



Carolina Union

The Carolina Union creates safe, inclusive and educational experiences that enable students to maximize their time at Carolina



Annual Report for 2024-2025

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Message & Executive Summary

Alexandra Marchesano



The 2024-2025 Carolina Union Annual Report highlights the following accomplishments to better serve the campus community:

- Increase student engagement.
- Enhance space in the Union for better efficiency and safety.
- Create administrative efficiencies to streamline operations, enhance customer service, and maximize resource utilization.

The Carolina Union staff did an amazing job creating opportunities to increase student engagement through signature programming and innovative approaches.

FallFest, the annual “welcome back to campus” event, attracts over 10,000 students who meet new friends while enjoying free food, giveaways, and activities. Student Life & Leadership (SLL) partnered with the Carolina Union Activities Board (CUAB) to restructure programming that actively engages students rather than simply providing giveaways.

One example was Jubilee, which is an annual concert and festival. Students who attended interacted with other students and enjoyed a concert later that evening. CUAB also attended the National Association for Campus Activities (NACA) conference, which helps them learn how to plan engaging activities.

Event Services planned several Carolina Union Signature Programs, including four Treat Yo’ Self events attracting over 1,300 students with themed activities for Halloween, Mental Wellness, and Earth Day. Birthday Bash celebrated the Union’s anniversary with close to 800 students. A new signature event, Pepsi in the Pit, provided free Pepsi products to 2,000+ students every Friday.

The Carolina Union has also engaged students in a fun, active learning environment. We hire and train over 150 students to work in the Union. Students attend the Fall Conference, which is a yearly training program that focuses on values development, skill enhancement, safety in the Union, and understanding working roles and responsibilities. The Student Employee Development Committee plans the Fall Conference every year. This committee also revised the student employee evaluation form to better assess student performance and learning while working in the Union. Students are evaluated on values development, resilience, and skill building.

Recognizing that the Carolina Union is an aging facility, we prioritized enhancing space through capital projects and improvements. Major completed projects included a main elevator renovation and HVAC upgrades. The staff also worked on an assessment to identify space to use as a resource room for student organizations. We are also revitalizing the Underground and the Class of 2000 Lounge, which includes new carpeting, lighting, and furniture. A security camera review was conducted to ensure more efficient delivery of service. Future plans include partnering with campus organizations to designate Union spaces for student study and academic programming, creating seamless integration between classroom learning and experiential education opportunities.

The Executive Team worked with staff to identify administrative efficiencies that better serve students through a four-year strategic plan. SLL streamlined the student organization registration process from multiple annual sessions to once yearly. Communications & Creative Services (CCS) began a brand audit to improve Union marketing. Event Services revised reservation policies for events and meetings. The Business & Finance Office relocated to a new suite for better visibility and service to student organizations.

We had a very productive year in the Carolina Union, and I am looking forward to more great opportunities to serve our students.

Alexandra Marchesano
Executive Director of the Carolina Union

Administration

Mission

The Carolina Union creates safe, inclusive and educational experiences that enable students to maximize their time at Carolina.

Accomplishments

- Planned and implemented a successful 2025 Chancellor's Award Ceremony with the Chancellor's Awards Planning Committee.
- Planned and implemented a successful FallFest with the FallFest Planning and Campus Partners committees.
- Toured the Carolina Union with Chancellor Roberts and discussed the need for a new Union to better meet student needs.
- Worked with staff to finalize the Event Planning Process for student organizations planning events in the Carolina Union.
- Conducted a space analysis in the Carolina Union.
- Advised the Carolina Union Board of Directors.

2025-26 Goals

- Oversee development and fundraising opportunities for the Carolina Union.
- Create and implement a major events committee.
- Work with Event Services on a remodel for various spaces in the Union.

- Create an arts committee to oversee the permanent art collection in the Union.
- Continue a space analysis for the Carolina Union.
- Continue to advise the Carolina Union Board of Directors.



Milestones & Achievements

Awards



Chloe Zwilling
Event Manager

Student Affairs Award of Distinction

The Award of Distinction recognizes outstanding contributions by Student Affairs staff members on behalf of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill and Student Affairs.



