

C A R O L I N A
C O V E N A N T

Celebrating 20 Years



CONTENTS

Origins and Growth **2**

Transforming Generations **6**

Alumni Success **8**

Career Readiness and Support **10**

Philanthropy in Action **12**

The Next Generation **16**



Letter from the Director

DEAR FRIENDS,

I am honored to share updates from the Carolina Covenant as we celebrate two decades of transformation together. I am personally grateful for your unwavering support at this special moment. Your generosity has profoundly shaped the lives of countless students and my own journey with this extraordinary program.

Our 20th anniversary is more than a milestone; it's a testament to dreams realized by our founders, over 11,000 graduates, and indeed, by me. The Covenant is a national model for integrating robust financial aid and scholarships with comprehensive career and well-being support, mentorship, and vibrant community. To enable thousands of outrageously talented students to graduate from Carolina debt-free is an extraordinary feat, one that continues to attract bright minds to our University. When other institutions ask how we achieve success of this scope and scale, my answer always points back to partners like you.

As a Tar Heel, I believe our shared pursuit of excellence for our Covenant means not just sustaining but innovating. The Covenant must continue to be an "engine of innovation," advancing the University's goal to be a global leader by enhancing our infrastructure for a new generation of students.

Through extensive data collection, analyses, and direct input from our scholars and alumni, we've identified three strategic priorities to guide our next five years:

- 1** strengthen community networks for academic and career advancement;
- 2** enhance early awareness and engagement of resources and services; and
- 3** close targeted gaps in access, opportunity and outcomes.

Just as Coach Dean Smith's players "pointed to the passer" after a basket, acknowledging that no success is achieved alone, please know that you, our supporters, are the "passers" enabling thousands of victories for our scholars. You are the reason so many brilliant students chose Carolina and why so many are now paying it forward. And while we've achieved so much in 20 years, the game is not over. We need your continued partnership to ensure the Covenant forever remains a cornerstone of our University.

Thank you for your invaluable support. I encourage you to explore more details of our strategic plan in the pages ahead. I am more than delighted to discuss how you can deepen your involvement.

With gratitude,

Candice Williams '06, '21 (PhD)
Director of the Carolina Covenant





Chancellor James Moeser (center) poses with an early class of Carolina Covenant Scholars.

‘The audacity to think we could do it’

Champions of the Carolina Covenant reflect on its start.

It was a simple but bold idea, expansive in scope and backed by virtually universal support: UNC-Chapel Hill should provide students from lower-income families with a realistic path to graduate from Carolina debt-free.

Under the guidance of James Moeser, Carolina’s chancellor (2000-08), and Shirley Ort, former director of the Office of Scholarships and Student Aid, the Carolina Covenant went from that original idea to a model program replicated by dozens of colleges and universities, shaping the college experience for thousands of students at Carolina and throughout the country.

Throughout 2024 and 2025, the Covenant celebrated 20 years of service to Carolina students. The groundbreaking program combines state and federal grants, work-study opportunities and privately supported scholarships to help students pay for undergraduate tuition and expenses.

“The Carolina Covenant upholds a core value for the University. The promise of an affordable education ensures that we remain proudly public, genuinely open to talented students of all backgrounds and income levels,”

said Ort. “I think that’s central to our character, to what makes Carolina such a vibrant and inspiring place.”

The Carolina Covenant was her opportunity to make sure prospective students felt encouraged to apply to Carolina, backed with the added assurance that once they earned their admission, the University would help them find a way to fund a top-tier education. Since 2004, the Covenant has given over 11,000 students the peace of mind to attend college while avoiding financial burden.

FROM IDEA TO INCEPTION

The idea, then dubbed the “Carolina Compact,” first appeared in 2001. It emerged from a period of rapidly rising costs for higher education. Ort said tuition at UNC-Chapel Hill doubled in the years leading up to the Covenant, and the administration worried about students self-excluding themselves from Carolina due to financial fears.

At the time, it was financially impossible to provide an entirely debt-free education to Carolina’s low-income students. But with increases in state

and federal funding over the next two years, the “Compact” became more and more of a possibility for Carolina’s students.

Discussions began among top Carolina administrators including Ort; Jerry Lucido, then associate provost for undergraduate admissions; and then-Provost Robert Shelton before the idea was presented to Chancellor Moeser in 2003.

