

History of the College

The history of Central Piedmont Community College (CPCC) centers not so much on bricks and mortar, books and computers, or programs and classes, but points more to the many people who have played a role in developing the college and the many students who have found success as a result of their experiences.

CPCC has provided educational opportunities since 1963, the year the North Carolina General Assembly passed the community college bill. Opening as a fully integrated institution, under the direction of Dr. Richard H. Hagemeyer, the founding president, the college combined the programs of the Central Industrial Education Center (CIEC) on Elizabeth Avenue and Mecklenburg College on Beatties Ford Road and sold its property on Beatties Ford Road to develop a campus around the old Central High School complex. Starting with 3.94 acres, the college bought surrounding property, demolished buildings and closed streets to build the beautiful, tree shaded, 32-acre Central Campus that students and faculty now enjoy.

From the start, the college was innovative in its teaching methods. CPCC soon garnered national recognition for its individualized instruction and computer-assisted instruction. In 1970, the college was invited to join and help found the League for Innovation in the Community College, and today it is still an active member and member of the League for Innovation's Board of Directors. CPCC has grown from a small college with a dozen programs serving 1,600 students to one with nearly 300 degree, diploma and certificate programs at six campuses and online with an array of credit and non-credit offerings.

After Dr. Hagemeyer's retirement in 1986, Dr. Ruth Shaw became the college's second president. Under her leadership, the college added the Advanced Technologies Center and the Center for Automotive Technology and began acquiring land for more campuses.

The college's third president, Dr. Tony Zeiss, led the college from December 1992 to December 2016 with a mission devoted to serving students and the community through customized training and workforce development. In 2002, the National Alliance of Business chose CPCC to receive its Community College of the Year Distinguished Performance Award. Under Dr. Zeiss's direction, CPCC became a multi-campus community college with six campuses: Central, Merancas, Levine, Harper, Harris and Cato Campuses and three centers: City View Center, WTVI PBS Charlotte and Ballantyne Center.

Now under the leadership of Dr. Kandi W. Deitemeyer, the college is the county's premier workforce development resource. Currently, CPCC is embarking on developing a new strategic plan and expanding to serve the growing region and maintain the college's fundamental commitment to student success. CPCC works to enhance the lives and success of individuals and employers, making Mecklenburg County stronger and more prosperous.

For a more comprehensive review of the history of Central Piedmont Community College, consult the following resources:

Oleson-Briggs, S. (2013). *Central Piedmont Community College: Legacy and Promise 1993-2013*. Charlotte: CPCC Foundation, Inc.

Timblin, C. L. (1995). *Central Piedmont Community College: The First Thirty Years 1963-1993*. Charlotte: CPCC Foundation, Inc.