Central Piedmont Community College

2025-26

PERFORMANCE REPORT

FROM THE PRESIDENT

As Mecklenburg County continues to experience unprecedented growth, Central Piedmont Community College strives each day to provide students with opportunities that both transform lives and positively impact our ever-evolving region. It is an honor to serve as a provider of career pathways and as the county's primary workforce development partner. We are proud to report that during the 2024-25 academic year, more than 52,000 students enrolled at Central Piedmont — and we are tracking to finish the 2025-26 year with 58,000 students. Behind these numbers are individuals trusting us to help them achieve excellence in their chosen field.

As we close out the 2025-26 year and look to the future, we have an opportunity through this Performance Report to reflect and showcase the alignment between Mecklenburg County's strategic goals — and the daily work at Central Piedmont to support that pursuit.

We continue to offer nearly 300 associate degree, diploma and certificate programs, providing affordable, hands-on education that also prioritizes community needs.

For instance, our many partnerships with regional organizations provide industry training that strengthens the economy and workforce. A recently announced partnership with PSA Airlines will prepare more students for in-demand careers in the aviation sector, while a $1 million Gable Grant from the Lowe's Foundation benefits those in the skilled trades. Programs and services in healthcare, information technology, hospitality and more also feature industry input and community involvement. And, for those students who plan to transfer in pursuit of a bachelor's degree, we now have nearly 20 guaranteed admission partners.

Central Piedmont continues to grow alongside Mecklenburg County. We experienced record enrollment in the fall — with more than 36,000 students. As we close out the 2025-26 year, we expect to hit a milestone: five years of enrollment growth.

The college is continually transforming as well. The expansion of our Harris Campus will train talent in cosmetic arts, barbering and massage therapy, with affordable services open to the public. Work on the Community Lifeline continues at our Levine Campus to train public safety professionals, and our Architectural Technology program recently doubled with an expansion to Cato Campus.

For their tireless efforts in aiding all of the college's endeavors, I would like to recognize the Mecklenburg County Board of Commissioners, the County Manager and the County team. Your support and collaboration helps Central Piedmont thrive and for that we say, "thank you."

Regardless of their academic and career goals, students learn how to be good stewards of their community and global citizens at Central Piedmont. It is a privilege to have been part of the fabric of Mecklenburg County for more than 60 years, and we cannot wait to see what the future holds.

Sincerely,

Kandi W. Deitemeyer, Ed. D.
President

MECKLENBURG COUNTY COMMUNITY VISION

LEARN

Residents in Mecklenburg County will have access to a high-quality education at any point in their life and be prepared to meet the needs of employers. We will be a model learning community, committed to maximizing academic achievement for every student regardless of socio-economic standing. The county will continue to be a regional hub for higher education, offering individuals opportunities to attain degrees and further their professional development.

WORK

Residents in Mecklenburg County will have continuing employment opportunities in a diverse economy that provide all who are capable and willing to work a living wage. All residents will have the opportunity to share equitably in the community's prosperity. We will be innovative and have a vibrant economy as we attract new businesses and support existing businesses.

CENTRAL PIEDMONT'S VISION, MISSION, AND VALUES

VISION

Central Piedmont will be a champion of students, a catalyst for opportunity, and an exceptional provider of learning experiences that transform lives and strengthen our community.

MISSION

To facilitate student learning, success, and completion, Central Piedmont provides exceptional education and globally competitive training in an engaging, supportive environment.

VALUES

Student-Centered
Collaboration
Excellence
Accountability
Equity
Courage

CENTRAL PIEDMONT
BY THE NUMBERS

ON TRACK TO ENROLL
58,000
STUDENTS IN 2025-26

ON TRACK TO ACHIEVE
5
CONSECUTIVE YEARS OF ENROLLMENT GROWTH

MORE THAN
$4 MILLION
IN SCHOLARSHIPS PROVIDED TO STUDENTS

NEARLY
300
PROGRAMS

19
GUARANTEED ADMISSION PARTNERS

6
CAMPUSES ACROSS THE COUNTY

TRUIST

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

PSA AIRLINES PARTNERSHIP STRENGTHENS AVIATION WORKFORCE PIPELINE

In March, Central Piedmont and PSA Airlines announced a new partnership to prepare more students for high-demand, high-wage careers in the aviation sector in the Charlotte region and beyond.

Nationally and regionally, the aviation industry faces rising demand for pilots, aviation maintenance technicians, drone operators, air traffic control specialists and other skilled roles. As an American Airlines hub serving 13 other carriers and home to one of the world's busiest airports, Mecklenburg County is uniquely positioned to develop the skilled talent needed to fuel the region's growing aviation sector.

