

FRAMEWORK FOR PARTNERSHIP

To meet the needs of students, faculty, and staff, and to promote efficiency within the University of North Carolina System, the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill (UNC-Chapel Hill) and the University of North Carolina School of the Arts (UNCSA) are excited to pursue a partnership that preserves and fosters the uniqueness of each campus while leveraging the ways that they can strengthen each other and the communities they serve. This Framework is created to protect the uniqueness of each University and to roadmap next steps.

I. NORTH CAROLINA'S HIGHER EDUCATION FIRSTS

The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill is a top-ranked research university in Chapel Hill, North Carolina. UNC-Chapel Hill was chartered in 1789 and is the nation's first public university.

The University of North Carolina School of the Arts is a top-ranked creative and performing arts conservatory in Winston-Salem, North Carolina. UNCSA was founded in 1963 and is the nation's first public arts conservatory.

These sister campuses are part of the University of North Carolina System, the state's public university system and one of the strongest systems of higher education in the world.

II. SHARED VALUES

Enhancing benefits to the students, faculty, staff, and their communities are top priorities for UNC-Chapel Hill and UNCSA. Both recognize the importance of access to learning, student success, affordability, and efficiency. Both understand that public trust begins with being honest stewards of public resources. Both strive to nurture and prepare the next generation of leaders for success. These values, among others, underpin the everyday work of these institutions.

III. EXISTING SUCCESS

UNC-Chapel Hill and UNCSA have explored mutually beneficial relationships over the past years and already have successfully collaborated to support their students in a range of areas. This includes providing support for UNCSA student health services, UNCSA digital accessibility compliance, and promoting arts exposure in both communities.

These existing relationships provide a foundation for an expanded collaboration between the two universities.

IV. MOVING FORWARD

Each institution comes to this Framework in a place of strength, well-positioned to think strategically about how they can further meet the needs of their respective communities. Through cooperation and growth, both institutions will benefit.

A. AREAS OF FOCUS

Building on existing success, UNC-Chapel Hill and UNCSA intend to leverage resources to expand student opportunities and increase operational efficiencies. To start, the institutions will engage in collective conversations focused on the following main areas.

1. Student curricular and programmatic opportunities:

Each of the sister campuses offers students experiences in areas that the other cannot. UNCSA can broaden access to the arts for UNC-Chapel Hill students. Similarly, UNC-Chapel Hill can provide pathways for UNCSA students to access non-arts-based experiences outside of their UNCSA core general education.

For the benefit of their respective student populations, the institutions intend to explore opportunities that would provide their students access to uniquely created programs. Faculty will play a key role in contributing to academic and curriculum program development.

Potential structures such as single-semester institution-to-institution residency programs, intercampus minors, and international study abroad experiences will be explored. These curricular additions will provide benefits to students in both campus communities but also the public at large.

2. Student and infrastructure support opportunities:

UNC-Chapel Hill is supported by robust infrastructure in critical areas such as student support, informational technologies, and human resources. Due to economies of scale, UNC-Chapel Hill has operational efficiencies that UNCSA, a small, specialized conservatory, does not. Through this partnership, UNC-Chapel Hill can provide support to UNCSA in areas such as student health services, international student support, payroll and benefits management, dining services, and other technical operational infrastructure. With this operational and infrastructure assistance, UNCSA will redirect financial and other resources to expand and enhance student experiences and to invest in critical operational and personnel needs.

3. Promoting creative and artistic opportunities:

UNC-Chapel Hill and UNCSA recognize the importance of the arts on campus and in the communities they serve. Arts programs and experiences connect members of the community to one another, and to local and global culture. A partnership will support existing relationships through which the campuses can explore additional opportunities to develop new works together and bring those experiences to their communities in Chapel Hill and Winston-Salem, and beyond. Through this incubation experience, UNC Chapel Hill would invest in Winston-Salem and UNCSA would invest in Chapel Hill.

B. TIMELINE

On-campus subject matter experts from each campus will collaborate on pathways to move forward in the above areas. Both institutions acknowledge that a partnership in some areas will be more challenging than in others, and thus there is not one single timeline on which this relationship can be measured.

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This list is a start—not an end. Other opportunities may become apparent during collaborative conversations, and the institutions agree to explore any such additional mutually beneficial opportunities as they arise.

V. PRESERVING IDENTITIES

Both institutions recognize the uniqueness of the other. Each has an established community and culture, both on campus and in their broader areas. Each has a student population with distinct needs. These differentiations are what make a partnership promising and emphasize the importance of maintaining the individuality of each campus. Put differently, this partnership will not change either institution – their identities or their governance structure. No one institution becomes subservient to the other.

UNC-Chapel Hill and UNCSA will continue to offer their robust and distinct degree programs. Going forward, neither institution intends to pursue baccalaureate programs that are in direct competition with the other. If there becomes a need in the future, the institutions will confer in good faith before seeking any formal approval.

Each institution will remain a constituent institution of the UNC System, have its own differentiated admissions process, and be its own degree-granting institution. Each chancellor will continue to report to the UNC System president. Moreover, each institution will retain its statutorily created Board of Trustees and maintain separate administrative structures and faculty.

VI. EVOLVING GOALS

UNC-Chapel Hill and UNCSA recognize that institutional goals may evolve over time. To ensure the uninterrupted success of these storied institutions, the institutions may initiate a structured transition returning to their separate infrastructures. Both institutions agree to approach such a return with the shared goal of protecting their students, faculty, staff, and communities. The UNC System will facilitate and support the institutions in navigating challenges to ensure ongoing success.

VII. CONCLUSION

UNC-Chapel Hill and UNCSA are excited to explore the opportunities this partnership may bring. This Framework signifies each institution's commitment to best serve the state, the nation, and the world.

There is no doubt that operationalizing a partnership will have its challenges. But this unique opportunity to do more together cannot be ignored. UNC-Chapel Hill and UNCSA look forward to moving into the next phase of this journey.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, this Framework for Partnership is acknowledged between the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill and the University of North Carolina School of the Arts as of the date entered below.

This the 12th day of October, 2026.

Read and understood:

THE UNIVERSITY OF NORTH CAROLINA AT CHAPEL HILL


Chancellor Lee Roberts

THE UNIVERSITY OF NORTH CAROLINA SCHOOL OF THE ARTS


Chancellor Brian Cole

Acknowledged and supported by:

UNIVERSITY OF NORTH CAROLINA SYSTEM


President Peter Hans