

Theme music ([00:01](#)):

Please listen carefully.

Taylor Pardue ([00:06](#)):

Welcome to the NC State Philanthropy Podcast, telling the world how we Think and Do through the support of our friends, alumni and more. I'm your host, Taylor Pardue.

([00:22](#)):

On this episode, we're joined by Chris Boyer, NC State's assistant vice chancellor for strategic brand management, to discuss how sustaining the university's brand identity is about much more than the consistent use of a logo.

([00:32](#)):

Thank you so much for joining us today, Chris. Just to kick things off, tell listeners a little bit about yourself, how you came to be part of the Pack and kind of what you're working on now in your current role.

Chris Boyer ([00:55](#)):

Sure. First of all, thanks so much for having me and the opportunity to talk about the Office of Strategic Brand Management, which I'm very passionate about, and I'm obviously passionate about NC State as a whole. My path here is a little bit non-traditional and unconventional. I'm not a North Carolina native, wasn't an alum of NC State, although I'm a current non-traditional student at NC State, but I actually came here because I was following, at that point, a very focused career in intercollegiate athletic administration, and during my undergraduate days at a different institution, I was fortunate enough to meet a woman by the name of Debbie Yow, who became quite a professional and personal mentor for me over the years, and ultimately had a chance to go back and work for her at the University of Maryland.

([01:40](#)):

And then when she became the director of athletics here at NC State, she had an opportunity for me a couple years into her tenure to come join her team for Wolfpack Athletics. And I jumped at it because it was an opportunity to reunite with her, who, again, had been a longtime professional mentor for me, but also come to a university in a great area of the country, in a great athletic conference with a storied athletic tradition. And what I didn't even realize at the time because it — you probably know this, being an alum and being from North Carolina — what you don't know, even if people are telling you, is, within the state of North Carolina and this region of the country, NC State has as loyal and passionate a following and fan base and alumni base as any institution in the United States, especially any institution in this state and this region.

([02:39](#)):

And for whatever reason, and probably because of more recent athletic notoriety, that's not as well known or wasn't as well known 10 years ago when I got to NC State. I think we've done a much better job as an institution over the last decade or so in telling that story. But that was phenomenal to me. I mean, I've worked at six different universities, so I knew all of those initial reasons I said were gonna be true and genuine when I got here. What I didn't know was if — what I didn't realize was the rewarding nature of working for a university with a passionate and loyal fan base as passion or loyal as — actually, I would even say even more so than my alma mater, especially when you consider the up-and-down record of success in athletics.

[\(03:32\)](#):

So, sometimes you feel that passion and sense that passion and loyalty working in athletics at universities who have won recent national championships or had recent athletic success. And when I got here 10 years ago, you couldn't necessarily say that was the case. So, to see it then, and I feel like, again, because of the great job the university's done and the athletic department has done, both under Debbie and her successor, Boo Corrigan.

[\(03:55\)](#):

I think it's even ratcheted up in the 10 years, and I think the trajectory with the university from an overall brand standpoint and reputation and ranking standpoint, but where we are in terms of our curriculum, where we are obviously wrapping up an incredibly successful \$2 billion-plus campaign, all those things that were true 10 years ago are only more true today. And, again, I just, I didn't realize all that from only seeing NC State from different parts of the country through my professional career. So, that was really cool.

[\(04:26\)](#):

So, I got to work for Debbie for about seven years in the athletic department and then worked for Boo for a time. And then I just had this unbelievable fortunate opportunity. The university decided to create a new effort within University Communications and Marketing, which, again, as you know, at NC State also funnels up to University Advancement, where we saw an opportunity to do a few things.

[\(04:53\)](#):

And the name of the office, the Office of Strategic Brand Management. We saw an opportunity to better strategize and approach holistically or centrally some of our corporate-engagement efforts related to sponsorship, and commercial sponsorship, specifically. We saw an opportunity to pull in our trademark licensing office and more closely align with the university brand for a variety of reasons: strategic, political, legal and otherwise.

[\(05:21\)](#):

And then this office was also going to have the opportunity to really manage and enforce and hopefully continue to elevate — and, in some cases, monetize — the brand of NC State, both internally and externally. So, a lot of those areas, those are what I would call the three broad buckets of what the Office of Strategic Brand Management does, are the areas that I had focused on in my 20-plus year career in intercollegiate athletic administration, inclusive of seven here at NC State.

