

UNIVERSITY MISSION AND PURPOSE

Statement of Mission and Purpose

Wake Forest is a university dedicated to the pursuit of excellence in the liberal arts and in graduate and professional education. Its distinctiveness in its pursuit of its mission derives from its private, coeducational, and residential character; its size and location; and its Baptist heritage. Each of these factors constitutes a significant aspect of the unique character of the institution.

The University is now comprised of seven constituent parts: Wake Forest College, the Graduate School of Arts and Sciences, the School of Law, the School of Medicine, the School of Business, the School of Divinity, and the School of Professional Studies. It seeks to honor the ideals of liberal learning, which entail commitment to transmission of cultural heritages; teaching the modes of learning in the basic disciplines of human knowledge; developing critical appreciation of moral, aesthetic and religious values; advancing the frontiers of knowledge through in-depth study and research; and applying and utilizing knowledge in the service of humanity.

Wake Forest has been dedicated to the liberal arts for over a century and a half; this means education in the fundamental fields of human knowledge and achievement, as distinguished from education that is technical or narrowly vocational. It seeks to encourage habits of mind that ask “why,” that evaluate evidence, that are open to new ideas, that attempt to understand and appreciate the perspectives of others, that accept complexity and grapple with it, that admit error, and that pursue truth. Wake Forest College has by far the largest student body in the University, and its function is central to the University’s larger life. The College and the Graduate School are most singularly focused on learning for its own sake; they therefore serve as exemplars of specific academic values in the life of the University.

Beginning as early as 1894, Wake Forest accepted an obligation to provide professional training in a number of fields, as a complement to its primary mission of liberal arts education. This responsibility is fulfilled in the conviction that the humane values embodied in the liberal arts are also centrally relevant to the professions. Professional education at Wake Forest is characterized by a commitment to ethical and other professional ideals that transcend technical skills. Like the Graduate School, the professional schools are dedicated to the advancement of learning in their fields. In addition, they are specifically committed to the application of knowledge to solving concrete problems of human beings. They are strengthened by values and goals which they share with the College and Graduate School, and the professional schools enhance the work of these schools and the University as a whole by serving as models of service to humanity.

Wake Forest was founded by private initiative, and ultimate decision-making authority lies in a privately appointed Board of Trustees rather than in a public body. Funded to a large extent from private sources of support, it is determined to chart its own course in the pursuit of its goals. As a co-educational institution it seeks to “educate together” persons of both sexes and from a wide range of backgrounds—racial, ethnic, religious, geographical, socio-economic and cultural. Its residential features are conducive to learning and to the pursuit of a wide range of co-curricular activities. It has made a conscious choice to remain small in overall size; it takes pride in being able to function as

a community rather than a conglomerate. Its location in the Piedmont area of North Carolina engenders an ethos that is distinctively Southern, and more specifically North Carolinian. As it seeks further to broaden its constituency and to receive national recognition, it is also finding ways to maintain the ethos associated with its regional roots.

Wake Forest is proud of its Baptist and Christian heritage. For more than a century and a half, it has provided the University an indispensable basis for its mission and purpose, enabling Wake Forest to educate thousands of ministers and lay people for enlightened leadership in their churches and communities. Far from being exclusive and parochial, this religious tradition gives the University roots that ensure its lasting identity and branches that provide a supportive environment for a wide variety of faiths. The Baptist insistence on both the separation of church and state and local autonomy has helped to protect the University from interference and domination by outside interests, whether these be commercial, governmental, or ecclesiastical. The Baptist stress upon an uncoerced conscience in matters of religious belief has been translated into a concern for academic freedom. The Baptist emphasis upon revealed truth enables a strong religious critique of human reason, even as the claims of revelation are put under the scrutiny of reason. The character of intellectual life at Wake Forest encourages open and frank dialogue and provides assurance that the University will be ecumenical and not provincial in scope, and that it must encompass perspectives other than the Christian. Wake Forest thus seeks to maintain and invigorate what is noblest in its religious heritage.

History and Development

Since 1834, Wake Forest has been an institution dedicated to providing a quality education to young people interested in using their knowledge and talents to better the world around them. Characterized by exceptional teaching, outstanding research and scholarship, and meaningful connection with one another, a Wake Forest education is designed to help develop leaders of character intent on working and living in the spirit of Pro Humanitate (for humanity).

The brief history of Wake Forest is useful in understanding the University as it is today and appreciating the process through which it developed. For more information and a detailed timeline illuminating Wake Forest’s history, please visit WFU Timeline (<https://zsr.wfu.edu/special/collections/archives/wfu-timeline/#event-college-building-construction>).

