



**ACKERMAN CENTER**  
for Excellence in Sustainability

# Undergraduate Student Guide

2024-2025



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## Ackerman Center for Excellence in Sustainability (ACES) Overview

### Mission

The Ackerman Center for Excellence in Sustainability drives responsible thought leadership and inspired action to accelerate progress in social and environmental sustainability through innovative and profitable business solutions.

We accomplish this by engaging with and connecting stakeholders to empower students, faculty and businesses to create impactful solutions, strengthen resiliency and identify breakthrough opportunities.

### World-Class Curriculum

UNC's Kenan-Flagler Business School is ranked one of the top business schools in the world for sustainable enterprise education. Sustainable enterprise electives are integrated into the undergraduate, full-time, and executive MBA programs, preparing students and executives for careers in which knowledge of sustainability concepts and strategies enhance their skills as managers and business leaders.

### Sustainable Business Club

The Sustainable Business Club exists to cultivate values-driven business leaders by equipping and empowering them to be social and environmental change-makers as they enter the workforce.

### Speakers and Events

CSE hosts global competitions, speakers, the UNC Sustainability Awards and more throughout the academic year where students can compete on sustainability challenges and hear from professionals, other students, thought leaders and alumni from around the world. ACES also co-hosts the UNC Clean Tech Summit, Careers with Impact Forum and other events. These experiences address a wide range of environmental and social sustainability management issues.

### Sustainability in Practice

One of the ACES's primary objectives is to provide action-based learning opportunities to Kenan-Flagler students in the practice of sustainable enterprise. ACES works with student clubs, partner organizations and companies to identify and leverage competitive advantage through sustainable enterprise strategies and practices.

### ACES Leadership Associates

Students can work directly with ACES Leadership on sustainability initiatives like Launching Investment for Future Transformation (LIFT) and other topics through internships either directly with ACES or through other opportunities like [EcoStudio](#).



**Olga Hawn, PhD**  
Faculty Director



**Jeff Mittelstadt**  
Executive Director



**Tracy Triggs-Matthews**  
Associate Director



**Mary Kay Lemon**  
Program Manager



## Events for Academic Year 2024-2025

### **UNC Sustainability Social**

September 4, 2024, 9:30-12:00  
Student Union

### **Careers with Impact Forum**

UNC Kenan-Flagler  
October 4, 2024

### **LIFT Challenge**

**Coaching:** Spring and Summer 2025  
Virtual, various days and times  
**Submission Deadline:** Early October 2025  
**Finals:** Late October 2025  
Virtual

### **ClimateCAP**

University of California, Berkley  
February 28-March 1, 2025

### **2025 UNC Clean Tech Summit**

UNC Friday Center  
March 24-25, 2025

### **MBA FoodCon**

Duke University  
TBD

### **UNC Sustainability Awards and MBA Graduation**

Location TBD  
April 25, 2025

Join the ACES [Facebook](#) and [LinkedIn](#) pages to get updates on events.

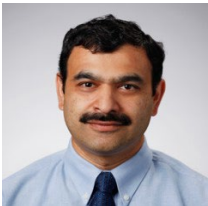


## World-Class Curriculum and Faculty

### Faculty: Tenured and Tenure-Track



**Yasser Boualam**  
*Assistant Professor of Finance*  
[BUSI 490-113 Sustainable Finance](#)



**Vinayak Deshpande**  
*Associate Professor and Area Chair of Operations*  
[BUSI 538 Sustainable Operations](#)



**Olga Hawn**  
*Associate Professor of Strategy & Entrepreneurship and Sustainability Distinguished Fellow*  
*Faculty Director of the Ackerman Center for Excellence in Sustainability*  
[ACES Leadership Associates](#)  
[Kenan Scholars Research Projects](#)



**Paige Ouimet**  
*Associate Professor of Finance*  
[BUSI 490-117 Business Topics: Stakeholder Capitalism](#)



## Faculty: Clinical & Adjunct



**Jeff Mittelstadt, MBA, MJ, MEM**  
*Professor of the Practice of Strategy & Entrepreneurship*  
*Executive Director, Ackerman Center for Excellence in Sustainability*  
BUSI 507: Sustainable Business and Social Enterprise  
BUSI 508: Sustainable Business and Impact Entrepreneurship



