

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

Please listen carefully.

Taylor Pardue ([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 this episode, we're joined by Chuck Flink, director of the Peter A. Pappas Real Estate Development Program, to talk about his time as a student, faculty member and donor at NC State.

([00:31](#)):

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

Chuck Flink ([00:51](#)):

Well, I think I very much had an unconventional path to NC State because I'm not a North Carolinian. And I'm in the Midwest, I've lived there all my life, and I was looking to get out of the Midwest.

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

Oh, wow.

Chuck Flink ([01:02](#)):

And so, I started looking at Eastern cities, Eastern campuses. I wanted a landscape architecture program. I was in pre-architecture at a Division II school. I first applied to Florida; it was 30,000 kids. I said, "I can't do it. I'm in a Division II school." And NC State at the time — this is 1979, 1978 — it was 19,000 students. And I said, "You know what? I think I could do that."

([01:26](#)):

And I'm up at Northwest Missouri State. I'm a long ways away from my parents, and I tell my mom I've applied to NC State and I have a provisional letter of acceptance requiring that I go there for an interview — which stunned me. I had no idea, and I'll get more into that in just a minute. But she says, "Oh, you have a cousin who went to school somewhere out there." And I said, "Oh, really?" "Yeah, John Gregg," which is the Gregg Museum. It's my mother's extended family, my family.

([01:51](#)):

So, anyway, it's in March of 1979, and I've got spring break coming up. I'm at this Division II school, and I book a flight. I'm 19 years old, can't rent a car, and I fly out here, and they said that this is a letter from the College of Design. I was going to have to reenter as a freshman. I was a sophomore in Division II, had accumulated a lot of credits, all that kind of stuff. And I just didn't understand what I was getting myself into, and thank God I did not. Because, at the time, the college had a cap of 100 students.

([02:19](#)):

And so, I fly out, and I tell you, Taylor, the minute I hit the ground and the jet door opened and I walked out, my first thought was, "I think I've landed in heaven." I mean, it's March, there's snow on the ground, the blue skies, pine trees. This is a kid from the Midwest. Everything's gray for months.

Taylor Pardue ([02:36](#)):

Sure.

Chuck Flink ([02:36](#)):

And then I stayed overnight at what was the Planters. I think it was The Planters Inn, which is now North Hall. They converted it from the hotel to an NC State facility. The whole thing was just sort of magical. And so, I didn't really know anything about NC State. I have to be honest. I mean, I knew about David Thompson and Monte Towe, but beyond that, I just didn't know anything. So, it was really great coming out here and being part of the College of Design and graduating.

([03:01](#)):

And I knew right away that the value of my education was amazing. I knew it while it was happening. And I remember going up to the dean, **Claude McKinney**, and my professors and my department chair and saying, "Thank you. I graduated, and this was incredible." And I think that that played such a role in my experience as becoming part of Wolfpack Nation and wanting to be involved. So, I like to tell people today, "Look, I've been involved with this university for, gosh, 46, going on 47 years in some way, shape or form. I've always had something going on and super-proud of that association and always wanted to give back, always wanted to be a part of giving back." So, that's been a big part of motivation there.

Taylor Pardue ([03:41](#)):

Obviously, we're thrilled to have students, whether they're natives of Raleigh, natives of North Carolina. All the more coming from out of state, that's a huge vote of confidence in us, but to start your education over again, I mean, that really shows the value that you placed on this education that we provided.

Chuck Flink ([03:58](#)):

We have the freshman orientation at the College of Design in what's called the Pit. There ...

Taylor Pardue ([04:02](#)):

OK.

Chuck Flink ([04:02](#)):

Those who know the College of Design, and the dean is there, and there's a hundred of us, and he says, "All of those from out of state, come to my office afterwards." Well, there were three of us, and Dean McKinney looks at us, he goes, "You're the fortunate three that we let in from out of state. Don't mess up."

([04:18](#)):

And that was when it first hit me, how serious all this was, and it all sort of came crashing down. But I just love everything about NC State. I love Wolfpack Nation. I love the culture. My wife, who's a Duke graduate, she's found a great home here as well. We love the people. The students are amazing. Just everything about the university is fantastic, and it's become a big part of our lives.

