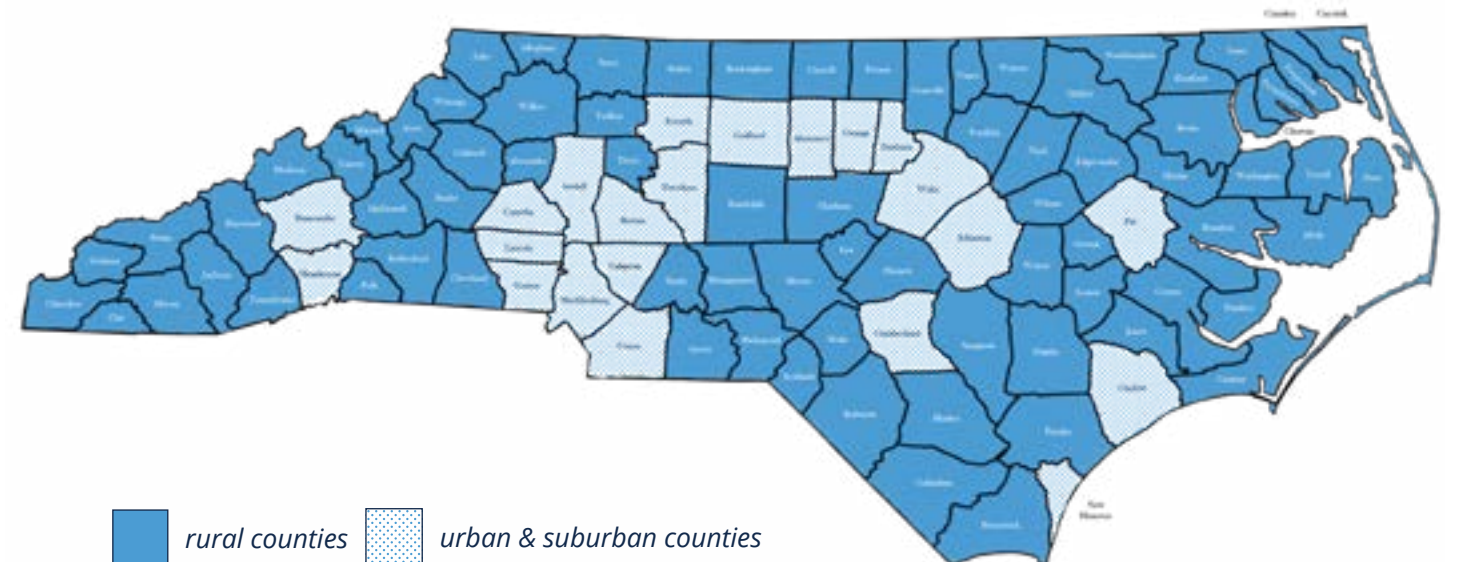
UNC Rural is uniquely positioned to increase the university's impact and ultimately foster greater well-being in rural communities through partnerships based in the value of reciprocity.

78 Rural counties in North Carolina

100 Counties in North Carolina

1 in 3 of NC residents live in rural areas.	#2 Rural population in the United States	#1 American Indian population east of the Mississippi River	40% of first-year UNC students (2022) are from rural areas.
1 in 5 of rural adults 25-44 have a college degree or credential.	3.7M people in NC live in rural areas.	8 State-recognized American Indian tribes	45% of rural NC residents under 18 are people of color.

NC COUNTIES AT A GLANCE



UNC Rural staff



Giselle Corbie, M.D., M.Sc.

Co-Director

Giselle is the UNC Vice Provost for Faculty Affairs and Kenan Distinguished Professor of Medicine, Co-Director of the Center for Health Equity Research and Associate Provost for Rural Initiatives.



Jada Brooks, PhD, MPSH, RN, FAAN

Co-Director

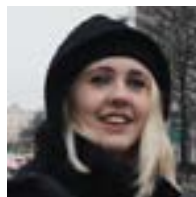
Jada is Associate Professor and Ross Distinguished Term Scholar in the UNC School of Nursing, and adjunct faculty in the Environmental Sciences and Engineering Department in the Gillings School of Global Public Health. She lives on the traditional homelands of the Lumbee, Tuscarora and Cheraw in Robeson County, NC, where she serves on the Lumbee Tribe of North Carolina IRB.



