

Taylor Pardue ([00:01](#)):

Please listen carefully.

([00:08](#)):

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.

([00:18](#)):

On our Season 5 premiere, we're joined by Eva Feucht, director of the Park Scholarships program, to talk about its invaluable role here at NC State — and a special anniversary it's celebrating this fall.

([00:31](#)):

Thanks so much for joining us today, Eva. To kick things off, just tell listeners a little bit about yourself and what first brought you to NC State.

Eve Feucht ([00:51](#)):

Thank you, Taylor. I'm really excited to do this with you. I came to NC State as a student from outside of North Carolina. I came for open house, and my father was talking to some professors, and by the time I found them, mortified by how much he'd been saying about me, they said, "What do you think?" And I said, "Well, NC State seems great, but it would cost me twice as much as going to school at home." And they said, "Well, your father's been telling us all about you, and there's this new scholarship. You should look into it."

([01:23](#)):

Long story short, I applied for the Park Scholarship, and I was very fortunate to receive it in the third cohort, which came here in 1998. So, that's what brought me to NC State, and then I earned my degrees here in chemistry and science education. Put both of those degrees to work for a very short time each but found my way back here not long after graduation to work in the Park Scholarships program, 2004. So, now I'm starting my 22nd year working here.

Taylor Pardue ([01:52](#)):

Congratulations.

Eve Feucht ([01:53](#)):

Thank you.

Taylor Pardue ([01:55](#)):

What has that career trajectory been like, to have been a Park alumna and then to come back with the program? What have been some of the memorable moments from that?

Eve Feucht ([02:03](#)):

I really am still sort of amazed that this all has played out this way, because it would've been a dream hard for me to believe if you told me as an undergraduate. I worked in 10 different offices at NC State when I was a student, and yet a career in higher education administration isn't always something that a student realizes could be possible. And it wasn't until I would go into the staff offices and say, "You seem like you have really fantastic jobs." And they remembered that and reached back out to me to say, "Remember, you used to tell us that? Would you like the opportunity to join us?"

([02:39](#)):

So, to be able to work with incredible students who have as much ability as they have heart; to be able to be a part of a university that has never been stronger — every year I've been here, you can say it's never been stronger, it's never been a better place to be. It's just a really incredible thing that every day, if I am reflecting on the problems that our world is facing, at the same time, I know that I get to go to work today and do something that makes a long-term investment to help that world. So, that's a pretty extraordinary thing.

Taylor Pardue (03:10):

Excellent. So, now you're the director of this program that, obviously, you have loved for many, many years. What's the current role like? What's it like to be at the head of this program?

Eve Feucht (03:21):

It's interesting every day. No day is like the one before it. I became director in 2008; actually, in October of 2008.

Taylor Pardue (03:28):

OK. Interesting time, yes.

Eve Feucht (03:28):

So, if you remember what was happening then, it was. We immediately began navigating challenges, financially, as an institution, and then we had leadership changes at the university in pretty short order in my first few years as director, but I've been fortunate that I worked with Chancellor Woodson for his entire tenure. So, I actually report directly to the chancellor of NC State, and so, that's given me a terrific opportunity to be able to interact with our university's leaders — now, of course, with Chancellor Howell, who I'm thrilled to be working with because I worked with him in his prior roles here, too.

(04:02):

So, this program touches so much of what the university does because we are involved with the recruitment and the admissions aspect of the institution, where we're attracting thousands of extraordinary students from all over the country and beyond to come here and pursue this opportunity at NC State through the Park Scholarship and then to work with those students while they're here to help them develop their abilities in leadership and service and scholarship and character.

(04:31):

That is just extraordinary, too. My background as an educator, I still get to use that through the courses that we provide for our students. And then the newer part has been the philanthropic side, where, when I became director, that primarily looked like working with the Park Foundation. Our founding donor had been so incredibly generous to NC State, but now building on the incredible foundation that they gave us, I have the opportunity to work with many generous donors, and I have found a lot of joy in that, too.

Taylor Pardue (05:00):

Excellent. So, obviously, "Park Scholarships program," it's in the name: a "scholarship." But, really, what goes into this program? How did it get started here at NC State?

