



Dean of the William States Lee College of Engineering

The University of North Carolina at Charlotte (UNC Charlotte or Charlotte) invites nominations and applications for the position of dean of the William States Lee College of Engineering. This role reports to the provost and vice chancellor for academic affairs at UNC Charlotte, North Carolina's urban research university.

North Carolina is known for its commitment to public higher education; the [University of North Carolina at Charlotte](#) exemplifies the state constitution's mission of access. What [began in 1946](#) as a night school to serve returning veterans has grown into one of the top 100 public universities in the nation. As North Carolina's urban research university, UNC Charlotte is integral to the social, cultural and economic fabric of the Charlotte metropolitan area of three million people. UNC Charlotte delivers high-quality, affordable education and drives progress and innovation through top-tier research and creative discovery. There are more than 3,200 faculty and staff members and an enrollment of 33,045 students. All thrive on a 1,000-acre campus, 10 miles from the city center, and at the Dubois Center in uptown Charlotte. UNC Charlotte boasts more than 193,000 alumni and graduates, with more than 9,000 new alumni each year.

Mission Statement

UNC Charlotte is a leading urban research university with a significant local-to-global impact. We transform lives, communities, and industries through accessible and affordable education, offering exemplary bachelor's, master's, doctoral, and professional programs. Our commitment to scholarship, innovation, and service drives our contributions to the ever-evolving needs of society. Through strategic partnerships and a focus on real-world applications, we prepare our graduates to excel in their careers and lead with purpose and integrity in a rapidly changing world.

The Strategic Plan

The University's strategic plan, [The Charlotte Difference: A Plan for National Distinction, 2026-31](#), is a focused roadmap to accelerate UNC Charlotte's rise as a premier public urban research university. The plan is anchored in four priority areas:

- [Transform Students' Lives Through Educational Opportunity and Excellence](#) — We will deliver a high-impact, career-connected education that expands access, supports timely completion, and prepares every graduate for lifelong success.
- [Power the Future Through Research in All Its Forms](#) — We will elevate our research enterprise to the front ranks of American universities, advancing discovery, innovation, and creative activity

while harnessing the power of artificial intelligence, emerging technologies and interdisciplinary collaboration.

- [Drive Progress for Charlotte, North Carolina and Beyond](#) — We will lead as the state's urban research university and a catalyst for regional prosperity, mobilizing our people, partnerships, and expertise to generate measurable impact and strengthen civic and economic vitality.
- [Expedite Charlotte's Ascent to National Distinction](#) — We will invest in our people, programs, and partnerships to attract top talent, amplify our national reputation, and secure our place among the nation's most distinguished public universities by 2030.

With record student success and research expenditures, UNC Charlotte is a university on the move, and national publications are taking notice. According to *U.S. News & World Report*, UNC Charlotte is one of the top 10 fastest-rising universities in the nation. UNC Charlotte has climbed 85 spots in the *U.S. News & World Report Best Colleges* rankings since 2020 and [currently sits at No. 87](#) among public universities. The university also ranks No. 38 in the nation (and No. 1 in NC) on U.S. News' "Most Innovative Schools" list. Its online bachelor's programs rank No. 4 in the nation, and more than 30 graduate programs and specialties, including four engineering programs, are ranked among the top 100 nationally.

Academics

UNC Charlotte's academic enterprise is gaining increasing national and international recognition, reflecting the university's growing stature as a research-intensive institution. With a broad portfolio of undergraduate, graduate, and doctoral programs, the university is building nationally distinctive strengths in areas including engineering, computing and informatics, energy, health, business, and the sciences. UNC Charlotte's academic enterprise is organized across eight colleges, spanning the full range of the liberal arts, sciences, and professional programs. This breadth of offerings creates rich opportunities for interdisciplinary collaboration and positions UNC Charlotte as a full-service research university capable of connecting with the needs of not only a fast-growing region, but beyond. Through hands-on experience and strong industry ties, students graduate ready to contribute from day one. The university's colleges and schools are:

- [Belk College of Business](#)
- [College of Arts + Architecture](#)
- [College of Computing and Informatics](#)
- [Cato College of Education](#)
- [College of Health and Human Services](#)
- [College of Humanities & Earth and Social Sciences](#)
- [Klein College of Science](#)
- [William States Lee College of Engineering](#)