Chronological History of Wake Forest University

Year	Event
1834	Founded in the town of Wake Forest, North Carolina, as Wake Forest Manual Labor Institute by the Baptist State Convention of North Carolina. Samuel Wait, president
1838	Named Wake Forest College
1845	William Hooper, president
1849	John Brown White, president
1854	Washington Manly Wingate, president
1879	Thomas Henderson Pritchard, president
1884	Charles Elisha Taylor, president
1894	School of Law established

1902	Two-year School of Medicine established	1996	Wake Forest becomes the first college in the history of the U.S. News rankings to advance from classification as a Regional University to a Top-30 National University. It remains the only school to make this jump.
1905	William Louis Poteat, president	1997	Change of name to Wake Forest University School of Medicine
1921	First summer session	1998	Purchased Flow House in Vienna to serve as an academic international house for students
1927	Francis Pendleton Gaines, president	1999	Divinity School founded
1930	Thurman D. Kitchin, president	2005	Nathan O. Hatch, president
1941	Relocation of the School of Medicine to Winston-Salem and eventual change of name to Bowman Gray School of Medicine and association with the North Carolina Baptist Hospital	2008	Wake Forest announces it will become the first Top-30 National University to no longer require admission applicants to submit standardized test scores. This is a distinction we still hold.
1942	Women admitted as undergraduate students	2009	The Wayne Calloway School of Business and Accountancy and the Charles H. Babcock Graduate School of Management officially merged under the name Wake Forest University Schools of Business (now named Wake Forest University School of Business)
1950	Harold Wayland Tribble, president	2010	Wake Forest begins a 10-year, \$625 million construction effort that enhances academic, residential and athletic facilities.
1953	Wake Forest becomes a founding member of the Atlantic Coast Conference	2012	Opening of Wake Forest University Charlotte Center in uptown Charlotte, N.C.
1956	Move to Winston-Salem, 100 miles west, in response to an endowment from the Z. Smith Reynolds Foundation. No American college has picked up roots as deep and moved them so far.	2013	Farrell Hall opens to house the Wake Forest University School of Business; the first of 10 presidential endowed chairs was created to recognize faculty who represent the teacher-scholar ideal.
1961	Graduate School of Arts and Sciences established	2014	Thrive, a comprehensive wellbeing initiative, was launched.
1962	First major private university in the South to integrate with the enrollment of Edward Reynolds	2015	Summer Immersion Program opens for high school students.
1967	James Ralph Scales, president	2016	The School of Medicine moves its medical education programs to Innovation Quarter in downtown Winston-Salem.
1967	Change of name to Wake Forest University		
1969	Charles H. Babcock Graduate School of Management established		
1974	Purchased Casa Artom in Venice to serve as an academic international house for students		
1977	Purchased Worrell House in London to serve as an academic international house for students		
1983	Thomas K. Hearn Jr., president		
1984	Sesquicentennial anniversary		
1986	Established governing independence from the Baptist State Convention of North Carolina		
1994	Carnegie Foundation recognizes Wake Forest as a Doctoral II institution, an upgrade that qualifies the University for consideration as a National University according to U.S. News & World Report rankings		
1995	School of Business and Accountancy is renamed the Wayne Calloway School of Business and Accountancy		

2017	<p>Opening of Wake Downtown, home to new biomedical sciences and engineering programs; opening of the Wake Washington Center at One Dupont Circle, Washington, D.C.; start of a study-abroad program for first-year students in Copenhagen; Wake Forest receives \$70 million for scholarships from the late Porter Byrum (JD '42), the largest gift in the University's history; a new residence hall honoring Maya Angelou (LHD '77) is dedicated; Program for Leadership and Character launched.</p>
2018	<p>Reynolda Cabinet expands to include the chief diversity officer; a three-year project to transform the 1950s Reynolds Gym into a health and wellbeing center is complete.</p>
2019	<p>The President's Commission on Race, Equity and Community is formed to illuminate the University's history and guide action moving forward; the University ranks 4th among U.S. doctoral colleges and universities in percentage of students studying abroad.</p>
2020	<p>President Nathan Hatch, on behalf of the University, apologizes for the University's role in the institution of slavery; Wake Will Lead campaign exceeds its \$1 billion goal, having created more than 50 endowed professorships, funded renovations and new buildings, provided scholarship dollars to 1 in 5 undergraduates, lowered student debt by 30% and added nearly \$400 million to the endowment; a health system integration arrangement is entered into with Charlotte-based Atrium Health, Inc. and plans are announced to add a second Medical School campus in Charlotte.</p>
2021	<p>School for Professional Studies opens in Charlotte; Susan R. Wentz takes office as president on July 1.</p>
2022	<p>Atrium Health joins with Advocate Aurora Health, a leading healthcare organization in Chicago and Milwaukee, to create a new entity called Advocate Health, headquartered in Charlotte. The role of Wake Forest Baptist Medical Center and Wake Forest University School of Medicine as the academic core of Atrium Health will be expanded to serve Advocate Health.</p>