The first iteration of the program promised all students admitted to Carolina that if their family income was at or below 150% of the federal poverty level they could graduate with zero debt. Moeser approved the program with one change. He suggested changing the name from Compact to Covenant, a switch meant to convey how seriously the University took this promise.

“We had the audacity to think we could do it,” said Moeser, who announced the plan on Oct. 12, 2003, at his annual State of the University address. “I just thought that would be a beautiful thing to do.”

At a politically divisive time, reaction to Moeser’s announcement was overwhelmingly positive, as documented in his archived papers at Wilson Library:

“James – BRAVO for helping low-income students get Chapel Hill’s great education!”

“I think this is an amazing, gutsy and principled thing to do. Please send me information on how to donate money to support this program.”

“Congratulations on the success of your Carolina Covenant program. This is a superb effort on the part of the university, which I know will pay huge dividends.”

Universities across the country, including the University of Virginia and the University of Nebraska, followed Carolina’s model of need-blind admissions with robust financial support for lower-income students and families, reported The New York Times in 2004.

Moeser and Ort, the two spearheads of this groundbreaking program, have since retired and stepped

THE Carolina Covenant JOURNEY

2004

Debt-free promise begins

The Carolina Covenant launches with a mission to provide admitted students from low-income families the opportunity to graduate debt-free through a combination of grants, scholarships and work-study.

2005–10

Mentorship and national recognition

The program adds mentoring as a core component of the program, gains national attention and becomes a model for similar initiatives at other universities.

2014

A decade of impact

The Covenant celebrates its 10th anniversary, having supported thousands of students and significantly improved graduation rates among low-income students.

2020

Expanding student support

The program expands its support services to include alumni engagement, career development and well-being initiatives.

2024–25

20 years, 11,000 scholars

The University celebrates the 20th anniversary of the Carolina Covenant. More than 11,000 students have benefitted from the program and about 10% of all undergraduates are now Covenant Scholars.

2025–30

Shaping the future

Three strategic priorities will guide the next five years: Strengthen Community Networks, Enhance Early Awareness and Close Targeted Gaps.

away from Covenant administration. But for them, and students and faculty alike, it holds a firm grasp on their memories of Carolina.

“As I look back on the creation of the Carolina Covenant, I am struck by one thing — and that is the brilliance of Chancellor Moeser,” said Ort. “By naming the program the Carolina Covenant, he made clear that it was a promise to both current and future generations of students.

“The message was clear: Carolina is, and will remain, accessible and affordable for academically prepared students from low-income backgrounds.” ■



Renatta Craven (left), a Covenant Scholar from Raleigh, shares a laugh with Chancellor Moeser as he visited Morrison Residence Hall on move-in day in 2004. Renatta is now a successful pediatrician.

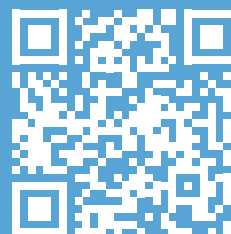
“The message was clear: Carolina is, and will remain, accessible and affordable for academically prepared students from low-income backgrounds.”

SHIRLEY ORT, FORMER DIRECTOR OF THE OFFICE OF SCHOLARSHIPS AND STUDENT AID



CAROLINA STORIES THEN, NOW AND FOREVER

Scan the QR code to watch the 20th anniversary commemorative documentary to hear from the program's founders; supporters like Roy Williams; and a few of the scholars, alumni and community members whose lives have been transformed by this lasting commitment to opportunity.





The Tar Heel behind the Carolina Covenant

Shirley Ort reflects on the promise fulfilled.

Shirley Ort is the Tar Heel behind the Carolina Covenant. She served as the director of the UNC Office of Scholarships and Student Aid for 19 years before she retired in 2016. Celebrating the Covenant's 20th anniversary, we reached out to Ort for a Q&A.



Shirley Ort implemented the plan that became the Carolina Covenant.

HOW DO YOU FEEL ABOUT THE COVENANT TODAY?

I'm thrilled to see that it has survived and thrived long enough to become a big part of the institutional culture of Carolina. I have always known that, to endure, an initiative such as the Covenant must not be built around a particular personality or leader; those programs never last long. An enduring program needs broad support, and the Covenant has earned it. With the support of donors, leadership and so many others on campus, the Covenant has grown and become a celebrated part of the campus culture. To date, more than 11,000 Covenant Scholars have enriched Carolina immeasurably and helped keep Carolina true to its founding mission. I am proud to have shared in this worthy effort.

