



THE
**UNIVERSITY OF
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SYSTEM**

NORTH CAROLINA TEACHING FELLOWS PROGRAM: ANNUAL REPORT

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University of North Carolina System
Chapel Hill, North Carolina

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Background

The North Carolina Teaching Fellows Program was reestablished by the North Carolina General Assembly in the 2017 State Budget (S.L 2017-57) with the purpose to “recruit, prepare, and support students residing in or attending institutions of higher education located in North Carolina for preparation as highly effective STEM or special education teachers in the State’s public schools.”

The legislation also established the North Carolina Teaching Fellows Commission (Commission), a 14-member body tasked with providing program oversight. In accordance with the parameters set by the General Assembly, the Commission was tasked with the responsibility of selecting five educator preparation programs to partner with the program.

Per G.S. 116-209.62(f), the Commission was directed to evaluate educator preparation programs and use the designated legislative criteria to create an application process to select five educator preparation programs as partners for the program. After careful evaluation, the following institutions were selected: Elon University, Meredith College, NC State University, the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, and the University of North Carolina at Charlotte.

During the 2020 Legislative Session, HB 1096 (Session Law 2020-56) was adopted, which authorized the expansion of the program to three additional EPP partner institutions and in doing so, directed the NC Teaching Fellows Commission to make a “diverse selection.” In responding to that directive, the Teaching Fellows Commission modified the rubric used to evaluate applications from prospective EPP partners to include the following qualitative metrics (in addition to other assessment measures):

- Diversity of EPP Program Admissions
- Diversity of EPP Program Completers
- Geographic Diversity
- HBCU/MCI Institution Status

After careful evaluation and independent scoring, the three institutions with the highest scores were Fayetteville State University, North Carolina A&T State University, and the University of North Carolina at Pembroke. Each of these institutions welcomed their first Teaching Fellows for the 2022-2023 academic year.

Program Overview

For the first year of the program’s reauthorization, the Teaching Fellows application opened on December 4, 2017, with an application deadline of January 15, 2018. For the 2018-2019 application cycle, a total of 232 applications were received. After an initial review, applicants progressed to finalist interviews, which were held in six locations around the state over two weeks (virtual interviews were also provided). On April 1, 2018, the NC Teaching Fellows Commission offered awards to 110 applicants. In total, 79 students joined Teaching Fellows as part of the initial 2018-2019 cohort.

For the 2019-2020 application cycle, a total of 220 applications were submitted. After initial review, finalist interviews were again held across the state. After a comprehensive evaluation of finalists’ applications and interview scores, the Teaching Fellows Commission decided to offer 133 awards. In total, 101 students joined Teaching Fellows as part the 2019-2020 cohort.

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For the 2020-2021 application cycle, a total of 189 applications were submitted. After initial review, finalist interviews were again held across the state. After a comprehensive evaluation of finalists' applications and interview scores, the Teaching Fellows Commission chose to offer 114 awards. In total, 87 students joined Teaching Fellows as part of the 2020-2021 cohort.

For the 2021-2022 application cycle, a total of 156 applications were submitted. After initial review, finalist interviews were held virtually, due to COVID-19 concerns. After comprehensive evaluation, the Teaching Fellows Commission chose to offer 118 awards. In total, 88 students joined Teaching Fellows as part of the 2021-2022 cohort.

For the 2022-2023 application cycle, a total of 125 applications were submitted. After initial review, finalist interviews were held virtually. After comprehensive evaluation, the Teaching Fellows Commission chose to offer 119 awards. In total, 106 students joined Teaching Fellows as part of the 2022-23 cohort.

Program Enrichment

A key element of the Teaching Fellows program is providing meaningful enrichment opportunities to all program participants. The enrichment model for Teaching Fellows is two-fold – under the direction of a campus director, each of the five partner institutions have designed an enrichment framework, which is designed to build community in a smaller setting among a Fellow's peers who attend the same institution. The campus-level enrichment opportunities are intentionally designed to be unique, allowing each institution to align to their respective program's particular areas of focus and to build organic partnerships within their own respective communities.

An additional layer of support is provided by state-level enrichment opportunities, which bring together the collective group of Fellows from all five partner institutions. These events are designed to build a strong sense of community among all Fellows and to highlight particular topics to ensure a strong and cohesive vision for the broader mission and purpose for the Teaching Fellows program. The first enrichment event was held for the 2018-2019 class of Teaching Fellows on April 5-6, 2019 at the North Carolina Center for the Advancement of Teaching in Cullowhee, North Carolina. Fellows gathered for a two-day seminar that focused on teacher leadership, professionalism, and building strong classroom culture.