[\(05:48\)](#):

So, the fact that this office was being created and I was going to get an opportunity to put my hat in the ring for it and see if what I had accumulated through my experience and track record in college athletics, specifically, could be applicable and useful and helpful to the university on a more general, universitywide scale. So, it was a serendipitous opportunity. I owe a lot of people a lot for, ultimately, having the trust in me to bump over into this role almost three years ago.

[\(06:23\)](#):

So, that's a little bit about how I got to NC State, started in athletics and then bumped over to your neck of the woods in University Advancement and, specifically, Communications and Marketing.

Taylor Pardue [\(06:32\)](#):

You mentioned how you were on a very specific career track, but the more you talked, I was like, it really does make for a natural segue into branding because it's that same school spirit, that loyalty, and especially you coming from an out-of-state perspective and seeing it fresh and realizing what we have

here and then helping us turn around and promote it even more, like you said, ratcheting it up even more. I think that's just a great fit, and we're glad to have you here in that role. You're doing a great job.

Chris Boyer ([07:00](#)):

I really appreciate it, and I've loved every minute of it. I will tell you, there were moments where I thought, I'm leaving this career that I really had a lot of equity in at the point, I've been focused like a laser beam on probably staying in and hoping I could reach the highest levels of it, for this parallel path — parallel but related, I would say. And there were moments I thought, Oh, will I ever miss this? Will I ever regret this? And I've got to say, it's almost surprising to me, there hasn't been a minute just because of the opportunity that this position is, but this position to this place, NC State, at this specific time in the university's history in its momentum and upward ascension.

([07:39](#)):

And then, with what's happening in this region and the state, it's just ... and it does allow me to call on a lot of, again, I would say, the skills and experiences I had been able to develop and hone specific to college athletics in a more universitywide role.

([07:55](#)):

But I think they are translatable. It's different at times, for sure, but I appreciate you saying that, because I do think we've had success and I also appreciate you saying the outside perspective. And now, as a current NC State student — which, I think, it's neat for me to be able to say out loud internally and externally because I think when you're selling a product, good or service — and, to some degree, we're all selling, right? — I do think it's easier to sell a product that you also use yourself.

Taylor Pardue ([08:22](#)):

Yeah.

Chris Boyer ([08:22](#)):

So, the fact that I can say that out loud, "I'm a current student," I'm proud of that. But, predominantly, I was an outsider when I got here, and even after seven years in athletics, I was here, but I, again, I couldn't say I was an alum or a North Carolina native.

([08:38](#)):

But I think that, in some ways, makes what I say about this place, especially to external audiences, feel maybe even a little bit more objectively based and genuine because I'm not saying it with those built-in, inherent biases. I've established them over time, but the fact that I can lead with that and just say, you know, that this is true based on my outsider experience coming here. And then we have all these great metrics and data and anecdotes and case studies and, increasingly, more of them to back it up.

([09:11](#)):

I think that's really been helpful as we build the brand and we try to bring external companies, whether they be retailers, corporations, what have you, into the mix to understand the power of the NC State brand and how it can be used for mutually beneficial objectives.

Taylor Pardue ([09:28](#)):

So, talk a little bit about ... I know ... What does your day-to-day look like? I know people sometimes hear the word "brand" and they think they understand what that means, but what all does that really

mean and what all do you do to really promote that into, like you said, build it — not just rest on our laurels, but really improve it even more than what we've already enjoyed?

Chris Boyer ([09:46](#)):

Yeah. Great question. I appreciate you asking it that way, and “brand” is part of our office name and part of my title, but I think it's important to surround it by the other labels that come with it.

([09:59](#)):

So, we are the Office of Strategic Brand Management, and I think that's important because University Communications and Marketing, which has played a larger role than me for sure in our office in building the overall brand of NC State and continuing to develop what the brand would look like internally and externally, existed before the Office of Strategic Brand Management.

([10:22](#)):

So, we have a lot of talented, creative people in University Communications and Marketing who have been working hard at that for the university's history, but with, I think, an emphasis and more concentrated focus over the last, you know, 10, 12 years since my boss, Brad Bohlander, got here.