Kelly Spainhour
Leadership Development
Program Coordinator

Student Affairs Fresh Impact Award

The Fresh Impact Award recognizes a staff member who joined Student Affairs within the past one to three years and has positively influenced the department with new ideas and perspectives.

Awards



Natasha Young
Assistant Director

ACPA Outstanding Program Award

This award honors an innovative campus program that exceeds expectations in fraternity/sorority affairs, organizations/activities, community and civic engagement, or leadership through exceptional student involvement, creativity, and goal achievement.

Anniversaries

- **Juan Chavez**, Housekeeping Manager
Retired after 26 years at the Carolina Union
- **Darrius Barrow**, Director of Student Life and Leadership
10 years in UNC System
- **Yolanda Jefferson**, Business Services Specialist
10 years in UNC System
- **Tiwana Hopper-Gould**, Director of Business & Finance
10 years in UNC System

Business & Finance

Mission

The Business & Finance Office supports the Carolina Union mission to create safe, inclusive and educational experiences that enable students to maximize their time at Carolina.

Accomplishments

- Hired and co-trained a new Director of the Business & Finance Office (BFO).
- Held BFO Open House and Ribbon Cutting on October 2, 2024.
- Held BFO 1st Annual Retreat on March 12, 2025, at the Friday Center.
- Prepared FY26 Operating Budget for the Carolina Union and Carolina Union Student Organizations for submission to Student Affairs.
- Prepared Capital Projects and expenditure budget for submission to Student Affairs.
- Effectively managed finances for the Union and CUSO, including analysis of revenue and expenditure.
- Streamlined and implemented administrative and operational efficiencies in line with Operational Excellence for timely delivery of information and services to internal and external stakeholders.
- Continued provision of financial guidance, advice, and training for the Union and CUSO.

2025-26 Goals

- Plan, develop, and manage the Carolina Union's annual budget.
- Effectively manage finances for the Union and CUSO.
- Streamline and implement administrative and operational efficiencies in line with Operational Excellence for timely delivery of information and services to internal and external stakeholders.
- Efficiently analyze revenue and expenditure for all budgets managed by the department.



