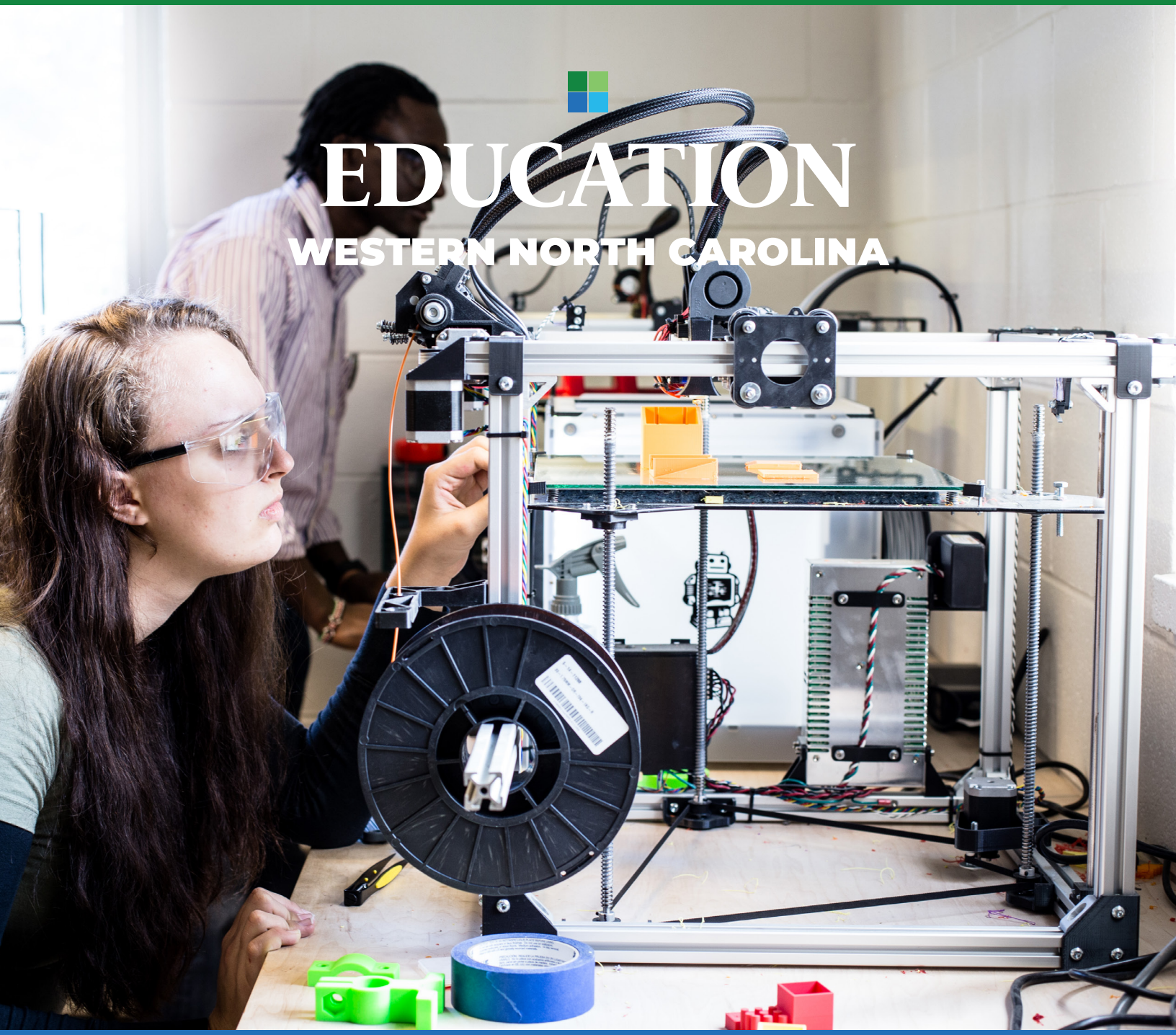


EDUCATION

WESTERN NORTH CAROLINA

In the Asheville area, the education and business community work closely together to build the elements necessary to support a vibrant economy.

RIVERBIRD RESEARCH

ASHEVILLECHAMBER.ORG/RESEARCH-ECONOMY/

THE UNIVERSITY OF NORTH CAROLINA AT ASHEVILLE

UNC Asheville is one of the top public liberal arts universities in the nation according to *U.S. News and World Report* and part of the University of North Carolina System. Approximately 4,000 students from across the globe call UNCA their educational institution and home.

