



Students at Carolina Way Camp, a first-year orientation experience in North Carolina for incoming freshmen who know or are seeking to know Jesus Christ

The North Carolina Study Center Spotlight

by Elizabeth Youssef and Madison Perry

For parents and students alike, the start of freshman year of college can be daunting. A new chapter where students have the opportunity to choose what they become involved with and who they will be. Thankfully for Christian parents and students at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, there is a place that eases those fears and anxieties, The North Carolina Study Center (NCSC).

The NCSC is a hospitality and leadership center that cultivates Christian life and thought at UNC-Chapel Hill. Our vision is “to offer a Christian education for students and faculty at UNC through theological education, hospitality, and spiritual formation in unity with the extended Christian community.”

It all started with a vision from Madison Perry, a double Tar Heel (BA '06, JD '13) from Kinston, North Carolina, after he visited the Study Center at the University of Virginia.

“I saw their study center and saw how something like that would make a difference at UNC,” Perry said. “UNC felt like a big, disorganized school, but also the Christian community itself wasn't working together that well.”

After visiting the center at UVA, Perry reflected on his own college experience and what opportunities a study center at UNC-Chapel Hill could provide in bridging the gap between the university and the Christian community.

“I had very strong academic interests, especially in theology and philosophy, and there was no easy place to go with them and relate them to faith,” Perry said. “When I saw their study center, I thought that this really solves those two problems well.”

In 2014, Perry started the NCSC with help from an alumni and faculty steering committee, with many generous families and

individuals joining in. Thanks to strong church partnerships, NCSC was able to purchase the Battle House at 203 Battle Lane in Chapel Hill, and the Study Center officially opened in the fall of 2015 with Perry and Katharine Batchelor on staff. Today, the number of staff has grown to 11 members and Perry remains the Executive Director.

NCSC is a part of the Consortium of Christian Study Centers, which is a trade association for over thirty Christian study centers around the country. There are also study centers at other state universities in North Carolina, including East Carolina and NC State.

“What we have found is that if we meet obvious student needs through hospitality and care, then that gives us the opportunity to offer them deeper resources that enrich their education,” Perry said.

There are four pillars of Christian education at the NCSC that reflect crucial areas of holistic growth for college students: growth in knowledge, growth in community, growth in a vocation, and growth in character. There are different programs available in each of these areas for students such as a Fellows Program, academic seminars, a student hospitality team, and the Wilberforce Leadership Program.

“As a resource center, we're not hoping that any one student would do all of those,” Perry said. “It's more like as students are being challenged or finding themselves hungry to grow in any of these areas, that then we'll be ready.”

One of the most popular programs started in 2018 is Carolina Way Camp, a first-year orientation program for students that starts the week before the fall semester. This year, there were 220 students who participated, the highest number to date.

“We take students who don't have a plan for college yet, who are not well-connected, and we help them instantaneously multiply the number of relationships, and we also give them space to really approach college intentionally as Christians,” Perry said. “And because we're not a single fellowship group, we can offer it to a larger group of students and help those students find ministries and churches.

There are so many examples of student success stories of growth. Some students have become Rhodes Scholars, flourished in their disciplines as Christians, and are leaders in different majors and clubs across campus.

“We want students to understand how their Christian formation will impact their ability to lead in secular environments,” Perry said. “So that's a really fun opportunity we have at UNC.



Madison Perry, Founder and Executive Director of The North Carolina Study Center

The North Carolina Study Center is a hospitality and leadership center that cultivates Christian life and thought at UNC-Chapel Hill.

There are four pillars of Christian education at the NCSC that reflect crucial areas of holistic growth for college students: **growth in knowledge, growth in community, growth in a vocation, and growth in character.**



North Carolina Study Center

203 Battle Lane, Chapel Hill, NC 27514

www.ncstudycenter.org



NC State Study Center

201 Brooks Ave, Raleigh, NC 27607

www.ncstatestudycenter.org



East Carolina Study Center

500 Elizabeth Street, Greenville, NC 27834

www.ecstudycenter.org





UNC-CH students participating in The North Carolina Study Center's Fellows Program, which offers instruction classes in scripture and theology designed to equip students with the knowledge, tools, and community necessary to deepen their faith and connect it to all of life.

As we invest in student leaders, they can mature rapidly and then hopefully discover all kinds of opportunities to make a difference on campus.”


Students also grow in their faith and understanding of who God is and who God has made them to be.

“There are tons of stories of isolated students who come here, they meet some people, they start to understand God's love better, and then they feel more at peace and are able to flourish personally,” Perry said. “There are students who are interested in ‘religion,’ and they find Jesus here.”

The staff at the Study Center also have institutional memory of what resources and opportunities the

university has available for students. Since there is no holistic advising service at UNC-Chapel Hill, that is another resource that staff provide for students.

As NCSC grows, we continue to be committed to our mission of cultivating Christian life and thought at UNC-Chapel Hill for students and faculty. We believe in the vision of this university being a great place to grow as a Christian.

“I would love for Carolina to be known not only for basketball, fun, and academic excellence,” Perry said. “I would love for people to know that Christian alums from UNC take good care of their students, and that UNC is a place where Christians mature in remarkable ways.” 



Madison Perry is the Executive Director of the North Carolina Study Center



Elizabeth Youssef is the Assistant Director of Community Engagement at the North Carolina Study Center