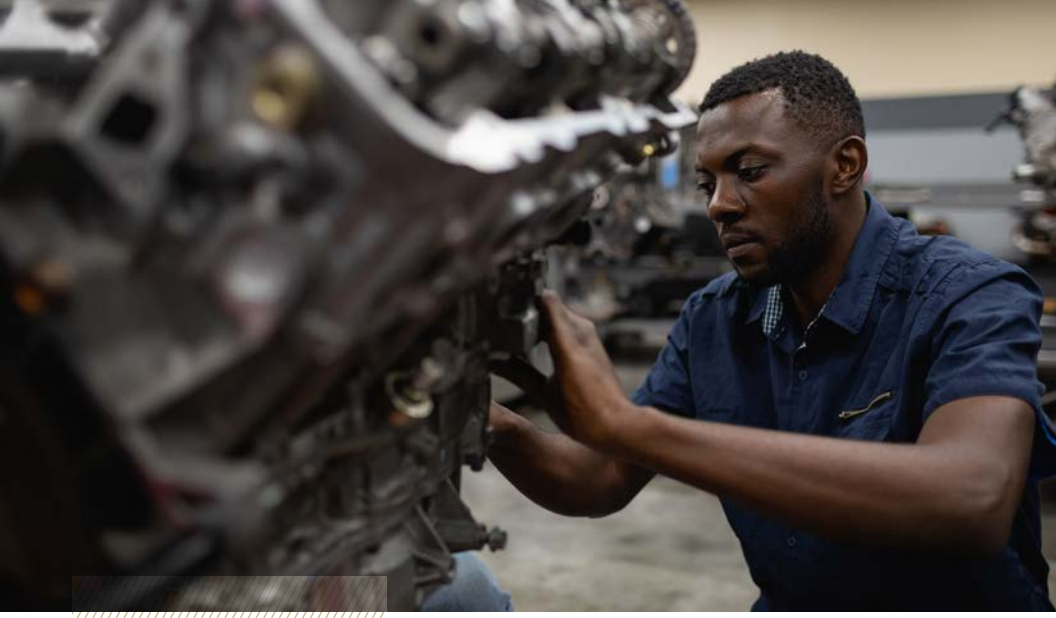
With support from PSA Airlines, Central Piedmont is expanding its investment in modern equipment and curriculum that will strengthen the pipeline of trained aviation professionals to sustain regional employers. Through the collaboration, Central Piedmont students will gain access to internships and PSA facilities to support hands-on learning. PSA will also provide technical expertise and professional development opportunities for college faculty.

"This partnership reflects our commitment to strengthening the aviation workforce in one of the fastest growing regions in the country," said Christine Hollanshead, vice president of people of PSA Airlines. "We're excited to help develop the next generation of aviation professionals by expanding access to hands-on training, modern equipment and scholarship support."

Through this new partnership, PSA Airlines will establish the PSA Airlines Scholarship Fund to support students pursuing aviation-related fields, as well as the PSA Airlines Program Fund, which will provide resources to strengthen academic programs at the college. These funds will complement the airline's broader efforts to enhance and expand Central Piedmont's aviation programs.

"PSA's investment in student success is clear, and we're proud to partner with them to develop talent for one of our region's most essential and fastest-growing industries," said Dr. Kandi Deitemeyer, president of Central Piedmont. "Together, we are creating new opportunities for our students while strengthening the aviation workforce that keeps our community moving."

Central Piedmont currently offers a range of industry-recognized aviation training opportunities, including a Private Pilot Ground School and drone instruction, with additional coursework in development. Collaboration with PSA Airlines is an important part of the college's strategy to further invest in the future of aviation education. The college is also pursuing resources to establish a comprehensive aviation maintenance program aligned with regional workforce and economic development needs.



AUTOMOTIVE BUSINESSES LEVERAGE CENTRAL PIEDMONT PROGRAMS FOR WORKFORCE TRAINING SUPPORT

Central Piedmont continues to serve as a partner for businesses throughout the region, offering individual training and development solutions. Currently, the college is providing tailored training solutions for two Charlotte-based automotive organizations — Hendrick Automotive and Woodie's. With an ongoing need for employees to maintain certifications and enhance technical skill development, the college delivers courses for each company.

Hendrick Automotive has ongoing needs for courses in notary public certification, North Carolina state initial inspection and OBD II (emissions) inspection. Likewise, Woodie's sends employees to the state inspection and OBD II classes. Additionally, it has piloted a four-part program targeting training in electrical, brakes, steering and suspension, and HVAC that allowed completers to take industry-recognized certification tests.

Employees primarily attend the specially tailored courses at the Joe Hendrick Center for Automotive Technology on Levine Campus, where they utilize state-of-the-art equipment along with ample training and classroom space.

However, the college remains flexible and can also deliver services at a client's location if needed.

In 2024-25, Central Piedmont supported nearly 40 courses for Hendrick Automotive and seven courses for Woodie's. By keeping technicians trained, certified and ready for what's next, Central Piedmont isn't just supporting local employers — it's helping to keep Charlotte moving.

Through hands-on, responsive workforce training, the college ensures businesses like Hendrick Automotive and Woodie's have the skilled talent they need to continue driving Charlotte's economy forward.

JENKINS ELECTRIC AND CENTRAL PIEDMONT WORK TOGETHER TO IMPROVE OPERATIONS AND EFFICIENCY

At the end of June 2025, Central Piedmont concluded a nearly two-year NCEdge Customized Training program with Jenkins Electric — a Charlotte-based industrial company specializing in electromechanical repair, motor maintenance and custom manufacturing for heavy equipment. New roles and equipment at the company, along with new client demands, required upskilling and improved leadership alignment. Central Piedmont offered its expertise in organizational effectiveness to offer unique, tailored solutions.

A one-day Saturday retreat identified a new mission, vision and a plan of action over a two-year period. Three main goals and objectives emerged.

- Workforce development built critical skills for current and future business needs.
- Leadership operations and training covered core competencies such as communication, coaching and delegation.
- Finally, continuous improvement and safety supported the rollout of integrated systems such as an enterprise resource planning (ERP) system and cross-functional collaboration to eliminate waste and improve operational efficiency.

By aligning leadership, strategy and workforce development, Central Piedmont enabled Jenkins Electric to undergo a multi-year transformation and better serve its customers and community.

STUDENT STORY

ALLISON GREENWALT

ALLISON GREENWALT IS ON THE CLIMB

For Allison Greenwalt, providing a tour of Central Piedmont's Harper Campus led her to a career as an electrical lineworker.

Allison had been studying welding for a year and working toward an associate degree when she was asked to show a group of charter school students the different programs the college offers.

"That's when I learned about the lineworker program," Allison said. "Sitting there listening to what all these different classes are about, something sparked whenever [the lineworking instructors] and students were talking about it."

Seeing their passion and excitement led Allison to believe it was something she could love as well. She soon began the 16-week program.

