

## **Belk College of Business Strategic Plan 2021-2026**

The vision of the Belk College of Business is to be a leading urban research business school.

To fulfill this vision we must:

- Offer a full array of rigorous and innovative undergraduate, graduate, and professional education programs,
- Employ nationally renowned scholars, passionate and engaging teachers, and dedicated professional staff, and
- Be a driver of economic development and economic mobility in the Charlotte region and beyond.

To meet this vision, the Belk College must have the necessary financial and human resources, modern facilities, a strong network of community and alumni engagement and support, and a culture that supports us in living our core values. Our core values are:

- Integrity: We embrace integrity as the fundamental basis for trust, leadership, and organizational culture.
- Knowledge and Innovation: We are dedicated to encouraging intellectual curiosity, advancing knowledge, and promoting innovation.
- Excellence: We have a passion for excellence in business, research, and education.
- Diversity and Inclusion: We foster an environment that is based on mutual respect, broadens understanding, and builds trust.
- Global Citizenship: We promote ethically principled and sustainable global practices that foster economic and social value.

The Belk College has five major goals over the next five years:

1. Optimize and expand our portfolio of distinctive graduate and executive education programs with an emphasis on rigorous and innovative scholarship and training.
2. Ensure our undergraduate programs provide a relevant and innovative business education with an emphasis on student development and success.
3. Drive progress and positively impact business and society in North Carolina and beyond by increasing our contribution to the scholarly knowledge base, producing transformative solutions to societal issues and challenges and informing policies.

4. Engage with the greater Charlotte business community, our alumni, and friends to support the College.
5. Strengthen diversity, develop and deliver culturally responsive learning experiences, and implement high-impact inclusion initiatives.

Below is a discussion of each of the goals followed by objectives and tactics that will help us meet those goals.

**Goal 1: Optimize and expand our portfolio of distinctive graduate and executive education programs with an emphasis on rigorous and innovative scholarship and training.**

Masters programs, doctoral programs, and non-degree Executive Education programs are vital to the College and will be even more so as the College continues to evolve. These programs serve the College's primary educational mission, provide talent and training to support economic development and economic mobility, serve to enhance the College financially, develop our faculty intellectually, and connect our faculty's research to the business community. To meet the strategic goal of optimizing and expanding our portfolio of graduate and executive programs, the College will pursue the following objectives through the deployment of the tactics listed under each objective.

***Objectives***

1. Enhance the reputation of our Ph.D., DBA, and specialty masters' programs.
  - a. Continue to strengthen the reputation of our Finance Ph.D. program through a focus on both student recruiting and job placement.
  - b. Achieve national recognition of our DBA program by highlighting our program diversity, student outcomes, and industry impact.
  - c. Reinforce the reputation of our top ranked (#12) Master of Science in Mathematical Finance by strengthening our international partnerships.
  - d. Strengthen the reputation of the Master of Science in Real Estate Program through stronger recruiting with a focus on improving student diversity.
  - e. Establish the positioning of our MS Economics program as a top tier "Ph.D. prep" program that prepares students for further academic study in prestigious Economics Ph.D. programs.
  - f. Optimize the size and concentrations within the Master of Accountancy program.
  - g. Continue to focus on efforts that ensure that our rankings are a good reflection of the quality of our programs.

2. Expand graduate degree programs
  - a. Grow enrollment in our MBA program by expanding into online delivery formats, launching new, highly relevant concentrations, and repositioning our program as a Professional MBA.
  - b. Plan and launch three new dual degrees between DSBA and our MBA, MAFI, and MACC programs.
  - c. Explore the viability of launching an Executive MBA in Business Analytics.
  - d. Explore and plan for a concentration in Accountancy within our Ph.D. program.
  - e. Participate in the planning for a Ph.D. in Data Science.
  - f. Explore and implement early entry pathways for MACC, MSRE and MSM programs.
3. Expand our portfolio of graduate certificate programs to provide pathways into graduate degree programs, while providing relevant knowledge and skills to our business community.
  - a. Launch new certificate programs in FinTech and Digital Marketing.
  - b. Explore and create new relevant certificates by streamlining and optimizing MBA concentrations and electives.
4. Continue to drive profitable growth of our Executive Education portfolio.
  - a. Develop a flexible solution framework integrating interactive talks, live-online education, online learning, in-person education, workplace consultation, and executive coaching.

