Spring Planning Updates
NC State’s plans for the spring semester continue to be refined and shared with the campus community. At the time of this report’s publication, the most recent updates include changes to the academic calendar for the spring semester. On October 22, 2020, NC State announced that the spring semester would begin on Tuesday, January 19, 2021 – one week later than originally planned. This allows more time to implement a robust COVID-19 testing strategy for students returning to campus. Additional changes were made to the time built-in for spring break. Many members of the NC State community expressed concern at having a week for spring break. Instead of the full week, there will be four wellness days spread throughout the semester. These days are intended to provide a respite for our community, and faculty will be instructed to avoid any deadlines or tests on days following these breaks. Exams will take place May 3-10 with a Reading Day and two weekend days set aside for breaks. Spring commencement is scheduled for May 15.

Virtual Commencement Announcement
NC State announced that a virtual Commencement Ceremony will be held on Friday, December 4, 2020 at 6 p.m. This event will celebrate Fall 2020 graduates and students who graduated in Spring 2020. University administrators and distinguished guests will address the Class of 2020. The event will also feature graduates, their families and loved ones, and NC State faculty and staff. Graduates, their families and loved ones, and NC State faculty and staff are encouraged to submit videos and photos by October 30, 2020 on the virtual commencement website: virtual.commencement.ncsu.edu. Some of these videos and photos will be featured in the virtual ceremony.

Racial Equity Summit
NC State hosted its first Racial Equity Summit on October 15, 2020. The Summit brought together NC State faculty, staff, students, community members and alumni who shared input on how the university can address specific issues and broader themes to improve racial equity at NC State. The Racial Equity Summit is part of a series of initiatives at NC State to support the university’s mission to make its campus a more diverse and inclusive campus. Additional information about the Racial Equity Summit and the university’s racial equity initiatives can be found online on our diversity portal: ncsu.edu/diversity/
NSF Grant for Crop DNA Replication Research
Two faculty members in the Department of Plant and Microbial Biology were recently awarded a $3.3 million grant from the National Science Foundation’s Plant Genome Research Program. The grant will allow Drs. Linda Hanley-Bowdoin and Bill Thompson to continue their work investigating how plants control DNA replication and how this can influence agronomic traits. Their work has implications for agriculture as well as genomics research. This group is the only one working on DNA replication timing in actively growing and developing tissue, which provides them the opportunity to gain insight into fundamental questions. Through the grant, they also plan to make a difference in the lives of students. They hope to hire one undergraduate student in their lab during the academic year in addition to supporting an existing program that provides summer research experiences to undergraduate and high school students.

American Humane Nonprofit Recognizes Long-time CVM Member
Julie Nettifee was named an American Humane Veterinary Nurse Hero as part of a national competition sponsored by Zoetis Petcare and in coordination with the nonprofit organization American Humane. Julie has worked at NC State for over 20 years in a variety of roles, including supporting clinical research and faculty-clinicians and education DVM students. Currently, she is focused on research and clinical support for the College of Veterinary Medicine and the NC State Veterinary Hospital. She was one of five finalists to receive this honor, which recognizes the dedication of veterinary workers and the lives that they have changed. American Humane is dedicated to animal welfare and supporting the human-animal bond.

C3 Program Gets 11th Partner School
NC State’s Community College Collaboration (C3) program gained a new community college partner last month. James Sprunt Community College, located in Duplin County, signed a memorandum of understanding with NC State to become the 11th community college partner in the C3 program. The C3 program is a dual-enrollment, dual-admission program that gives students at partner NC Community Colleges a clear pathway to a four-year degree from NC State. Individual advising by NC State advisors – while students are still at the community college – helps students navigate the transfer process more easily. Students also have early access to degree planning tools, which allows them to see how courses in the Associate Degree will meet NC State’s degree requirements.