Taylor Pardue ([04:39](#)):

Well, go on. I mean, you've not just graduated once here, but again, vote of confidence. You have two degrees from NC State.

Chuck Flink ([04:44](#)):

I do really do value the Wolfpack Nation. I do. I like to kid around and say I'm a very slow learner, which is true. '82 undergraduate, master's in '17. So, I think that's about 35 years. I was recruited by department head **Gene Bressler** — great, great friend, awesome, awesome human being — to come back and teach. And I was intimidated to do that. I had an undergraduate degree. I had probably a 30-year professional career at the time, and — something like that, 25, 30 years. And he said, "Our students would value hearing from you."

[\(05:18\)](#):

And so, I started teaching, and he comes to me, he says, "I really think you should get a master's degree." And I'm in my 50s, and I'm thinking, "Gene, I don't need a master's degree at this time in my life." I mean, I just couldn't understand the value of it from my perspective. But the rules had changed, and there was a new 30-credit-hour master's for professionals who wanted to come back and pursue that. And he knew I was working on a book that chronicled my professional career, and he put two and two together and said, "Look, you could come back, get a master's degree, finish your book and be of great value to the university. We could knock a whole bunch of pins down at once if you're just agreeable to it."

[\(05:54\)](#):

So, here I go. I go back to school, and I get my master's degree, and I published a book, which was a shock. It's turned out to be really good on many, many levels. And then working with Gene, he wanted me to continue on and elevate my role in the academy to be a professor of the practice. So, he really, he worked with the faculty, the Department of Landscape Architecture and Environmental Planning, and here I become a professor of practice.

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

And my mother, who was alive at the time, is laughing so hard because there are some very significant people in her side of the family that were educators, including one who started the junior college system in Florida. And she's like, "I can't believe my son" and her other son "are both at the university." Tickled her to no end that we would do that. I feel like I'm a tourist on this journey, stumbling along and just doing things, but I really thank Gene Bressler for helping me on that pathway.

Taylor Pardue [\(06:52\)](#):

Sounds great. Now, I've obviously jumped us forward in time, if listeners are paying attention. Step back a bit. Talk about your career. It's amazing in its own right.

Chuck Flink [\(07:01\)](#):

I'm very blessed. I became very interested right after school. Well, first of all, I graduated into the middle of a recession, which a lot of people don't remember the '82 recession and how bad it was. Double-digit interest rates, double-digit everything, inflation. I mean, it was a really tough time, and there were no jobs. I got one job offer out of college from a great firm, good friends with them to this day, **LandDesign** in Charlotte. It was **Brad [Davis] and Larry [Best]**, who were just starting out at the time, and they said, "We'll pay you \$16,000 if you come down here and work your butt off." And I sort of just did the math in my head and figured, well, I think I could probably do that on my own.

[\(07:35\)](#):

So, I kind of threw a shingle out in the middle of a recession, and I was a utility infielder. I would do anything for anybody. Any job that nobody wanted to do, I would do it. And it was on-the-job training. But then I was a volunteer, too, and somebody came to me and said, "There's the perfect job for you downtown Raleigh: the Raleigh Greenway Planner. You should go and apply." And I really did not know

much about greenways at the time, but I applied for it, and I got the job, and that was the start of a career that spans to this day. And I feel so lucky to have been able to marry a passion for the outdoors and for conservation of the earth's natural resources with a career in that, and then helping to build trails and building access.

[\(08:16\)](#):

And so, that career — which, by the way, started off pretty rough. I mean, for the first five or six years when I ... So, I started in '86. I met my wife in '91, and I really like to share this because it's true. And Marjorie's always quick to say, "I knew this guy before he had a penny." I didn't even have two wooden nickels to rub together. So, I was not only broke, but I also was deeply in debt trying to start a company, and she took me in anyway. So, I mean, I owe a lot to Marjorie. She was a big believer in me before anybody else was a believer in me.