Adam Sotak

Associate Director

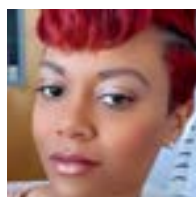
Adam joined UNC Rural in early 2023 after nearly 25 years serving in various roles in the nonprofit sector in North Carolina. He earned his BSW from Appalachian State University and his MSW from UNC-Chapel Hill.



Shelby McLamb

Communications Assistant

Shelby promotes and shares UNC Rural opportunities, resources and partnerships. She recently graduated from UNC-Chapel Hill. She studied communications and media and journalism, and served as a social media intern for A Different Kind of Leader podcast hosted by Giselle Corbie.



Carissa Whitehurst

Executive Assistant

A North Carolina native, Carissa graduated from Guilford Technical Community College in 2013 with an A.A. in General Education. She brings years of administrative experience from her previous role as an administrative assistant where she worked with faculty, staff and students.

INTERNAL ADVISORY BOARD

Anita Brown-Graham, Chair, ncIMPACT Initiative, UNC School of Government

Margaret Barrett, Carolina Center for Public Service

Meredith Bazemore, Office of Rural Initiatives, UNC School of Medicine

Lynn White Blanchard, Carolina Center for Public Service

Martin Brinkley, UNC School of Law

Carolyn Fryberger, NCGrowth, UNC Kenan-Flagler Business School

Jill V. Hamm, UNC School of Education

Mark Holmes, Sheps Center for Health Services Research, UNC Gillings School of Global Public Health

Tyler Mulligan, UNC School of Government

Gary Nelson, UNC School of Social Work

Terry L. Noah, UNC Children's Research Institute, UNC School of Medicine

Mollie Ashe Scott, UNC Eshelman School of Pharmacy

Projects

TAR HEEL BUS TOUR SPECIAL PROJECT FUNDS

UNC Rural funds community-academic teams to expand ideas and collaborations sparked by faculty participation in the Tar Heel Bus Tour.

\$5-10,000

Award per recipient

Engaging Pharmacy Students
Conetoe Family Life Center Summer Camp for Underserved Youth

From Bertie County to Carolina
expanding Project Uplift, Uplift PLUS, Carolina Male Empowerment Network

Health Promotion in Rural Northeastern NC
Tyrell County Schools

Community spaces collaborative mapping
Princeville

Teaching the Tar Heel Bus Tour
Racial Literacy Curriculum

Citizen Science Biodiversity Monitoring
Grandfather Mountain



CAROLINA ENGAGEMENT WEEK

600+
attendees

Carolina Engagement Week celebrates public engagement through events, workshops, stories and experiences to highlight UNC and community partner collaborations across North Carolina.

The Carolina Center for Public Service leads Engagement Week. UNC Rural proudly co-sponsors. With other partners, we host and promote the event.

In 2023, we helped plan multiple sessions focused on rural communities. We also helped develop Engagement Week promotional materials.

25
events

We are committed to continuing support of Engagement Week, with a goal of increasing participation by rural partners.

Projects *continued*

WHOLE COMMUNITY CONNECTION

Whole Community Connection (WCC) is a partnership between UNC Rural and the Office of Interprofessional Education and Practice (IPEP) with financial support from the Kenan Charitable Trust.

WCC supports leaders advancing health equity in rural North Carolina. It increases local power to focus on community priorities and co-creates a model of relationship-centered engagement.

WCC teams are community members working with academic UNC partners. WCC supports partnerships based in Robeson or Edgecombe counties, North Carolina.

WCC PARTNERS

- HOPE Alternative Learning Program THRIVE (Tarboro)
- Robeson Whole Together
- Reducing Sexual Violence and Increasing Sexual Health Equity in the Intellectual/Developmental Disability Community in Robeson County
- Robeson Parent 2 Parent
- Supporting Child Mental Health in the Robeson Lumbree Community
- Tarboro Community Garden

\$45,000

Award per team for one-year projects and leadership development



MAPPING UNC COMMUNITY-ACADEMIC PARTNERSHIPS

UNC Rural is committed to collaborating with others at UNC to create a comprehensive and sustainable foundation for understanding the wide range of engagement initiatives. These initiatives impact thousands of UNC faculty, staff, students, schools, departments, centers and institutes, and their community partners. That's why we're expanding our role in hosting UNC colleagues to discuss how to build and strengthen community-academic partnerships in rural areas.

To move forward, we're part of a design thinking team led by Innovate Carolina. This creative problem-solving team is exploring ways to better map and coordinate UNC community-academic partnerships.