"Four months is nothing compared to a lifetime of opportunity," Allison said.

Born in Chicago, Allison moved to the Charlotte area with her family when she was about five years old and grew up in Matthews.

> ***"Four months is nothing compared to a lifetime of opportunity."***
>
> – ALLISON GREENWALT

After making the switch from welding, Allison graduated from Central Piedmont's lineworker program in December 2024. During her time at the school, she spent Monday–Thursday at Harper Campus covering the basics of linework in the classroom and learning how to climb. She then spent Fridays at Merancas Campus training to get her CDL.

A catalyst for the program was a $500,000 grant from the Duke Energy Foundation, which helped Central Piedmont launch and equip the training program at its Harper Campus. The partnership ensures students train using industry-standard equipment and reflects a shared commitment to developing a skilled, local workforce for the Carolinas.

Through its vast network of relationships, a variety of companies spoke with students on campus, and Allison soon secured a job with Williams Electric — a Duke Energy contractor.

She currently works as a groundman as part of a six-person crew. As she progresses, Allison will be able to test to move up the ranks as her team feels she is ready.

She'd love to see more women get involved in the profession, and she speaks highly of all Central Piedmont has to offer.

"The facilities and the dedication the instructors have to help you pass is just amazing," she said. "I never thought a community college could have this level of opportunities and resources."

WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT AND EDUCATION

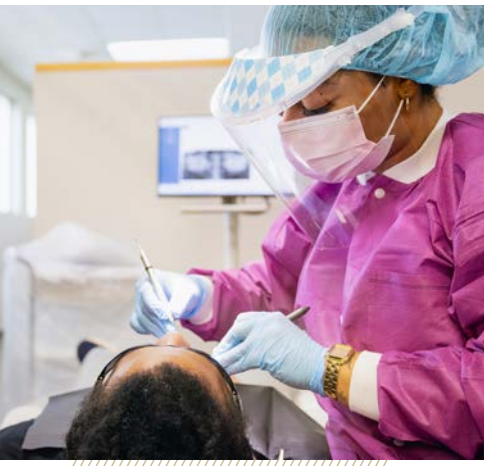
CENTRAL PIEDMONT HITS RECORD SINGLE-SEMESTER ENROLLMENT OF 36,000 STUDENTS, EXPANDS PROGRAMS FOR CHARLOTTE'S WORKFORCE DEMANDS

Central Piedmont reached a historic milestone in the fall, enrolling more than 36,000 students across its curriculum, continuing education and basic skills programs. This marks a 16% increase over fall 2024 and the highest single-semester enrollment in the college's history, underscoring Central Piedmont's growing impact as a driver of workforce development and economic mobility in the Charlotte region.

The college has increased enrollment for the last four and a half academic years, dating back to the summer of 2021 — and is on track to hit five years at the end of the 2025-26 academic year.

Enrollment in the college's curriculum programs rose by 13%, totaling 23,474 students, reflecting strong interest in high-demand fields such as healthcare, information technology and advanced manufacturing. Continuing education programs experienced a 21% increase in enrollment, while basic skills programs grew by 36%, serving 5,559 students, empowering them to complete high school, learn English as a second language and build confidence for independent living.

"This record enrollment is a testament to the college's commitment to meeting the evolving needs of our community," said Dr. Amy Bruining, vice president of student affairs at Central Piedmont. "Whether students are pursuing a degree, upgrading their skills or preparing for a new career, Central Piedmont is here to support their journey and fuel Charlotte's economic growth."



> ***"Whether students are pursuing a degree, upgrading their skills or preparing for a new career, Central Piedmont is here to support their journey and fuel Charlotte's economic growth."***
>
> DR. AMY BRUINING

CENTRAL PIEDMONT'S ENROLLMENT INCREASE IS FUELED BY SEVERAL STRATEGIC INITIATIVES:

- **Introduction of multi-term registration**, which allows students to plan their academic journey up to a year in advance.
- **Increase in scholarships and flexible payment plans**, significantly reducing financial barriers and making college more accessible to all. The college provided over $4.2 million in scholarship support in 2024-25 — and has continued to increase this support in 2025-26.
- **Additional transfer and guaranteed admission programs**, supporting students who plan to continue their education at four-year institutions. The college recently announced transfer partnerships with North Carolina State University, Arizona State University and the University of North Carolina at Pembroke, and now offers guaranteed admission programs with nearly 20 institutions.
- **Introduction of innovative learning options**, including global learning experiences, earn-and-learn programs, work-based learning and new courses in artificial intelligence and emerging technologies.
- **Expansion of Central Piedmont Academy**, placing college faculty directly in Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools (CMS) to expose high school students to college-level material and mentorship earlier in their academic journey.

CENTRAL PIEDMONT HAS EXPERIENCED REMARKABLE GROWTH ACROSS ITS ACADEMIC PROGRAMS. HIGHLIGHTS INCLUDE:

- Enrollment in Information Technology's Network Management and Cybersecurity track more than doubled, increasing from 141 to 340 students — a 141% rise — making it one of the college's fastest-growing programs.
- Enrollment in business-focused transfer pathways grew by 51.8%.
- Transfer-oriented programs also saw significant gains. The Associate in Arts program grew by 23.3%, adding 348 students, while the Associate in Engineering program increased by 40.7%, with 730 students enrolled this fall.
- Other top growth areas include the Associate in Arts in teacher preparation, which rose by 33.7%; Automotive Systems Technology, up 17.2%; and the Biological Sciences pathway, which grew by 15.7%.

This surge in enrollment also comes as the region continues to grow rapidly, with an average of 157 people moving to the area each day, according to the Charlotte Regional Business Alliance.

Central Piedmont continues to keep pace with Charlotte's rapid growth by expanding career-aligned programs that prepare students to graduate and enter the workforce immediately, while also offering lifelong learning and seamless transfer pathways to four-year institutions.