([10:42](#)):

But what Strategic Brand Management, I think, has come along with understanding, it's arguable that the most valuable asset the university has — any university, maybe any public institution or company — is its brand, what people think about it, how they feel about it, what their impressions of it are, what their interactions with it are like.

([11:04](#)):

So, after I think we had started to do a better job of building the brand and understanding the importance of NC State's brand and trying to be more consistent with its usage and more centralized with the development of it, we saw that there was a greater opportunity to start to then manage it more strategically. So, hence, “Strategic” Brand Management.

([11:26](#)):

So, what our day looks like, and again, I won't be, try not to be, repetitive, but I think it helps guide the conversation because what our office does is really, then, how our team of four spends our day, to certain degrees.

([11:40](#)):

The three large buckets, or broad strokes, I would say, our office is responsible for is the management of the NC State brand internally and externally. When I say “management,” how internal departments use it, how external entities and partners are allowed to use it, make sure that it's presented in the way that is documented in our brand guidelines and is in line with our university mission and values. And along with protecting and managing it, we do look for strategic ways to continue to elevate it, in some cases monetize it and drive resources back to campus through it.

([12:16](#)):

So, we spend time with, through brand training, to make sure all new employees that at least are somehow tangentially involved to communicate in the university brand, understand the brand, the brand guidelines to a lesser extent.

([12:29](#)):

Parts of our second bucket, which I mentioned, is our trademark-licensing program. And trademark licensing has existed at the university before the creation of the Office of Strategic Brand Management,

but, as I said, we brought it under the University Communications and Marketing umbrella for a variety of reasons when this office was created.

[\(12:47\)](#):

So, trademark licensing really does approve or disapprove use of NC State's intellectual brand property. I could leave it "intellectual property," but our intellectual property is separate from, like, the research and innovation and technology that's being developed on campus and limited to, in our case, usage of our logos, marks, word marks. So, if anybody wants to use the NC State logos or word marks, again, internally or externally, if they're following the law and policy rules and regs, needs to come through our office. And I would say we're much better at that than we used to be.

[\(13:25\)](#):

And I would say we see the, see the large majority, but we're constantly finding unauthorized uses. But all of that fits into the second bucket of trademark licensing and making sure that all products, goods and services who want to use our marks — and, again, all internal colleges' and units' usage — are approved and used appropriately. And in some cases that also comes along with resource generation.

[\(13:48\)](#):

And it's always important for me to mention that, per university policy, rules and regs, and really since we've established the Office of Trademark Licensing at NC State, all trademark-licensing royalties, after expenses, go to support NC State's student scholarships and academic resources — the vast majority of the student scholarships in the areas of need, merit, study abroad and athletics.

[\(14:13\)](#):

So, that's a really compelling story for us to be able to tell when we're either asking people to be in compliance with trademark-licensing rules and regs and/or we're courting companies, licensees, retailers. We'll talk about some of our co-branded partnerships that people who we're asking to do business with us understand that there is a business model associated, but the importance of the business model for us is to support NC State students and NC State student scholarships.

[\(14:42\)](#):

So, brand management strategy, elevation monetization, trademark licensing. And then I would say the third bucket, where I probably have spent most of my time since the office creation, is trying to develop a more centralized approach to universitywide, or at least multi-departmental/multi-college, corporate and commercial sponsorship. So, most people around NC State, or at least a good number of people around NC State, understand that we have a university pouring-rights partner in the form, currently, of Coca-Cola through Coca-Cola Bottling Consolidated out of Charlotte. That's what we consider a commercial sponsorship because there are actually marketing and promotional and advertising assets. It's not just a gift of philanthropy, a business-to-business relationship. There are marketing and promotional assets that are included in that.

[\(15:35\)](#):

One of the reasons our office came to exist, I would say, were two newer relationships. One in the form of our retail banking relationship with PNC Bank, which I was part of at the time when I was in athletics, but it was really being managed through the Chief Finance Officer's office at the time. And that was, again, part of this understanding, "Wow. We have, you know, there's probably not hundreds of these deals out there, but there's an opportunity for us to engage with mission-aligned and value-aligned companies that might have some marketing objectives that NC State can help them meet."

