Case Study

Gateway To Success: North Carolina A&T Improves Gateway Course Outcomes, Particularly for First-Generation and Pell-Eligible Students

North Carolina Agricultural and Technical State University

Serving over 15,000 students, North Carolina Agricultural and Technical State University (NC A&T) is one of North Carolina's top research campuses and the largest HBCU in the U.S. NC A&T is nationally recognized for excellence in STEM education.

The Challenge

NC A&T is committed to advancing innovative teaching and learning that strengthens student success and workforce readiness. To ensure all students—particularly those facing the greatest barriers—can thrive, institutional leaders sought to scale high-quality, evidence-based teaching practices across the university.

The Solution

Launched in 2021, NC A&T's partnership with ACUE provides faculty access to the nationally recognized Certification in Effective Teaching. As a participant in a Gates Foundation-funded, multi-institution Faculty Mindset Research Project, results showed increased faculty confidence and improved student outcomes. Additional findings reinforce positive impacts, particularly for students facing the greatest barriers, including first-generation and Pell-eligible students.



Valerie Giddings, PhD

Senior Vice Provost,
North Carolina Agricultural and Technical State University

Our success with ACUE is impressive, and the university will continue to support ACUE programs to build on the principles of great teaching.

STUDENT IMPACT

10.7%

Increase in Grades for First-Year Students

First-year students taught by ACUE-certified faculty had a 10.7% increase in grades.

5.1%

Increase in Passing Rates for First-Year Students

First-year students taught by ACUE-certified faculty experienced a 5.1% increase in passing rates.

5.6%

Increase in Grades for Pell-Eligible Students

Pell-eligible students taught by ACUE faculty had a 5.6% increase in grades.

7.9%

Increase in Grades for First-Gen Students

First-gen students taught by ACUE faculty experienced a 7.9% increase in grades.

***Source**: Evidence of Improved Student Outcomes in Gateway Courses Following ACUE Certification at Georgia Southern University and North Carolina A&T State University (2026)*

TRANSFORMING FACULTY MINDSET

Improved Faculty Confidence & Mindset

Consistent with the Faculty Mindset Study, NC A&T faculty who completed ACUE courses describe a renewed sense of purpose and passion for teaching. As reflected here, faculty also report increased confidence in implementing evidence-based practices, designing effective courses, and positively influencing student mindset.

Faculty Engagement

4k

New Practices Implemented

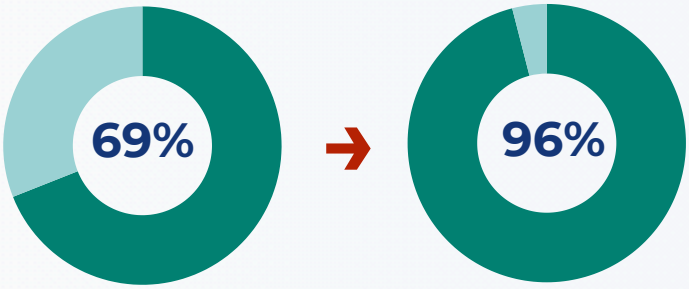
Faculty reported implementing 4k new practices.

182

Certificates Earned

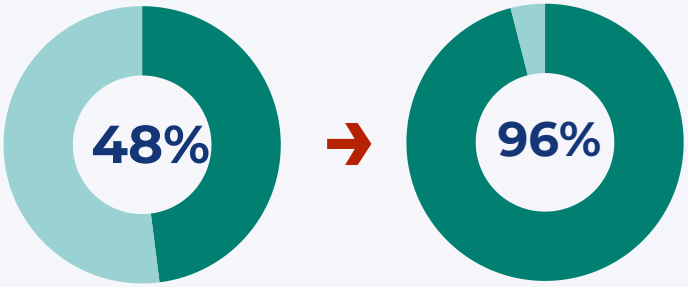
As of Spring 2026, 182 faculty have earned ACUE's Certification in Effective Teaching.

Use Research to Inform Teaching



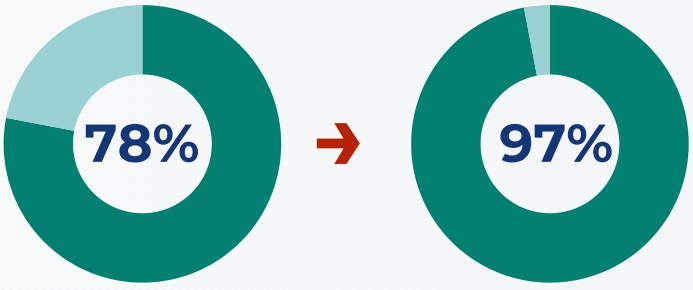
Before ACUE Course | After ACUE Course

Confident Designing an Effective Course and Class



Before ACUE Course | After ACUE Course

Can Influence How Students Perceive Their Intelligence



Before ACUE Course | After ACUE Course

ACUE's Impact

The findings from NC A&T reinforce a clear conclusion: Investing in faculty is one of the most effective strategies an institution can make for advancing student success.

Explore more research and learn how ACUE partners with colleges nationwide to achieve scalable, evidence-based impact.

Learn more: acue.org/impact.

***Source**: Fall 2021-Spring 2025 Institutional Report, unless otherwise noted.*

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