

# NC STATE UNIVERSITY

Assistant Dean of Philanthropy  
*and*  
President, North Carolina Agricultural Foundation, Inc.  
College of Agriculture and Life Sciences  
North Carolina State University  
Raleigh, North Carolina

## THE SEARCH

[North Carolina State University](#) and the [College of Agriculture and Life Sciences](#) seek an experienced and aspirational Assistant Dean of Philanthropy to build upon the College's fundraising accomplishments.

North Carolina State University (NC State) is a land-grant university. Serving the people of North Carolina – through education, research, and economic advancement – is central to its mission. The College of Agriculture and Life Sciences (CALS) is critical in delivering that mission to the state. Over 4,400 students learn from and work with more than 700 world-leading faculty and staff to identify and provide practical solutions for the real world. CALS's extensive partnerships with agriculture, business, education, government, and industry create a unique culture of collaboration that increases productivity and fuels economic development. Through extension programs and 102 local centers across North Carolina, CALS ensures that a diverse group of clients and citizens have access to subject matter experts who can help address their individual, unique needs.

Partnering with [Dean Garey Fox](#), an energetic and ambitious leader for whom philanthropy is key to achieving his priorities, the next Associate Dean (AD) will steward and further elevate an existing, successful [advancement operation](#) for CALS. The AD will simultaneously serve as President for the [NC Agricultural Foundation](#) (Foundation), stewarding and supporting advisory boards that consist of alumni, volunteers, industry partners, and state representatives.

The AD reports directly to Dean Fox, serving as a member of his senior leadership team, and has a close relationship with the central [University Advancement](#) (UA) office, notably the Associate Vice Chancellor, University Development. This executive will build close ties with CALS faculty and staff, advancement peers across NC State, CALS alumni and volunteers, and critical industry partners across North Carolina. The AD is charged with building a world-class advancement operation from a place of existing strengths, deepening relationships with current donors, identifying new partners in philanthropic support, and managing both the CALS advancement office and the Foundation's activities. The AD will also be responsible for a portfolio of major and principal gift prospects and donors.

The successful hire will have extensive experience developing and implementing comprehensive fundraising strategies that elevate the resources and reach of an organization, preferably on behalf of a public research university. This executive will have demonstrated success in soliciting and closing transformational gifts to support complex and/or technical programs, as well as a history of mentorship and support of other frontline fundraisers. The future AD will be keen to build relationships with industry partners and associations, volunteers and alumni, and peers across CALS and the wider university. A bachelor's degree is required. While personal experience in agriculture is a plus, it is not required for success in this role.

North Carolina State University and the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences have retained the search firm Isaacson, Miller for this important recruitment. Inquiries, nominations, and applications may be directed to the search firm as indicated at the end of this document.

## ABOUT NORTH CAROLINA STATE UNIVERSITY

[North Carolina State University](#) (NC State) was founded in 1887. As a land-grant university, NC State is committed to creating economic, societal, and intellectual prosperity for the people of North Carolina. Today, NC State is the largest university in North Carolina, with more than 37,000 high-performing students, 9,000 pre-eminent faculty and staff, and 300,000 alumni. NC State is a research-intensive university known for its leadership in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics. It is at the forefront of teaching and research in agriculture, business, design, education, humanities and social sciences, natural resources, textiles, and veterinary medicine. NC State is consistently named as one of the best values in higher education, and many of its programs are ranked at the top of their respective disciplines.

## ABOUT THE COLLEGE OF AGRICULTURE AND LIFE SCIENCES

The [College of Agriculture and Life Sciences](#) (CALS or College) is one of the largest colleges of its kind in the nation, with more than 4,400 students pursuing [associate's degrees through the Agriculture Institute](#), [bachelor's](#), [master's](#), and [doctoral](#) degrees, and 1,300 on-campus and 700 off-campus faculty and staff members that touch every county in North Carolina. Its research engine ranks at the top of land-grant university colleges. New research awards consistently exceed \$120 million annually. Industry engagement is at the core of CALS, with \$5.6 million in funding across 84 industry contracts with 56 unique companies in 2024. More than 43,000 volunteers and stakeholders engage in two million face-to-face contacts annually.

## Research and Education

CALS' departments deliver the academic programs, research, and extension services that cultivate change agents prepared to confront grand challenges with innovative solutions. To create more opportunities for collaboration and innovation, CALS aligned its 12 departments, as well as various centers and programs, into [four interdisciplinary research and education systems](#) as follows:

- [Animal and Ecological Systems](#)
  - Animal Science
  - Applied Ecology
  - Prestage Department of Poultry Science
- [Food, Biochemical, and Engineered Systems](#)
  - Biological and Agricultural Engineering
  - Food, Bioprocessing, and Nutrition Sciences
  - Molecular and Structural Biochemistry
- [Human and Resource Systems](#)
  - Agriculture and Human Sciences
  - Agriculture and Resource Economics
- [Plant, Insect, Microbe, and Soil Systems](#)
  - Crop and Soil Sciences
  - Horticultural Science
  - Entomology and Plant Pathology
  - Plant and Microbial Biology

[NC State Extension](#) extends research-based knowledge to all North Carolinians, helping them transform science into everyday solutions that improve their lives and grow the state. With [101 local centers](#), more than 1,100 experts, and a vast network of partnerships, Extension puts science into action, delivering practical solutions to local issues across North Carolina.

