

# Collegiate Leaders Forge New State-wide Leadership

by Wanda Kidd  
CBFNC Collegiate Engagement Coordinator



Creating a space for young adults to risk leadership has long been a hallmark of denominational collegiate ministry. Campus ministers recognize in students things that they may never have seen in themselves. The phrase “I see in you” is a powerful tool to offer students who are trying to find their voice, their gifts, and their place.

The leaders of the future are being shaped today in collegiate ministry. Students examine themselves and look to others to determine their role in confronting the issues, problems, and opportunities that lay ahead for the culture and the church. Often, students see what needs to be done but wait for permission and encouragement to lean into the role of leader.

In our own quest to ensure our place in the world, we leaders may fail to see that there is already space where younger people can serve and use their giftedness. To open the door for others does not shut the door for us. The issues that demand attention in our world are vast and complex. We all benefit if all persons are blessed to live into their God-given talents. We need each other’s ideas and ingenuity. We need the passion and energy of the young and they need the wisdom and compassion of the older leader. Truly insightful leadership is not an “either/or” perspective but a “yes/and” way of seeing the world.

CBFNC Collegiate Engagement is living out this calling by offering students places to serve and lead in their Cooperative Baptist Student Fellowship (CBSF) local groups. This year, we have broadened their scope and connectedness to see the world on a larger stage through the CBSF State Leadership Initiative.

Those who remember the old BSU model remember that there was a state leadership component to the overall leadership plan. There were local campus groups, mission opportunities, and state leadership teams that helped plan events, selected mission sites, raised money, and addressed social issues that were of

concern to students in light of the teaching of Jesus.

As we began the journey of CBFNC collegiate engagement, we went slowly. We waited for students to see needs and concerns and then ask how they could be part of the solutions. First in small groups, then on retreats then in mission opportunities, conversations around call served as the focus.

Our philosophy is neither to put new wine in old wine skins nor to squelch opportunities simply because they have been done before. Those working with students listen to what is bubbling

up and intentionally address the concerns and ideas that grow out of their CBFNC collegiate experience.

About a year ago, a student wondered what other CBSF students were doing in their groups. What was working for them? What were their struggles? He wanted a bigger picture of ministry on campuses and the opportunity to learn from each other. From his challenge, we sent out an invitation to see if other

students were feeling the same interest and frustration - and it turns out they were. They wanted to be connected to something bigger than their group. So, for one year under the tutelage of Lawrence Powers, the CBFNC Triangle campus minister, students met virtually. They shaped a plan of how they envisioned a state leadership team of young adults in local CBSF groups might work. They asked a lot of “WHYs” long before they got to the “HOWs.” It was a wonderful thing to watch. Their work culminated in reaching out to local groups, asking for students willing to hold an office in this new plan, finalizing a constitution, and presenting their plan to the students at the annual CBFNC Midwinter Retreat. At this year’s retreat, the team, chaired by Taylor Moyer of ECU and Kurtis Conrad at NCSU, made a presentation of their work. The roomful of students affirmed their work by unanimously ratifying a constitution and electing a slate of officers (pictured here).

This group of students saw a need, created a plan, and implemented the ideas of shared ministry and leadership. The church of today should be hopeful for the church of tomorrow.

When young adults are given the space and encouragement to lead, they step up, use collaboration, listen to those who went before them as well as those who stand with them, and turn their heads to the future where Christ is leading. There is great hope in that for us all. 🌟



## COLLEGIATE STATE LEADERSHIP EXECUTIVE TEAM

- Justin Lockamy, *President* (North Carolina State University)
- Megan Hammaker, *VP for Public Relations* (Western Carolina University)
- Christa Soyars, *VP for Issue Engagement* (Meredith College)
- Kaitlyn Guins, *VP for Service Engagement* (Gardner-Webb University)
- Jiquan Davis, *VP for Spiritual Formation* (Western Carolina University)
- Taylor Moyer, *VP for Alumni Relations* (East Carolina University)
- Alexan Bailey, *VP for Graduate Student Initiatives* (Meredith College)