Across these units, UNC Charlotte offers doctoral and professional degrees that reflect the university's growing research mission. UNC Charlotte's research strategy explicitly calls for elevating the national and global visibility of its scholarship, expanding interdisciplinary collaboration, and developing national and international partnerships. Together, these efforts are extending the reach and reputation of a university deeply connected to Charlotte while increasingly positioning its academic programs, faculty expertise, and research enterprise on a national and global stage. The university's academic culture emphasizes experiential learning, community engagement, and the direct application of knowledge to real-world challenges.

The broader university community is supported by more than 400 student organizations and a vibrant campus culture that connects academic life with the energy of Charlotte itself. The university's alumni network is deeply embedded in the Charlotte business community, and the institution's partnerships with employers, civic organizations, and research institutions create a continuous pipeline of opportunity for students and faculty.

Leadership

[Sharon L. Gaber](#) serves as the fifth chancellor of the University of North Carolina at Charlotte, the Charlotte region's public research university. Since her arrival as chancellor in 2020, the university has embarked on a bold 10-year strategic plan that articulates a new vision to drive discovery and innovation for the region as a globally recognized public research university. Charlotte officially earned the nation's top research designation, Carnegie R1, in February 2025.

Prior to her arrival at UNC Charlotte, Gaber served for five years as president of the University of Toledo. Earlier in her career, she served as provost and vice chancellor for academic affairs at the University of Arkansas. She has also served as an administrator and interim provost at Auburn University and a faculty member and administrator at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. As the first woman to serve as chancellor of UNC Charlotte, Gaber follows the trail blazed by founding educator Bonnie Cone, who led the institution from 1946-66 through several stages of growth.

[Jennifer Troyer](#) serves as provost and vice chancellor for academic affairs, a role in which she provides leadership and oversight for eight academic colleges, Enrollment Management, the Graduate School, the Honors College, Institutional Effectiveness and Analytics, Charlotte Global, the Levine Scholars Program, the J. Murrey Atkins Library, Digital & Professional Learning, University College, and the UNC Charlotte Urban Institute. She was appointed provost in 2023.

Previously, she served as dean of the Belk College of Business at UNC Charlotte and professor of economics. She joined the Belk College as an assistant professor in 1999. In her decades with UNC Charlotte, Troyer has served in several leadership roles. Prior to becoming dean in July 2020, she served as interim dean for the Belk College (October 2019-June 2020) and interim dean for the College of Health and Human Services (July 2018-June 2019). Within the Belk College, she also served as senior associate dean, associate dean for graduate programs and research, and chair of the Department of Economics.

THE WILLIAM STATES LEE COLLEGE OF ENGINEERING

The William States Lee College of Engineering at UNC Charlotte is a dynamic, growing engineering college with a strong reputation for industry-connected education, applied research, innovation, and student success. Serving more than 4,400 undergraduate and 450 graduate students across a broad portfolio of engineering disciplines, the college prepares graduates to address complex challenges in fields ranging from energy and infrastructure to advanced manufacturing, computer engineering, construction, and emerging technologies.

At the William States Lee College of Engineering, six dynamic academic departments and schools prepare students to tackle real-world challenges through innovative education, research, and hands-on

experience. Each department offers a range of undergraduate and graduate pathways that blend technical rigor with practical application, ensuring our graduates are ready to lead in industry, research, and global engineering communities. Below are the six departments and schools.

- [Albert School of Construction](#)
- [School of Energy](#)
- [Civil and Environmental Engineering](#)
- [Electrical and Computer Engineering](#)
- [Industrial and Systems Engineering](#)
- [Mechanical Engineering and Engineering Science](#)

The William States Lee College of Engineering is in an exciting period of growth and opportunity, with new academic enterprises that position the college to respond to some of the most pressing infrastructure and workforce needs facing the region and nation.

The launch of the [Albert School of Construction](#) represents a significant expansion of the college's capabilities, bringing together construction engineering, construction management, civil engineering technology, facilities engineering, and related disciplines to teach the student the full capital project lifecycle. Supported by a major leadership gift, the school of construction is designed to expand programs, strengthen industry partnerships, develop hands-on learning opportunities, and prepare graduates to lead increasingly complex infrastructure projects.