CENTRAL PIEDMONT'S HARRIS CAMPUS TO BECOME A HUB FOR COSMETIC ARTS, BARBERING AND MASSAGE THERAPY TRAINING

Central Piedmont is transforming and expanding facilities at its Harris Campus into Mecklenburg County's hub for hands-on learning in cosmetic arts, barbering and massage therapy. The renovation and program expansion reflects the college's continued commitment to preparing a skilled, workforce-ready talent pipeline while providing affordable beauty and wellness services to the community.

The renovated facility — formerly the Harris I Building that will now be called the Cosmetic Arts Building — will welcome students beginning in August 2026. Features will include modern, professional salon and massage therapy spaces designed to mirror real-world industry environments. Students will train by serving real clients, gaining practical experience while providing accessible, low-cost beauty and wellness services to the community.

"We're turning passion into a profession," said Dr. Heather Hill, Central Piedmont's provost. "These best-in-class facilities at Harris Campus create direct and meaningful pathways into in-demand careers and prepare students to be confident, skilled and workforce-ready from day one."

EXPANDING ACADEMIC AND CONTINUING EDUCATION PATHWAYS

The upgraded Harris Campus will support a wide range of curriculum and continuing education programs designed to meet Mecklenburg County's growing demand for licensed cosmetic arts and massage therapy professionals across salons, spas, clinics and independent businesses.

Clinic capacity will expand by 40%, increasing from 50 chairs to 70, unlocking more access for students seeking careers and community members seeking affordable services.

Students can complete a cosmetology, barbering or massage therapy education at a fraction of the cost compared to private schools. Private school costs range from $22,000-$31,000, while Central Piedmont students can obtain an associate degree for just over $7,000, while continuing education costs range from approximately $600-$1,700.

Curriculum programs include:

- Associate in Applied Science degree — Cosmetology
- Cosmetology diploma
- Cosmetology certificate
- Dual Enrollment pathway for high school students leading to a Cosmetology certificate

Continuing education programs include:

- Barbering Technology
- Cosmetology in Spanish
- Esthetics Technology
- Massage Therapy
- Nail Technology
- Natural Hair Care

Barbering, esthetics and nail technology are all new programs for Central Piedmont.

Central Piedmont's Cosmetology program has served the community for more than a decade, licensing more than 700 students with a 92% exam pass rate. The college partners with Pivot Point, a global leader in beauty, barber and wellness education, to ensure students train using industry-leading curriculum, tools and techniques.

DRIVING WORKFORCE IMPACT AND COMMUNITY ACCESS

As Mecklenburg County continues to grow, so does the need for trained and licensed cosmetic arts and massage therapy professionals. Central Piedmont plays a pivotal role in addressing both regional and statewide workforce needs by preparing graduates who are certified, skilled and ready to succeed in the workplace.

The new public-facing salon and massage therapy spaces will increase access to high-quality, affordable services, creating a model that benefits both students and residents.

“This project is about more than a building renovation,” Hill said. “It’s about economic mobility, workforce development and strengthening the connection between Central Piedmont and the community we serve.”

> ***“We’re turning passion into a profession. These best-in-class facilities at Harris Campus create direct and meaningful pathways into in-demand careers and prepare students to be confident, skilled and workforce-ready from day one.”***
>
> DR. HEATHER HILL

CELEBRATING THE COLLEGE'S NEW SKILLED TRADES LEARNING COTTAGES THANKS TO LOWE'S FOUNDATION GABLE GRANT

Central Piedmont showcased the transformative impact of the Lowe's Foundation Gable Grant with a ribbon-cutting ceremony for a new skilled trades facility on Jan. 15.

Thanks to the $1 million award the college received in 2024, Central Piedmont renovated a previously vacant building to create the Levine Campus Learning Cottage, a facility housing construction, electrical, HVAC and refrigeration labs.

Beginning with the spring 2026 semester, students will gain hands-on experience in these high-demand fields, preparing them for rewarding careers in the skilled trades.

The grant also funded the upfit of a trailer as a mobile electrical lab and covered the cost of a new portable trailer that will become a mobile construction lab, enabling the college to deliver skilled trades education to every corner of Mecklenburg County.

Additional improvements include the build-out of a construction yard, renovation of the air conditioning, heating and refrigeration lab at the Harper Campus, and investments in laptops and smartboards to enhance classroom instruction.

Beyond facilities, the Gable Grant has strengthened community partnerships with Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools, Rebuilding Opportunities in Construction (ROC) and other organizations committed to workforce development and student success.

Since 2024, Central Piedmont has awarded 525 certifications related to the grant, with more to come.

ARCHITECTURE PROGRAM CAPACITY DOUBLES

Central Piedmont has expanded its growing Architectural Technology program to a second location at its Cato Campus, doubling capacity and increasing access for students across the Charlotte region. The expansion, made possible from the support of an anonymous donor, reflects growing student demand, the region's construction and development boom, and the college's deepening investment in hands-on, design-focused education.

"This expansion is about meeting students where they are and giving them the space and tools to imagine, collaborate and build," said Dr. Heather Hill, Central Piedmont's provost. "We're proud to provide a studio that mirrors real-world practice and makes architectural education more accessible in our community."

> ***"We're proud to provide a studio that mirrors real-world practice and makes architectural education more accessible in our community."***
>
> DR. HEATHER HILL

With this second studio, the program can serve up to 200 students. The expansion complements ongoing partnerships in the area, including a 2+2 transfer agreement with UNC Charlotte's David R. Ravin School of Architecture. This agreement launched in 2022 and gives qualified students a direct pathway to complete a four-year pre-professional architecture degree — students spend two years with Central Piedmont and then two years at the four-year institution.