[\(16:14\)](#):

So the PNC retail banking arrangement got done, and then soon thereafter we entered conversations, ultimately, with New Belgium Brewery to create our officially licensed beer through New Belgium, Old Tuffy. Ad that just furthered, I think, the understanding by, at many levels of the university, is like, “Oh yeah. If these partnerships are done right, they can tie into academic alignment, mission alignment, extension alignment; give students some real-world opportunities; celebrate some of our subject-matter experts and our faculty and staff — oh, and drive revenue and resources back to support student scholarships.

[\(16:53\)](#):

So, at that point, I really say it was, and again, I was more involved in that agreement through my then role in athletics. But I think I was interacting with the right people at that point that saw that there were some parallels to what I had done through most of my career in athletics. And athletics, I mean, like it or not, related to corporate sponsorships, specifically, athletics have largely been ahead of the curve on college campuses ...

Taylor Pardue [\(17:21\)](#):

Sure.

Chris Boyer [\(17:21\)](#):

... with that in terms of going out and soliciting corporate engagement and, really, in a marketing and advertising relationship at athletic events and athletic venues. So, I think the fact that I could speak to that probably with more experience than most administrators on a college campus, because I had spent my entire career up to that point largely in athletics, I think was also helpful. But I think that’s one of the reasons I was given the opportunity. And like I said, because we’ve never really approached that type of activity on this campus, it — in a real, strategic, centralized way — most of those, the limited number of engagements we’ve had have kind of either happened serendipitously or, you know, through a specific opportunity at specific time.

[\(18:08\)](#):

So, I’ve been charged with really trying to get our arms around how we can do this in a more holistic, engaged way across campus and deliver the many assets that we have as a campus collectively to hopefully not take anybody’s piece of the pie away, because there are a lot of units in colleges on campus that are engaged in sponsorship or sponsorship-like activity, and we’re not trying to put an end to that. But we think that, maybe, if we approach some of these engagements more collectively and more centralized, the pie will get bigger for them and not take anybody’s specific piece away.

Taylor Pardue [\(18:38\)](#):

Yeah.

[\(18:45\)](#):

In this Philanthropy 101 segment, we’re highlighting the NC State Belltower Collection.

[\(18:49\)](#):

The Belltower Collection is a special mix of private-label apparel and accessories that is sold exclusively through NC State’s campus bookstore, Wolfpack Outfitters. Named for the university’s Memorial Belltower, the collection features an artistic take on the landmark as its logo. This is probably displayed on the collection’s polo shirts, quarter zips, necklaces, and lapel pins — items which make the Belltower Collection something Pack members can wear in any season and on any occasion.

[\(19:18\)](#):

The Belltower Collection was officially launched in 2020 to coincide with and celebrate the renovation, restoration and completion of its namesake, which was made possible in large part by the financial support of the Bill and Francis Henry family. A dozen departments from across NC State contributed to the collection's development, including groups from the College of Design, the Wilson College of Textiles, and the Poole College of Management — the latter two of which are named in honor of the families who generously support their ongoing successes.

[\(19:47\)](#):

Best of all, a portion of the sale of each item in the Belltower Collection goes toward scholarship support of NC State students.

[\(19:57\)](#):

From its design to its launch to the present day, the Belltower Collection perfectly illustrates how NC State, with the help of our friends, alumni and more, will stand the test of time — just like the Memorial Belltower has for more than a century now.

[\(20:08\)](#):

For more information on the NC State Belltower Collection, please visit shop.ncsu.edu/collections. Now, back to the show.

[\(20:25\)](#):

Well, speaking of modernization, resource generation, pieces of pie, everything, I think what makes this so interesting is, obviously, NC State Philanthropy Podcast, we talk about philanthropy. We usually talk about donors specifically — you know, scholarships, things that are direct, direct gifts. What makes this so unique is the fact that everybody becomes a donor when you support NC State through our brand, through our merchandise, things like that. And it is, it's truly going back to students, faculty, it really supports the university. And so, everybody really becomes a supporter of NC State in that way.