WHAT WAS THE CAROLINA COVENANT MESSAGE?

At Carolina, we knew that growth in our federal, state and institutional grants and scholarships had more than kept pace with tuition increases, but we weren't sure that we were getting our message across. We worried well-qualified students might self-exclude out of concerns about affordability. It would be fair to say that the Carolina Covenant was created to send a clear message to students and families. We had to move away from "financial-aid speak" and instead share a clear, consistent message of promise and commitment — that college is possible, no matter what your income.

IS THE CAROLINA COVENANT STILL THE SAME TODAY?

Today's program, though strengthened in many respects, remains largely unchanged from when it was shaped 20 years ago. By the second year, we realized it wasn't enough to simply bring low-income students to campus; we needed to make sure they could participate fully in the academic and cultural life of the University. It all seemed to work! As grants and scholarships were combined with necessary support services, graduation rates among Covenant Scholars began and continue to climb, virtually eliminating what had previously been an income-related persistence and graduation gap. I cannot say enough about the efforts of Professor Fred Clark, now deceased, who tirelessly put a number of these initiatives in place, with the support and assistance of other faculty and staff partners and mentors. ■

Fulfilling the Covenant promise

11,000+ COVENANT
SCHOLARS
SINCE 2004

*Since 2004, the four-year graduation
rate of Carolina Covenant Scholars
has increased by approximately*

40%

A family of scholars

*The Carolina Covenant
turns three sisters'
dreams into reality.*

Several sets of siblings have been supported by the Carolina Covenant over the past 20 years. The three Martinez sisters — **Amaya Martinez Mesa '17** and **twins Nathalie and Nicole Martinez '24** — have an overwhelming sense of gratitude for the support they received from the Covenant and the many ways it helped them reach their goals.

"I wish that every student could make the choice of going to college with the type of support we had," said Amaya while in her third rotation working toward a medical degree in the UNC School of Medicine.

As the trailblazer, Amaya was able to provide inspiration and support to her sisters as they made the move north from Miami. In fact, it was a visit from the twins to Chapel Hill the previous year that Amaya credits with planting a seed. "We went hiking," she said, "and we explored the campus. We had a great visit. That was the first time I thought maybe they would apply."

The Carolina Covenant helped ease that transition in more ways than the Martinezes could ever have imagined. The financial support was crucial. "I remember looking at the award letter with my mom and realizing that this was a once in a lifetime opportunity," said Nicole.



*Nathalie (left), Amaya (center) and Nicole (right)
celebrating the twins' graduation in May 2024*

Nathalie added, "Without the Carolina Covenant, I may have stayed in Florida and lived at home for financial reasons. I applied to other schools, but none of them provided this level of financial assistance."

As undergraduates, Nicole and Nathalie were also able to volunteer at medical clinics in Bolivia at no cost to themselves, thanks to the combined efforts of leaders in the Carolina Covenant and the Office of Global Health Education — the project's organizing program. As a result, they gained an amazing cross-cultural experience with direct application to their future academic goals.

***"Without the Carolina Covenant, I may
have stayed in Florida and lived at home
for financial reasons. I applied to other
schools, but none of them provided this
level of financial assistance."***

NATHALIE MARTINEZ '24

>50%

of Covenant Scholars are first-generation college students

4.40

average Covenant Scholars' high school GPA

~10%

of the undergraduate student body are Covenant Scholars



Twins Nathalie (left) and Nicole at the Old Well

Nathalie and Nicole are preparing for medical school, an opportunity made possible because Carolina Covenant enabled them to graduate without student debt. “Medical school is expensive,” Nicole said. “We would never have considered it if we already had debt from our undergraduate degrees.”

BEYOND FINANCIAL SUPPORT

What the Martinezes didn't expect was everything else the Covenant had to offer. The thoughtful mentoring, practical advice and family-like atmosphere the program provided really impressed all of the Martinez sisters.

“I don't think I would have made it through that first semester if it hadn't been for [then-director] Brian Hogan and the resources he connected me to,” said Amaya,

who appreciated the personal care and support of the Covenant's program staff. “They genuinely care about your well-being.”