Business & Finance by the Numbers

Volume of Transactions for the Carolina Union

Fiscal Year 2023-2024

3,142

Fiscal Year 2024-2025*

2,423



26.34%

** Decrease due to variable components (payment timing, transaction volume, method of payments used)*

Volume of Transactions for Student Organizations

Fiscal Year 2023-2024

2,092

Fiscal Year 2024-2025**

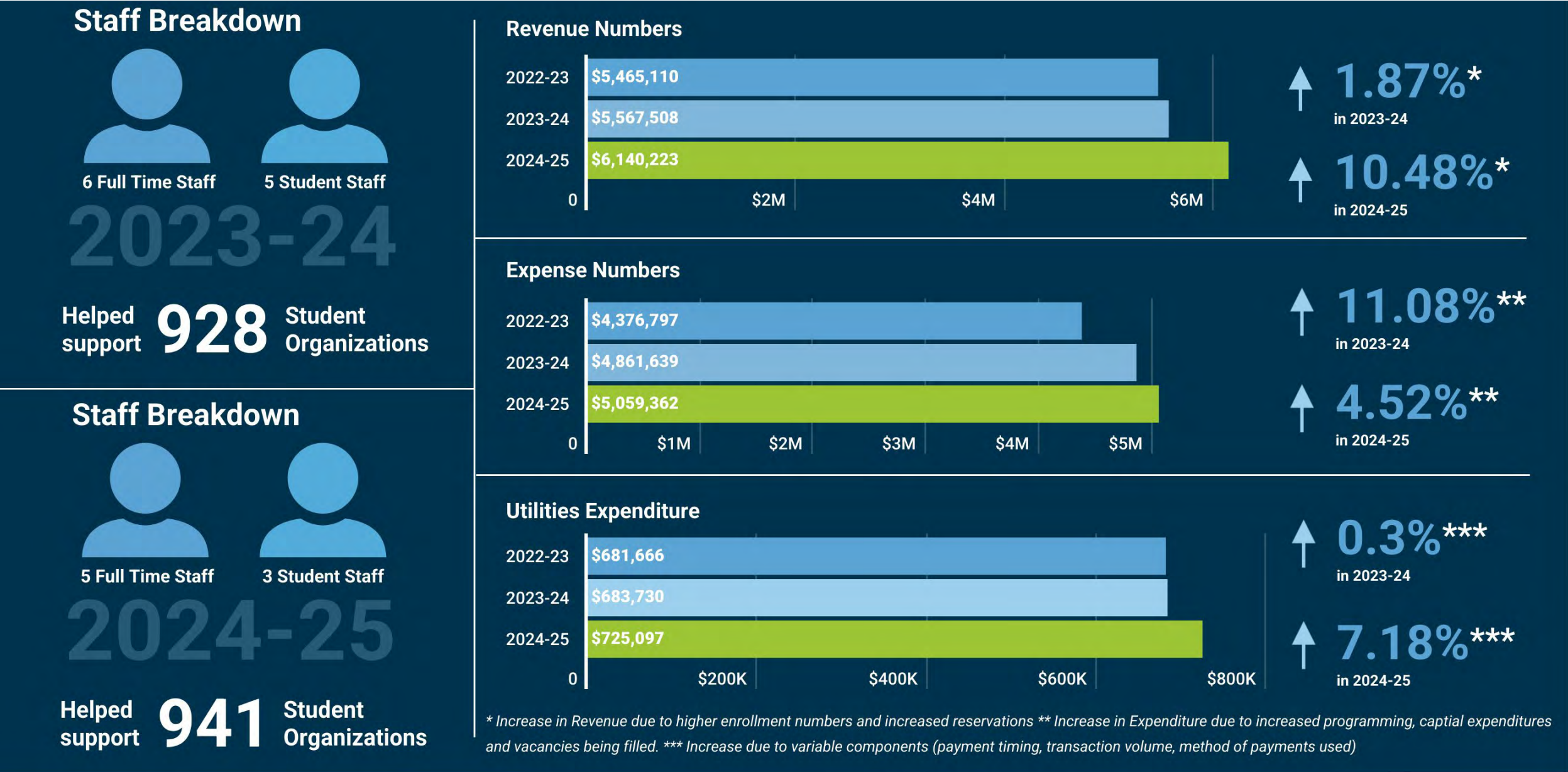
2,219



7.18%

*** Increase due to variable components (payment timing, transaction volume, method of payments used)*

Business & Finance by the Numbers



Communications & Creative Services

Mission

Communications and Creative Services connects the Carolina Union to the student experience by delivering creative communication solutions and engaging marketing initiatives that build the campus community and enrich educational opportunities.

Accomplishments

- Expanded the creative team by identifying and hiring a skilled student design assistant who brought fresh perspectives to multiple design and marketing projects.
- Revitalized the Carolina Union newsletter with a complete redesign and content refresh that better serves audience needs and interests.
- Launched a strategic brand audit process to assess the Union's current identity and develop recommendations for strengthening brand presence and consistency.

2025-26 Goals

- Finalize the brand audit process and present priority recommendations to ensure consistent, compelling brand representation throughout the Carolina Union.
- Create accessible communication resources including a media messaging guide and toolkit that enables all staff to effectively represent the Union's mission.
- Revamp the student staff structure in CCS through position evaluation, role expansion, and strategic hiring to better serve department needs and student growth.



Logo created by Savannah Nelson, Student Staff Design Assistant.

CCS by the Numbers

Staff Breakdown



Staff Breakdown



Social Media Statistics



Most Popular Instagram Post

394 Likes

FallFest Flashback Friday Post

Most Viewed Instagram Reel

10,600 Views |

FallFest Swag Preview

f 1,980**
Facebook Followers

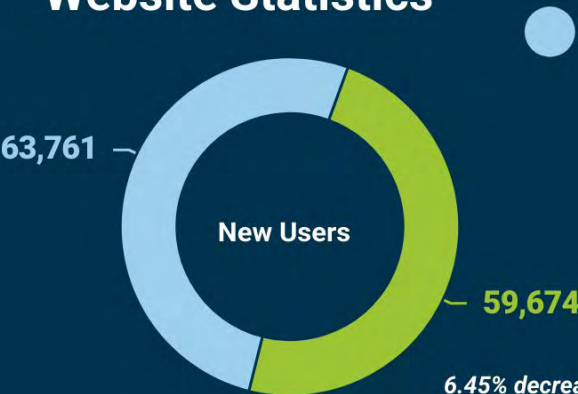
X 4,744***
Twitter/X Followers

@ 714****
Threads Followers

in 42*****
LinkedIn Followers

* Instagram followers increased by 11.67%. ** Facebook followers decreased by 0.1%. *** X followers decreased by 6.12%.
**** Threads followers increased by 11.5%. ***** Base line data. The page was launched in 2025.