[\(08:45\)](#):

So, we started off, and then all of a sudden all that work and all those seeds that were planted hit at the right time. And there was this real tidal wave of interest in greenways in the United States and around the world. And here I was, I had a company called **Greenways Incorporated** that I formed in 1986 and left the city of Raleigh, and it's just been incredible in that regard. So, I feel very fortunate with my career, but I also know I worked extremely hard. I put a lot of time into making it a worthwhile career as well.

Taylor Pardue [\(09:18\)](#):

Talk a little bit about, what does that journey been like? What all does your job involve? And we always talk about how NC State alumni affect our state, nation and world. Your work, especially, the more I've read about it in preparation for this interview, it's amazing all the places that you've been able to visit, the places that you've had an impact on.

Chuck Flink [\(09:39\)](#):

It's incredible because I think people would recall there was an environmental movement in the '60s. There was a president in Nixon who helped author and get enacted a lot of environmental legislation. There was a real meeting of the minds. Through the '70s and the early '80s, there was a bit of departure from some of that stuff, but this national interest in greenways, I like to say, has been a conversation that's been going on in this country for a long, long time. And actually, in the Raleigh area, it's amazing because 1969, **Lewis Clarke** really pioneers the idea of a capital city greenway system. He calls it the "green fingers."

[\(10:15\)](#):

Bill Flournoy, a master's degree student at NC State in the College of Design, looking for his thesis project, writes what I say to this day is the most definitive guide on how to create a community greenway system. It's [a] brilliant piece of work. And then I come along, and the interesting thing is, we're all associated with the College of Design, but none of us ever had a conversation about our love for greenways. So, it's really fascinating in that regard. But I connected with this, and then there's this national interest in it. The *National Geographic* writes an article about it. It becomes one of the most-read *National Geographic* articles of all time; huge amounts of interest from around the world. It just strikes a note that people felt like we ought to have a broad conservation initiative. We ought to be connected to the lands and waters in our neighborhoods and in our communities that we love. We ought to be able to connect that across the community to provide [a] variety of different benefits.

[\(11:10\)](#):

And I feel like my passion and my wanting to work hard was well-placed in this emerging industry. I remember when it started out, I mean, I kind of knew everything that was going on, and now it's a multi-billion dollar industry all over the world. And so, no way you can track it, but it's been fun to be involved. I have written three books on the subject. *Greenway* is a guide to planning and design development. It came out in '93, and then *Trails for the 21st Century* in 2001, and then *The Greenway Imperative*, which was my master's thesis, came out in March of 2020. So, along the way, I've tried to be part of a group of storytellers, people that chronicled the rise of the American greenway movement and how it went all around the world, as well as sharing technical information on how people might create greenways in their communities.

Taylor Pardue ([11:59](#)):

I didn't realize that was your master's thesis published. All the more taking what you learned here and spreading it to the masses.

Chuck Flink ([12:05](#)):

Absolutely. Absolutely. Yep. Crazy.

Taylor Pardue ([12:08](#)):

You've mentioned it earlier. Talk a little bit about how you came back and got involved as a faculty member — not to give it away to, the surprise to the listeners — but as a faculty member and then as a donor as well.

Chuck Flink ([12:18](#)):

Sure.

Taylor Pardue ([12:18](#)):

It's one thing to be proud of where you came from, but to want to get involved like that is just extraordinary.

Chuck Flink ([12:26](#)):

So, again, credit to Gene Bressler. He really pursued me. And when you're a private practice and you've got tons of clients and you're running a company and there's so much on your mind. And when somebody approaches you, said, "Come back to the university," I'm thinking, "I barely have time for myself," which was my response. "I don't really have time to do this." But Gene didn't give up, and there were some changes for me. I decided that the time was right. I turned 50. I'd run the company as long as I possibly could. It was almost ready to run me. And so, we found a buyer. We found a way to merge my company with another company, a national company called **Alta**. So, we became sort of Alta/Greenways, and that freed up some time for me. I knew that it was time to step away from the day-to-day operation.