As a way to give back, Amaya served on the alumni advisory board for the program, starting a highly attended medical-student-led seminar to help prepare other Covenant Scholars, like her sisters, to apply to medical school successfully.

“I hope that my daughters' legacies are the love and kindness they leave in others,” said Roberto Martinez, the proud father who credits the Covenant with making their dreams a reality. “As future physicians, this is extremely important. Hard work and dedication combined with passion takes you very far in life.” ■



Amaya is working toward her medical degree at Carolina



Carolina Covenant alumnus Charles W. Hands III is now an attorney in Charlotte.

A passion for helping others

Covenant alumnus committed to furthering the program for alumni and students.

The Carolina Covenant is what brought **Charles W. Hands III '14** to UNC-Chapel Hill. The scholarship program gave the bright-eyed teenager ready to study chemistry the financial security to attend the University. Now he's making sure current students have the same opportunities.

The Charlotte-based attorney stepped up to serve as chair of the Carolina Covenant Alumni Advisory Board in the scholarship's 20th anniversary year, which coincided with the 10th anniversary of his graduation from Carolina. Hands continues to value the impact of the Covenant on his education and career.

"It was a game changer," said Hands. "It was life changing for me."

Hands moved to Chapel Hill from Wilmington to pursue his undergraduate degree. Initially, he found it difficult to adapt to the new scenery and pace of life. But the Covenant helped smooth the transition, providing Hands with a family at Carolina. Through professional mentoring,

movie nights and the guidance of Covenant academic coordinator Fred Clark, he eased into college life.

"There were thousands and thousands of people there, but these people knew me, and they were looking for my best interest," said Hands.

In this environment and through discussion with academic and professional advisers from the Covenant team, Hands realized his passion in life — helping people. He knew that wherever he found himself in life, he wanted to give back to those in need. After consulting with Clark, he made the decision to change his major to African, African American and diaspora studies and begin the pre-law track.

The Covenant program threw its support behind him, no questions asked. The team immersed Hands in the law school experience through simulated classrooms and free LSAT prep.

"If I can see this through and this works out like you keep saying, I'm going to be 100% involved with Covenant as much as I can. I'll always support the Carolina Covenant."

CHARLES W. HANDS III '14

"When I got into law school, my goal was to make Fred Clark in the Covenant proud for supporting me, and so I said, 'Hey, when I go into law school, I'm going to strive to become No. 1 in the class,'" Hands said. "After my first semester, I was No. 1 in the class. I actually did it."

From financial aid to pizza dinners to grad school preparation, the Covenant made its mark on Hands' time at Carolina. And he wanted to make sure that, once beyond college, he could give back to the program that gave him so much. Hands now works with his uncle at Hands Law Firm in Charlotte, but he never strays far from his mission to help those around him or the Covenant.

Through the North Carolina Bar Association, he volunteers for programs like Wills for Heroes. He also finds opportunities through local organizations, teaching opportunities for students at nearby universities and church groups — anything that enables him to give back to his community.

His commitment to fostering spaces for equitable access and education led him to the Carolina Covenant alumni advisory board.

"He came to our senior banquet and all of the alumni, the students, wouldn't even let him leave," said Ann Trollinger, associate director of the Carolina Covenant and lead for alumni engagement. "They were saying he was such a motivational speaker."

His tenure as chair gives him the chance to reconnect with alumni and current students, and make good on his word to Clark.

"Before I graduated from Carolina, I had promised him one day, 'When I'm on the other side, if I can see this through and this works out like you keep saying, I'm going to be 100% involved with Covenant as much as I can,'" Hands said. "I'll always support the Carolina Covenant." ■

Alumni Success

AS OF 2024-25



8,000+

CAROLINA COVENANT ALUMNI

80%

COVENANT ALUMNI
pursue secondary degrees

175+

ALUMNI ADVOCATES

200+

professional development
GRANTEES

5.5.2

*Five full-time professional staff,
five undergraduate interns and
two graduate assistants plus
a host of volunteers ensure
Covenant Scholars and alumni
are equipped to succeed.*

Going beyond degree completion

Scholar develops important professional skills by serving on the Covenant Student Advisory Council.

Emily Goins '26, of Jacksonville, North Carolina, worked hard throughout high school. She always knew that she wanted to go to college, but wasn't sure how she would make it happen, or rather, how she'd be able to pay for it.

