



THE NAVIGATOR

A Monthly Insight into Student Success from University College | April 2026



Dr. Zack Underwood with University College Awards Winners at Honors Convocation



George King II presents the George King II Academic Success Coaching Award

DEAN'S UPDATE

The end of the semester is here. Exams are the final step for our students. Through hard work and perseverance, our students will reach the finish line. This month, we are highlighting student awards and celebrating graduating student workers.

Exams can be a stressful time. We want to remind students about academic resources available in University College including the [Writing & Speaking Studio](#) as well as the [Academic Success Center](#) for Tutoring and Supplemental Instruction.

Finish Strong Eagles. Eagle Pride, Amplified!

Zack Underwood

INAUGURAL UNIVERSITY COLLEGE AWARDS

On April 10, 2026, University College honored 5 students at Honors Convocation. The inaugural five award winners were:

- Aspiring Eagles Academy Service Award:
 - Sahniya Bilkerdyk
- Bernice Duffy Johnson Service to University College Award:
 - Taylor Slaughter
- Outstanding First Year Student in Community Service Award:
 - Amiya Eure (not pictured above)
- Outstanding Second Year Student in Community Service Award:
 - Jordan Knapper
- George King II Academic Coaching Award:
 - Janae Frazier

The George King II Academic Success Coaching Award is in honor of George King II. He is the longest-serving member of University College and currently serves as an Academic Success Coach. This award honors our Academic Success Coaches and the perseverance of the students they support.



MARK YOUR CALENDARS

- April 29 Final Exams Start
- May 7 Final Exams End
- May 8 Final Grades due by 5pm
- May 8 & 9 Commencement
- May 10 Residence Halls close at Noon
- May 19 First Day of Summer I
- May 25 Memorial Day (University Closed)
- June 25 First Day of Summer II



MARISSA'S WORK FOR UNIVERSITY COLLEGE MAKES AN IMPACT

When Marissa Jones arrived at NCCU, she was driven to succeed. Marissa states that "University College provided me with the foundational support, resources, and guidance I needed to build confidence in my academic abilities." She became an Undergraduate Teaching Fellow (UTF), supporting students in mastering course material and adjusting to college-level expectations. Marissa later advanced to a UTF Coordinator role, mentoring peers and contributing to program development. These experiences strengthened her leadership, communication, and commitment to helping others succeed. **Photo on left**

Marissa continued her University College service journey by becoming a CIS 1100 peer tutor at the Academic Success Center, fulfilling her desire to make an impact through direct academic support. Her success in this role led to her selection as one of the university's first Academic Mentors. As Teah Smith, Director of Tutoring & Supplemental Instruction, shared, "Marissa excels at sharing the study strategies and learning techniques she has refined throughout her own academic career, helping students develop stronger habits, greater confidence, and improved outcomes." Marissa graduates this May as a double major in Information Technology and Business Administration, and plans to continue her academic journey by pursuing her MBA. Her story reflects the power of growth, leadership, and service, leaving a lasting impact on the NCCU community and setting the stage for continued success beyond graduation.



SOPHOMORE FOUNDS STUDENT ORGANIZATIONS

Martha Kamara is a sophomore Fashion, Apparel and Textile Design major who is making waves in the art world. She currently serves as the president and founder of the African-Caribbean Association Organization (ACAO), and is the Fashion Chair for The Collective, a new organization founded in the Fall of 2025. Martha says, "The whole point of ACAO is community...that's the impact I want to make". **Photo on right**

As Fashion Chair and Fall 2026 Queen of The Collective, Martha helped bring to life a Black Wall Street Art Show that celebrated the legacy of Black excellence in Durham. The event featured six curated art pieces highlighting the history and impact of Black Wall Street. Martha is continuing to apply for fashion and art internships for the summer, and her work in The Collective ties well to her career aspirations.