([13:13](#)):

I wound up helping to bring in for that group two of the largest contracts, design development contracts that we had ever seen: one with the **Walton Family Foundation** in Northwest Arkansas, and the other with the **Hyde Family Foundation** in Memphis. And so, I spent almost 10 years running two projects for them. So, it freed up some time for me because I wasn't really running the company anymore. And I walked with Gene into the classroom. So, we had to decide what we were going to teach, and that was

the first question he said. “Well, what do you want to talk about?” “Gene, you’re the one who asked me to come in here. I don’t know.”

[\(13:44\)](#):

But we had this conversation, and we decided that we wanted to teach to the future. We had a long conversation. I said, “When I was in school, nobody really talked much about the future.” And so, we came up with a course title, “The Landscape Imperative,” in which we began to frame issues about the future. And this is 12, 15 years ago. And I began to really look at evidence that pointed to the future. And I wanted to select a target year, and 2050 became the target year, because it was one that was being thought about and documented. And at that time, it was 35-plus years out. And so, we began to frame a whole course around that, and we got a lot of students that became very interested.

[\(14:26\)](#):

And in a way, it also became a bit of a recruiting class for the Department of Landscape Architecture, because we had kids from other colleges that enrolled. Students from UNC came over. So, it was an interesting class. It was sort of a 101 on landscape architecture, but it had this sort of future-forecasting. So, that’s how I got involved in the faculty side of it. And then I’m going to get back to this because I want to talk about the donor side of it for just a moment. Marjorie and I have always been philanthropic, and people might remember that in 2009, the university was in a tough pickle. We lost a lot of folks, and we had an interim chancellor, and I was nominated to the Board of Visitors. Well, I didn’t know what the Board of Visitors was. I thought it was a welcome group or something like this; come and welcome people to the university.

[\(15:11\)](#):

No, no. OK. I found out. So, [\[Dr. James “Jim” H.\]](#) Woodward appoints me. [Dean Marvin Malecha](#) said, “Would you represent the College of Design?” So, I did. And then Randy Woodson’s brought in, and I remember the first time I saw Randy Woodson live and in person, and it was shortly after he was officially hired, and I was just, wow, I couldn’t believe it. I couldn’t believe how fortunate our university was. And so, I was on the Board of Visitors, and Chancellor Woodson, after a couple years of his leadership, he called me and said, “Would you be the chair of the Board of Visitors?” Which I was absolutely floored. So, I accepted his offer, and that sort of got me into that. And that’s about the time that we launched the Think and Do the Extraordinary Campaign. And Marjorie and I, we had such a great relationship with the College of Design.

[\(15:58\)](#):

And I was also simultaneously appointed along with [Steve Schuster](#), who unfortunately is no longer with us, to be the co-chairs of the capital campaign for the College of Design. And Steve and I had a conversation, and Steve said to me, “Chuck, nobody’s going to do anything unless the two of us plant a flag.” He says, “I’ll plant a flag for architecture if you’ll plant a flag for landscape architecture.” And so, we both did very substantial bequest gifts on both sides of that ledger. And we both had talked to our wives, talked everybody into this “the gift is there after you die” kind of stuff, but we planted some pretty significant flags. And for me, the power of philanthropy was something that I experienced as a student. I would’ve never gotten through college if Dean McKinney wasn’t so good and constantly looking for \$500 — “Got \$500? I got a kid who could use \$500.” And that was me.

[\(16:52\)](#):

I was putting myself through school. I didn’t have any money, and so, I really relied on philanthropy. So, full circle when it’s coming back, and I’m thinking about, “Wow, Marjorie, here’s a chance for us to make a difference in the lives of students going forward.” So, we did a bequest gift, and then we, on top of that, we did a scholarship, a fully funded scholarship that would roll out funds and started contributing.

And I think it's always about, for me, it's like paying forward in a sense. I've experienced something good. People were there to help me. I'm in a position to help others. Why not do that? So, I think that's a big part of that motivation. So, those things are kind of happen a bit simultaneously. I'm back here doing some teaching, and I'm also involved in philanthropy.

Taylor Pardue ([17:36](#)):

I always like to highlight the importance of volunteering. So many times, people think "giving" means dollars, and it does to a point.

Chuck Flink ([17:43](#)):

To a point.