Goins, along with her two younger sisters, was raised in a single-parent household by her father, a wounded warrior veteran who was injured during his service in the U.S.

Marine Corps. She hoped she could be the first in her family to go to college. She learned about the Carolina Covenant when a counselor at her high school shared that she could qualify for a debt-free financial aid package at UNC-Chapel Hill if she applied and was accepted to the University. Goins took her counselor's advice and was thrilled to be admitted to Carolina as a Covenant Scholar and Vetter Military Family Scholar.

Now Goins is an aspiring teacher double majoring in English and comparative literature and human development and family science. She also serves on the Covenant Student Advisory Council. In this role she helps coordinate service projects and well-being experiences for Covenant Scholars. For example, Goins and other Covenant Scholars worked in partnership with Upward Bound to encourage low-income high school students on their path to college.

Serving on the Covenant Student Advisory Council has helped Goins develop important professional skills. She feels that she entered college a few steps behind her peers from more affluent areas who had greater opportunities to build professional networks and develop professional skills. The Covenant team recognizes that difference and helps scholars, like Goins, build the professional skills that are needed as they leave Carolina and enter the workforce.

CLOSING THE GAP

Jessie Durham-Nash leads the Covenant's career services, which include one-on-one coaching, workshops and networking opportunities. Additionally, the Covenant's Career Accelerator Program is offered for those who are interested in a year-long, cohort-based program that provides individualized professional



development support to scholars. Dedicated funding helps Covenant Scholars engage fully with professional development opportunities that might otherwise be cost-prohibitive, such as attending conferences or working in unpaid or under-paid internships.

“Many of our Covenant Scholars come to Carolina both with less financial resources and less social capital, or people whom they can connect with for opportunities, than peers. Over half of our scholars are also first-generation college students, which amplifies these concerns, because they have to work harder just to learn how to navigate college life, let alone prepare for their future careers,” said Durham-Nash. “We are addressing this gap by creating intentional networks and opportunities for them in partnership with mentors, liaisons across campus and alumni.”

Giving back to students like herself is important to Goins, who spent six weeks one summer teaching low-income students in the military town of Norfolk, Virginia. With the Covenant's support, she interned with Breakthrough Collaborative, which seeks to pair students with teachers from similar backgrounds who can relate to their experiences.

“The Carolina Covenant allowed me to come to college without taking on a financial burden for myself or my family,” said Goins. “And I really hope that my being here will be an inspiration to my younger sisters and show them that college is an option for us as first-generation college students.” ■

Mentorship matters

More than 100 alumni, faculty and friends of the Carolina Covenant serve as mentors, guiding Covenant Scholars to successful graduation and beyond. Meet two mentors and learn why they believe mentorship matters.

BRADLEY LAUCK '22, '27 (MD)



Lauck went from first high school graduate in his immediate family to UNC-Chapel Hill alumnus, North Carolina Army National Guard medical corps officer and third-year medical student. He also serves on the Carolina Covenant Advisory Board.

“As an alumni advisory board member, I am excited to work with Covenant Scholars and give back by serving as a mentor, especially to those interested in pursuing careers in medicine.”

LORENZO HOPPER '10, '20 (PHD)



Hopper is an assistant professor and honors faculty member in the Department of Epidemiology and Community Health at UNC Charlotte. He was selected as chair of the Carolina Covenant Alumni Advisory Board for the 2025–26 academic year because

of his outstanding work with the Covenant’s extended alumni mentoring program.

“To me, the Carolina Covenant represents the belief that every student — regardless of background — deserves a fair shot at education and success.”



These passionate supporters of the Carolina Covenant are for...

MILITARY DEPENDENTS

Steve '78 and Debbie '78 Vetter were both raised in military families, with fathers who were career Marines.

In 2017, after years of philanthropy at the University, supporting scholarships for athletes and students at UNC Kenan-Flagler Business School, from which Steve graduated, they asked how they could specifically support military dependents at Carolina. The result was the Vetter Military Family Scholars Fund, which supports scholarships for any military dependent who qualifies for a Covenant Scholarship — scholars like Emily Goins.