Website Statistics



6.45% decrease from 2023-2024 due to mobile-first habits where students prefer apps over web browsing.



1.8% decrease from 2023-2024 due to mobile-first habits where students prefer apps over web browsing.

Event Services

Mission

The mission of the Event Services office is to connect the Carolina community through exceptional event services and vibrant facilities.

Accomplishments

- Exceeded revenue goal by 28%, providing additional funding that directly supports enhanced programming initiatives and critical building improvements.
- Completed capital projects with the upgrade to the new main elevator for the Union and the replacement of HVAC for the common areas of the East Wing of the facility.
- Recruited and hired the following positions: Associate Director of Event Services, 2 Full-time Event Managers, 2 Part-time Event Specialists, 1 AV Manager, and 1 Part-time Reservation Specialist.
- Restructured Event Services to address budget and staffing needs, eliminating service gaps while creating budget savings.

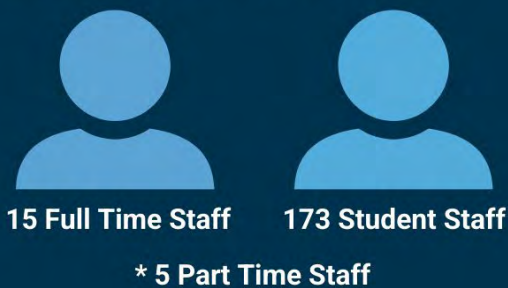
2025-26 Goals

- Install a new roof on the north wing Union facility.
- Upgrade Union Lounge spaces including the Class of 2000 Lounge, the Underground Lounge, and the Bridge Lounge.
- Hire and recruit new members of the Event Service Team to include Housekeeping Manager, Guest Services Manager, Assistant Maintenance Manager, and Housekeeper.
- Continue space analysis to maximize Union utilization during daytime hours.



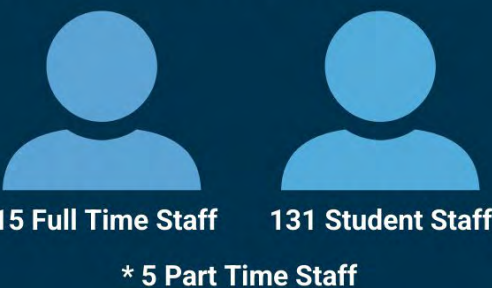
Event Services by the Numbers

Staff Breakdown



2023-24

Staff Breakdown



2024-25

Reservation: A detailed account of an event or activity scheduled to take place in a CU Space.

Occurrence: A single instance. Some reservations have only one occurrence, others may have dozens such as a re-occurring weekly meeting.



Total Occurrences in 2023 - 2024
(Programs/Events/Meetings)



Total Occurrences in 2024 - 2025
(Programs/Events/Meetings)

↑ 1%

Event Services by the Numbers

Occurrences Breakdown

● 2023-24 ● 2024-25



Department reservations in the Union continue to climb at **2.9%**, which coincides with more daytime usage



Union reservations decreased by **.5%**. This reflects lower meeting frequency among Union departments and a reduction in maintenance-related space holds.



Student org numbers fell by **7%** from 2023-2024. Some of this can be attributed to stepped up scheduling practices focusing on ensuring confirmation for room usage. This practice would increase cancellations enforced by Event Services.



Non-affiliate reservations increased by **33.3%**, reflecting strong client retention and referral patterns, as well as larger activations requiring multiple reservable spaces.

Event Services by the Numbers

Signature Events Attendance

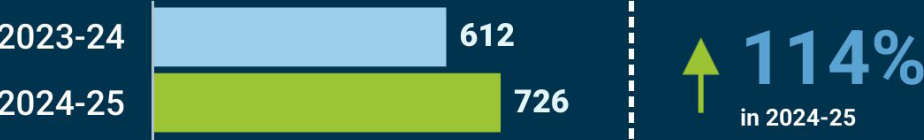
The Carolina Union’s signature events span the academic year. These carefully curated experiences not only enhance student life but also strengthen the bonds that connect generations of Tar Heels. The following attendance data demonstrates the significant impact and reach of our signature events throughout the 2024-2025 academic year.