Taylor Pardue ([17:45](#)):

You have the best of both worlds in your situation because you're getting face time with students. I mean, you're feeling the life of campus around here and helping instruct them and then also preparing for the future as well. So, I think that's powerful.

Chuck Flink ([18:00](#)):

Right. And so, this work then culminates around, let's see, Mark Hoversten, current dean, College of Design. Someone who I've known for many, many years when I was working in Las Vegas on open space trail and greenway strategies in Las Vegas for about four or five years. Mark was starting a brand-new architecture landscape architecture program at UNLV.

Taylor Pardue ([18:22](#)):

OK.

Chuck Flink ([18:22](#)):

So, that's where I first met Mark. Then many, many years later, Steve Schuster and I are on the selection committee, or the search committee, if you will, for a new dean for the College of Design, and Mark is a finalist. And so, we reconnected, and 2017, 2018, a group of people came to the chancellor and said, "We need to start real estate development at NC State. You guys have all the right practices." So, I'm already kind of a faculty member, I'm already involved in philanthropy leading into this, and Mark calls me and says, "I know that you're getting ready for another change in life, and would you come and be a consultant to us on this?" And so, I did, and then I wound up, Mark winds up appointing me in March of 2020 as the director of this program. And, of course, there is no program; there's just an idea.

([19:08](#)):

So, we've been marching along in that regard. But I think all of that lead-up, and like you said, it's more than just stroking a check or doing a bequest gift or whatever. It's really a full package. It's really about connecting with your university and all the elements of it and the passion that people have for the university and what it's capable of doing for society. And I think the Pappas Real Estate Program, which is what it's called, does that in a very big way. I mean, it's a really big idea. It's looking to the future of North Carolina, and it's harnessing all the power and the passion of the university, and trying to do that in a way that will affect North Carolina in a really positive way going forward.

Taylor Pardue ([19:49](#)):

Absolutely.

Chuck Flink ([19:50](#)):

A lot of challenges out there. So, I think that when Marjorie and I, I mean, she's been on Wolfpack Women in Philanthropy since it started. I've been part of several different aspects of the university — president of [the] Alumni Association, Board of Visitors, College of Design. Just various things. I think when you're giving your time, to me, it's of equal value to your ability to give treasure because your time is meaningful to students, it's meaning to faculty, it's meaningful to other alumni. And I like to think of Wolfpack Nation in this sense: I mean, it's really like a community, and there's so many people that are giving back in ways that make sense for them in their lives. And I think that's what's really, for me, what's really positive about being involved with this university and with this particular community.

Taylor Pardue ([20:36](#)):

Well, I want to talk about, you mentioned a program, the Pappas program.

Chuck Flink ([20:39](#)):

Yeah.

Taylor Pardue ([20:39](#)):

This is one that you are, it's an incredible gift to the university, and then you are integral to its operation as well. Talk about this real estate program and what all it means for NC State moving forward.

Chuck Flink ([20:52](#)):

And again, I think it's easy to look at it now and go, "Wow." And all this, it has a very organic pathway. Mark Hoversten, heavily involved at the start of this. I'm in there. We're just trying to figure out, OK, we have this level of interest in NC State doing real estate development education. It's not something the university's ever done. There's no legacy of this, right? So, I'm working with the provost office now, and [Senior Vice Provost for Academic Strategy and Innovation] Helen Chen likes to say, "This is a bootstrap program," and it's true. I mean, we started with almost no resources. They kidded me, "You're a part-time volunteer, part-time employee." It's kind of a weird thing to straddle, but I think we all believed that there was something there.

([21:31](#)):

And Chancellor Woodson, I cannot say enough about him. Provost Arden, I mean, there's a whole bunch of people. It's a long list of people that are involved in this. I happen to be the point person, the face of it because Mark says, "Point to you as a director." So, it's been an incredible journey, and we really didn't have a lot to sell. I mean, we started one class, we're getting a little bit of enrollment, we have 20 kids being enrolled, and the chancellor said to me, "Come in and be an entrepreneur, Chuck. That's what you are. Come in and be an entrepreneur, and do your best to just jumpstart this. You're kind of swimming against the tide because universities are not naturally entrepreneurial. So, it's not going to be easy to do," but there was a lot of people, so much support on this campus for this and so many people embracing the idea.