“With military families, the person serving in the military usually gets all the recognition, but we know firsthand that their family also serves,” said Debbie Vetter. “Military families deal with constant separation, deployments and stress, and by setting up the Vetter Military Family Scholars Fund, we want these young people to know that we honor their service as well as their parents’ service.”

Each year the Carolina Covenant Scholar cohort includes several Vetter Military Family Scholars.

The Vettters hope the number of Vetter Military Family Scholars will continue to grow as the Carolina Covenant program becomes more well-known throughout the state, especially in areas with military bases. In addition to funding scholarships, the Vettters will be funding one full-time position and one part-time position in Undergraduate Admissions and the Office of Scholarships and Student Aid to help increase awareness of the Carolina Covenant and support Vetter Scholars.

“By setting up the Vetter Military Family Scholars Fund, we want these young people to know that we honor their service as well as their parents’ service.”

DEBBIE VETTER '78



Vetter Scholars gathered at the Top of the Hill in January 2020 for a luncheon with campus leadership and Debbie and Steve Vetter (center).

CAREER PREPARATION

Rick Margerison '70 and his late brother **Kenneth Margerison '67** were both recipients of Whitaker scholarships that allowed them to graduate from Carolina with minimal debt more than 50 years ago. The brothers, along with Rick's wife, Leah, and Kenneth's wife, Patty '67 partnered to establish three scholarship funds that support 18 Carolina students each year.

"When my wife and I got to the place where we could make some significant contributions, supporting scholarship students seemed like the first place to go."

RICK MARGERISON '70

"I don't know how much debt I would have had or how long it would have taken me to get through school without the scholarship. And so, when my wife and I got to the place where we could make some significant contributions, supporting scholarship students seemed like the first place to go."

Rick Margerison also recognized that, despite achieving academic success, Covenant Scholars often needed more support as they prepared for employment after college. This observation led to his support of the Covenant's career preparation initiatives, which are aimed at equipping Carolina Covenant Scholars with the relationships, experiences and skills to compete and thrive beyond degree completion. The Margerisons' gift also supports a full-time permanent position, currently held by Jessie Durham-Nash, that is focused on career development for Carolina Covenant Scholars.



Rick and Leah Margerison are helping support scholars to prepare for their careers.



Ed and Deborah Roach established funds to support Covenant Scholars' learning experiences abroad.

GLOBAL EXPERIENCES

Ed '74 (JD) and Deborah '73 Roach were both first-generation college students. They first became involved with the Carolina Covenant a few years ago when they established the Deanna Day Covenant Memorial Funds to support educational opportunities for scholars. In 2024, they decided to do even more to open up opportunities for Covenant Scholars, establishing an expendable fund to support more students now. The expendable fund awards study abroad scholarships to Covenant Scholars.

"We weren't able to travel until later in our lives, but we've learned so much through our travel experiences," said Deborah Roach. "We believe that travel can enrich Covenant Scholars' learning experiences, career preparation and worldviews."

We want to help study abroad be a reality for Covenant Scholars who may not have the means or feel there is an opportunity for them to travel for certain learning abroad programs otherwise."

The Roaches established both the funds in remembrance and honor of Deborah's late sister Deanna Day, who died of leukemia after her freshman year at Guilford College.

"We want to help study abroad be a reality for Covenant Scholars who may not have the means or feel there is an opportunity for them to travel for certain learning abroad programs otherwise."

DEBORAH ROACH '73



These passionate supporters of the Carolina Covenant are for...

THE FUTURE

Long before **Dwight Jacobs '87** was in the C-suite at Duke Energy, he was a kid with roots from rural Robeson County, part of a Lumbee Indian family, figuring out what college even meant. His dad passed away just before high school graduation.

His mom worked in the school cafeteria. And though the Carolina Covenant didn't exist yet, the spirit behind it — the belief that potential shouldn't be limited by financial circumstance — was already at work in his life.

Decades later, Dwight and his wife **Moira Jacobs '87** are paying that belief forward in a big way. The Jacobses' transformational estate gift in support of the Covenant

"Knowing what the fruits of our labor will do for others gives me great joy, satisfaction and pride. It makes me smile every morning."

DWIGHT JACOBS '87

ensures that other students can access the same life-changing opportunities. Their gift will ultimately fund approximately 20 Carolina Covenant students.