Eve Feucht (05:09):

We are named for a very successful NC State alum: Mr. Roy Park, who graduated in 1931, and he had multiple successful careers, first in business and then in communications, and he remained loyal and connected to NC State throughout his life. After he passed away, his wife knew Roy loved NC State, and

so, she was the one that initiated the scholarship being funded. So, 1996 was the year the first class came in, and they funded us with grants for many, many years in an incredibly generous way. But then in the early 2010s, they built on that with an endowment commitment. So, they provided our philanthropic footing and really launched the program.

Taylor Pardue (05:53):

It's such a recurring theme, I feel like, with NC State. Obviously, you're a perfect example of this, too. Just alumni falling in love with the university, staying connected with it even many years after they've graduated and things like that. So, really appreciative to Roy Park and his family for making this possible.

Eve Feucht (06:08):

It's really a living legacy, truly, when you think about the meaning of a scholarship, the meaning of an endowed scholarship, that there is permanent support to continue to invest in bright young people. To invest in their education, to provide them the support of a world-class university, is truly extraordinary. There's really nothing else like it. I'm a little bit cheesy about this, but I'm getting goosebumps as I talk about it. I mean, Taylor, because I've been at this as long as I have now, and I see our alumni out in the world, we are, as you know, about to celebrate our 30th year. So, our alumni are very young, speaking as one of the oldest, but they're also into their careers substantially at this point and making an impact in so many sectors at such scale.

(06:54):

And so, I have been privileged to be able to see a dream come to life: that dream being, not that it would make the lives of the Park Scholars better, but that, because they had an investment made in them, [they] would go out and make an impact all over NC State for many more students; that they would go out beyond NC State and make an impact all over North Carolina and all over the world, and that is exactly what they're doing. So, to be able to see that arc of one alum who cared and stayed connected and his family giving back, and now many other people joining in that work, it really is wonderful.

Taylor Pardue (07:31):

You used a very good and very interesting word: "investment." We've talked about the "Park" in "Park Scholarships program." We've talked about the scholarships, obviously. Talk about the program. What does this incoming class, this 30th class, what do they have to look forward to? What all is involved in that investment?

Eve Feucht (07:47):

I do use that word often, "investment." We are more than a scholarship. So, while it is incredibly generous that the scholarship provides for the cost of students' education, we don't stop there. We build on that. So, the students have the opportunity to be part of a close cohort of equally capable, but all unique in their own interests, group of scholars who they will get to walk on a journey with through college. So, we provide weekly seminars for them where they're hearing from speakers like our chancellor, like our governor, like our secretary of state and many other folks; people who are founders and nonprofit leaders, and increasingly those speakers are Park Scholars, but it's much more than just that.

(08:33):

We take them on four trips, two retreats, where they really reflect on who they are and who they intend to be and the impact they want to make. And then two learning labs where they meet with leaders, first in this state and then in Washington D.C., to really help them build their own skills in preparing for leading and whatever the things that they will do down the road. They have access to apply for grants to help

them with their enrichment. So, things like going to a professional conference and presenting or launching a new service initiative or studying abroad or things like that. They have faculty mentoring provided to them. Every Park Scholar is taught how to identify a mentor and how to work with a mentor, but then they go out across our campus and find their own mentors, which I do think really speaks to NC State's culture.

(09:16):

Our faculty jump at that opportunity. When I talk to colleagues on other campuses and in other scholarship programs, they'll say, "Well, how much do you pay the mentors?" And I say, "I don't." We have a culture here where our faculty are really enthusiastic about undergraduates and really enthusiastic about supporting them — not just teaching the classes, of course, but beyond that. So, all of our students do that with our guidance and structure provided to encourage them along the way. So, those are a few examples, but we really pour into them so that the ability that we know that they have can be realized.

Taylor Pardue (09:50):

What are some examples of your time as a director, and just in general with the program, some standout things that students have been involved with through Park?

Eve Feucht (09:58):

There are so many, some that your listeners may have heard of. Course, we'll start with the Krispy Kreme Challenge ...

Taylor Pardue (10:04):

Of course.