([22:16](#)):

So, I start calling some people I know in the industry — John Kane, Peter Pappas. I mean, I call people just kind of out cold and say, "Could you come in?" People that aren't part of our program — Paul Zarian at Hines, etc. And when I called Peter and he came up here, I did not realize that there was some

interest from the philanthropic side. Could we connect with Peter in some way? Peter has had a very successful career, and I brought him in one of my classes, and it just connected with him right away. He understood exactly what we were trying to do and he was so excited.

[\(22:46\)](#):

It's Monday night. The class is supposed to run from 6:00 to 8:45. It's now 9:00. He's still sitting there with the students, and I said, "Peter, we've got to let these students go home. They have had the long day, and they're tired." And he goes, "Only if you'll go across the street and sit with me and have a glass of wine." And I said, "Absolutely." So, the bar is closed at the Aloft Hotel. We had to reopen the bar. And so, we're sitting there having a glass of wine talking about it, and he was just really genuinely excited. And he said, "I am really connecting with you on the vision that you have for this program, and I'd like to figure out how to be a part of it." And that was the start of a conversation that eventually about 16, 18 months later, his family, his wife, Claire, all of his family, Thomas, his daughters, the Pappas Family Foundation, gave a gift to the university of \$10 million.

[\(23:36\)](#):

I think that's, to me, the ultimate in the power of philanthropy. How do you take a concept and an idea, connect it with people who have the wherewithal, the means to turn that into a program that is then going to benefit the state of North Carolina? I just thank Peter and his wife so much for what they've done, all the belief they've had in something that was really in its infancy. But since their gift was confirmed in April of '24, we've raised more money on top of it. Again, everybody who's come in and offered gifts and bequests and all kinds of things has had that same connection to our vision. So, vision is very powerful.

[\(24:13\)](#):

I have a very good friend, **Sig Hutchinson**, and people might know about on the podcast who's here in the Raleigh area. And Sig and I always say that raising funds for something isn't about making the ask; it's about painting a powerful vision. If you can paint a powerful vision and get people excited in this country, you can raise money. And I do think that with our capital campaign, the Think and Do the Extraordinary Campaign to things like the Peter Pappas program, I think that's what we've done at this university. We've painted progressive, exciting visions for what could be accomplished, and then people go, "Gosh, how do I get to be a part of that?"

[\(24:53\)](#):

Sometimes it's certainly making contributions financially, but other times it's just ... And that's what we're doing in the Pappas program. We want to connect you in our classroom with our students. We want to invite you to our engagement, the sessions that we're doing. Any way that you want to get involved, our doors open in that regard. So, we've had a lot of the industry across North Carolina come in and support what we're doing.

Taylor Pardue [\(25:14\)](#):

I think you made the perfect point when you said about Mr. Pappas coming and then about you being in the classroom as well. You come in maybe as a volunteer, you just really see the vision and then maybe the giving will come from that. But it really is seeing that vision. And we have so much here to look forward to in the future with NC State. We really do paint a beautiful image.

Chuck Flink [\(25:36\)](#):

Image, right. And I just want to say for the record to be ... I had no idea Peter Pappas would ever do that. And it was never my goal inviting him up here for the first time to make any ask of him. I just knew

him from the industry, and I knew that he was doing some of the most incredible, progressive development work that I had seen in North Carolina. He was taking risks. He was breaking the mold on how we grow, how we build, which is the question for North Carolina.

Taylor Pardue ([26:05](#)):

Sure.

Chuck Flink ([26:05](#)):

How do we do this in a way that we achieve multiple goals for our communities? And I thought Peter was pushing the boundaries on this, and I always admired him, and I wanted him in our classroom for that reason. I wanted him to come and explain to our students how he goes about it, how he thinks about development. That was my motivation, and then I learned, gosh, he's so motivated. He and his family foundation want to be involved and want to be a leader in how we carry out that program.