Similarly, the newly established [School of Energy](#) builds on UNC Charlotte's growing national leadership in grid technology, energy research, and workforce development. The School of Energy is uniquely focused on the interdisciplinary challenges associated with modernizing and expanding the nation's electrical infrastructure and builds directly on the university's selection to lead the [NSF Grid Modernization Engine in the Carolinas](#), supported by the NSF Engine investment over 10 years.

The William States Lee College of Engineering will also benefit from the launch of a new Innovation Hub. [UNC Charlotte and Honeywell](#) announced a \$10 million investment that will expand STEM workforce development and accelerate innovation in the Charlotte region. The investment will transform UNC Charlotte's Burson Hall into the Honeywell Innovation Hub — a 155,000-square-foot, state-of-the-art learning complex for applied research and STEM education.

Research

Across all departments and schools at the William States Lee College of Engineering, both undergraduate and graduate level students engage in hands-on research that addresses real-world challenges. From sustainable infrastructure and advanced manufacturing to smart systems, energy, and data-driven innovation, each department offers specialized research areas where they can collaborate with faculty, gain practical experience, and contribute to cutting-edge discoveries. This work is supported by a growing network of research centers, industry partnerships, and collaborative teams that connect engineering expertise to pressing challenges facing communities and industries. Across its [research portfolio](#), the college emphasizes hands-on engagement, translating discovery and innovation into practical solutions while preparing students to contribute to the next generation of engineering advances.

Centers and Institutes

Research at the William States Lee College of Engineering comes to life through its centers and institutes. These dynamic, collaborative environments connect students with faculty and industry partners to work on meaningful, real-world problems.

- [BATT CAVE](#) - The North Carolina Battery Complexity, Autonomous Vehicle and Electrification Research Center, the BATT CAVE, is driving innovation by unraveling the intricate world of batteries and their applications that will drive the next generation of autonomous vehicles, smart cities, and intelligence systems.
- [National Defense & Intelligence Innovation Institute \(NDI3\)](#) – Co-located with BATT CAVE, this university-wide defense institute features several engineering initiatives (tactical power, digital engineering, unmanned aerial systems) and serves as a point of connection between the College of Engineering's motorsports engineering preeminence and the racing industry's pivot to defense manufacturing.
- [Charlotte AIR Institute](#) - Charlotte Douglas International Airport and UNC Charlotte join together to explore solutions to challenges in the aviation and airport infrastructure sector. The Charlotte Aviation Innovation and Research Institute, or Charlotte AIR, is the only partnership of its kind in the nation between a major airport and a major university.
- [Energy Production & Infrastructure Center](#) (EPIC) - EPIC was formed through private and public funding in response to the need to supply well-educated and highly trained engineers qualified to meet the demands of the energy industry and to provide sustainable support for applied research. Offering a collaborative industry/academic partnership, EPIC produces a technical workforce and advancements in technology for the global energy industry while supporting the Carolinas' multi-state economic and energy security.
- [Center for Precision Metrology](#) - As the top research center of its kind in the Western Hemisphere, UNC Charlotte's Center for Precision Metrology lab is central to education and research efforts in the areas of precision engineering and metrology. With a wide variety of high-end measurement instruments and a customized environment, engineering experts work to support American advanced manufacturing through research, workforce development, and industry partnerships.
- [Super Fab Lab](#) - The Charlotte Super Fab Lab provides engineering and computer science students with access to advanced fabrication tools, design software, and technical mentorship that bridge theory and practice—turning innovative concepts into real, testable prototypes. Through collaboration with faculty, researchers, and industry, students gain the experience and confidence to engineer meaningful solutions to real-world challenges.

Located in one of the nation's fastest-growing economic centers, the college benefits from deep partnerships with over 300 corporations, government agencies, and community organizations, providing students with extensive opportunities for hands-on learning and real-world problem solving. In addition, the college benefits from an active and engaged [Board of Advisors](#) that provides strategic insight, industry perspective, and philanthropic leadership.