Eve Feucht (10:05):

... which not everyone knows is associated with the Park Scholarships program but, indeed, was initiated by a handful of Park Scholars who said, "You know what would be fun? If we met at the Belltower, ran to Krispy Kreme, ate a dozen donuts and ran back and timed ourselves. But the following year, the word having gotten out, that went from a handful of students to 50-some, and they needed a little structure around paying for the donuts. So, they started collecting money, and then, lo and behold, they had a little bit of extra, and friends in the Park Scholarships program had been organizing a different effort that was benefiting the North Carolina Children's Hospital. So, they turned to their friends and said, "Why don't we join you in supporting the Children's Hospital?"

(10:43):

Well, fast forward to now, our students and many other NC State students who have joined them have been able to make a more of than \$2 million contribution to the North Carolina Children's Hospital, which is extraordinary philanthropy for anyone, let alone college students to be able to do, which has resulted in the naming of a clinic right here in Raleigh after the NC State Park Scholars. It's just made a tremendous impact for the hospital. So, that's just one example, but when we think about the students in this program making an impact for many others, beginning with their fellow NC State students, yes, they have provided an incredibly fun tradition, but also an opportunity for leadership because many of the other leaders of the Krispy Kreme Challenge are students from all over campus. That's been a really wonderful example of impact at scale right here on campus, but they are recognized far beyond. They've been selected for many nationally and internationally prestigious fellowships, and that certainly is a recognition of the caliber of the education that they're getting here at NC State, but also the preparation that they are having as leaders.

(11:52):

So, when we think things like the Fulbright and the Goldwater [scholarships], we've also had recent success with the Knight-Hennessy, which is a relatively new, really prestigious scholarship at Stanford, and we've had four of those just in the last several years. And likewise, we've had four recipients of the Churchill Scholarship, which is an extraordinary selective, STEM-specific program for students to study at Cambridge. NC State's had four of those so far. All four of them were in the Park Scholarships program. So, certainly the recognition is there nationally and globally for the caliber of student that we have here at NC State.

(12:28):

They're also leading in ways, some of the traditional ways you might think about. Currently, right now, NC State student body president and vice president and treasurer are all Park Scholars who are elected by their peers to lead our campus. That's the sixth time that one of the Park Scholars has served as our student body president. Again, program's only been around 30 years, so that's a tremendous recognition. The Matthews Medal, which the Alumni Association awards for top impact that students make on our campus, has gone to Park Scholars many times, including two just this past spring. So, we're really, really excited about that.

(13:04):

And then their leadership certainly extends far beyond campus. We've had, the first one has been elected to a state-level house of representatives up in Massachusetts several years ago, and they are certainly entrepreneurs, founders, CEOs. We have one who's a department head at Purdue now, leading in academic settings and many more. I mean, really, you name it, and I probably have a story about it for you.

Taylor Pardue (13:26):

It goes back to what you were saying about a small group, really pouring into these students the resources of this very research-heavy university, all that it has to provide, and watching as they go out and that compounding impact on the world that they provide. It's just amazing.

Eve Feucht (13:43):

Absolutely. And as someone who's been associated with NC State myself for about a quarter-century, when I think about where we were when I got here — not in quality, because anybody who's been around NC State will tell you we've always been an extraordinary place — but in everyone else knowing it, the way that our reputation has grown has been extraordinary. The way that the demand, therefore, for undergraduate spots has grown is certainly another indicator that the word is out now. It's not a secret any longer, but NC State is an extraordinary place to be, not just in terms of the caliber of the education, but also the culture, which I get more and more questions about these days. When we are recruiting exceptional students, they ask a lot of questions of us about NC State, about the Park Scholarships program. I'm often asked, "How do students treat each other?" And I wasn't being asked that as often when I first got here as I am now. I'm happy that that is increasingly on the radar of high school students. That matters. But it's an easy answer at NC State.

Taylor Pardue (14:46):

It's a very easy answer.

Eve Feucht (14:46):

Isn't it, Taylor?

Taylor Pardue (14:47):

Yes.