## Leadership

### Garey Fox, Dean

Garey Fox became dean of the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences in August 2023. He joined NC State in 2017 as a professor and head of the Department of Biological and Agricultural Engineering at CALS.

Fox's research focuses on surface water and groundwater interaction with applications for stream bank erosion and failure, sediment and nutrient transport, and the design of vegetative filter strips and riparian buffers. His work has been supported by the National Science Foundation, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, the U.S. Geological Survey, and the U.S. Department of Agriculture. He has published approximately 150 peer-reviewed articles in several refereed journals and served as principal investigator or co-principal investigator on grant-funded projects totaling over \$27 million.

Before joining NC State, Fox worked at Oklahoma State University as a professor and the Orville L. and Helen L. Buchanan Chair in Biosystems Engineering for the Department of Biosystems and Agricultural Engineering. Concurrently, he was the director and Berry Endowed Professor at Oklahoma State's Water Resources Center. He was previously a faculty member at the University of Mississippi.

Fox earned bachelor's and master's degrees in agricultural engineering from Texas A&M University and a doctorate in civil engineering from Colorado State University.

### Sonia Murphy, Associate Vice Chancellor, University Development

In March 2025, Sonia Murphy was appointed the associate vice chancellor, university development. In this role, she advances NC State's mission by setting and exceeding strategic goals and promoting cross-disciplinary fundraising.

Murphy joined CALS in 2006 as the director of gift planning. Over the next 18 years, she was repeatedly promoted and became the assistant dean for CALS Advancement and president of the NC Agricultural Foundation in 2017. Under her leadership, the college achieved record-breaking fundraising success, strengthened alumni and donor engagement, and furthered CALS' mission in transformative ways.

Murphy received her bachelor's degree in Economics from Wake Forest University.

## OFFICE OF ADVANCEMENT, COLLEGE OF AGRICULTURE AND LIFE SCIENCES

The mission of the CALS Advancement Office is to enhance, promote, and support the academic programs, teaching, research, and extension efforts of the College. CALS has over 35,000 [living alumni](#) and receives philanthropic support from individuals with direct and indirect ties to CALS, corporations that have operations in North Carolina, roughly 60 commodity groups, and other representatives of the state's agricultural community.

The [Advancement Office](#) is comprised of 30 professionals who are responsible for frontline fundraising, alumni and strategic engagement, annual giving, events, stewardship, communications, operations, and business processes.

CALS receives more philanthropic support than any other academic unit at NC State, both year over year and during the last campaign. In FY2025, CALS raised \$55 million, which accounted for 15 percent of the entire university's gifts and new commitments during the same period. Since 2019, CALS has averaged \$47.5 million in annual philanthropic revenue.

### North Carolina Agricultural Foundation, Inc.

The [NC Agricultural Foundation](#) (Foundation) is a non-profit, 501(c)3 organization formed as a means of supporting agricultural research, extension, and teaching activities conducted within CALS. The Foundation accepts and manages gifts for the benefit of the College. The Assistant Dean of Philanthropy also serves as President of the Foundation.

The Foundation is guided by an expansive board that represents all 100 counties across the state and many of the commodity associations. In addition to the President of the Foundation, the officers of the Foundation are the Chair, Vice Chair, Treasurer and two Assistant Treasurers, and Secretary and two Assistant Secretaries. [Eight additional advisory boards](#) operate under the NC Agricultural Foundation. Historically, the Foundation meets biannually in the fall and in the spring.

As of [June 30, 2024](#), the Foundation had \$248 million in total assets; by June 30, 2025, the amount of investible assets had grown to \$259 million.

## ASSISTANT DEAN OF PHILANTHROPY

The Assistant Dean of Philanthropy (AD) will play a vital role in achieving the College's goals and aspirations while leading CALS advancement efforts, building and expanding the existing donor base, and overseeing the Foundation. This AD reports directly to the Dean and works in close partnership with University Advancement (UA) as well as with advancement leadership representing CALS interdisciplinary partners. As a central partner, UA has a team-oriented environment with a clear commitment to program growth, alignment, and success.

In this role, the AD works with the Dean and the Associate Vice Chancellor in growing and diversifying support for the College. CALS has established several high-level [initiatives](#), including [Student Access](#), [Plant Sciences](#), [Food Animal](#), and [Food Innovation](#). The AD will work closely with academic and administrative partners alike to match specific programs and opportunities with current and potential donors, as well as the interests of North Carolina's agriculture community.