UNC Asheville is also recognized for the National Conference on Undergraduate Research (NCUR) as a program of distinction by *U.S. News and World Reports* national rankings.

UNC Asheville founded NCUR in 1987 to address research questions of interest in a scholarly and creative manner.

More than 60 percent of UNC Asheville's students complete original research in their field of study, an opportunity usually found only in graduate programs.

#2

NATIONALLY FOR "MAKING AN IMPACT"

The Princeton Review, 2018

#7

IN NATIONAL PUBLIC LIBERAL ARTS COLLEGES

U.S. News & World Report, 2018

Life Sciences

An array of math and science programs are offered with opportunities for scholarships and research through the GlaxoSmithKline Foundation.

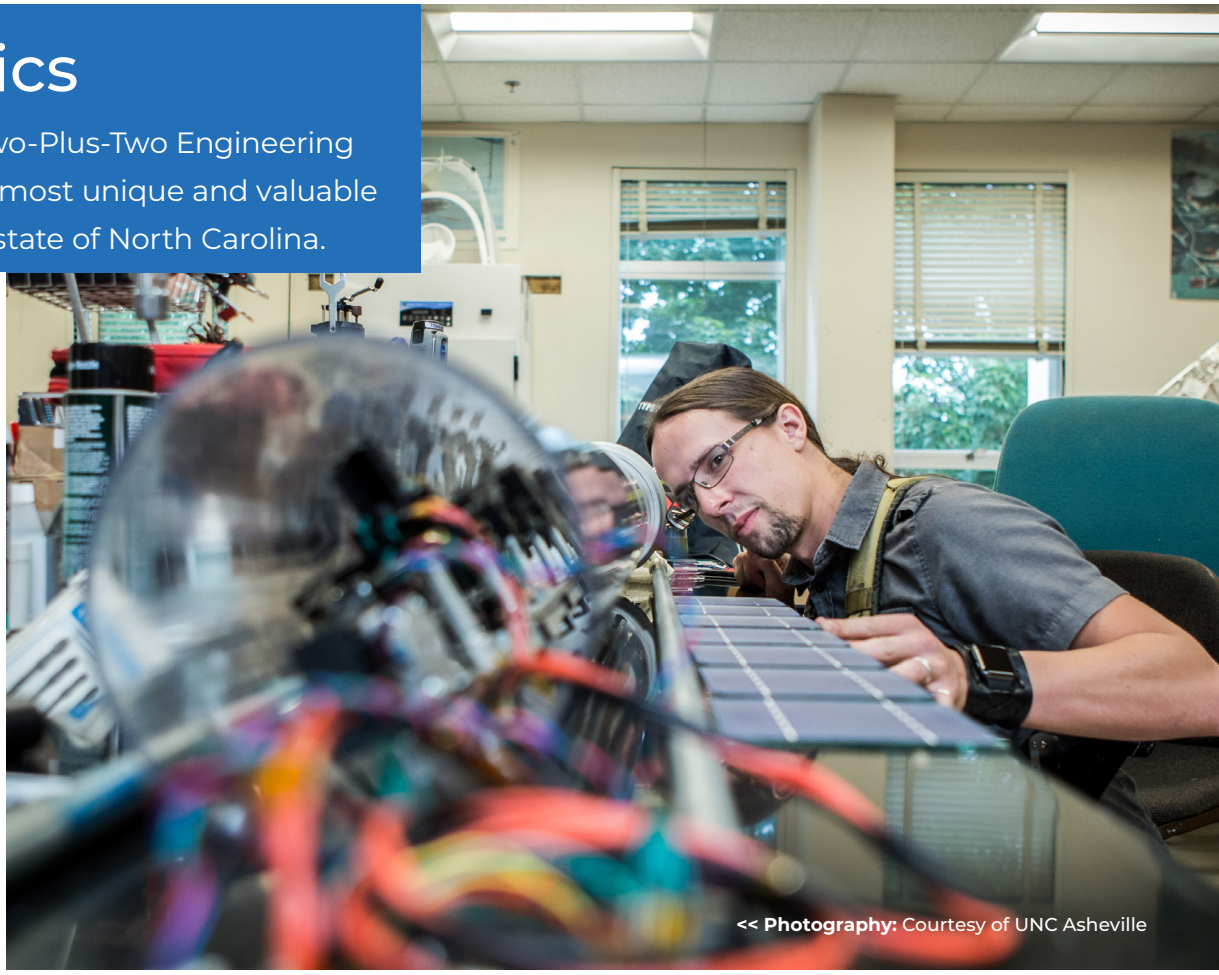
<< Photography: Courtesy of UNC Asheville

Programs of Distinction:

Within UNC Asheville's Life Sciences coursework, degrees such as Biology and Chemistry are offered with state-of-the-art research labs preparing students with the background needed for Master's and Ph.D. programs. The Atmospheric Science program provides opportunities to connect with National Centers for Environmental Information, one of the nation's largest weather data centers.