**Drew Jones, MS**  
*Clinical Professor of Strategy & Entrepreneurship*  
*Co-Director of Climate Interactive*  
MBA 833A Systems Thinking for Sustainable Enterprise



**Stephanie Mahin**  
*Clinical Assistant Professor, Management and Corporate Communication*  
BUSI 490-104: Corporate Social Advocacy and Activism



**Chris Wedding, PhD, MS**  
*Professor of the Practice of Strategy & Entrepreneurship*  
*Managing Director: IronOak Energy Capital*  
*Founder: Entrepreneurs for Impact*  
MBA 831F, Climate Tech Startups and Investors (Seminar)



## World-Class Curriculum

UNC's Kenan-Flagler Business School is ranked as one of the top business schools in the world for sustainable enterprise education.

### BSBA Courses

BUSI 490-104: Corporate Social Advocacy and Activism – Stephanie Mahin

BUSI 490-113: Sustainable Finance – Yasser Boualam

BUSI 490-117: Stakeholder Capitalism – Paige Ouimet

BUSI 508: Sustainable Business and Impact Entrepreneurship – Jeff Mittelstadt

BUSI 507: Sustainable Business and Social Enterprise – Jeff Mittelstadt

BUSI 538: Sustainable Operations – Vinayak Deshpande (seminar)

### MBA Courses (Undergraduate students may take with permission)

MBA 833A: Systems Thinking for Sustainable Enterprise (seminar) – Drew Jones

MBA 831F, Climate Tech Startups and Investors (Seminar) – Chris Wedding

### Speakers and Events

ACES hosts speakers and regional events like the UNC Clean Tech Summit, the Careers with Impact Forum, and MBAFoodCon –an event that is hosted each year at one of our premier North Carolina Universities – UNC, Duke, and NC State.





## Sustainable Business Club

*“Work in Sustainability crosses all functions and industries and there are very few large companies that do NOT have a CSR report where just 10 years ago, there were very few that did. Companies today understand that consumers, employees, and shareholders all want what is best for the environment, for people and a company’s profits. It’s incredibly difficult to do and incredibly important it be done.”*

—Tracy Triggs-Matthews, Associate Director, ACES

### Mission Statement

The Sustainable Business Club of Kenan-Flagler Business School is committed to the well-being of both economic and ecological systems. We envision the Sustainable Business Club, university and community doing business that preserves, protects and ultimately enhances the living systems that sustain local business and the larger human economy. To do this, we will take responsibility and educate our affiliates on sustainable business practices by facilitating discussion with neighboring companies and engaging in activities to promote a sustainable economy for future generations.

### Commitment to DEI:

The SBC is committed to creating an inclusive environment where diversity is celebrated. All members of our community should have the same access to opportunities, be treated equitably and respectfully, and contribute fully to the success of our community.

### Communication:

The SBC communicates with members through the weekly newsletter. The purpose of the newsletter is to provide detailed opportunities both on and off campus related to sustainable business and professional development. The newsletter also provides industry-related news on sustainability tailored to our members.

### Opportunity

- **Career Development Workshops with UBP**
- **The Impact Project**
- **Guest Speakers (Carolina Solar Energy, Burt’s Bees, and more)**

### Leadership

**Faculty Advisors:** Jeff Mittelstadt, Executive Director, Ackerman Center for Excellence in Sustainability and Tracy Triggs-Matthews, Associate Director, Ackerman Center for Excellence in Sustainability

Co-Presidents: Arnav Gunwani and Liz Barteldt,

Contact: [uncsustainablebusinessclub@gmail.com](mailto:uncsustainablebusinessclub@gmail.com)



## UNC-Chapel Hill Sustainable Ventures

### Carolina Thrift

Carolina Thrift is a community-oriented sustainability initiative that works to reduce needless waste in Chapel Hill. The project's purpose is to extend the lifespan of items that are usually disposed of by conducting collections of used items at the end of the school year and hosting a large-scale discount sale in August. Carolina Thrift's mission is to encourage socially responsible consumerism, provide the UNC-Chapel Hill area financial relief, and build Carolina's community.