The new Cato studio, converted from a former law library, features:

- An open layout with mobile furniture
- Abundant natural light
- High-tech fabrication tools, including 3D printers, plotters and laser cutters

These tools complement the program's emphasis on industry-standard production workflows, including Building Information Modeling (BIM) and computer-aided drafting (CAD). Students in the program also learn industry-relevant software such as SketchUp, Rhino, AutoCAD and Revit, ensuring they graduate with real-world technical proficiency.

Beyond the classroom, both locations offer students opportunities to engage with professionals and other students from both UNC Charlotte and Central Piedmont's architecture programs in work sessions and critiques. These experiences help develop soft skills like communication, collaboration, preparation and critical thinking. Students can network and establish a strong relationship with the existing architectural community in Charlotte.

CENTRAL PIEDMONT LAUNCHES NEW HOSPITALITY WORKFORCE TRAINING PROGRAM

JumpSTART — a new 12-week hospitality training program — came to Central Piedmont in the fall to help meet the rising demand for talent in Charlotte's hotel and lodging industry.

The hospitality sector in Charlotte is booming, and employers are looking for job-ready talent. JumpSTART was created in direct response to feedback from local hospitality leaders and provides students with industry-recognized certifications, hands-on experience and career-building opportunities.

Program details

- Took place over four months.
- Included classroom instruction, hands-on learning, a hotel externship and a job fair.
- Prepared students for real-world hospitality careers with certifications and skills employers want.

BUILDING INDUSTRY CONNECTIONS

The hospitality team at Central Piedmont recently joined the Charlotte Hospitality and Tourism Alliance's General Sales Meeting at the Charlotte Convention Center.

They hosted an info table to promote JumpSTART and connect with local employers, shared how the program strengthens the hospitality workforce pipeline, and boosted community and employer partnerships through training and collaboration.

NEW CONTINUING ED PROGRAMS LAUNCHED THROUGHOUT THE YEAR

Central Piedmont launched several new continuing education programs in the fall to help students build in-demand skills across a range of fast-growing industries.

These short-term, skill-focused courses are designed to give students a head start in high-demand fields like hospitality, IT, aviation and healthcare.

WHAT'S NEW:

JumpSTART: Careers in Hotel & Lodging Operations

- Explore career pathways in hospitality and lodging management.

Information Technology (IT)

- AI Foundations: From Curiosity to Career
- Learn the basics of artificial intelligence and how to turn interest into opportunity.

Workplace Tech Skills

- Become proficient in the essential digital tools that power the modern workplace.

Private Pilot Ground School (Aviation)

- Take off with foundational training for aspiring pilots.

Radiology

- CT Scan
- Mammography
- Specialized training is available for those pursuing careers in radiologic technology.

These continuing education programs have been shaped by local industry experts — and directly align with workforce partners' talent needs.

DUAL ENROLLMENT IN THE SPOTLIGHT AS HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS GET A HEAD START ON COLLEGE

Central Piedmont's Dual Enrollment program provides high school students with the opportunity to earn college credit toward a two- or four-year degree while still attending their own high school. The tuition-free program results in significant cost-savings and reduced time to earn a college degree. Over the winter, the Dual Enrollment program was featured on "Carolina Impact," a program produced by WTVI PBS Charlotte.

The feature includes interviews with:

- Dr. Amy Bruining, vice president, student affairs
- Erik Turner, principal, Central Piedmont Early College
- Two Central Piedmont students currently participating in the Dual Enrollment program

Dual Enrollment reflects the college's commitment to access, affordability and student success, giving learners an early opportunity to explore college pathways while still in high school. This often leads to important personal growth.

The PBS segment aired in late January and early February and is currently available to view online.

CENTRAL PIEDMONT EARLY COLLEGE PRINCIPAL ERIK TURNER NOMINATED AS CMS PRINCIPAL OF THE YEAR FINALIST

The finalists for the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools (CMS) 2025-26 Principal of the Year award honored leaders who demonstrate exceptional commitment to their schools and communities. Erik Turner, Principal of Central Piedmont Early College, was nominated as one of this year's finalists.

The CMS Principal of the Year recognition highlights school leaders who inspire students and staff, foster academic excellence and model a culture of care. Principal Turner's nomination reflects his passion for supporting student success and his dedication to building a strong, thriving school environment at Central Piedmont.

WHAT IS EARLY COLLEGE?

Early college is part of CMS's Cooperative Innovative High Schools and focuses on first-generation college preparatory students, underrepresented students and students who would benefit from accelerated learning opportunities.

Graduates of Central Piedmont's Early College earn a high school diploma with an associate degree, up to two years of transferable college credit or an industry certification — tuition-free. Books and fees are covered by CMS.

NC BOOST HELPS STUDENTS GET TO WORK

Designed by the North Carolina Community College System, NC Boost provides targeted support to help students graduate faster and transition into high-demand, high-wage careers. Central Piedmont was one of the first eight community colleges to take part in the program in fall 2025.

The program is especially beneficial for those pursuing degrees in fields such as healthcare, information technology, engineering, biotechnology, skilled trades, transportation or public safety. Students must be North Carolina residents and receive a Pell Grant or be eligible for the Next NC Scholarship to qualify.

Key benefits for students selected include:

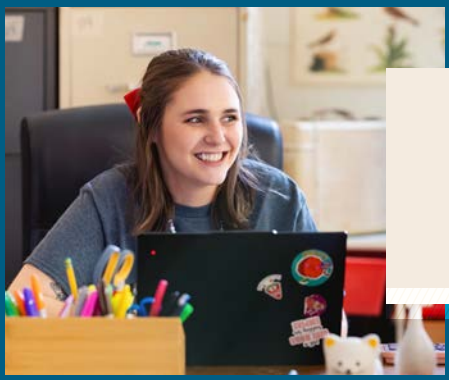
- A dedicated success coach offering personalized guidance from enrollment through graduation
- A $100 monthly payment for meeting program requirements
- Additional financial support for books or supplies each semester
- Access to exclusive activities and events focused on student success

NC COMMUNITY COLLEGES | Boost

GOVERNOR STEIN VISITS CENTRAL PIEDMONT AS THE COMMUNITY LIFELINE PROJECT CONTINUES

On March 19, North Carolina Gov. Josh Stein visited Central Campus in support of increased funding for public safety professionals. Central Piedmont continues to champion public safety workforce development as work on the Community Lifeline continues at the Levine Campus in Matthews.