In one of the nation's best senior design programs, the College of Engineering's strong industry engagement connects students directly with engineering professionals and brings real-world opportunities into their academic experience. Through strategic advising and mentorship, including

hands-on support in design and build projects, seniors tackle the kinds of challenges that teach them skills demanded by top employers. The [Senior Design Program](#) exemplifies UNC Charlotte's commitment to experiential, industry-connected engineering education. Each year, more than 500 students engage in approximately 90 projects, working in interdisciplinary teams with industry partners to address complex, real-world challenges across engineering disciplines. More than 80% of projects are industry-funded and mentored, giving students the opportunity to apply their technical knowledge while developing essential skills in project management, communication, design, and problem-solving. The program also creates meaningful connections between the college, its students, faculty, and the region's vibrant engineering and business community, culminating in the semesterly Senior Design Expo, where students showcase their solutions to industry and university stakeholders.

The college has experienced significant growth in enrollment, research, philanthropy, and external partnerships in recent years, positioning it for continued advancement and greater impact across the nation in the near future.

THE ROLE OF THE DEAN

Reporting to the provost and vice chancellor for academic affairs, the dean is the chief academic and administrative officer of the William States Lee College of Engineering, responsible for providing strategic vision and operational leadership for all aspects of the college's portfolio of academic programs, research, and industry engagement.

The dean is responsible for setting college priorities and leading the college to accomplish goals that are in alignment with [UNC Charlotte's strategic priorities](#). The dean will join a leadership team in Academic Affairs at UNC Charlotte that places a high value on innovation, collaboration, and interdisciplinarity. The dean is the college's chief advocate, promoting the college's goals and achievements, leading its development and fundraising activities, and engaging with industry and other community partners. The dean will be the College of Engineering's public voice, promoting initiatives within UNC Charlotte and across the state, fostering collaboration with industry, and articulating the College of Engineering's contributions at the local, state, regional, national, and international levels.

Reporting to the dean are the associate dean for academic affairs, associate dean for research, associate dean for faculty affairs, assistant dean of student experience, assistant dean of budget and personnel, and six department/school heads. In addition, the office of the dean of the College of Engineering is staffed by nine staff. The College of Engineering has a total of 197 faculty, 83 staff, and a budget of \$57.9M.

Leadership Agenda

The dean will be expected to address the following agenda:

- ❖ **Elevate Engineering Excellence and Distinction-** UNC Charlotte's trajectory as an R1 research university, coupled with the College of Engineering's growth in research funding, enrollment, and external visibility, creates a powerful platform for the next dean. The opportunity is to translate this momentum into a clear and compelling vision for the college's next chapter, aligning research ambition, academic quality, student success, rising rankings at the graduate and undergraduate levels, and resource growth around a distinctive identity for engineering at Charlotte.

- ❖ **Expand Capacity to Support Growth and Ambition-** The college's rapid enrollment growth, expanding research portfolio, and growing industry partnerships have created increasing demand for faculty, student support, facilities, and research infrastructure. The next dean will have the opportunity to serve as a persuasive advocate, effective collaborator, and strategic partner with university leadership, alumni, industry, and philanthropic supporters to secure the resources needed to sustain growth and realize the college's full potential.
- ❖ **Deepen Industry and Community Partnerships-** Located in one of the nation's most dynamic business regions, the William States Lee College of Engineering benefits from a deep and well-established network of industry partners across energy, construction, technology, mobility, advanced materials and manufacturing, and related sectors. The next dean will have the opportunity to strengthen these relationships, sustain meaningful engagement with employers and alumni, and expand partnerships that advance sponsored research, experiential learning, student placement, philanthropy, and the college's broader role as an engine of workforce and economic development.
- ❖ **Advance Emerging Academic Platforms and Areas of Excellence-** The launch of the Albert School of Construction and the School of Energy gives the next dean an uncommon opportunity to shape new academic platforms and areas of excellence. By fostering collaboration across schools and departments within the College of Engineering and with other colleges and programs across the university, the dean can advance interdisciplinary teaching, research, and innovation while strengthening connections to industry and community partners. The opportunity also includes positioning these schools, alongside the college's strengths in advanced manufacturing, precision metrology, and digital systems, as nationally relevant engines of innovation and workforce development in growing areas such as artificial intelligence, defense, and biomedical engineering.
- ❖ **Strengthen Student Success and Graduate Education-** As undergraduate demand grows and the student profile strengthens, the next dean will have the opportunity to ensure that enrollment growth is matched by exceptional academic pathways, advising, experiential learning, and career outcomes. At the same time, expanding graduate education and Ph.D. production will be essential to sustaining the college's research trajectory and R1 designation, and will require focused attention to funding models, program differentiation and evolution, and graduate student recruitment and success.