Carolina Thrift hosted its Inaugural Sale in August 2018 with over 2,500 people in attendance and raised over \$8,000 that will go towards a sustainability fund for other environmental organizations. This year, Carolina Thrift hopes to continue to host pop-up thrift shops and eventually hopes to establish a permanent, on-campus location in the near future.

Get involved: [www.carolinathrift.org](http://www.carolinathrift.org)



### Edible Campus

Edible Campus UNC creates working landscapes across the UNC Chapel Hill campus to facilitate student engagement in topics of food and agriculture sustainability.

Edible Campus has converted twelve garden beds across campus to incorporate edible, medicinal and pollinator friendly plants. The organization maintains these "satellite beds" with the help of students in the residence halls and allied organizations. All produce grown in these beds are free to pick by passersby! In April 2017, Edible has added a central Edible Campus Garden, located behind Davis Library. This garden serves as a hub of food, social justice, and community-building activity on campus. The produce grown in this garden will be allocated to UNC student organizations that are addressing food system issues in their work.

Get involved: [www.ediblecampus.web.unc.edu](http://www.ediblecampus.web.unc.edu)



### Sonder Market

The Sonder Market sells fresh, locally-sourced produce directly on campus to combat food insecurity in the Chapel Hill community. Operating from a mobile cart located outside of the Student Union, The Sonder Market is stationed at the heart of UNC in order to conveniently serve students, faculty, and staff. Not only do we bring fresh food to the UNC community, but we make it affordable as well. Through partnerships with local farms and agriculture groups such as Farmer Foodshare, The Sonder Market is able to sell students high quality produce below grocery store prices. In addition to selling a variety of healthy and local foods, The Sonder Market supports food security and education through regular workshops and cooking courses.

Get involved: [www.socialinnovation.unc.edu/ventures/the-sonder-market/](http://www.socialinnovation.unc.edu/ventures/the-sonder-market/)





### The Meantime Coffee Co.

The Meantime is a student-run, non-profit coffee shop located in the Campus Y, UNC-Chapel Hill's Center for Social Justice and Social Innovation. The Meantime partners with a local coffee producer, Carrboro Coffee Roasters, to provide sustainably-sourced and fresh beans for their products. The Meantime gives back to the Carolina community by providing scholarships, professional development, and provides a testing ground for other student sustainable food ventures on campus. This coffee shop was solely created and still run by Undergraduate students at UNC.

Get involved: <https://meantimecoffee.com/>



### Vintage Blue

Vintage Blue is a community-based clothing and storytelling company. VB sells thrifted UNC vintage apparel through the Instagram platform as well as they have recently established their own fashion line, including sustainably-sourced thrifted clothing. They also publish stories about residents of the Chapel Hill community through their social media platforms. They are a socially-driven company and all of their profits are reinvested or used to partner with other student sustainability initiatives.

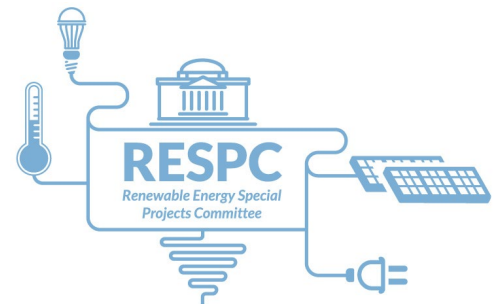
Get involved: <https://vintageblueunc.com/>



### RESPC

The purpose of the Renewable Energy Special Projects Committee (RESPC) is to increase the use of renewable energy and sustainable practices through funding of renewable energy, energy efficiency, maintenance, and energy education projects on campus. We work with several different departments, faculty, and professionals in order to generate ideas and technologies that can be used to improve the use of energy at UNC. Through a Renewable Energy student fee, we are able to fund these projects and implement new technologies and retrofits that will help UNC Chapel Hill set the standard for campus sustainability as the flagship university in the UNC school system.