Mechatronics

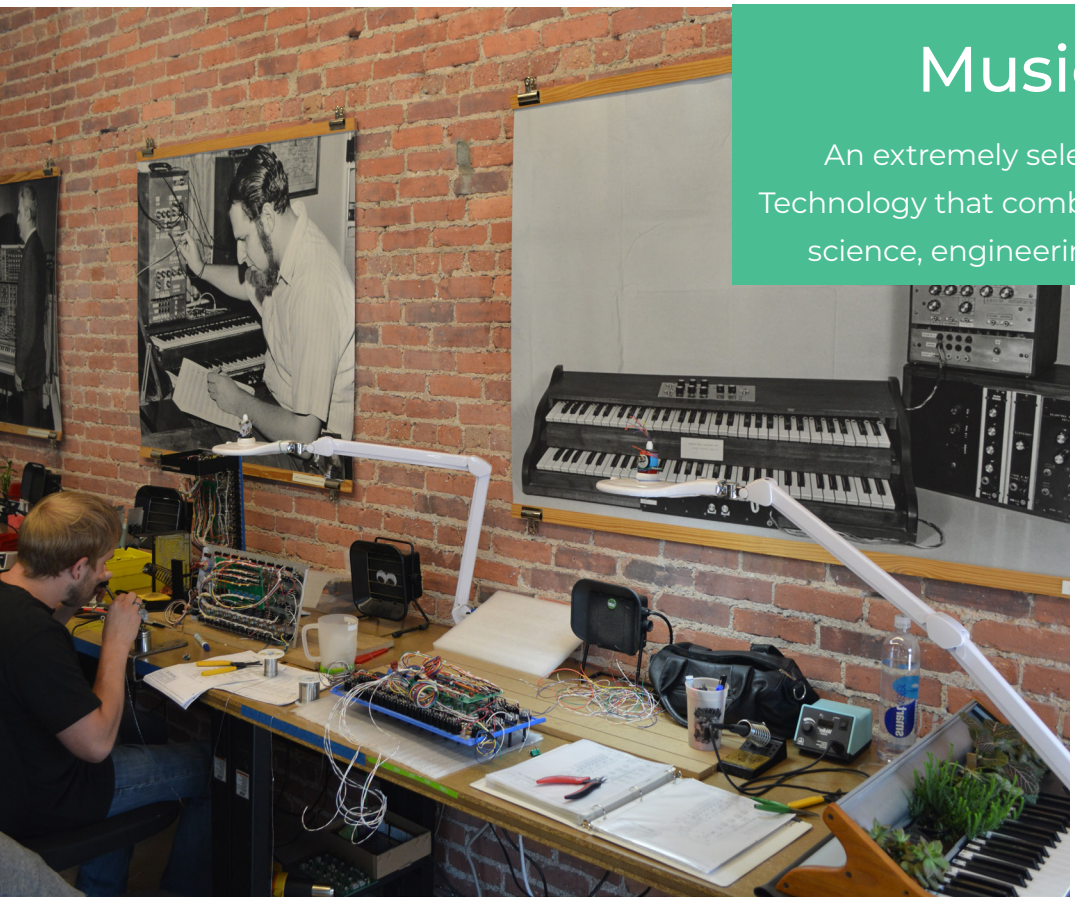
The Mechatronics and Two-Plus-Two Engineering Programs are two of the most unique and valuable programs offered in the state of North Carolina.



<< **Photography:** Courtesy of UNC Asheville

Programs of Distinction:

Both engineering programs are offered as a result of a partnership between UNC Asheville and NC State designed to unite the best engineering courses with a rich liberal arts foundation. Many students who participate in these programs (over 350 students since their conception) continue to work in the Asheville area once they have their degrees.



Music Technology

An extremely selective hybrid degree in Music Technology that combines music, math, computer science, engineering, electronics, and business.

Programs of Distinction:

At UNC Asheville the music department features a key partnership with Bob Moog Electronic Music Studio. Through this partnership, it plays an important role in developing talent for the growing music industry in the area. The music industry was estimated to contribute $383M in total output and supported nearly 3,400 jobs in Buncombe county in 2016.