Treat Yo Self



- 4 dates total with highest participation at the end of each semester.
- Event attendance increased by **11.9%** from 2023-24, which can be attributed to consistent programming efforts and enhanced promotional strategies throughout the year..

Birthday Bash



- 1-day event with heaviest traffic in the afternoon.
- 2024 Birthday bash was a three-day event for the Union’s 55th Birthday. Attendance averaged 339 participants per day.
- A **114%** increase in attendance from the 2023-24 year can can be attributed to consistent programming efforts and enhanced promotional strategies.

Pepsi in the Pit



- The Pit: 5 occurrences starting in mid-February 2025.
- LDOC Edition: 1-day event

Student Life & Leadership by the Numbers

Mission

The mission of Student Life & Leadership is to create an inclusive Carolina community through engagement and intentional educational opportunities.

Accomplishments

- Achieved a record 235 applicants for the NC Fellows program (70% increase from 2023-2024).
- Facilitated 30 Student Organization programs (33% increase from 2023-2024).
- Completed Voter Registration Training for 191 students (200% increase from 2023-2024).

2025-26 Goals

- Launch a Spring Semester Leadership program.
- Increase the number of students that complete the SEED program.
- Increase student organization participation in Student Organization Leadership Experience programs.



Student Life & Leadership by the Numbers

Staff Breakdown



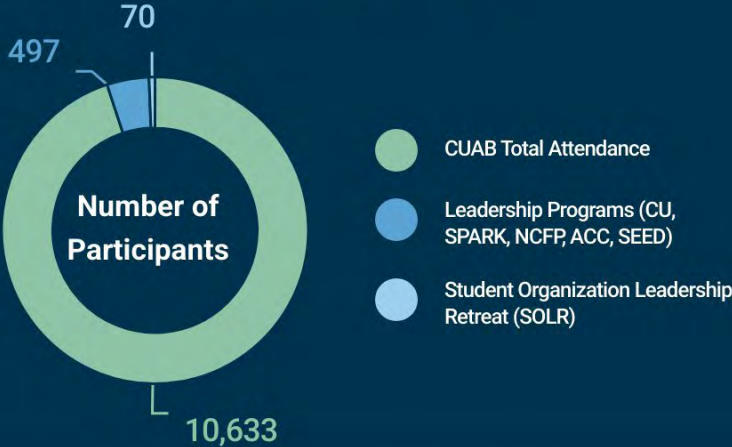
8 Full Time Staff



36+ Student Staff

2023-24

Programs Sponsored 2023-24



Staff Breakdown



9 Full Time Staff



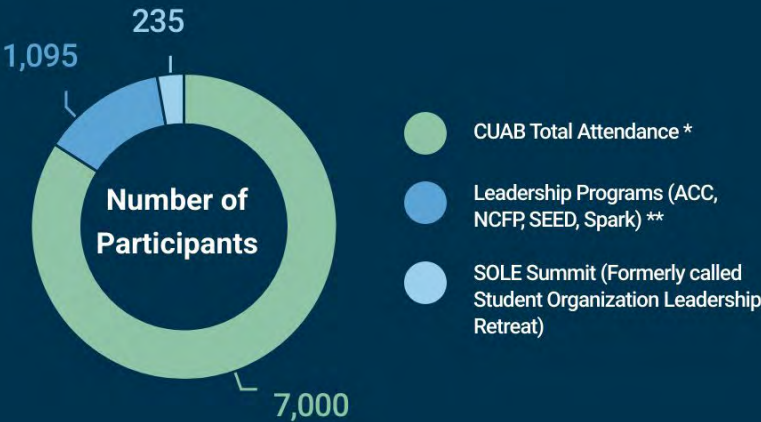
5 Graduate Assistants



30 Student Staff

2024-25

Programs Sponsored 2024-25



* **34.16%** decrease in event attendance from 2023-2024. This is partly due to an advisor vacancy.