Get involved: <http://respc.web.unc.edu/home/>





### FLO Food

The purpose of FLO Food as an organization is to work with CDS to achieve and maintain a sustainable purchasing plan with regards to Dining. FLO aims to assist and develop communication with CDS specifically to improve and increase Carolina's commitment to sustainability and CDS's sustainability initiative. FLO stands for Fair, Local, and Organic, and the purpose of the organization is to make those principles integral to the set

up of Carolina Dining Services, thus the scope will include all members of the campus community who use meal plans and eat on campus, as well as members of the surrounding community who will benefit from increased cooperation with the University.

Get involved: <http://flofood.weebly.com/>



### Student Environmental Action Coalition - SEAC

Student Environmental Action Coalition (SEAC) is committed to defending social justice through environmental initiatives. SEAC communicates messages of environmental and political activism through local initiatives, but have extended their reach to the state level as well, and have participated in several international service learning trips.

Most recently, SEAC hosted a speaking series that addressed the environmental and social justice implications of the North Carolina Hog

Industry.

Other past on-campus initiatives have included hosting the Carolinas PowerShift '09 Conference, and the promotion of reusable water bottles as well as Compact Fluorescent Lightbulbs. SWEAT service learning trips have included a greenbelt project in Kenya, a water sanitation project in Tanzania, and a greenhouse project in Bolivia.

Get involved: <https://campusy.unc.edu/committee/student-environmental-action-coalition/>



### Coulture Magazine

Coulture Magazine is a fashion and lifestyle magazine that challenges beauty standards by encouraging readers to accentuate their best features rather than conform with unrealistic societal expectations. Coulture delivers this message through the lens of UNC-Chapel Hill students by way of relatable content and superior design.

Get involved: <https://www.facebook.com/coulturemagazine/>





## Sustainability in Practice

### Launching Investment for Future Transformation (LIFT)

Using blended finance and impact investing to address the United Nations' (UN) Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), if done correctly and inclusively, can drive social equity, social justice and economic mobility for underserved communities everywhere.

The Ackerman Center for Excellence in Sustainability's Launching Investment for Future Transformation (LIFT) with sponsorship from Bank of America, calls on students from around the world to develop blended finance strategies to drive true triple bottom line sustainability – simultaneously addressing the most pressing environmental, social and economic challenges of our time. The world is experiencing monumental challenges, from climate change to the lack of access to clean water and sanitation, from the need for affordable housing to sustainable energy and infrastructure. The impacts from these challenges have been disproportionate, affecting the most vulnerable, underserved populations and communities.

We can tackle these complex sustainability issues in a manner that advances social equity, justice and economic mobility. Blended finance will help us do this successfully! We need unique solutions that combine multiple finance and investment mechanisms to support innovation from and for all stakeholders.

We invite student teams to pitch ideas in line with the UN SDGs and identify untapped opportunities and bridge gaps to solve social inequities and create opportunities for economic mobility. There is no single path in the fight for social justice and equitable economic opportunity. The world needs ideas for all sectors, topics and regions. No matter where you're from, teams can pitch solutions for high-income countries, low-income countries, and everything in between. Fill out the student interest form [here](#).

**Create a team of 3-5 students and submit your best blended finance solution for a chance to win a share of \$15,000 in prizes, make powerful connections, and help change the world.**

**Finals will take place virtually, February 14-15, 2025.**

### Business Leadership in Sustainability Internship Program

During the academic year the [Business Leadership in Sustainability](#) (BLIS) program provides opportunities for students to build their business sustainability skills to assess North Carolina companies to determine the winners of our annual Sustainability Awards. You can sign up [here](#).

### Student Athlete Sustainability Initiative

UNC-Chapel Hill student athletes have partnered with the Ackerman Center for Excellence in Sustainability (ACES) to create the [Student Athlete Sustainability Initiative](#). The purpose of the initiative is to help student athletes connect their values and business interests through learning and leadership opportunities that fit with their structured schedules. Many student athletes have an interest in business and in driving positive social and environmental impact. You can sign up [here](#).

### STAR (Student Teams Achieving Results)

UNC Kenan-Flagler's Student Teams Achieving Results program, STAR, sends teams of top MBAs and BSBA's to build comprehensive and actionable strategies for corporations and not-for-profits seeking to strengthen their global competitiveness. STAR teams receive academic credit for their four-month engagement and are guided by both a faculty advisor and an executive from the client organization.