The training facility will provide real-world learning experiences preparing first responders to serve the rapidly growing Charlotte-Mecklenburg region. The Community Lifeline is set to provide expanded academic programs, cross-agency training opportunities and access to cutting-edge tools, such as virtual reality and high-tech medical simulation labs. Firefighters, law enforcement and emergency medical service (EMS) personnel will be able to use this safe, controlled environment to train, learn and grow in public safety professions. The comprehensive project is targeted to open in 2028.



STUDENT STORY

HANNAH WATKINS

FROM COLLEGE TO THE CLASSROOM: HANNAH WATKINS' CENTRAL PIEDMONT JOURNEY PUT HER ON THE TEACHING PATH

After working as a stay-at-home mom for 12 years, Hannah Watkins was ready to go back to school. At Central Piedmont, she found that teaching was her calling, following in her mother's footsteps.

"When I first started at Central Piedmont, I didn't know exactly what I wanted to do, but I knew that I wanted to do more with my life," Hannah said. "I started slowly by taking just one or two classes at a time. When I realized I wanted to be a teacher, I contacted an advisor at East Carolina University, and I started working on the credits I needed to be able to transfer into that program."

> ***"It was the first time in a long time that I was excited about going to school."***
>
> HANNAH WATKINS

She received her associate degree from Central Piedmont in 2019 and graduated from ECU in 2025. She is currently in her first year of teaching third grade at Steele Creek Elementary School in Charlotte.

Hannah, who is originally from Freetown, Mass., but has lived in the Charlotte area for nearly a decade, utilized full-time online options at both Central Piedmont and ECU. That provided extra flexibility as she raised her three children.

Incidentally, it was her time at Central Piedmont that put her on the teaching path.

"As I was going through my classes and learning how to be a good student, I saw how important education was," she said. "I wanted to bring that education to our youth so that they could have a better future, too."

Hannah's journey at Central Piedmont reignited her own love for learning as well.

"It was the first time in a long time that I was excited about going to school," she said.

Having unlocked her own potential, she is now helping a new generation discover theirs.

GUARANTEED ADMISSION PROGRAMS ANNOUNCED WITH NC STATE AND UNC PEMBROKE

Central Piedmont has brought its guaranteed admission partners to nearly 20 after recently announced partnerships with North Carolina State University and the University of North Carolina at Pembroke.

The NC State partnership — known as "Wolfpack Connect" — welcomes students who earn an associate degree from a participating community college, maintain a 3.0 GPA or higher and meet NC State's transfer admission deadlines. Students can enroll in more than 100 eligible NC State majors and concentrations. Central Piedmont was one of three inaugural partners in the program.

Meanwhile, "BraveNation Advantage" creates a defined, student-centered transfer pathway that aligns academic advising, course planning and support services between Central Piedmont and UNC Pembroke. Through this partnership, eligible Central Piedmont students who complete designated coursework will be guaranteed UNC Pembroke admission, reducing uncertainty and helping them stay on track to earning a four-year degree.

These programs build on Central Piedmont's long-standing commitment to transfer excellence. The college maintains partnerships with more than 30 four-year colleges and universities, including:

- Statewide transfer agreements to UNC System universities
- Nearly 20 guaranteed admission agreements
- Twenty "2+2" programs for Associate in Applied Science graduates
- Five honors transfer agreements
- Two additional specialized transfer opportunities

ENVIRONMENTAL STEWARDSHIP

COLLEGE CONTINUES TO FOCUS ON SUSTAINABILITY

Central Piedmont is a careful steward of both financial and natural resources. Key highlights from the college's 2025 sustainability efforts include the following:

ENERGY

The college's energy consumption per square foot held steady at a peak 50% decrease from 2006 levels. In effect, the college has expanded its total occupied building space by more than 50% without increasing the electricity or natural gas needed to operate those facilities comfortably, safely and efficiently. This progress is the result of energy-efficient building design, LED lighting upgrades and the selection of high-efficiency HVAC systems. These improvements were made while maintaining the college's commitment to investing in and caring for high-quality academic facilities. Additionally, energy costs have declined by more than 25% per square foot from 2006 levels.

RECYCLING

The Culinary Arts program and the Harris Conference Center continue to compost food waste generated through daily operations, diverting approximately 15 tons of food scraps from landfills in 2025.

Each year, the college recycles roughly 125 tons of paper, cardboard, glass, plastic and metal — nearly the weight of a fully loaded Boeing 757. Central Piedmont also recycles an average of 10 tons of electronic waste annually. Other recycled materials include printer cartridges, scrap metal, batteries, light bulbs and various automotive waste items generated through instructional programs.

TREES CHARLOTTE

Central Piedmont maintains a strong partnership with TreesCharlotte, a community organization dedicated to protecting and expanding the city's tree canopy. TreesCharlotte has supported multiple tree-planting events across Central Piedmont campuses by providing both trees and volunteers. The organization also regularly participates in the college's Tree Campus and Environmental Stewardship Committee meetings. Through this collaboration with TreesCharlotte, Central Piedmont has maintained its Tree Campus USA designation, awarded by the Arbor Day Foundation, for more than five years and has advanced several campus stewardship initiatives.