The second enrichment event, which included the 2018-2019 and the 2019-2020 class of Fellows, was held on September 14-15, 2019 at the Rizzo Conference Center in Chapel Hill, North Carolina. The event agenda provided opportunities for teambuilding activities, a Q&A panel with beginning teachers and their mentors from the New Teacher Support Program, an in-depth workshop on cultural bias and social emotional learning, and a session that featured the 2018 and 2019 North Carolina Teachers of the Year.

Due to COVID-19, it was not possible to host an in-person enrichment event for fall 2020. Out of an abundance of caution, an enrichment event, formatted as a "mini-seminar," was held virtually on November 8, 2021. The event featured Dr. Rick Hess, who serves as Senior Fellow and Director of Education Policy Studies at the American Enterprise Institute, and was facilitated by Dr. Andrew Kelly, Senior Vice President for Strategy and Policy at the UNC System Office.

In the spring of 2022, the director of the program submitted her resignation, and as a result, a spring 2022 enrichment event was not held. In October 2022, a virtual "mini-seminar" was facilitated by Dr.

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Laura Bilbro-Berry, Executive Director of Educator Preparation and Lab Schools at the UNC System Office, in conjunction with the campus directors. The event featured a panel of North Carolina educational leaders.

The North Carolina Teaching Fellows director position was vacant until November 1, 2022, when Dr. Bennett Jones was hired as the new director. Soon thereafter, planning began for the first statewide in-person enrichment event for Teaching Fellows in three years, scheduled for April 1, 2023 at the McKimmon Center in Raleigh. The day-long spring symposium will feature input from campus directors, a keynote speaker, and breakout sessions for all fellows.

Reporting Requirements

This report has been prepared in accordance with the reporting criteria specified by G.S. 116-209.62(j). However, due to COVID's impact on testing, observations, and data reporting for 2020-2021 and 2021-2022 school years, program graduates do not yet have sufficient data to be evaluated as prescribed in 116-209.62(j)(2)(d) and (e), and 116-209.62(j)(3); these metrics are thus excluded from this report.

- 1) Forgivable Loans awarded from the Trust Fund, including the following:
 - a. Demographic information regarding recipients.
 - b. Number of recipients by institution of higher education and program.
 - c. Information on number of recipients by anticipated STEM and special education licensure area.
- 2) Placement and repayment rates, including the following:
 - a. Number of graduates who have been employed in a STEM or special education licensure area within two years of program completion.
 - b. Number of graduates who accepted employment at a low-performing school identified under G.S. 115C-105.37 as part of their years of service.
 - c. Number of graduates who have elected to do loan repayment and their years of service, if any, prior to beginning loan repayment.
 - d. Number of graduates employed in a STEM or special education licensure area who have received an overall rating of at least accomplished and have met expected growth on applicable standards of the teacher evaluation instrument.
 - e. Aggregate information on student growth and proficiency in courses taught by graduates who have fulfilled service requirements through employment in a STEM or special education licensure area.
- 2a) Mentoring and coaching support through the North Carolina New Teacher Support Program, including the following:
 - a. Number of forgivable recipients who received mentoring and coaching support when employed at a low-performing school identified under G.S. 115C-105.37.
 - b. Number of forgivable loans recipients who received mentoring and coaching support when employed at a school not identified as low-performing under G.S. 115C-105.37.
- 3) Selected school outcomes by program, including the following:
 - a. Turnover rate for forgivable loan graduates, including the turnover rate for graduates who also received mentoring and coaching support through the North Carolina New Teacher Support Program.
 - b. Aggregate information on student growth and proficiency as provided annually by the State Board of Education to the Commission in courses taught by forgivable loan graduates.
 - c. Fulfillment rate of forgivable loan graduates.

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Data Reporting

The data below reflects the cumulative totals of the five cohorts of North Carolina Teaching Fellows and is presented to meet the requirements as outlined in general statute. As noted above, due to the absence of teacher effectiveness data for graduates as a result of various factors, information is not available for requirements 2(d), 2(e), 3(a), and 3(b).