([26:32](#)):

So, I think that's really great, and I really enjoyed working with Peter a lot. He's a very driven person, and he's got a lot of energy for what he's doing, which is great. That's what you need. But I agree with you: When you can paint these pictures, whether it's supporting the university as a whole, supporting a college or a program, that's the power of philanthropy, is to connect people with their passion and connect them in a way that they drive some meaning and some benefit from their involvement.

Taylor Pardue ([26:58](#)):

Absolutely. Yeah. He sounds like the perfect partner for NC State with that dynamic, that future-looking mindset and everything. So, very appreciative that he would be involved with us.

Chuck Flink ([27:08](#)):

Yeah, I couldn't agree more.

Taylor Pardue ([27:10](#)):

So, talking about the future, we are, as of this recording date, still a few weeks out, but the next big thing on NC State's calendar is Day of Giving, this annual celebration of philanthropy that we enjoy every March. Talk a little bit about how donors can get involved with the Pappas program, and with real estate and the College of Design for that, but really, just what the future holds and how listeners can become involved.

Chuck Flink ([27:34](#)):

Yeah. So, a lot of the funds that we've raised so far are restricted funds. They're going to go towards endowment, so we don't really have access to those in the large amount that I've talked about. So, for me, Day of Giving is an excellent opportunity for us to raise funds that we do have access to that helps us in our educational mission and endeavor. Our endowment, I set up the goal of raising \$30 million so that we could operate the program with the distribution, the 3.5% to 4% distribution that comes off of it. And that would allow us to hire faculty and teach our students and do all of our educational mission.

([28:09](#)):

But we're a long ways from that. So, what Day of Giving has meant to me in the past is, many of the small gifts, I mean from \$25 to \$500 to \$1,000, that we're able to put into our funds that allow us to fund our operations, help our students through the academic year, that kind of stuff. So, that's the

power for me of Day of Giving. And it's a way for folks to get involved in something like the Pappas program and make a contribution that fits their pocketbook, but to know that their impact is there. It has a direct relational impact to the program and the way we operate it.

[\(28:44\)](#):

There's sort of three legs to the stool of the Pappas program. We have an academic program where we've enrolled now more than a hundred students in the spring semester of '26. We're teaching four courses in the spring, and we'll teach another four courses in the fall. We've offered our first certificate in real estate development with a focus on design. We're getting ready to launch our second one. But the other two legs are, we have a really robust engagement program where we're doing lots of outreach across the state of North Carolina, and then we have our applied research. So, we're working with lots of different organizations, public and private sector, to put our students and faculty in a very active role where we can make an impact on the events of today through our sponsored research.

[\(29:24\)](#):

So, a lot of design ideation work; a lot of looking at particular problems associated with real estate development, whether it be affordable housing or transportation issues or whatever, and do work presently that might shape the future of those. So, when people participate with us on Day of Giving, they're helping to fund all of that work. And it's really the aggregated dollars, to be honest. We're a lean and mean fighting machine. We operate on a pretty small budget, but I think that our impact is very outsized for what our budget is. So, that's what I'm trying to use Day of Giving for, is to provide access to folks who might believe in what we're doing, want to help us shape the future of growth and development in North Carolina, and they can make a contribution on Day of Giving.

Taylor Pardue [\(30:06\)](#):

Sounds great. Yeah, this is one of those programs that I just love to highlight because we always pride ourself on being not just a thinking school, but a Think and Do school.

Chuck Flink [\(30:15\)](#):

Right.

Taylor Pardue [\(30:15\)](#):

And I feel like your program —

Chuck Flink [\(30:18\)](#):

Very much.

Taylor Pardue [\(30:19\)](#):

And not just for the future, too. Not just for 2050, but like you said, boots on the ground right now, really impacting how North Carolina and beyond shape these green spaces, how humans interact with our environment. Just a wonderful outreach program through academics, but, it's like you said, through research and through Extension as well.

Chuck Flink [\(30:37\)](#):

Yeah. And I think the Think and Do mantra is very much on display here. I believe that, in a rather short order, the Pappas program has become recognized as a bit of a thought leader. And I mean that programmatically, because there's a lot of people involved. We have guest lecturers, we have adjunct

faculty, we have myself and my associate director, and so on and so forth. And we have a lot of bright students, a lot of bright students. The students are really the stars. They're amazing.