** Attendance increased by **120.32%** from 2023-2024 due to increased marketing efforts and intentional changes to program formats.

Student Life & Leadership by the Numbers

Student Organization Statistics 2023-24



928 Student Organizations



99 Activities/Programs hosted by CUAB



75% of the student body holds membership in a student organization

Student Organization Statistics 2024-25



941 Student Organizations *



46 Activities/Programs hosted by CUAB **



75% of the student body holds membership in a student organization

** The 1.4% increase in student orgs is consistent with natural fluctuations in registrations as new groups form to address emerging interests while others may become inactive.
** Hosted less events than in 2023-2024 to focus on quality rather than quantity.*

Carolina Union Activities Board

Mission

The Carolina Union Activities Board (CUAB) is dedicated to building a vibrant and inclusive community by creating shared experiences that connect, inspire, and celebrate the diverse voices of Carolina students. Through intentional, engaging, and dynamic programming, we aim to turn campus moments into lasting memories.

Accomplishments

- Hosted music festival, Jubilee 2025, in a comeback year for CUAB with an estimated 1,200 attendees.
- Increased the number of committee members by 120 percent.
- Tabled at both the Safetoberfest hosted by Carolina Housing and the UNC School of Law's Summer Resource Fair.

2025-26 Goals

- Create inclusive, student-centered programs that bring together diverse communities, ensuring every student feels welcomed, celebrated, and part of Carolina.
- Develop innovative events that highlight student talent, showcase cultural expression, and reimagine traditional programming in fresh, engaging ways.
- Design programs that promote wellness, inclusivity, and representation, leaving lasting positive memories while responding to the evolving needs of the student body.
- Empower CUAB members to grow as leaders through hands-on planning, while building partnerships across student organizations, departments, and campus communities.



CUAB by the Numbers

CUAB Events Breakdown 2024-25



46

Events



13

Board Members

74

Committee Members

Event Attendance



7,000*

** Decreased by 34.16% from 10,633 in 2023-24, which can be attributed to staffing changes that impacted both event planning and attendance tracking.*

Carolina Union Board of Directors

Mission

The Carolina Union creates safe, inclusive and educational experiences that enable students to maximize their time at Carolina.

Accomplishments

- Created a new space allocation process.
- Student members of the Board of Directors provided feedback about making changes to spaces in the Union to better support students, campus departments, and non-affiliates. The students provided feedback regarding changes to the lounge in the Underground and the Class of 2000 Lounge.
- Began to review and revise the Board of Directors (BOD) by-laws.
- Began planning a reception to bring past student employees and former BOD members back to the Union.

2024-25 Goals

- Improve student awareness of the Carolina Union Board of Directors by posting meeting updates and initiatives on accessible digital platforms.
- Strengthen engagement with student organizations via collaborative programming and updates to space allocation.
- Continue evaluating the interest and feasibility of a new Carolina Union facility with feedback, space usage data, and long-term campus planning insights.
- Collaborate with Carolina Union staff to execute a plan that enhances the experience of student employees.



Message from the Carolina Union Board Chairs



Alexandria Poulos
Chair, Carolina Union Board of Directors
2025-2026

Hello Tar Heels,

I'm honored to serve as your 2025-26 Chair of the Carolina Union Board of Directors! The Union is a central space for student life on campus, and I'm committed to making it even more accessible, inclusive, and responsive to your needs.

Over the coming year, I'm excited to work alongside students, staff, and faculty to strengthen engagement with student organizations, increase transparency about the work of the Board, and continue exploring the future of the Union facility.

I can't wait to see what we accomplish together!

Alexandria Poulos
Chair, Carolina Union Board of Directors
2025-2026



Fredre'Oni (Oni) Terrado
President, Carolina Union Activities Board
2025-2026

Hi Carolina Community,

I'm elated to serve as your Carolina Union Activities Board President and Vice Chair of the Carolina Union Board of Directors.

My goal is to foster meaningful connections and strengthen our community through impactful event programming and clear, collaborative communication across departments. I'd love to work with any department looking to create a memorable experience for the student body. Most importantly, I'm committed to ensuring that every Carolina student has an unforgettable experience and feels truly supported through our Carolina community.

Fredre'Oni (Oni) Terrado
President, Carolina Union Activities Board
2025-2026