**Goal 2: Ensure our undergraduate programs provide a relevant and innovative business education with an emphasis on student development and success.**

Undergraduate education is a core activity of the Belk College. Through our programs, the Belk College develops the future workforce of the Charlotte region and beyond while providing economic opportunity for citizens of North Carolina. Students see the value of this education. Our majors and minors are some of the most popular on campus, and the popularity of these programs continues to increase. Employers value the skills our graduates have, as evidenced by the placements of our graduates.

The business world is in a time of disruptive change, requiring the Belk College to continually adapt our programs and degrees to stay ahead of that change. The Belk College prepares students for immediate entry into the workforce, as well as developing within them the intellectual curiosity, professionalism, and flexibility they need for long-term career success. The Belk College provides diverse and inclusive learning environments and experiences, and our programs teach students about business both in the United States as well as the global context.

Stewardship of both public and private resources requires efficient and innovative delivery of our programs in a way that provides students an opportunity to earn a high quality degree in a timely manner and to leave the university career ready. To meet the strategic goal of ensuring that our undergraduate programs provide a relevant and innovative business education, the College will pursue the following objectives through the deployment of the following tactics.

### **Objectives**

1. Support innovative curricular changes that improve program relevancy and address industry and societal needs.
  - a. Continuously review and update undergraduate program learning goals and related curriculum maps, giving special attention to student learning in the areas of diversity, technology, and understanding the relationship between business and society.
  - b. Support innovative changes to program mix and design, including development of a capstone modeling course for students in Finance and a new interdisciplinary program from Management in Entrepreneurship.
  - c. Strategically consider varied course delivery modalities, including a fully online undergraduate program for degree completion.
  - d. Develop, collect and respond to added measures of student success relative to undergraduate program learning goals, to include new student self-assessment data and employer feedback.
2. Promote an integrative learning approach.
  - a. Encourage and document industry integration and immersive learning experiences in the classroom, leveraging partnerships with organizations and businesses in the Charlotte area and beyond.
  - b. Further incorporate professional development programming and use of the Niblock Student Center *Guide* into required progression and business core courses, emphasizing related competencies and reaching all students at multiple points in their academic career.
  - c. Continue promoting student participation in internship opportunities for course credit to maximize applied learning.
3. Improve undergraduate student engagement and retention.
  - a. Focus on efforts that enhance brand identity, awareness and affinity.
  - b. Market and communicate learning and professional development opportunities to help support academic excellence and encourage positive career progress.
  - c. Continue to develop and support high-impact student engagement practices, with an emphasis on new students and sophomores, including the implementation of a new mentoring program.
  - d. Support programs focused on community building and professional success, including the Business Learning Community, Business Honors,

Belk Scholars, and Niblock Scholars programs, and Belk College-sponsored student organizations.

4. Improve the student graduation rates and the post-graduation outcomes of undergraduate business students.
  - a. Continue comprehensive and integrated advising and professional development practices that foster and encourage student accountability in discovering and achieving academic and career goals.
  - b. Leverage technology and predictive analytics to engage proactively with students and promote success.
  - c. Investigate and mitigate roadblocks to student progression and ensure access to classes required for graduation.
  - d. Continue to work collaboratively with the Office of Undergraduate Admissions and the UNC Charlotte Transfer Center to emphasize the need for transfer students to complete math progression courses early in their studies.
  - e. Promote increased awareness of and utilization of campus support resources.
  - f. Further utilize technology to enhance student access to advising and professional development services and information, considering in-person, hybrid and online options.
  - g. Continue building strategic partnerships with industry and providing opportunities for students to connect with industry partners.
  - h. Promote awareness of and smooth transitions into the College's Graduate Programs, including early entry options (both existing options and potential programs for the MACC and MSRE programs).