[\(20:56\)](#):

Talking about specificity, too, with different companies we work with and all, obviously, you know, you buy an NC State hat, NC State-branded hat, you buy a T-shirt, things like that, that goes toward that overall goal. Talk about some of the specific products that we've introduced lately and then, we have, you know, some more in the works, too. Just talk a little bit about how we've partnered with different companies and things like that, kind of like Old Tuffy, and the opportunities that are coming to the market soon for these potential donors, as they should view themselves, to take advantage of.

Chris Boyer [\(21:26\)](#):

I appreciate you articulating that, and I don't want to create the misconception that there's the same type of tax and philanthropic benefits buying officially licensed merchandise, but you're right, and supporting a lot of the same initiatives that a philanthropic donor with the added advantage or walking away with a great T-shirt or mug or what have you. And I do think that's as much of an important part of the story to talk about when we're engaging with a corporation, because I think there's always reticence on a college campus to talk sometimes about the quid pro quo of a revenue or money exchange. It's tainting the mission for us. It's important to talk about how that money, again, has to be mission-aligned, and it has to really go to areas that are important and make sense for the university.

Taylor Pardue [\(22:12\)](#):

Yeah.

Chris Boyer ([22:13](#)):

But then it's also coupled with the story that the money's then going to support student scholarships. So I, that helps some people get over the challenge. And same thing with, you know, a lot of people hear trademark license and then they think, to your point, it's decals on T-shirts or mugs or hats or whatever. And that is, it's important. It's a large and important part. And it's been a growing part of the NC State business, quite frankly. I mean, we're a top-30 program now in the country in terms of sales of trademark-license goods, traditional trademark-license goods. And the same can be said: a significant portion of all those sales do go right back to that scholarship pot that I talked about. So, I never want to give short attention to that, because those relationships in some cases still remain the bread and butter — the licensee relationships with well-known companies like Hanes Champion, a North Carolina-based company; like an Adidas who's one ...

Taylor Pardue ([23:01](#)):

I was going to say, I'm a proud owner of the original Adidas shoes that we — the gray ones. We have the new red ones out now, but ...

Chris Boyer ([23:10](#)):

Ultraboost 2.0.

Taylor Pardue ([23:11](#)):

Yeah.

Chris Boyer ([23:11](#)):

Yeah, and I think that's cool because that does kind of answer your question. I, we've been — and I think, being in University Communications and Marketing and having a little bit more in terms of resources, human and otherwise — have allowed us to more aggressively position ourselves to be included in the mix when these companies — national, regional, local — are launching new products into the officially licensed marketplace.

([23:38](#)):

So, quite honestly, we missed out on Adidas's first iteration of the Ultra Boost, and we were irritated by that, and we made our case known to Adidas. A) We're irritated. B) You've missed the mark on this. Like, and we can show them the metrics and data of trends of our fans buying officially licensed merchandise and how they show out for season ticket sales in not one sport, not two sports, but many sports.

Taylor Pardue ([24:04](#)):

Yeah.

Chris Boyer ([24:04](#)):

How our teams are raising the brand of the university. So, they, you know, included us in the second version, our Ultraboost 1.0, and we immediately became the top fastest-selling co-branded Ultraboost that they had in the collection. And that's important. So, that was the first one. The second one, obviously, based on our track record of the first time they included us, we were included in 2.0, which is currently on the market that you were just talking about. And it's, Taylor, I think it's important in three reasons, really. Now, more so than ever, one is, outside of your multimedia partners, the networks that carry your games on TV, that, whether we like it or not, is sometimes still the best exposure that a

university can get for the money. Next to that, your sideline partner. When I say sideline partner, it's usually Adidas, Nike, Under Armour during our lifetime.

Taylor Pardue ([25:01](#)):

Yeah.

Chris Boyer ([25:01](#)):

These companies that have strategically aligned with Division I athletic departments, those companies give you an unbelievable opportunity from a brand standpoint. Not only eyeballs, but how people feel about your brand, what your brand means to the 16-, 17-, 18-year-old recruits. So, for Adidas to treat us like, as we are, one of, you know, their top partners from an officially licensed point of view or co-branded point of view, that's really important for our overall brand and brand elevation.

([25:30](#)):

Secondly, it comes along, as I said, with revenue back to the university because those are high-margin — like, sneakers, you know, they're not cheap. There's a margin build in that. So, everybody wins on that. Adidas wins. The retailer who's carrying it; in this case, Wolfpack Outfitters.