"It's tough to ask for help, even humiliating," said Dwight. "You have to swallow your pride a little bit. So it's not only my blessing, it's my obligation now to do that for somebody else. Knowing what the fruits of our labor will do for others gives me great joy, satisfaction and pride. It makes me smile every morning."



The Jacobses made a transformational estate gift in support of the Carolina Covenant.



Roy Williams delivers the Commencement Address for the class of 2020.



Scan the QR code for a brief message from Roy about why he is paying it forward by supporting the Carolina Covenant.

PAYING IT FORWARD

Roy Williams '72, '73 (M.A.T.) and Wanda Williams '72 have been staunch supporters of the Carolina Covenant since the program's inception. In March 2021, just before his retirement as head coach of UNC Men's Basketball, Roy and Wanda made a \$3 million gift to Carolina, dedicating \$1.5 million to the Carolina Covenant.

"The Carolina Covenant is near and dear to our hearts," shared Wanda. "If Roy were going to school now, he would have been a Covenant Scholar."

"I came down here as a country bumpkin from the mountains of North Carolina and probably still am," Roy added. "I was so naive about so many things, and the University helped me mature. The idea of where I would be right now if I had gone elsewhere is hard to even envision."

"We need to let other people have these opportunities."

PAVING A PATHWAY FOR OTHERS

"When I think about my purpose, I think about the idea of creating a legacy of helping to lay a pathway for others to follow, to make it easier for someone to achieve the type of success that I've achieved," said **Ilana Finley '00**, former vice president of global communications and social impact for Converse, current chief communications officer for LIV Golf.

When she was a student-athlete on the track and field team studying journalism at Carolina, with the help of student aid, Ilana said she felt incredibly supported by the University. Her experience led her to endow a scholarship through the Carolina Covenant. She also serves on the UNC-Chapel Hill Board of Visitors.

"Carolina gave me so much; I am happy to be able to do something that gives back in a way that is a sign of my gratitude, my experience and what being at UNC did for me," Ilana said.

"Carolina gave me so much; I am happy to be able to do something that gives back in a way that is a sign of my gratitude, my experience and what being at UNC did for me."

ILANA FINLEY '00



Ilana Finley endowed a scholarship through the Carolina Covenant.

Strategic priorities for the next generation

As the University honors the legacy of the Carolina Covenant and looks ahead to the next 20 years, three strategic priorities serve as a roadmap for the program's continued growth and unwavering commitment to support our students.

1

Strengthen community networks for academic and career advancement.

We will build out our robust ecosystem of student support relationships by increasing the scope and scale of our alumni, employer, donor, mentor, campus partner and student networks in targeted academic and career fields while deepening relationships among all stakeholders to benefit the success of Covenant Scholars.

2

Enhance early awareness and engagement of resources and services.

We will proactively inform and educate our strategic networks of students and partners about the full benefits of the Carolina Covenant — ensuring deep understanding and increasing meaningful incentives for scholars to take full advantage at every stage of their Carolina journey. We will engage innovative communications and motivational strategies with vigor and persistence from the pipeline to Carolina and beyond graduation.

3

Close targeted gaps in access, opportunity and outcomes.

By strengthening our community networks and ensuring their early awareness and engagement of resources and services, we will elevate measurable outcomes for Covenant Scholars and further mitigate persistent financial and social barriers to success. We will address financial challenges for summer studies and learning opportunities abroad; map funded pathways to career-advancing internships and research experiences; and get even closer to eliminating the gap in graduation rates between Covenant Scholars and other students.



Scan the QR code to learn more about the Carolina Covenant strategic plan.



Thank you!