**Goal 3: Drive progress and positively impact business and society in North Carolina and beyond by increasing our contribution to the scholarly knowledge base, producing transformative solutions to societal issues and challenges, and informing policies.**

For many years, the College has invested heavily in building a faculty filled with world-class researchers and excellent teachers. These faculty members have helped the College to develop very strong programs at all levels, where the faculty have an impact beyond the classroom. They are publishing both theoretical and applied research in the most prestigious and important journals in business. They are informing policy and changing business practice and having an impact on our community.

The Belk College can leverage the abilities of these faculty members to support business in two distinct ways. First, they can work directly with industry, non-profits, and government to lend expertise to solve specific problems. Second, they can translate their academic research into formats accessible to non-academics. This can be done

through teaching in executive education, addressing industry groups directly, or media outlets. Engaging our faculty resources in this way will help the College enhance economic development and economic mobility in the Charlotte region and beyond. It will also provide ways for both the College and the faculty members to monetize their research. Finally, it will continue to help cement the reputation of the College and University through intellectual leadership. To meet this strategic goal, the College will pursue the following objectives through the deployment of the following tactics.

### **Objectives**

1. Encourage, recognize, incentivize, and support impactful high quality research.
  - a. Support research seminars, external research speakers, and research workshops within departments and at the College level.
  - b. Encourage and support our faculty engagement in interdisciplinary research initiatives across the University.
  - c. Encourage, recognize, incentivize, and support our level of externally funded research.
2. Engage with industry and government partners on collaborative research projects solving actual problems facing them and our broader community.
  - a. Directly impact organizations and communities through integrated classroom projects, dissertations, masters theses, and contract research.
  - b. Continue supporting the Childress Klein Center for Real Estate and explore opportunities to create additional Centers.
3. Create, curate, and amplify unique stories of the College and the impact of its scholarship.
  - a. Translate basic research conducted by our faculty for the purpose of communicating the applications and impact of the scholarship.
  - b. Showcase faculty expertise to the broader community through programming, media appearances, public talks, and social media outlets.
  - c. Create marketing strategies to position the College as a national leader in research.

### **Goal 4: Engage with the greater Charlotte business community, our alumni, and friends to support the College.**

To meet our vision of being a leading urban research business school, the College must connect continuously with companies, local government, community and business leaders and influencers in the Charlotte region, North Carolina, and beyond. This engagement helps recruit students, develops opportunities for our students and alumni, provides direction for new avenues of applied research, supports community initiatives,

creates a culture of giving back to the community, and cultivates the relationships that will lead to fundraising opportunities. It also allows us to continuously develop and propagate the College's brand.

The College has a very significant population of alumni in the Charlotte region. They have a stake in the long term success and growth of the College and want to help the College develop. As the College has grown in both strength and stature, it has also developed non-alumni supporters at the highest levels of business in the Charlotte region. These supporters understand the value to the Charlotte region of having a local business school that conducts research, offers advanced degrees and executive education, and is an active civic partner. Engagement with alumni and non-alumni business leaders lays the foundation for future fundraising and consolidates our role as the public research business school in our region.

In addition to direct engagement and partnership, the College uses its website, publications, events, social media, and other outlets to engage with the larger Charlotte community. These strategies help build the brand awareness of the College, which leads to opportunities to cultivate new friends and supporters. These efforts also help to instill a sense of pride and ownership in the College among students and alumni, which enhances the effectiveness of our direct engagement activities.

To meet our goal of engaging with the greater Charlotte business community, our alumni, and friends to support the College, the College will pursue the following objectives through the deployment of the following tactics.