Taylor Pardue ([25:45](#)):

Yep.

Chris Boyer ([25:45](#)):

Our campus-owned bookstore, they sell a high-margin item, and we see our share of revenue. So, it really becomes a win-win-win.

([25:53](#)):

And then, lastly, and part of a new area to our office that we've spent an increasing amount of time on, and most of your listeners are probably at least tangentially aware of, NIL: name, image and likeness legislation that's really changed college athletics right now. But there will be opportunities for other students on college campuses to really monetize the use of their name, image and likeness. So, what Adidas very smartly did, [it] signed up some of our current student-athletes, high-profile women's soccer players. So, it also helps from a gender-equity and Title IX standpoint to show we're not just supporting our men's teams here. They signed up two of our high-profile women's soccer players from our NCAA women's soccer team — they just qualified again this year — to help actually promote the Ultraboost sales.

([26:41](#)):

So, at that point, it becomes, and this sounds like hyperbole, but I do, I think I can show backup to this, it's a win-win-win-win, because our student-athletes are winning.

Taylor Pardue ([26:51](#)):

Yeah.

Chris Boyer ([26:52](#)):

Trademark licensing and the scholarships we support are winning. Our on-campus retailer, Wolfpack Outfitters, is winning, and Adidas is selling product, and that makes them value the overall relationship they have with the university. So, that's just the tip of the iceberg. We have, the other area I think we've

been able to aggressively expand, both because leadership's been open to it on this campus and because we have a little bit more resources in terms of time and human bodies in our office, are what I would label more co-branded trademark-licensing relationships.

[\(27:25\)](#):

So, it's not just putting our logo on established goods; it's actually partnering with another established brand, whether it be in the state or nationally, to tie together their brand with their product or service with the NC State brand and really try to maximize the combined strength of both brands. And I would say, again, I think Old Tuffy in some ways was our first foray into that. And we saw the opportunity that was there, and New Belgium saw the opportunity in this state. And then that helped us, ultimately, explore a couple others that have already launched or launched recently.

[\(28:02\)](#):

And not only do we try to take all these initiatives and make sure people understand they're supporting the mission of the university and student scholarship, but we also, wherever possible, like to really make it an integrated effort with the appropriate colleges, faculty, staff, researchers, students on this campus.

[\(28:21\)](#):

So, that's the approach we took with our co-branded wine program. We decided we're going to try to build an affinity wine program. Just about every other university that had done this before us just simply slapped a label on a wine bottle, and I am not going to talk to the quality of the wines that they use, but in most cases, it wasn't in the state that the university was; it was just a label program. So, as they found a willing partner and slapped a "University of X" label.

Taylor Pardue [\(28:52\)](#):

Sure.

Chris Boyer [\(28:53\)](#):

We said, our approach is going to be, take advantage of the strong and growing wine industry in the state of North Carolina through the course of this initiative. It's either been No. 7 or No. 8 in the country in terms of wine production and wine economy, coupled with, and some NC State constituents, I wouldn't say all or maybe even most, know this, we have a deep-rooted — pun intended — history in the wine industry. Not only the state of North Carolina, but NC State, specifically. People have strong feelings about muscadine wine, but you can say NC State played a huge role in the creation of muscadine wine. But then we've also played a huge role in the growth of the other viniferous wines throughout the entire state.

[\(29:37\)](#):

So, we had a strong reason to be interested in that business. And again, wine and wine tourism is a growing part of the North Carolina economy, which falls in line with the university mission. So, we were able to tap into university subject-matter experts specific to wine. We involved our College of Design to ask them, and some people would say the most important element of marketing wine is the label. So, we have a great College of Design. We engaged a faculty member [in the] College of Design. She jumped at the opportunity to allow her students, current students to take a stab at designing the wine labels. Ultimately, they blew us away with what they [created], and every wine that we produce — we just launched our third and fourth wines in the program — every wine we've launched has come from an NC State student inspired, completely designed label design and name. So, we're proud of that.

[\(30:27\)](#):

And so, it becomes an educational, real-world experience, completely aligned with the university mission supporting a really important North Carolina industry. Oh, and by the way, all sales benefit NC State student scholarships. So, the more we can tell that story, we're proud to do that.