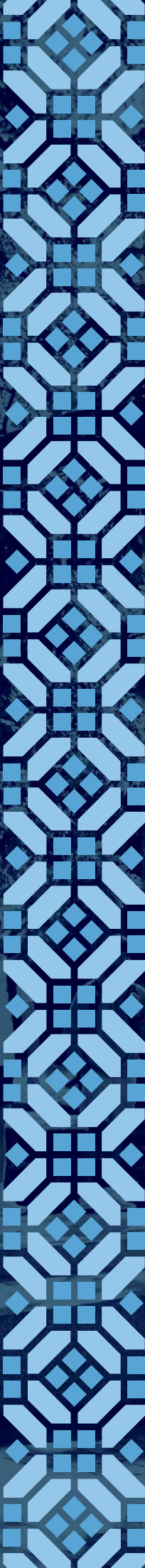
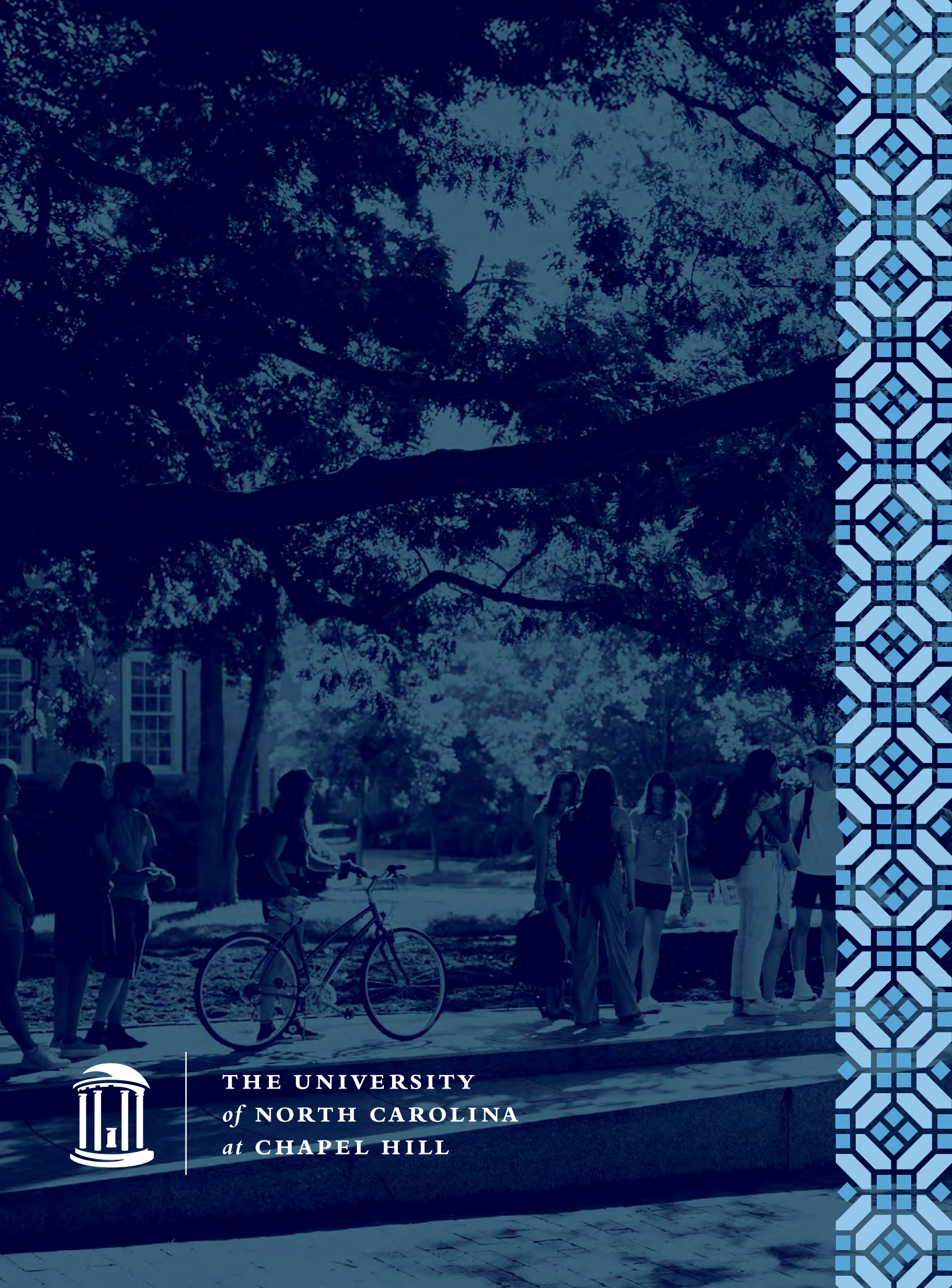


To the many donors and supporters who saw the potential of the Carolina Covenant from the very beginning and to those whose continued support allowed the program to thrive. The past 20 years of success would not have been possible without you.



Covenant Scholars pose with a painting by Covenant alumna Lauren Baker '24.





THE UNIVERSITY
of NORTH CAROLINA
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