Teams of UNC Kenan-Flagler MBAs and BSBA's work with their clients to develop strategies for growth and profitability. To participate in STAR students must complete the Consulting Skills and Frameworks course before or concurrently to the STAR project.

For more information and to apply visit [STAR](#).



## StartUp-UNC

Startup UNC (formerly Launch the Venture) is a new ventures course designed to help students, faculty, staff, and alumni take a business idea or scientific innovation to market. The course starts by assessing the nascent ideas and technologies from the perspective of customer need, product-market fit, competition, and value proposition. Using a lean startup approach, teams get to a go/no-go decision by the end of Mod 2 (December). Teams moving ahead will develop a strategic roadmap and financial plans for launching the business in Mods 3 and 4.

StartUp-UNC takes about 15 teams that start in Mod 1 and around half of them will complete the entire 4 sections and be ready to launch. Although not common, they may enroll some teams in Mod 3 or Mod 4 if they demonstrate sufficient understanding of the customer problems and validate both the customer needs and product fit through in-depth market research.

The four StartUp-UNC course overviews can be found [here](#).

For more information: [visit StartUp-UNC](#).



## Careers in Sustainable Enterprise

### Careers with Impact Forum

A day long forum of panels and networking events organized by the UNC Net Impact Club that gives students information about different career paths, functions, and industries in the field of sustainable enterprise.

Kenan-Flagler Alumni are making an impact all over the world:

- Acumen Fund
- B Lab
- Bank of America
- Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation
- Burt's Bees
- Cherokee
- Citi
- Clean Air Action Corporation
- Deloitte Consulting
- Duke Energy
- Education Pioneers
- Ford Motor Company
- GE Leadership Rotational Program
- GlaxoSmithKline
- GlobalGiving
- IBM
- iContact
- Intel
- Interface Flooring, Inc.
- Investors' Circle
- Johnson & Johnson
- KIPP (Knowledge is Power Program)
- KPMG, Sustainability Services Group
- McKinsey & Co
- MegaWatt Solar
- Mercy Housing
- National Park Service
- Natural Resources Defense Council
- NextEra Energy Resources
- The North Highland Company
- PwC
- Proctor & Gamble
- Reebok
- RTI International
- ScottMadden Associates
- Self-Help
- SJF Ventures
- Southern Energy Management
- Starbucks
- Strata Solar
- Sustainable Value Partners
- Teach for America
- Timberland
- USAID
- Walmart
- World Wildlife Fund

## How to Get the Most out of Career Resources

### 1. *LinkedIn and Facebook groups*

Join the LinkedIn group: UNC Kenan-Flagler Ackerman Center for Excellence in Sustainability

Join the Facebook group: UNC Kenan-Flagler Ackerman Center for Excellence in Sustainability

### 2. *People to follow on Twitter for jobs and announcements:*

@Katie\_Kross Kenan-Flagler MBA Alumae

Dr. Mrim Boutla @PurposeU

Ellen Weinreb @SustainableJobs

Tracy Triggs-Matthews @TracyTM

Ackerman Center for Excellence in Sustainability @unc\_aces

Sustainable Business Club @UNCBiz\_CS





## Job Search Advice from Katie Kross (MBA '04)

### Author of *Profession and Purpose: A Resource Guide for MBA Careers in Sustainability*

Focus your search. "Sustainability" is a big umbrella; you'll need to define what you're looking for.

Stay current; the field is changing quickly. Greenbiz.com and the Corporate Eco Forum's Weekly Briefing are two great sources.

Conduct great informational interviews with practitioners. Kenan-Flagler's alumni network is phenomenal.

Go to where the practitioners are. Conferences and industry events are some of the best places to network.

Be creative in gaining real-world experience while a student. Class projects, independent study/practicum projects, and internships can build your resume.

Use Google Reader and job search agents to help you aggregate job openings with keyword combinations like "MBA and sustainability" or "energy and intern."

Katie also posts job openings at her blog: [www.professionandpurpose.com](http://www.professionandpurpose.com)