Taylor Pardue [\(30:47\)](#):

Excellent.

Chris Boyer [\(30:48\)](#):

Yeah.

Taylor Pardue [\(30:49\)](#):

So, kind of as a closing, parting thought: Obviously, a lot of what you do, working on the corporate levels and everything, it's ... you can't really talk about it until it's finalized, just because the details are still in the mix and everything, but just to give us an idea, like, where do we go from here? What's the future look like for NC State branding?

Chris Boyer [\(31:08\)](#):

So, I'll hit, real quickly, all three of the buckets because what I think the future, I think they all impact the question about what is the future of the NC State brand. We, I think the collective "we" — NC State and University Communications and Marketing — believe we've only scratched the surface with our Think and Do brand campaign, so I don't, I wouldn't expect a significant change to the current visual and narrative identity of NC State because we also think it fits well with the university mission, vision and the new strategic plan. Quite honestly, I would argue that every overarching goal within the new strategic plan falls very nicely in line with the current NC State brand. So, to continue to tell that story, but I do think there, you know, we're about 10-plus years now into the current brand and brand guidelines, so I do think it's, we're going to probably undergo, maybe, a refresh and take a look at how we support the brand. I'll be part of that. I won't lead that, but I do think that impacts the other two areas that we're responsible for in our office, and one is trademark licensing.

[\(32:19\)](#):

So, I think we will continue in trademark licensing to identify opportunities with licensees, retailers, our fan base to keep them excited and energized about the NC State brand, and hopefully in a way that manifests itself in buying NC State-branded merchandise, products and services and allows us to continue to align with the right type of companies to do these co-branded relationships. I think, as long as the brand remains strong and we show, we can show our constituents have an unsatisfied appetite for engagement and interaction with the brand, that helps us have the next big victories related to more universitywide, transformational corporate engagement at the corporate-sponsorship level.

[\(33:08\)](#):

And, you know, we won't even consider those engagements again unless they're aligned with the university mission and give us an opportunity to continue to elevate NC State's brand and bring resources back to the campus to our students, staff and faculty. And then, if it checks all those boxes, then I think it certainly merits a continued conversation where we'll be better positioned. And then what I think the future holds, we have an increasing number of very successful NC State alums who are out there in very influential roles within companies and corporations — in some cases, founded and started by NC State alums ...

Taylor Pardue ([33:46](#)):

Absolutely, yeah.

Chris Boyer ([33:46](#)):

... who will provide really cool opportunities, I think, to talk about the NC State brand in all three of these areas, but especially related to co-branded opportunities or university sponsorship. And then, coupled with the influx of, companies coming to the Triangle region in all sectors — tech, most notably, but in all sectors — I think, once they get here and, like I did, see the regional and statewide strength of the NC State brand, aside from the talent we're putting out in the workforce, I think there will be, continue to be those opportunities. And I think it's just us identifying the right, either specific companies, categories or maybe one-off opportunities just because of a well-placed NC State alum, and have those conversations. And I, again, I don't think we have to do hundreds or thousands of these deals to make an impact, and we don't expect NC State to be like a NASCAR driving around Raleigh with all kinds of corporate logos over it, but I think there's enough well-aligned companies and corporations in all these areas that continue, can continue to help elevate the brand and make everybody continually proud of NC State and what we are to not only this state, but the country and, increasingly, the world.

Taylor Pardue ([35:04](#)):

Sounds great. Chris, thank you, first off, for your time, but thank you so much for all that you and your office are doing to support, like you said, students, faculty and staff, and just how you're helping us celebrate all the incredible things that we do here on campus, and just really helping us celebrate what NC State is and what it means to us all. Just really appreciate it.

Chris Boyer ([35:23](#)):

You're going to make me emotional. It's my pleasure and honor to do it, so thanks for having me, and thanks for letting us continue to amplify our story.

Taylor Pardue ([35:36](#)):

For more information on NC State's strategic brand management, please visit go.ncsu.edu/branding. If you'd like to hear even more stories of Wolfpack success, please subscribe to the NC State Philanthropy Podcast today in the Apple or Google Podcast stores, on Spotify or through Stitcher. Be sure to leave a comment and rating as well to let us know how we're doing. Thanks for listening, and as always, go Pack.