UNC Rural, in collaboration with its partners, is looking at existing mapping and database models, brainstorming new ideas and working to create an actionable pilot project during FY24 that can be evaluated and adapted.

Key leaders in the design thinking process include the Carolina Center for Public Service, the Office of the Vice Chancellor for Research and the UNC School of Data Science and Society.

Communications overview

COMMUNICATING VALUE

We share the unique value of UNC Rural to internal and external audiences and amplify the impact of UNC-Chapel Hill's partnerships with North Carolina's rural communities.

In FY24, UNC Rural will grow our communications capacity by hiring a full-time communications specialist. With growing staff and capacity, we will broaden our reach and raise awareness of our work.

In addition to ongoing communications activities, we will:

- Conduct a communications audit.
- Update our branding guide.
- Establish a robust rural media contact list.

HELP US GROW



Follow us on Twitter
[@uncrural](https://twitter.com/uncrural)



Get our newsletter
go.unc.edu/UNCRuralNews



Visit us online
go.unc.edu/UNCRural



In February 2023, Adam Sotak and Shelby McLamb represented UNC Rural at the 44th Annual Minority Health Conference, hosted by the Minority Student Caucus in the UNC Gillings School of Global Public Health.

Looking ahead 2023-2024

OUR GUIDING COMMITMENTS

During the 2023 Spring Retreat, participants established external and internal guiding commitments.

External

- Increase awareness of UNC Rural's mission and work within UNC and rural community partners.
- Strengthen existing programming.
- Enrich UNC faculty and staff by increasing understanding and skills related to rural "engaged scholarship."
- Engage rural students better through existing partnerships.
- Increase partnerships and focus available UNC resources to rural communities.

Internal

- Build communications capacity.
- Continue building and receiving feedback on our working model that leans on the Thrive Rural Framework.
- Host two to four Internal Advisory Board (IAB) meetings and strengthen the board.
- Identify clear metrics of success and implement evaluation measures.

OUR FOCUS AREAS

During the 2023 Spring Retreat, participants established six key focus areas for FY24.

Operations & Fundraising

- Regularly convene the UNC Rural Internal Advisory Board and grow its membership.
- Explore the creation of an external advisory board consisting of community partners.
- Hire a new full-time communications specialist (summer 2023).
- Assess the need for additional staff or interns and move forward with hiring.
- Create multi-year fundraising plan to supplement existing financial support.

Communications

- Complete a communications audit.
- Better inform UNC students about job and internship opportunities in rural areas.
- Establish and communicate our definition of rural and promote it across UNC.
- Develop a marketing plan to promote UNC Rural to internal and external audiences.
- Develop digital and printed materials to support existing and new programs.
- Collect and share rural stories, deeps dives into rural narratives.
- Update the website and grow social media followings.

Program Evaluation

- Ask our partners in rural areas and at UNC what metrics matter to them and develop "metrics that matter" for programs.
- Collaborate with Abacus Evaluation to develop and report our metrics.
- Share lessons learned and evaluation outcomes with internal and external partners.

Rural Community Engagement

- Through research, interviews and surveys clarify UNC Rural processes and strategy for soliciting and responding to community input (ex. Thrive Rural Framework).
- Sponsor local events, giving UNC partners venues to hear from rural community leaders about their needs.
- Support and participate in the 2023 Tar Heel Bus Tour and special project funds.
- Continue involvement with WCC in Robeson and Edgecombe counties.
- Host and connect rural partners with UNC colleagues as opportunities arise.

Strategic Asset Mapping

- Create a visualization charting current UNC Rural partnerships and collaborations.
- Continue the design thinking process for mapping UNC community-academic partnerships.
- Begin building a database of UNC Hill faculty, staff and programs with expertise in rural issues.
- Research and identify effective ways to connect rural communities with available UNC resources.

Faculty & Student Engagement

- Survey faculty and students about rural mindsets and experiences.
- Develop and implement an "engaged scholarship" webinar series for UNC faculty and staff.
- Establish stronger partnerships with various UNC schools and departments.
- Remain an active Carolina Engagement Week partner.



In April 2023, UNC Rural staff members, Internal Advisory Board members and partners gathered for the UNC Rural Spring Retreat.

Participants did a UNC Rural situational analysis, prioritized upcoming projects and began creating plans for work tasks in focus areas.



323 MacNider Hall
Campus Box 7240
333 South Columbia Street
Chapel Hill, NC 27599-7240

919.843.8271 | uncrural@unc.edu

uncrural.sites.unc.edu