[\(31:00\)](#):

So, we're creating the Think, and then the Do part of it is, we have a student-centric applied- or practicum-based education program. So, the students get an opportunity to see real estate development in its present-day form. We just finished our first land-use law class last semester. So, we were able to take current land-use law situations that are occurring in the Triangle and discuss them with our students. With the people, in some cases, that are involved in those decisions — lawyers, developers, landowners, whatever. That is really fantastic.

Taylor Pardue [\(31:36\)](#):

It is.

Chuck Flink [\(31:36\)](#):

Our students are amazed; they're responding really well. We get really high evaluations on our classes because they are so student-centric and they are so applied. And students are telling us, "Look, this is probably the best class I've taken in NC State because it pulls it all together for me. It takes my core academic education, whether that's engineering, architecture, natural sciences, whatever, landscape architecture, and then it combines it with other elements that I know I have to have in order to do problem-solving." And I do that in the classroom setting. So, it's very exciting for our students, and I think it's exciting for those who come in and participate with us as guest lecturers or industry representatives. So, you're right. I think it's just a perfect example of Think and Do.

Taylor Pardue [\(32:17\)](#):

Yeah. It sounds like it benefits everyone. And that's just a wonderful representation of NC State and what we hope to accomplish in the world. So, thank you so much for all that you do through this.

Chuck Flink [\(32:26\)](#):

Well, thank you.

Taylor Pardue [\(32:27\)](#):

And thank you as well for coming out today. This has been very informative and just, really, it's been a pleasure.

Chuck Flink [\(32:33\)](#):

Same here, Taylor. I'm always happy to do this kind of work with the university, a podcast like this, and share information about the program. And, of course, go Pack. Love Wolfpack Nation, and I appreciate the opportunity to be involved with the Pappas program. So, thank you.

Taylor Pardue [\(32:46\)](#):

We appreciate it as well. I have one last question for you because it just begs to be asked.

Chuck Flink [\(32:51\)](#):

Yes, sir.

Taylor Pardue ([32:51](#)):

With real estate and with landscape architecture, what is your favorite place on campus? And that could be any campus. We have several.

Chuck Flink ([32:59](#)):

I know. So, I have been asked this question a lot. So, it's the Yarborough landscape that's between the College of Design campus and it's [an] old part of campus. And it's always meant a lot to me, probably because it was the first campus landscape I visited when I came to interview. I like the design of it. It's a classic university campus design with some of the best architecture on, old architecture on the campus that's still remaining as a part of the original campus that dates all the way back to the 1800s when the university was set up. And I think it's Mary Yarborough Court. It's my favorite. I mean, only because I think just, for me, it just symbolizes so much about the university, and it's been there for a long, long time. It's timeless in that regard. But, listen, there are a lot of great landscapes across the campus, and I'm sure everybody has their favorite, but for me, that one is the most meaningful.

Taylor Pardue ([33:52](#)):

It is a great spot. It's got the history to it. It's got the shade trees for the summer. I was thinking when you said that about coming in March and coming for spring break and thinking that you had found heaven.

Chuck Flink ([34:03](#)):

And the camellias in bloom in February and March.

Taylor Pardue ([34:05](#)):

I thought, "I'm so glad he did not come in the middle of July, part of summer break. He might not have thought that about North Carolina in the summer."

Chuck Flink ([34:12](#)):

I think I probably walked through, I'm pretty sure I probably walked through Yarborough on my way to the college for my interview, and it probably just hit me then. NC State does not get a lot of credit for being a really beautiful campus. That's reserved for other people, other campuses, but I think that that part of NC State's campus is quite beautiful.

Taylor Pardue ([34:30](#)):

I think so, too. Thank you again for joining us, and have a great rest of the day.

Chuck Flink ([34:33](#)):

Absolutely. You, too. Thank you.

Taylor Pardue ([34:39](#)):

To learn more about the Pappas Real Estate Development Program and how you can support it, please visit go.ncsu.edu/designpod. 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.