ASHEVILLE-BUNCOMBE TECHNICAL COMMUNITY COLLEGE

Over 25,000 students enroll in Asheville-Buncombe Technical Community College (A-B Tech) every year, making it one of the largest institutions for higher learning in the region.

A-B Tech has 3 campuses across Asheville, Enka, and Madison County and is part of the North Carolina Community College System. More than 60 curriculum programs across 5 divisions including Advanced Manufacturing, Healthcare, Entrepreneurship, and Culinary Arts and Hospitality.

Breweries and Supply Chain

A-B Tech's Craft Beverage Institute of the Southeast provides the training needed to meet the professional standards and fundamental demands of Asheville and Buncombe County's spectacular beverage industries.

Programs of Distinction:

Hospitality remains a cornerstone of the Tourism economy in the Asheville-Buncombe area. Breweries had a total output of $934M in our Asheville Breweries Economic Contribution Study (2016). A-B Tech is equipped with the Craft Beverage Institute (CBI) of the Southeast program to support Hospitality. Created with our region in mind, the CBI is designed to support the growing craft beverage industry in Western North Carolina by preparing individuals for brewery and distillery operations, management, distribution, economics, marketing, and many more careers.

1 of only 2

PROGRAMS IN THE NATION FOR CRAFT BREWING

<< **Photography:** Courtesy of Capital at Play

Advanced Manufacturing

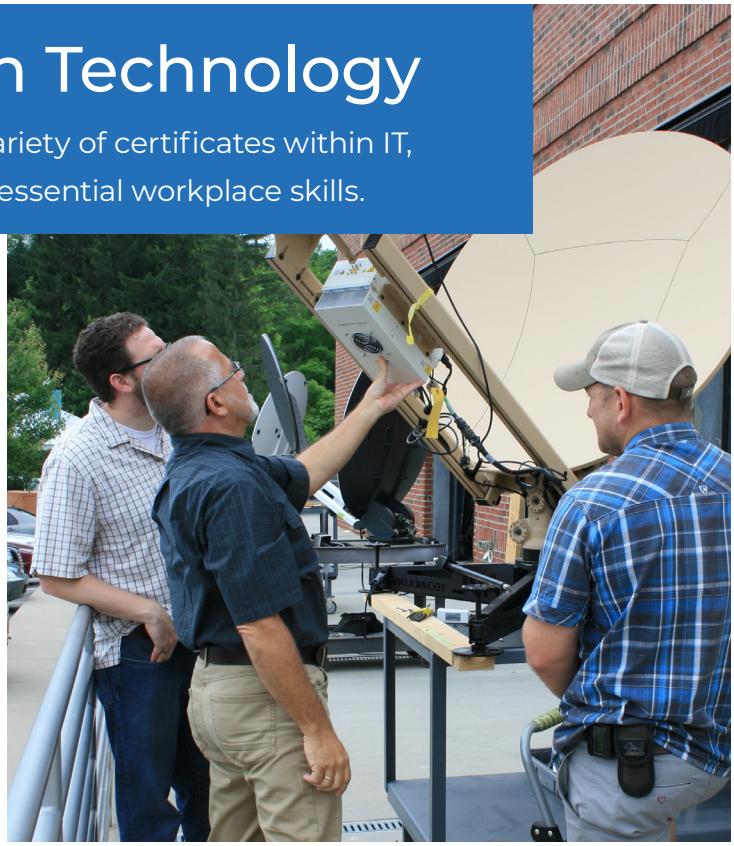
At A-B Tech, the Advanced Manufacturing Center is a state of the art teaching facility focused on building and sustaining a skilled workforce.

Programs of Distinction:

A-B Tech's Advanced Manufacturing Center is a 15,000 square foot building devoted to providing training in the Advanced Manufacturing sector. Through the center, hands-on training is available for Computer Numerical Control (CNC) and manual machining equipment, labs and equipment for specialized composites and repair, mechatronics, industrial maintenance (e.g. electrical, hydraulics, pneumatics, industrial controls, motors, etc.), metals, and more.

Information Technology

A-B Tech offers a wide variety of certificates within IT, providing students with essential workplace skills.



Programs of Distinction:

A-B Tech has certificates ranging from Computer Basics to Cisco Certified Network Associate (CCNA) preparation. In combination with Advanced Manufacturing programs, the CAD Technology certificate provides invaluable skills for 2-D and 3-D technical drawings.

