

THE UNIVERSITY OF NORTH CAROLINA

HISTORY

In North Carolina, all the public educational institutions that grant baccalaureate degrees are part of the University of North Carolina. The University of North Carolina Wilmington is one of the 16 constituent institutions of the multi-campus state university. The University of North Carolina, chartered by the N.C. General Assembly in 1789, was the first public university in the United States to open its doors and the only one to graduate students in the eighteenth century. The first class was admitted in Chapel Hill in 1795. For the next 136 years, the only campus of the University of North Carolina was at Chapel Hill.

In 1877 the N.C. General Assembly began sponsoring additional institutions of higher education, diverse in origin and purpose. Five were historically black institutions, and another was founded to educate American Indians. Several were created to prepare teachers for the public schools. Others had a technological emphasis. One is a training school for performing artists.

In 1931 the N.C. General Assembly redefined the University of North Carolina to include three state-supported institutions: the campus at Chapel Hill (now the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill), North Carolina State College (now North Carolina State University at Raleigh), and Woman's College (now the University of North Carolina at Greensboro). The new multi-campus university operated with one board of trustees and one president. By 1969 three additional campuses had joined the university through legislative action: the University of North Carolina at Charlotte, the University of North Carolina at Asheville, and the University of North Carolina at Wilmington.

In 1971 the General Assembly passed legislation bringing into the University of North Carolina the state's ten remaining public senior institutions, each of which had until then been legally separate: Appalachian State University, East Carolina University, Elizabeth City State University, Fayetteville State University, North Carolina Agricultural and Technical State University, North Carolina Central University, the North Carolina School of the Arts, Pembroke State University, Western Carolina University, and Winston-Salem State University. This action created the current 16-campus university. (In 1985 the North Carolina School of Science and Mathematics, a residential high school for gifted students, was declared an affiliated school of the university; and in 1996 Pembroke State University was renamed the University of North Carolina at Pembroke through legislative action.)

The UNC Board of Governors is the policy-making body legally charged with "the general determination, control, supervision, management, and governance of all affairs of the constituent institutions." It elects the president, who administers the university. The 32 voting members of the Board of Governors are elected by the General Assembly for four-year terms. Former board chairmen and board members who are former governors of North Carolina may continue to serve for limited periods as non-voting members emeriti. The president of the UNC Association of Student Governments, or that student's designee, is also a non-voting member.

Each of the 16 constituent institutions is headed by a chancellor, who is chosen by the Board of Governors on the president's nomination and is responsible to the president. Each institution has a board of trustees, consisting of eight members elected by the Board of Governors, four appointed by the governor, and the president of the student body, who serves ex-officio. (The NC School of the Arts has two additional ex-officio members.) Each board of trustees holds extensive powers over academic and other operations of its institution on delegation from the Board of Governors.