Spring 2021 COVID-19 Testing

NC State has implemented a robust testing program for the spring 2021 semester, including re-entry testing. All students, faculty and staff who will be on campus for classes or research and students who live within a mile of campus were required to have proof of a negative test result before starting the spring semester. NC State set up four re-entry testing sites during the month of January and provided more than 20,000 tests before the start of the semester. Rates of positive test results for students, faculty and staff were less than 2% of test results coming back for students, faculty and staff.

NC State has also expanded the surveillance testing program from the fall semester. Designated faculty and staff, students living on campus, and select student employees working in face-to-face roles are regularly tested as part of this program. Participants are tested weekly with the exception of groups such as student-athletes, that must be tested at rates in compliance with guidelines from governing bodies like the ACC and NCAA. The goals of the surveillance testing program are to identify cases, allow us to quickly activate our contact tracing program, and help isolate and quarantine individuals as needed to help prevent spread.

Black History Month at NC State

In honor of Black History Month, NC State has planned virtual events throughout February intended to help our community reflect on and acknowledge the achievements and struggles of Black Americans. One example is Blacks in Wax Weekend, a program hosted by the African American Cultural Center, GLBT Center and Women’s Center that acknowledges and celebrates Black history at NC State and beyond. Another noteworthy event is the Red, White and Black Virtual Tour with former African American Cultural Center program director Toni Harris “Mama” Thorpe. This virtual tour will revisit campus locations that helped give voice to the Black experience at NC State. While February brings a special focus, recognizing and celebrating Black history and culture every day is another way we can work to combat racism on campus and elsewhere.

Online and Distance Education Rankings

In the 2021 U.S. News and World Report online education rankings, NC State’s programs are proving their value and making impressive jumps. The online Leadership in the Public Sector bachelor’s degree completion program ranked 14th in the nation for best online bachelor's programs. This is an increase of 25 spots from the 2020 rankings. The Jenkins MBA online Business Analytics Certificate ranked 4th in Best Online Business Analytics MBA Programs. The Jenkins Online MBA ranked 16th, marking its seventh consecutive year in the nation’s top 20 Best Online MBA programs. A number of NC State’s online engineering programs continued to excel in the rankings. The online master’s program in engineering ranked 6th overall with specialized graduate programs in civil, electrical, industrial and mechanical engineering all placing among the top 15 in the nation. The recent rankings also reflect NC State’s ongoing dedication to serving veterans. Online master’s programs in the College of Education were ranked 1st in the state of North Carolina for veterans and 12th overall.
IARPA-Funded Research
NC State is one of seven academic institutions with three private companies collaborating on a new contract awarded to Accenture Federal Services by Intelligence Advanced Research Projects Activity (IARPA). IARPA is an organization within the Office of the Director of National Intelligence that invests in high-risk, high-payoff research that could help overcome difficult challenges relevant to the Intelligence Community. The project will use artificial intelligence and advanced machine learning to significantly reduce the time and cost of analyzing large volumes of geospatial imagery, as part of IARPA’s Space-based Machine Automated Recognition Techniques program. The ten collaborating organizations will assemble into three research teams, each focusing on distinct but interacting facets of the project: fusing and harmonizing data from multiple satellites, broadly searching Earth’s surface for change, and characterizing the attributes of changing landscapes. Josh Gray, assistant professor in the Department of Forestry and Environmental Resources and Center for Geospatial Analytics faculty fellow, is leading the NC State effort. He will work closely with colleagues at Boston College to lead the component dedicated to searching the Earth’s surface for change.

EPA With XVIII Airborne Corps
The University of North Carolina System signed an Educational Partnership Agreement (EPA) with the XVIII Airborne Corps, with NC State as the lead institution. The UNC System worked with members of the North Carolina congressional delegation to secure $8 million in the FY2021 defense appropriations bill for the “Pathfinder Airborne” program to support this innovative partnership between the 82nd Airborne Division, a subunit of the XVIII Airborne Corps, and the UNC System. The efforts are to focus on soldier-led research and innovation to support the 82nd Airborne Division’s unique mission of conducting joint forcible entry operations and deployment worldwide within 18 hours of notification. This partnership will strengthen NC State’s existing relationship with the military and allow for new opportunities to encourage and enhance education, research and innovation in STEM and other disciplines.

Accelerate to Industry Program wins Blackburn Award
The Graduate School’s Accelerate to Industry (A2i) program received the Blackburn Award from the American Association of University Administrators (AAUA), a non-profit organization dedicated to developing and advancing superior standards for the profession of higher education administration. The Blackburn Award is the highest institutional/programmatic recognition the AAUA offers. This award recognizes outstanding examples of college or university leadership activities that demonstrate creative solutions to common problems in higher education. A2i helps graduate students, postdoctoral scholars and graduate alumni gain valuable experience and explore careers in industry, making them even more competitive candidates for industry jobs.