## KEY OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES FOR THE ASSISTANT DEAN

### Executive Engagement and Identification of Priorities

- In partnership with the Dean and the Associate Vice Chancellor, University Development, coordinate the complete range of philanthropic activities related to the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences (CALS), including planning, managing, and implementing annual fundraising strategies.
- Build strong working relationships with academic department heads, faculty, and administrators throughout the College to understand their programs and priorities thoroughly, assist in managing their respective advancement activities, and represent their needs.
- Based on input from CALS academic and administrative leadership, craft campaign priorities that extend across the College's joint commitments to academic programs, education, research, extension, and state-wide outreach.
- Guide and support the Dean in his role as chief spokesperson and fundraiser for CALS, serving as a coach and advisor to him, as well as being his co-strategist in cultivating prospective donors and soliciting transformational gifts. Similarly, collaborate with and support department heads, faculty, and volunteers in their related fundraising efforts.
- Serve as an active and contributing member of the Dean's senior team cabinet. Build collaborative professional relationships with peers and foster a strong team orientation.

### Program Oversight and Fundraising

- Assess CALS' current fundraising success and future potential; craft a sophisticated multi-year fundraising and engagement strategy that will result in sustainable short- and long-term growth in

individual and institutional philanthropic contributions, in keeping with the mission and core values of CALS.

- Establish annual fundraising goals of all types (annual, major, principal, and planned) from all sources (individuals, corporations, foundations, and commodity groups) for all purposes (targeted programmatic support, interdisciplinary efforts, endowed chairs and scholarships, and unrestricted support for the Dean's priorities).
- Oversee initiatives to identify, qualify, prioritize, cultivate, solicit, recognize, and steward donors and prospects.
- Personally foster strong relationships with donors, alumni, businesses, and community leaders. Understand their individual and collective interests to ensure philanthropic outreach is donor-centric and nuanced.
- Personally manage a portfolio of major and principal gift prospects and donors, helping to secure transformational gifts that advance CALS' mission and research.

#### **Management and Leadership.**

- Lead a dedicated team of about 30 advancement professionals, including gift officers, communications specialists, and engagement staff.
- Serve as President of The NC Agricultural Foundation, Inc. (Foundation), working closely with multiple advisory boards that support a wide range of education, research, and outreach programs.
- Set policy, procedures, and best practices for the office; provide inspirational leadership, mentorship, and coaching to achieve annual goals while adhering to university performance standards.
- Model and reinforce a sophisticated, non-territorial approach to donor-centric philanthropy that encourages teamwork, flexibility, and responsiveness.
- Monitor progress against goals and share reports on progress with the Dean and Associate Vice Chancellor, University Development.
- Establish operating plans and budgets designed to attain the philanthropic goals and objectives of the College and the Foundation.
- Provide effective fiscal management of the NC Agricultural Foundation, Inc., and CALS Advancement budgets.

The AD must be willing and able to travel frequently and participate in occasional evening and weekend activities, as well as perform other relevant duties as assigned.

## QUALIFICATIONS AND CHARACTERISTICS

**The successful hire for this role will have many of the following professional qualities and experiences:**

- Minimum of eight years of progressively responsible experience in major gift fundraising and advancement leadership.
- Experience developing and successfully implementing comprehensive fundraising strategies, including campaigns, ideally in the context of a land-grant, research university.
- Experience managing a wide variety of volunteers and advisory boards; experience with industry groups or associations is a decided plus.
- Strong relationship-building skills across internal partners and external audiences.
- Demonstrated ability to take academic priorities and translate them into development opportunities.
- Expert knowledge of the principles, practices, and ethics of successful fundraising, as well as experience working with foundations and 501(c)3 organizations.
- Demonstrated ability to motivate, lead, and manage people, increasing the cohesion and efficacy of a team and inspiring them to even greater levels of service.
- Outstanding verbal and written communication skills, along with the ability to articulate the importance of CALS to students, the state, and the national agriculture community.
- Post-baccalaureate credentials or a bachelor's degree plus alternative or equivalent professional training and experience.

Familiarity with agricultural, biotechnology, and life sciences industries, research, and/or education is a plus but not required.

## COMPENSATION

Compensation will be competitive and commensurate with experience. Except for roles with a set rate of pay, the wage/salary of the finalist selected for this role will be set based on a variety of factors, including but not limited to qualifications, experience, education, licenses, specialty, and training.

## APPLICATIONS, INQUIRIES, AND NOMINATIONS

Screening of complete applications will begin immediately and continue until the completion of the search process. Inquiries, nominations, referrals, and CVs with cover letters should be sent via the Isaacson, Miller website: <https://www.imsearch.com/open-searches/north-carolina-state-university-college-agriculture-and-life-sciences/assistant-dean>.

Jack Gorman, Partner

Elizabeth G. Neustaedter, Principal

Lisa Clayton, Senior Search Coordinator  
Isaacson, Miller

NC State University is an equal opportunity employer. All qualified applicants will receive equal opportunities for employment without regard to age, color, disability, gender identity, genetic information, national origin, race, religion, sex (including pregnancy), sexual orientation, and veteran status. The University encourages all qualified applicants, including protected veterans and individuals with disabilities, to apply.

NC State University participates in E-Verify. Federal law requires all employers to verify the identity and employment eligibility of all persons hired to work in the United States.