> *We are fortunate to have workforce partners in Buncombe County that move at the speed of business. From forward-thinking intern and apprenticeship opportunities to customized training, nimble programming, engaged mentors and strong alumni networks on tap – our partners understand the global competition for talent and what Buncombe County business needs to thrive.*
>
> **— April Brown**
>
> **Director of Workforce**
>
> **Economic Development Coalition**

WESTERN CAROLINA UNIVERSITY

Also part of the UNC System, Western Carolina University (WCU) enrollment totals more than 11,000 students. In addition to 115 majors and concentrations, Western Carolina also has 60 graduate programs.

Western Carolina is approximately 50 miles from Asheville and sits on 600 acres of gorgeous mountainous area. Several of their graduate programs operate from a satellite campus in Asheville's popular Biltmore Park. For example, 4 doctoral, 9 masters, and 4 baccalaureate-completion programs are available. These include degrees in Business, Counseling, Education Leadership, Engineering, Nursing, Physical Therapy, Public Affairs and others to continue education and professional development.

1 of the Best

SCHOOLS TO EARN AN MBA

The Princeton Review, 2018

Business Administration

The Western Carolina Business Administration Program positions students for success in a variety of industries from financial institutions, manufacturing firms, healthcare companies, and non-profit organizations.

<< **Photography:** Courtesy of Western Carolina University

Programs of Distinction:

Within WCU's Business Administration Program is home to the nationally renowned Center for Entrepreneurship and Innovation, as well as the Master of Project Management program. At the satellite campus in Biltmore Park, this program is flexible and designed for the working professional. In addition, this program is fully accredited by the Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business (AACSB), an international organization.

ASHEVILLE AREA HIGHER EDUCATION MARKET

Total Students
281,475

WITHIN 25-MILE RADIUS**
Enrolled Students: 20,000
Completions: 4,238

- University of North Carolina at Asheville
- A-B Tech Community College
- Montreat College
- Warren Wilson College
- Mars Hill University
- Brevard College
- Haywood Community College
- Blue Ridge Community College
- South College - Asheville
- Furman University

WITHIN 50-MILE RADIUS**
Enrolled Students: 82,200
Completions: 18,879

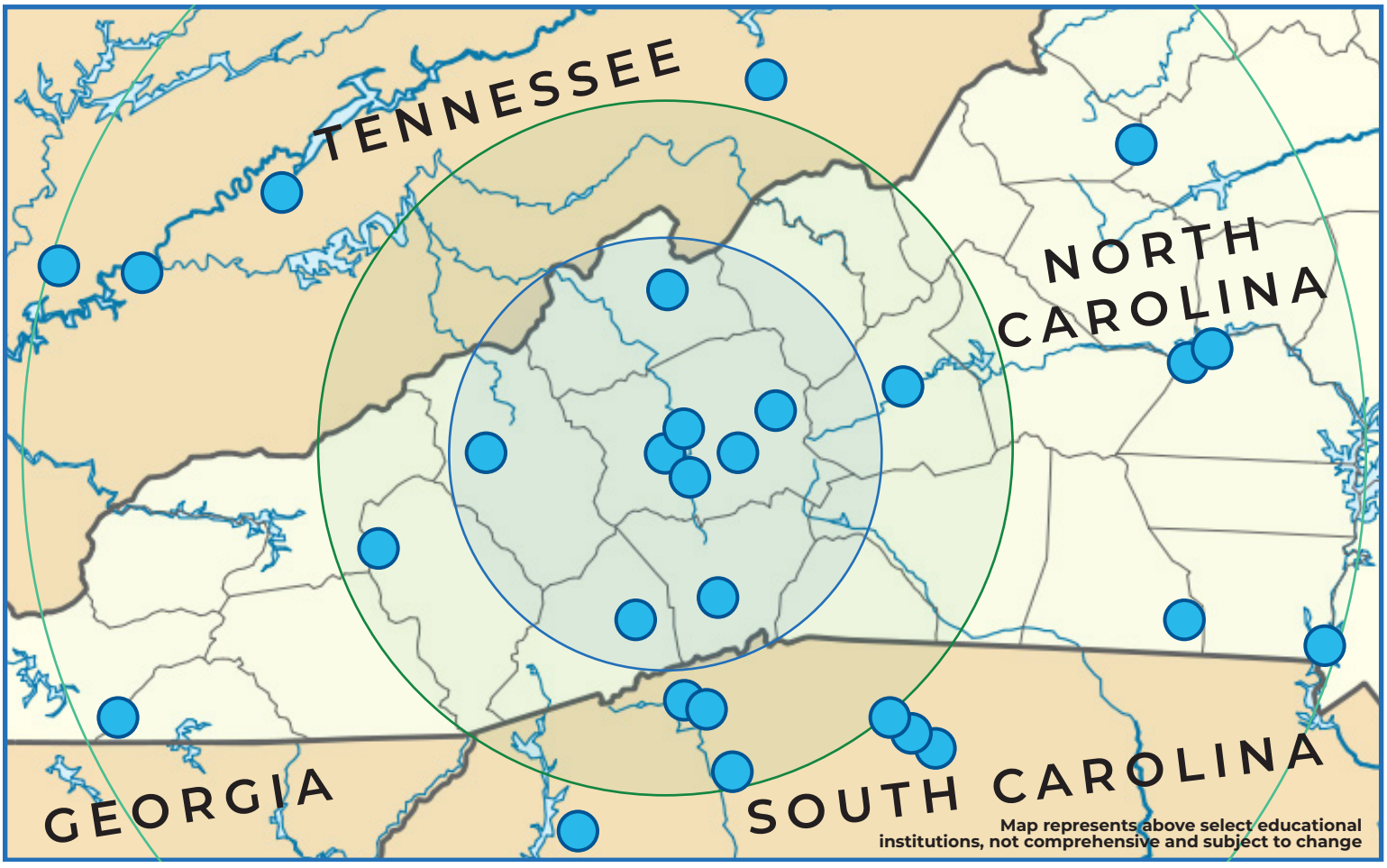
- Western Carolina University*
- McDowell Tech Community College
- North Greenville University
- Greenville Technical College
- East Tennessee State University