### ***Objectives***

1. Continue to cultivate meaningful relationships with College alumni, donors and friends to build affinity, foster lifelong learning, and inspire giving.
  - a. Recognize and celebrate alumni and supporters through programs and awards;
  - b. Add value by implementing new initiatives to cultivate engagement with graduate program alumni;
  - c. Build relationships with future alumni (our students) through strategic programming and communications that highlight the connectivity of the alumni network and demonstrate the value of lifelong engagement;
  - d. Create and implement new events to support giving and a culture of philanthropy; and
  - e. Embrace new technologies to support engagement and philanthropy.

2. Nurture the formal active partnerships and cultivate advocates from business and civic organizations and leaders in the greater Charlotte region.
3. Position the College as a national leader in business education and urban research through dynamic storytelling. through a comprehensive and integrated marketing and communications plan.
  - a. Create, curate, and amplify compelling stories of the College and its impact for diverse audiences;
  - b. Consistently communicate the unique image and value of our College
  - c. Develop a storytelling ambassador network (student, faculty, alumni).

**Goal 5: Strengthen diversity, develop and deliver culturally responsive learning experiences, and implement high-impact inclusion initiatives.**

To meet our vision of being a leading urban research business school, the College must live its values. Those values include diversity and inclusion and global citizenship. Diversity makes us stronger, enhances our ability to be innovative, and allows us to create an environment in which our students see both themselves and the world. Creation of an inclusive environment fosters diversity of thought and creativity and affords each participant in our College community with the opportunity to live up to their potential. As educators, the Belk College is committed to fostering curiosity and personal growth and creating inclusive classroom environments that allow our students to thrive and gain the skills they need to become leaders in diverse business environments.

To meet our goal of strengthening diversity, developing and delivering culturally responsive learning experiences, and implementing high-impact inclusion initiatives, the College will pursue the following objectives through the deployment of the following tactics.

***Objectives***

1. Nurture an inclusive environment for all members of the College.
  - a. Facilitate an inclusive classroom environment for all students by providing on-going training and resources for faculty, including how Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) issues relate to their disciplines.
  - b. Implement co-curricular programming related to diversity and inclusion, including affinity groups and speaker events.
  - c. Support initiatives and organizations that increase access to mentoring, targeted services, and financial support for underrepresented students.



- d. Continue to support meaningful professional development among faculty and staff.
  - e. Create a leadership-level position within the college to develop and promote DEI initiatives.
  - f. Increase the proportion of underrepresented groups in the College's faculty, students, and staff, including but not limited to:
    - i. Faculty = Black and Latinx
    - ii. Staff = Minorities in leadership positions
    - iii. Students = Female students
  - g. Initiate, facilitate and support the highest impact activities and inspire faculty, staff and students to be catalysts for equity and inclusion within the college.
2. Strengthen the curriculum so it prepares students to effectively engage with DEI issues in the workplace and beyond.
    - a. Provide pedagogical tools (such as the College Diversity Toolkit) and training needed to integrate DEI issues into the curriculum.
    - b. Map curriculum in all programs with a goal of having DEI issues systematically addressed.
    - c. Leverage area businesses and organizations to understand employer expectations and inform and augment classroom learning.
  3. Institutionalize the measurement and reporting of all aspects of DEI initiatives
    - a. Conduct a routine DEI climate survey for Belk students, faculty, and staff.
    - b. Include DEI contributions in faculty and staff evaluations.
    - c. Develop a public-facing dashboard of DEI metrics to promote accountability related to the College's stated goals.
  4. Continue to support current partnerships with institutions abroad, cultivate new relationships, encourage international engagement, and explore additional opportunities for collaboration.
    - a. Explore new partnerships for dual degree programs with other institutions, particularly in areas where we do not have representation (e.g., South America and Africa).
    - b. Encourage and support academic opportunities for students to engage with international communities, including travel abroad.
    - c. Promote faculty participation in international collaborations.