Eve Feucht ([14:48](#)):

It's an easy answer, and it's not just among the students, but it's in our culture across the board, right? Our faculty, our staff, our alumni. This is a place that is as kind and caring as it is exceptional. So, I feel that the fact that this program has been here 30 years and, over that time, NC State's reputation, I mean, our rankings, all of those things have grown dramatically in that same time. I really do believe we've had a role to play in that, and I'm very proud of that.

Taylor Pardue ([15:18](#)):

I've said it — it's especially applicable with Park, but I've said it in previous episodes: “Wolfpack,” being “Pack members,” it all sounds great. It's very catchy. It's great for if we were just looking for a mascot, but we really do embody it here, and I think Park is a great example of that, where alumni stay involved and really give back to the program and to the university and just represent us so well out in the wider world.

Eve Feucht ([15:40](#)):

Yeah, they really do. We have about 1,200 alumni now. So, we bring in these days, we're bringing in about 40 in each class, and so, there's a group of alumni now. We've touched every corner of campus, every college. They study so many different things here, but they really are staying connected. They come back, they give back, they serve in our selection committee, they are donors. That's really been another piece that has changed a lot in the early days. There were no alumni when I got here. There were no alumni. There weren't even any seniors when I first got here. And now, that's become just such a critical part of the program. It's been wonderful to see.

Taylor Pardue ([16:16](#)):

So, this 30th class, obviously, has so much to look forward to as they come in, but the Park program has also recently made an addition, a partnership, however you would like to say that, that is going to also bring in a new era for the program as well, if you'd like to speak to that.

Eve Feucht ([16:31](#)):

Yes, I definitely would. It's really, really exciting, something that we've been working toward for quite a long time. So, I mentioned that our philanthropic history began with the Park Foundation, who so generously got us up and running, gave us proof of concept. So, they allowed us to demonstrate that this works now, and their hopes were, and those hopes are coming to life, that others would join them in that work. And that's exactly what is happening now. So, we now have more than 30 endowments in addition to the one that they created. Many other donors have stepped up to do that, to provide us with predictable, steady income for the long term. Some of those endowments fund a scholarship. So, we now are at the point where some of our donors are connected to specific scholars. Well, with this new partnership, it's with an organization called the Stamp Scholars Program, and they are a nationally prestigious organization that funds scholars on many campuses. We're their 37th campus partner, and we are now, in partnership with them, going to be able to have students in this program who are both Park Scholars and Stamp Scholars. What that means is that half of their costs are being supported by a Stamp Scholars program.

([17:47](#)):

What that also means, this is intended by Stamps to be a challenge, an opportunity for other donors to join them. They will match 100% of all new gifts that we receive, which is just incredible. It's incredible to think about what that means and what it can mean in the future. So, it doesn't matter the size of the gift.

Every gift that we use directly toward a student's cost of attendance is eligible for this match. So, at whatever level a donor is able to give, their gift literally can be doubled, and that includes on the endowment side, where they also have agreed to match the new income from new endowment gifts. And that's an open-ended commitment. So, we're really, really thrilled and grateful about that. So, this class, the 30th class coming in this fall is our first to have Stamp Scholars in it. There are 10 Stamp Scholars in this class.

Taylor Pardue ([18:48](#)):

OK. It's great to have support even if it was just for the students we already have, but it's allowing you to do even more to bring in even more. So, just really appreciative of that new partnership.

Eve Feucht ([18:57](#)):

It's a wonderful opportunity.

Taylor Pardue ([18:59](#)):

You mentioned something I wanted to touch on. You said gifts of different sizes. I know a lot of times people hear, especially with a named program or they hear the word "endowment" or they hear about partnerships like this, and to their ear it sounds like, "Oh, that's so-and-so's, that's Park's scholarship." Or, "Now, they've got the Stamps partnership." Talk a little bit about how other donors can get involved with these gifts of various sizes and really help across the board with programmatic support and just, really, lifting the program up in many different ways.

Eve Feucht ([19:34](#)):

Right. Taylor, this year on Day of Giving, 100% of the freshmen Park Scholars made a gift ...

Taylor Pardue ([19:43](#)):

Freshmen, too.