Desired qualifications and characteristics

The ideal candidate will hold a doctorate or terminal degree in an appropriate academic discipline and will have a distinguished academic record with qualifications and experience that warrant tenure and appointment at the rank of professor in a William States Lee College of Engineering department or school. The individual will bring significant administrative experience, experience leading innovation, a track record of collaboration across disciplines, outstanding communication skills, authenticity, self-confidence balanced with humility, integrity of the highest order, a positive solutions-based approach to problem-solving, and a clear understanding of the challenges facing colleges of engineering. Specific attributes and competencies desired are:

- Significant administrative experience in progressively responsible leadership positions within a higher education institution, preferably at tier one research institutions.
- A proven leader who can elevate the university's and college's focus on student success, innovation, and industry engagement.

- Experience as an agent of innovation and change, achieving excellence across a complex organization.
- Background and experience pertinent to the unique programs and setting of the William States Lee College of Engineering, including a clear understanding of the academic vision of the university and the college's goals and opportunities related to delivering quality undergraduate and graduate education.
- A visionary strategic thinker with the ability to develop, inspire others to embrace, and execute a visionary and credible plan for the college's growth and distinction.
- A strong collaborator with the ability to continue growing interdisciplinary research and academic programs in the College of Engineering and in collaboration with other leaders at UNC Charlotte.
- A leader who respects disciplinary diversity, values teaching and service alongside research, and evaluates faculty contributions broadly.
- Strong knowledge of external funding and demonstrated experience in mentoring faculty in sponsored research.
- A skilled and persistent resource advocate who can make a compelling, data-informed case for engineering's unique needs.
- Proven business and political acumen commensurate with the leadership needs of the college, including the ability to navigate the organizational, political, and fiscal realities unique to a major public research university; demonstrable experience applying sound judgment; and an ability to manage change, resolve conflict, and build consensus.
- A credible and compelling external ambassador, comfortable engaging Fortune 500 executives, civic leaders, and government officials as peers, and experienced with building lasting philanthropic and industry partnerships.
- Demonstrated ability to analyze, understand, and interpret complex situations and problems; to evaluate options and devise and propose solutions that align resources with goals; and to implement plans and achieve measurable outcomes.
- Excellent interpersonal skills with the ability to develop, engage, and maintain constructive and professional relationships with other UNC Charlotte leaders, faculty, staff, students, donors, external supporters, and other external individuals and organizations of relevance to the college.
- Demonstrated ability to communicate effectively in a diverse organization. Excellent written and oral communication skills and the ability to communicate needs, plans, and programs effectively to both internal and external audiences.

Process of candidacy

The search committee will begin accepting and reviewing applications immediately and until December 4th, 2026. Requested application materials include a letter of interest addressing the leadership agenda and a curriculum vitae/resumé. Although applications will be accepted until a dean is selected, for best consideration, all candidates should submit their materials as soon as possible. All materials will be received in confidence.

For more information, please visit the search website: <https://provost.charlotte.edu/dean-the-william-states-lee-college-of-engineering/> and College website: <https://engineering.charlotte.edu/>

Please submit materials via the DSG- Storbeck online portal: <https://talent-profile.dsgco.com/search/v2/23277>

Client is assisted in the search by DSG Storbeck. For additional information, please contact:



Tom Fitch, Managing Director

Amanda Bennett, Managing Associate

Email: UNCCharlotteEngineeringDean@dsgco.com

This is a full-time position that will be based on-site in Charlotte, North Carolina. Salary is competitive and commensurate with experience and includes a generous benefits package.

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This leadership profile is not exhaustive and may be subject to change. While every effort has been made to confirm information at the date of publication, the accuracy or completeness of the information provided herein cannot be guaranteed.