North Carolina Central University, a state-supported liberal arts institution, was chartered in 1909 as a private institution and opened to students on July 5, 1910. It was founded by Dr. James E. Shepard. From the beginning, when it was known as the National Religious Training School and Chautauqua, its purpose has been the development in young men and women of the character and sound academic training requisite for real service to the nation. To this end, the training of all students has been entrusted to the most capable teachers available.

The institution’s early years were characterized by a wealth of enthusiasm and high endeavor, but not of money. Private donations and student fees constituted the total financial support of the school, and the heavy burden of collecting funds rested on the President.

In 1915 the school was sold and reorganized, then becoming the National Training School. During this period of its history, Mrs. Russell Sage of New York was a generous benefactor of the school.

In 1923 the General Assembly of North Carolina appropriated funds for the purchase and maintenance of the school; thus in that year it became a publicly-supported institution, and was renamed Durham State Normal School for Negroes. Two years later, the General Assembly converted the institution into the North Carolina College for Negroes, dedicating it to the offering of liberal arts education and the preparation of teachers and principals of secondary schools. North Carolina College for Negroes became the nation’s first state-supported liberal arts college for African-American students.

At its 1927 session, the General Assembly began a program of expansion of the college plant to conform to the needs of an enlarged academic program. The interest of the Honorable Angus W. McLean, then Governor of North Carolina, and his belief in the institution aided greatly in the promotion of this program. State appropriations were supplemented by a generous gift from B. N. Duke, and by contributions from citizens of Durham in 1929. The 1930s afforded federal grants and State appropriations for a new program of physical expansion and improvement of educational facilities; this program continued until the beginning of World War II.

The College was accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges and Secondary Schools as an “A” class institution in 1937 and was admitted to membership in that association in 1957.

The General Assembly of 1939 authorized the establishment of graduate work in liberal arts and the professions. Pursuant thereto, graduate courses in the Arts and Sciences were first offered in that same year; the School of Law began operation in 1940, and the School of Library Science was established in 1941.

In 1947 the General Assembly changed the name of the institution to North Carolina College at Durham.

On October 6, 1947, Dr. Shepard, the founder and President of the college, died. The Board of Trustees appointed an interim committee consisting of Dr. Albert E. Manley, Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences; Miss Ruth G. Rush, Dean of Women; and Dr. Albert L. Turner, Dean of the School of Law, to administer the affairs of the institution until the election of the second president.

On January 0, 1049, Dr. Alfonso Elder was elected President of the institution. At the time of his election, Dr. Elder was serving as head of the Graduate Department of Education and had formerly been Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences. Dr. Elder retired September 1, 1963.
Dr. Samuel P. Massie was elected as the third President of the College on August 9, 1963. Dr. Massie came to the institution from Washington, D.C., where he was Associate Program Director for Undergraduate Science Education of the National Science Foundation and Professor and Chairman of the Department of Pharmaceutical Chemistry at Howard University. He resigned on February 1, 1966.

When Dr. Massie resigned on February 1, 1966, the administration of the college was assumed by a second interim committee, whose members were Mr. William Jones, business manager; Dr. Helen G. Edmonds, graduate dean; and Dr. William H. Brown, professor of education. This interim committee served until July 1, 1967, when Dr. Albert N. Whiting assumed his duties as president.

Dr. Whiting, was elected president by the Board of Trustees on July 20, 1966. He served as president and chancellor of the institution until his retirement June 30, 1983. North Carolina College at Durham became North Carolina Central University in 1969. Among the significant developments during Dr. Whiting’s 16 years of service was the creation of the NCCU School of Business. Programs in public administration and criminal justice were also launched during those years.

A momentous development in the history of higher education in North Carolina came on July 1, 1972, when the state’s four-year colleges and universities were joined to become The Consolidated University of North Carolina. The reconstituted University of North Carolina, with 16 individual campuses, was headed by a single president and governed by the University of North Carolina Board of Governors. The head of each university became Chancellor.

Dr. Whiting was succeeded by Dr. LeRoy T. Walker in the role of interim chancellor. Dr. Walker had served the institution as chairman of the Department of Physical Education and Recreation, head track coach, and vice chancellor for university relations. He had served as the United States’ head track and field coach at the 1976 Olympic games, and was a key administrator in the early years of the U.S. Peace Corps. At their February 1986 meeting, the University of North Carolina Board of Governors, at the request of NCCU’s Board of Trustees, retroactively awarded Walker the title of chancellor, effective as of the beginning of his term in 1983.

Dr. Tyronza R. Richmond, formerly dean of the School of Business, succeeded Dr. Walker as chancellor on July 1, 1986. Prior to his arrival at NCCU, Dr. Richmond had served as associate dean and professor at the School of Business and Public Administration at Howard University. Richmond’s tenure saw the creation of the School of Education (formerly the Department of Education) and a reorganization of the academic administrative structure. Richmond resigned as chancellor to return to the classroom.

On January 1, 1992, Dr. Donna J. Benson, became interim chancellor for one year.
Dr. Benson was succeeded on January 1, 1993, by Julius L. Chambers, who had been director-counsel (chief executive) of the NAACP Legal Defense and Education Fund. Chambers, a distinguished civil rights attorney, was the first alumnus to serve as chief administrator, having received his bachelor’s degree in history from North Carolina College at Durham in 1958. Chambers launched a major capital construction effort including an additional residence facility on the site of the existing Chidley Hall, a biomedical/biotechnology research facility, a new School of Education building as well as substantial renovations to all student residence halls and most classroom facilities.

Dr. James H. Ammons, the ninth chief administrator of North Carolina Central University (NCCU), became chancellor June 1, 2001. Under his leadership, the university experienced significant enrollment growth, making North Carolina Central University the fastest growing university among the 16 campuses in the University of North Carolina system.

Dr. Charlie Nelms, the tenth chief administrator of North Carolina Central University, became Chancellor on August 1, 2007.
UNIVERSITY MISSION

North Carolina Central University is a comprehensive university offering programs at the baccalaureate, master’s, and selected professional levels. It is the nation’s first public liberal arts institution founded for African-Americans. The university upholds a strong liberal arts tradition and a commitment to academic excellence in a diverse educational and cultural environment. It seeks to encourage intellectual productivity and to increase the academic and professional skills of its students and faculty.

The mission of the university is to prepare students academically and professionally to become leaders prepared to advance the consciousness of social responsibility in a diverse, global society. The university will serve its traditional clientele of African-American students; it will also expand its commitment to meet the educational needs of a student body that is diverse in race and other socioeconomic qualities.

Teaching, supported by research, is the primary focus of the university. As a part of that focus, the university encourages its faculty to pursue intellectual development and rewards effective teaching and research. The university recognizes, however, the mutually reinforcing impact of scholarship and service on effective teaching and learning. North Carolina Central University, therefore, encourages and expects faculty and students to engage in scholarly, creative, and service activities, which benefit the community.

Compiled by Mr. Andre Vann
Sources: Archives

Old Administration

Clyde R. Hoey Administration Building