A. Demographic Information

The Teaching Fellows’ demographic data largely mirrors the metrics of the existing teacher workforce in North Carolina, particularly in terms of race and gender. Numerous studies have established a clear correlation between a diverse teacher workforce and positive outcomes for student achievement – a finding that underscores both the importance and the urgency of increasing the diversity of the teacher pipeline in North Carolina.¹ At current capacity, the Teaching Fellows program makes up a fraction of the larger teacher pipeline, but even so, remains committed to the larger statewide efforts to substantively increase teacher diversity. Future goals for the program include increasing the number of total applicants as well as those representing individual subgroups.

Table I: Teaching Fellows by Gender

	2018-2019 Cohort 1	2019-2020 Cohort 2	2020-2021 Cohort 3	2021-2022 Cohort 4	2022-2023 Cohort 5	TOTAL
Male	14	12	15	18	19	78
Female	65	89	72	70	87	383
TOTAL	79	101	87	88	106	461

Table II: Teaching Fellows by Race

	2018-2019 Cohort 1	2019-2020 Cohort 2	2020-2021 Cohort 3	2021-2022 Cohort 4	2022-2023 Cohort 5	TOTAL
Black/African American	5	5	10	13	20	53
American Indian/Alaska Native	1	1	1	1	1	5
Asian/Pacific Islander	5	2	0	2	3	12
Hispanic/Latino	4	4	4	5	8	25
Multiracial/Other	1	3	4	1	3	12
White/Caucasian	63	86	68	65	71	353
Non-reporting	0	0	0	1	0	1
TOTAL	79	101	87	88	106	461

¹ Redding, C. (2019). A Teacher Like Me: A Review of the Effect of Student–Teacher Racial/Ethnic Matching on Teacher Perceptions of Students and Student Academic and Behavioral Outcomes. *Review of Educational Research*, 89 (4), 499–535. See also Egalite, A. J., Kisida, B., & Winters, M. A. (2015). Representation in the classroom: The effect of own-race teachers on student achievement. *Economics of Education Review*, 45, 44-52.; Dee, T. S. (2005). A teacher like me: Does race, ethnicity, or gender matter? *The American Economic Review*, 95(2), 158-165.

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B. Program & Licensure Area

Table III: Teaching Fellows by Institution

	2017-2018 Cohort 1	2018-2019 Cohort 2	2019-2020 Cohort 3	2020-2021 Cohort 4	2021-2022 Cohort 5	TOTAL
Elon University	8	7	2	7	4	28
Fayetteville State University	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	2	2
Meredith College	7	7	0	8	6	28
North Carolina A&T State University	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	5	5
North Carolina State University	27	49	51	46	52	225
UNC-Chapel Hill	18	10	13	13	12	66
UNC-Charlotte	19	28	21	14	20	102
UNC-Pembroke	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	5	5
TOTAL	79	101	87	88	106	461

Note: Fayetteville State University, North Carolina A&T State University, and University of North Carolina-Pembroke were first added to the program in the 2021-2022 cycle.

Table IV: Teaching Fellows by Intended Licensure Area

	2017-2018 Cohort 1	2018-2019 Cohort 2	2019-2020 Cohort 3	2020-2021 Cohort 4	2021-2022 Cohort 5	TOTAL
STEM	55	71	56	56	69	242
SPED	24	30	31	32	37	121
TOTAL	79	101	87	88	106	461

C. Program Graduates

Table V: Summary of Program Graduates

	Number
Total Number of Program Graduates	108
Number of Graduates Employed in STEM/SPED Licensure Area	70
Number of Graduates Employed in Low-Performing School	3
Number of Graduates Who Have Elected for Cash Repayment	21

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Table VI: Partnership with New Teacher Support Program

During the 2021-2022 school year, the New Teacher Support Program supported 29 Teaching Fellows graduates over the course of 453 visits and 355 hours. The coaches assigned to the graduates provided mentorship on effective teaching practices, meeting individual student needs, and data assessment among other professional responsibilities.

	Number
Number of Graduates Currently Receiving Mentoring and Coaching Support from the New Teacher Support Program (2022-2023)	61

Next Steps

The program recently initiated its sixth application cycle, which opened on October 3, 2022. The application deadline is midnight on January 27th, 2023. After that time, all submitted applications will undergo an initial review, followed by a round of finalist interviews.

The Teaching Fellows Commission, per statute requirements, will meet and make final decisions on the number of awards to be offered. By April 1st, 2023, finalists who are selected will be notified and offered a Teaching Fellows award for the 2023-2024 cohort. Those recipients will have until May 1, 2023, to sign the promissory note to formally accept the terms of the forgivable loan program.

The next annual report from the North Carolina Teaching Fellows Program must be submitted by January 1, 2024.

