

Academic Culture: Titles and Ranks Within the University



What is a full professor, a chancellor, a provost, a dean, etc....?? It can be very confusing when you first start your college career. Here are the highlights, along with links to give you more information if interested.

A **Chancellor** is the leader of the university; the executive head of the university. The chancellor is the academic and thought leader who leads the charge of the university, the CEO of the university and who is the major fundraiser of the university. Our Chancellor is Randy Woodson.

A **Provost** is the top academic officer – the provost leads NC State’s academic efforts and is responsible for the university’s 10 colleges, overseeing the review and approval of all academic programs and policies. Our Provost is Dr. Warwick Arden. You can learn more [here](#).

A **Dean** is the leader and administrator of the colleges that reside within the university (like the College of Sciences of the College of Engineering). A dean works with budgets and staffing and programming, but their main responsibility is academic oversight.

Each college within NC State has several departments, and each department is run by a **Department Head**. They represent their faculty colleagues to the administration and work on behalf of the programs and students that are served within their department.



Professors

The word comes from the latin prefix “pro” meaning forth or forward, and “frateri” meaning acknowledge or confess. A professor professes a knowledge of their specialty. There are two types of professors: research professors and teaching professors, although both types will engage in both research and teaching as part of their jobs. Their titles signify where the bulk of their efforts are placed. Research professors primarily engage in research and Teaching Professors in teaching. Professors will have earned their PhD (doctorate of philosophy) in a discipline and is considered an expert in that field. Professors will typically have the title Dr. in front of their name.

When professors begin their academic careers they start at the rank of Assistant Professor. Typically after 6 or 7 years, they may be promoted to the rank of Associate Professor. The highest rank comes after this with Full Professor (or just Professor).

Sometimes students get confused about the difference between a teacher and a professor. You may find [this](#) short article here of interest to help with that.

Instructors & Lecturers

There are also faculty who teach at the Instructor level, who do not usually conduct academic research. Lecturers, also do no engage in research, and generally teach one class a semester. Sometimes lecturers are employed outside the university and come to campus to teach a class based on their interest in teaching.