FROM CLASSROOM TO GREENHOUSE: PLANT SALES SPOTLIGHT HORTICULTURE TECHNOLOGY

During the fall and spring semesters, Central Piedmont's plant sales take place at Cato Campus. The events offer a wide selection of vegetables, herbs, flowers, houseplants and more grown by students in the Horticulture Technology program.

More than just a plant sale, each event highlights real-world learning in action. Students apply what they've learned in plant science, greenhouse operations and landscaping to cultivate and prepare plants for sale, building skills that translate directly into careers across the horticulture industry.

Whether customers are starting a garden or refreshing a space, every purchase supports student learning and program growth.

HEALTH AND WELLNESS + SERVICES FOR SENIORS

CENTRAL PIEDMONT, MECKLENBURG COUNTY PARTNER TO SERVE LOCAL CHILDREN AT THIRD ANNUAL GIVE KIDS A SMILE DAY

On Feb. 7, Central Piedmont partnered with Mecklenburg County Public Health to host the Third Annual Give Kids a Smile Day in recognition of National Children's Dental Health Month.

The event brought together dental hygiene and dental assisting students, faculty and county health professionals to expand access to free pediatric dental care for families across the region.

Across the day, 50 Central Piedmont students from the Dental Hygiene and Dental Assisting programs provided dental cleanings to 93 children, all under full faculty supervision. Mecklenburg County Public Health further broadened the reach of care by conducting 99 dental screenings, helping families identify early oral health needs and connect to additional services.

In addition to clinical services, families attending the event had access to information on local health resources, support programs and community services, bringing total event participation to nearly 400 attendees.

REAL-WORLD SIMULATION BRINGS NURSING AND INTERPRETER EDUCATION STUDENTS TOGETHER

A collaboration months in the making came to life at Central Piedmont's Simulation Center, where nursing students partnered with students from the Interpreter Education program to run a realistic stroke scenario. The patient experiencing a stroke was Deaf, using American Sign Language and interpreting services to communicate.

The initiative was led by interpreter education instructor Kate Durkee, who wanted her students to get additional real-world practice.

"Research shows that even if student interpreters do not have the skills yet to interpret in a medical facility, the experience of trying is really helpful and can really grow their skills," Durkee said.

Durkee connected with Simulation Center Director Laura Cragg, who invited health sciences programs to participate. Christi Champion, department chair of the Licensed Practical Nurse (LPN)-to-Associate Degree in Nursing (ADN) program, saw immediate value.

"It is very realistic that anybody who walks into the hospital could have a Deaf patient or a hard-of-hearing patient," Champion said. "I felt that my students specifically have some more critical thinking skills than the other nursing students who are not licensed yet and do not have as much practice in the healthcare facility."

During the simulation, nursing students assessed the patient, recognized stroke symptoms and identified the need for an interpreter. Interpreter students then entered the room to facilitate communication while care continued. Nursing students also practiced alternative communication methods — including writing, gesturing and visual cues — while awaiting interpreting services.

Patients were portrayed by Deaf ASL faculty, including Katie Linker.

"You could see the nursing students and the interpreting students really collaborating and talking through Deaf culture, communication access, nursing and healthcare," she said. "Everyone left with something that they can utilize for next time."

Following the simulation, a structured debrief allowed for reflection on decision-making, emotions and patient advocacy. The scenario highlighted how communication delays can directly impact stroke care, where "time is brain."

Though their roles differ, both nurses and interpreters serve as advocates. This shared experience deepened students' understanding of each other's responsibilities — and better prepared them for real-world patient care. The goal is to expand these interdisciplinary simulations, giving students practical training they can carry into healthcare settings across Mecklenburg County and beyond.

> ***"You could see the nursing students and the interpreting students really collaborating and talking through Deaf culture, communication access, nursing and healthcare."***
>
> KATIE LINKER

SECRETARY OF NC DHHS VISITS CENTRAL PIEDMONT'S LEON LEVINE HEALTH SCIENCES FACILITY AND DENTAL CLINIC

Central Piedmont was honored to host Secretary Devdutta Sangvai with the North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services on campus in late February. He was joined by Secretary of the North Carolina Department of Administration, Gabe Esparza. Both leaders had the opportunity to tour the college's state-of-the-art Leon Levine Health Sciences facility, including the simulation labs and the dental clinic.

As Central Piedmont doubles down to empower students to be the healthcare workforce of the future, the team had a chance to share more about programming, student success and partnerships. Secretary Sangvai also learned about Central Piedmont's Wellness Center, which provides wrap-around services for students, including counseling and connections to resources in the community.

CASA CLUB SUPPORTS BREAST CANCER WARRIORS

During fall break, members of the Cosmetic Arts & Science Association (CASA) Club at Central Piedmont dedicated their time to supporting breast cancer survivors and fighters through two meaningful events.

SLUMBER PARTY SPA NIGHT AT THE PINK HOUSE

CASA Club volunteers hosted a slumber party–style spa night at the Carolina Breast Friends Pink House to create a relaxing and joyful experience for women who are currently battling or have survived breast cancer.

- Volunteers arrived in pajamas to set a cozy, welcoming tone
- Activities included face masks, mini manicures, DIY scalp oils and hand scrubs
- The event focused on building community and offering comfort through self-care

SUSAN G. KOMEN MORE THAN PINK 5K

CASA Club also participated in the Susan G. Komen MORE THAN PINK 5K, a walk to raise awareness and celebrate breast cancer warriors.

- Members created beaded bracelets to hand out during the event
- A handmade encouragement poster was displayed to uplift participants
- The walk served as a powerful reminder of solidarity and support

CASA Club continues to show how student-led initiatives can make a lasting impact at events offering emotional support, connection and celebration for those affected by breast cancer.