Eve Feucht ([19:43](#)):

... to Park Scholarships. The freshmen, I don't know the dollar amount collectively given by the class of '28, and that's not the point, anyway.

Taylor Pardue ([19:52](#)):

That's not the point. That's the spirit of it.

Eve Feucht ([19:54](#)):

Right? 100% of the freshman class gave back, invested in those to come after them. So, that matters. It matters for a lot of reasons, but I think it certainly should matter to someone who's thinking about making a large gift, "Is there confidence from the folks closest to the program to give?" Not, "How much did those freshmen give?" But they gave, they're participating. We had a record-breaking day on Day of Giving really. So, 28% of all of our alumni gave back, which is a fantastic number that I look forward to beating next year because our alumni interest is really growing. Our alumni are enthusiastic, and so, their participation makes a difference that those closest to us give. But we also have donors who are not quite as close. Alumni are obviously the most directly connected to the program, but parents give to the program at all levels. We have faculty and staff who contribute to what we're doing. We have many NC State alumni who do not have a direct connection to Park Scholarships but believe in what we're doing,

either because they see it as a way to strengthen the university or because they see it as a way to help with the problems that our world is facing.

(21:18):

Because I talk to our donors, I ask them, “What’s important to you? Why do you do this?” And that’s exactly what they tell me. They’re excited to help us attract extraordinary talent, but I was just looking today at the list. We always look at the recruiting results for each class. We ask the students, “Where else were you admitted? What were you thinking about and how did you pick us?” So, I was looking at that list. Not a surprise, because every year there are schools like this, but there’s MIT and there’s Yale and many other, at least seven of our peer, identified peer institutions that our students were admitted to, of course, because they’re exceptional. But they came here, they will be here; North Carolinians who will stay here, who we’ve retained here and out-of-state students that we’ve attracted here, and we asked them, “Why?” And for about three out of four of them, it’s the Park Scholarship. That was the number one factor in their decision. Either the financial support, the investment that I talked about, about the programming, the community, or some combination of those things.

(22:14):

So, back to the donors: For some of them, that’s a really exciting thing to be able to be a part of, is recruiting exceptional talent here, because we love NC State, we want to see NC State be as strong as it can be. But then again, as I said, for others, that looks like, if I wake up today and I’m a little worried about what’s going on in the world and I’m thinking, “What can I do?” Something that one can do is invest in people who have both the ability and the willingness to dedicate their lives to doing something about those kinds of problems, those problems at scale. And whether that gift is small, medium or large, it matters. It does make a difference, and I think that is a very motivating factor for a lot of our donors, including those who’ve left us in their estate, too, to know that, “I can’t take it with me, but I can know that it can help leave the world in a better place when I’m not here anymore in it.” So, I’m really grateful we’re able to offer people that chance to do something about helping our world.

Taylor Pardue (23:17):

Yeah, that is just so powerful. Thank you for sharing that, Eva, and just thank you for coming out today. Listeners, stay tuned. We’re going to do a follow-up episode to this one about becoming a Park Scholar and what that process looks like. But Eva, just thank you so much for coming out today. And as a closing thought, I know you have a very important conference coming up for Park, if you’d like to plug that before we go.

Eve Feucht (23:37):

I would. Thank you, Taylor. I would love to encourage all of our alumni and Selection Committee members and parents and any other friends of the program to join us in October for our biannual conference, Spark, where we will come together for a day and a half to celebrate scholarship, leadership, service, character. So, it’s not too late to register. Would love to see everyone there. But, Taylor, thank you for helping us celebrate our 30th anniversary of Park Scholarships. This has been really fun. I appreciate it.

Taylor Pardue (24:07):

You’re very welcome, and we will include information for Spark in the show notes as well. So, listeners, be sure to check that out.

Eve Feucht (24:12):

Fantastic.

Taylor Pardue ([24:20](#)):

To learn more about the Park Scholarships program, please visit park.ncsu.edu. If you'd like to hear even more stories of Wolfpack success, please subscribe to the NC State Philanthropy Podcast today via Apple Podcasts, Spotify, Stitcher or Podbean. Please leave a comment and rating as well to let us know how we're doing. Thanks for listening, and as always, go Pack.