*Schools that have a satellite campus in Asheville

**Not a comprehensive list and subject to change

WITHIN 100-MILE RADIUS**
Enrolled Students: 281,475
Completions: 71,714

- Western Piedmont Community College
- Appalachian State University
- Clemson University
- Lenoir-Rhyne University*
- University of North Carolina at Charlotte
- University of Tennessee at Knoxville
- Wofford College
- University of South Carolina Upstate
- Carson Newman University
- Converse College
- Tri-County Community College
- Gardner-Webb University
- Pellissippi State Community College



APPALACHIAN STATE

Located 90 miles northeast of Asheville, Appalachian State University is part of the University of North Carolina system and is regularly cited as a best value in public education. The school combines the attributes of a small liberal arts college with those of a large research university.

Nursing

Appalachian State University's 3-year average National Council Licensure Examination (NCLEX) is at 94%, higher than the State (82%) and National (86%) averages.

<< Photography: Courtesy of Marie Freeman, Appalachian State University

Programs of Distinction:

At Appalachian State, the BSN, RN to BSN, and MSN programs are available within nursing. BSN is a baccalaureate program to build foundation for graduate nursing education for those who do not have a registered nursing license. The RN to BSN online program is designed for registered nurses seeking the BSN degree. The MSN is a master's program to prepare registered nurses for leadership roles as educators in a variety of academic or clinical environments.

LENOIR-RHYNE

Lenoir-Rhyne is a private college based in Hickory with a Center for graduate studies in Asheville. The local campus furthers student education by specifically offering master's level programs in 10 areas including Business Administration, Nursing, Public Health, Counseling, Sustainability Studies, and Writing.

Programs of Distinction:

An innovative program designed to engage in providing sustainability challenges across a wide range of fields such as climate change, economic dysfunction, biodiversity decline, and more.

<< Photography: Courtesy of Lenoir-Rhyne

Sustainability Studies

Master's of Science

MONTREAT

A private Christian four-year college with satellite campuses in Asheville and four other locations across North Carolina. Montreat College offers undergraduate, adult undergraduate, and graduate programs with a focus on the School of Arts and Sciences.

Programs of Distinction:

Montreat College is designated a National Center of Academic Excellence in Cyber Defense Education by the National Security Agency (NSA) and the Department of Homeland Security (DHS).

Cybersecurity

One of the most rapidly expanding fields in the world

MARS HILL

A private four-year college located in neighboring Madison County with a satellite campus in Asheville. The school offers 30 majors including Business Administration and Management, Computer Science, and graduate studies in elementary education. Offered in the evening, the school's Adult Studies program is designed to fit the needs of working adults.

Programs of Distinction:

Students are provided skills to analyze and tackle global issues while navigating the increasing complexity of our globalized world. Students gain experience with political science, history, economics, and more.