FACULTY & STAFF STORIES

JOE LITTLE

HOW JOE LITTLE MAKES A BIG DIFFERENCE

Joe Little, the associate dean of technology at Central Piedmont, represents the spirit of the college. His enthusiasm for it is infectious.

“My favorite part of being at Central Piedmont is graduation,” he said. “It’s seeing those people complete their journeys, even if they’re not IT majors. I will be shouting for you on graduation day. It’s my favorite day of the entire semester.”

Central Piedmont has been a part of Joe’s journey for almost a quarter-century. He grew up in Charlotte and enlisted in the United States Army upon finishing high school. He specialized in communications and information technology from 1999-2003. When he was injured after four years of service, he returned home to transition into civilian life.

He received his associate degree from Central Piedmont in 2006 and later earned his bachelor’s at East Carolina University. For a time, Joe worked in the private sector as a network engineer and taught cybersecurity classes at Central Piedmont as an adjunct instructor. He began at the college as a full-time faculty member in 2011.

“I can tell you as a student and as a faculty member, this place excels at workforce development,” he said. “It’s all about connecting you to the skills.”

He points out that Central Piedmont provides the opportunity to learn and apply a craft. Furthermore, an ever-increasing number of certification exams let students prove to employers that they can excel at a job, even if they don’t have extensive experience. Employers recognize that fact. Workforce representatives are often found around campus, recruiting and speaking with students in IT and other fields.

“Whether you realize it or not, information technology is embedded into almost everything you do,” Joe said. “We need to learn how to use that responsibly and promote a better quality of life, and I want to be a part of training people to do that. But moreover, it’s about connecting the world at large and changing lives.”

> ***“I can tell you as a student and as a faculty member, this place excels at workforce development.”***
>
> JOE LITTLE

BELONGING WITHOUT BARRIERS

CENTRAL PIEDMONT STUDENTS STAND OUT IN THE CANOPY INNOVATION AWARD

Central Piedmont's Truist Honors Scholars participated in the Canopy Innovation Award in November, presenting a forward-thinking solution to address the affordable housing crisis. In the second annual event presented by the Canopy Housing Foundation and the Canopy Real Estate Institute, four teams were challenged to identify approaches in solving affordable housing problems through the concept of adaptive re-use.

The Central Piedmont students' idea centered around modular homes arranged in a cottage court layout, designed to maximize cost-effectiveness, efficiency and scalability through creative partnerships. This student-led initiative highlights how innovation can drive real change in housing affordability.

The Central Piedmont team finished in the runner-up spot in the Canopy Innovation Award program, judged by a panel of industry professionals. The finish was worth $2,500 in scholarship funds. Additionally, Central Piedmont took home $1,000 for winning the Realtor's Choice Award, a program that was voted on by the realtor community and the public through early December.

INTERNATIONAL EDUCATION WEEK: A CELEBRATION OF GLOBAL CONNECTIONS

The Global Learning Office brought incredible energy to campuses and virtual spaces during International Education Week (IEW) in November, with 12 events designed to spark curiosity and celebrate cultural exchange. Students experienced a week filled with learning, creativity and community.

HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE WEEK:

Kick-off event: Students explored the inspiring legacy of Vietnamese Americans in the nail industry through film, discussion and wellness activities.

Global perspectives: Engaging lectures and conversations revealed how migration and cultural exchange shape Charlotte's identity.

Study abroad fair: This milestone event showcased programs in Ireland, Italy and South Africa. Students shared stories, skills and photos from their travels, while partners across campus offered activities and career insights. Over 300 students attended, making this one of the most impactful events of the week.

Creative engagement: The Passport to the World Photo Contest invited students to share global experiences through stunning photography.

Cultural celebrations: From Japanese traditions and film to mindfulness inspired by global Blue Zones, students connected with diverse perspectives and practices.

Community and fun: Events like International Warm Up Wednesday and the Central Piedmont World Cup blended cultural conversations with camaraderie and athletic fun.

More than 780 participants joined in, creating a vibrant space for global learning and collaboration. These experiences not only celebrated diversity but also opened doors to future opportunities.

FACULTY & STAFF
STORIES
SARAH WILSON

CAREER COUNSELOR **SARAH WILSON** HELPS STUDENTS SHINE

For 21 years, Sarah Wilson has been impacting the lives of students as a career counselor at Central Piedmont. Among her major projects each year is preparing them for Skilled Trades Connect. The February hiring event puts students in skilled trades programs face-to-face with potential employers at the college's Harper Campus.

"My role with student preparation is helping students feel comfortable with talking to employers about their skill set, whether it is in a 30-second introduction, an elevator pitch or an interview," Sarah said. "I want every student to feel comfortable doing that."

A Charlotte native, Sarah received her master's degree in counseling in Ohio. She then returned to the Queen City, excited to help teach students the skills needed to be desirable in the workforce. She remembers her first day at Central Piedmont and feeling like she "hit the lottery."

Helping improve lives in such a diverse student population drew her to the college.

"Our instructors at Central Piedmont are providing students with high-quality instruction in the classroom, so they are coming out of their programs with marketable skills," she said. "The opportunity to work with them so that they understand how to translate that into employer language and take that into the job market is a really rewarding career."

One of the many ways she does that is through Skilled Trades Connect, which Sarah is quick to point out is a collaborative effort among faculty, staff and leadership.

The event has evolved from a tradeshow format in its earliest incarnation to the hiring event it is today. In 2026, the focus was on the five skilled trades housed at Harper Campus — HVAC, construction management, electrical, nondestructive examination and welding.

"With all the online applications, sometimes it can be hard to meet up with an employer in person," Sarah said. "This event allows students to do that. It allows employers to meet our students and our graduates and connect with great results."

> ***"Our instructors at Central Piedmont are providing students with high-quality instruction in the classroom, so they are coming out of their programs with marketable skills."***
>
> SARAH WILSON