International Studies

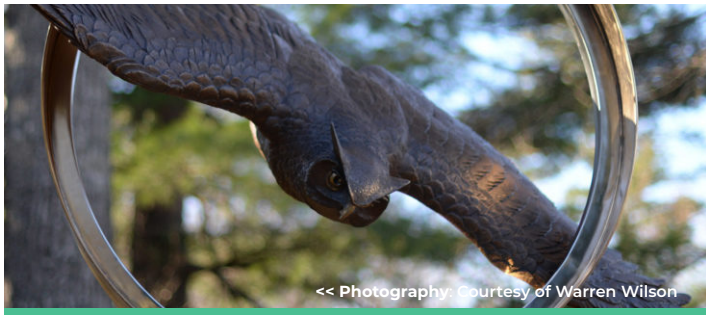
Studies of complex global issues

WARREN WILSON

A small, private four-year college located in the Swannanoa Valley near Asheville. Popular majors include focus on the sciences, including Environmental Studies. Warren Wilson offers a unique experience, providing high-quality experiential education along with an integrated work program. Students focus 10-20 hours a week on community programs and initiatives outside of class.

Programs of Distinction:

Warren Wilson established this program in 1976, taught by nationally-recognized MFA faculty. Their faculty include Pulitzer and National Book Award winners from a wide-range of backgrounds.



<< Photography: Courtesy of Warren Wilson

Fine Arts Program for Writers

Nationally renowned Master's Program

ASHEVILLE CITY & BUNCOMBE COUNTY SCHOOLS

There are approximately 30,000 enthusiastic, young students in the Asheville City and Buncombe County public school systems.

100%

100% of school districts in North Carolina can access the Internet at speeds of 100 kbps per student in both urban and rural areas.

Our schools are connected with a wide variety of tools that enhance learning

Laptops

Tablets

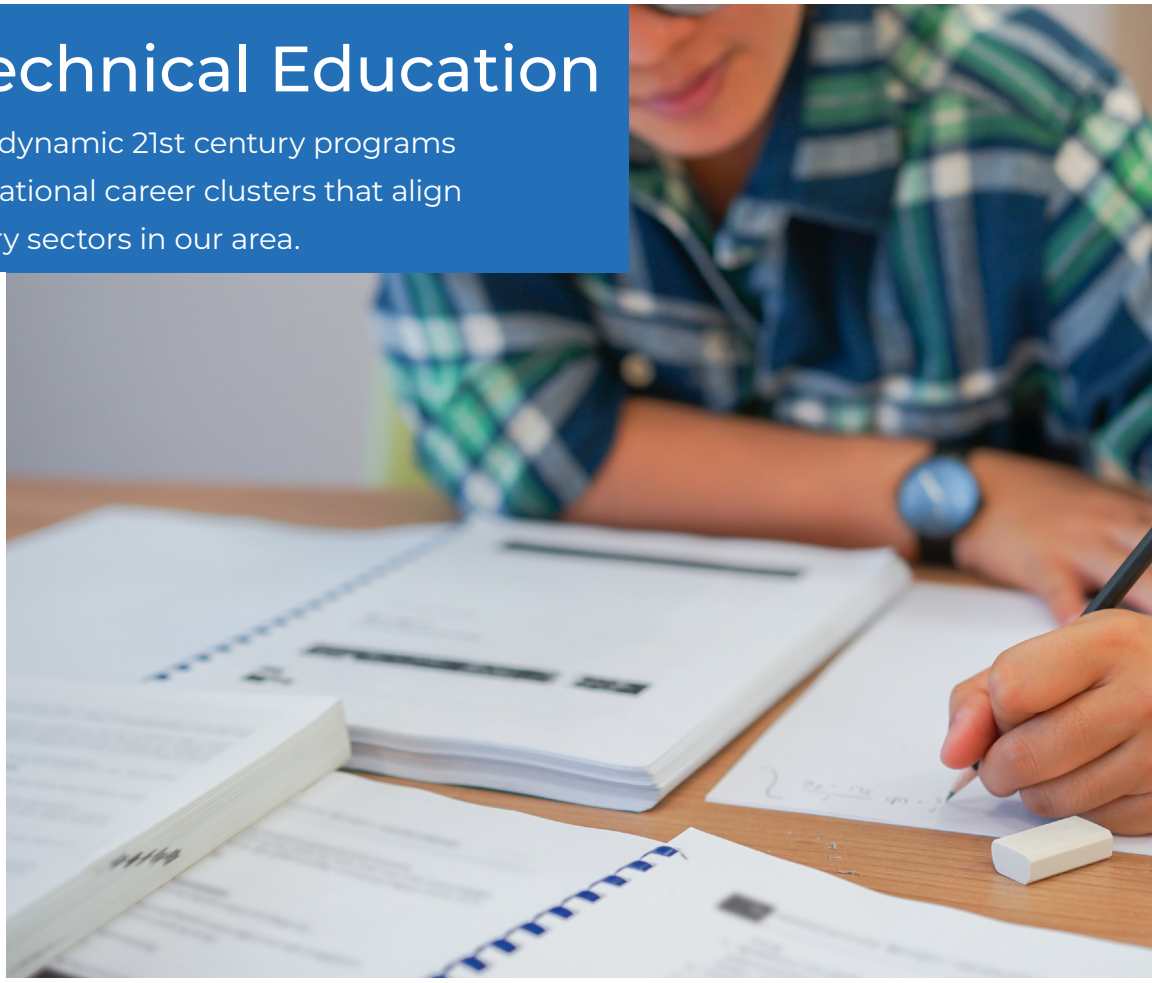
Asheville Area educators and business leaders collaborate to better engage young people in their learning. Teachers and leaders recognize the importance of equipping young students with the skills for success in a globalized era. Students in middle and high schools build critical thinking and problem-solving techniques through hands-on learning and an innovative curriculum that emphasize Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math (STEM) topics. Two new schools, Buncombe County Schools Discovery Academy and the Franklin School of Innovation Charter School opened in 2014, expand opportunities for students to engage in inquiry-based learning.

STEM School Programs

Buncombe County Schools opened the Nesbitt Discovery Academy in 2014 to provide opportunities for students to engage in innovative STEM curriculum. Asheville City's School of Inquiry and Life Sciences at Asheville (SILSA) additionally offers STEM opportunities to high school students.

Career and Technical Education

The mission of CTE is to offer dynamic 21st century programs to students based on the 16 national career clusters that align with the business and industry sectors in our area.



Programs of Distinction:

Both Asheville City and Buncombe County Schools provide Career and Technical Education (CTE) to prepare students for future careers and higher education. CTE provides students a way to earn college credits and credentials sought by local industries and businesses. The CTE curriculum also develops life and soft skills such as decision-making, communication, critical thinking, creative thinking, problem solving, leadership, and more.

4-Year Cohort Graduation Rates 2017-2018

Asheville City	359 — 89.4%
Buncombe County	1,953 — 87.8%
Haywood County	586 — 85.3%
Henderson County	1,064 — 91.4%
Madison County	209 — 86.8%
North Carolina	120,079 — 86.3%

Public Schools Mean SAT Scores

	Number Tested	Percent Tested	ERW Score	Math Score	Total
Asheville City	186	63.1%	577	539	1,115
Buncombe County Schools	831	46.6%	563	551	1,114
Haywood County Schools	150	27.0%	553	533	1,086
Henderson County Schools	325	34.4%	560	542	1,103
Madison County Schools	31	15.3%	537	527	1,065
North Carolina	44,325	44.0%	542	532	1,074
United States	1,426,258	N/A	527	517	1,044

“At Buncombe County Schools our mission statement echoes the state’s focus on preparing students to be ‘Career and College Ready,’ and we count on our community partners to help us in that endeavor. The experiences our students have can lead to a job right out of high school, with the impetus to secure further education for career advancement.

— Dr. Tony Baldwin
Superintendent, Buncombe County Schools

EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT

	Asheville City	Buncombe	Haywood	Henderson	Madison	NC	US
Population 25 Years and Over	62,638	181,217	44,393	81,797	14,943	6,684,672	213,649,147
Less than 9th Grade	2.4%	3.3%	3.6%	4.0%	8.4%	5.2%	5.6%
9th to 12th Grade, no Diploma	5.4%	6.7%	9.4%	7.3%	9.1%	8.5%	7.4%
High School Graduate	18.5%	24.5%	28.6%	26.2%	30.6%	26.4%	27.5%
Some College, no Degree	19.1%	20.8%	22.2%	23.9%	17.8%	21.8%	21.0%
Associates Degree	7.7%	8.0%	12.4%	8.9%	9.4%	9.1%	8.2%
Bachelor's Degree	28.8%	22.5%	14.5%	19.2%	14.3%	18.8%	18.8%
Graduate Degree	18.1%	14.1%	9.2%	10.5%	10.4%	10.2%	11.5%

More Research Reports at: AshevilleChamber.org/Research-Economy/

ADDITIONAL SOURCES: US Census Bureau, Education Superhighway, EMSI, IPEDS, and highlighted schools' sources.

PLEASE CONTACT US

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ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COALITION
Asheville-Buncombe County

ASHEVILLE
AREA CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

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