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ALERT TOP STORY EDITOR'S PICK

## Greater Cabarrus Foundation created, Cabarrus College president picked to lead

FROM STAFF REPORTS

May 2, 2024

**C**ONCORD – After more than two years of discussions, studying, planning, and contemplation, several prominent Cabarrus County leaders have announced the formation of the Greater Cabarrus Foundation, as well as the inaugural leader.

The idea for a community foundation first emerged in 2022, when Bob Bratton, a retired banking executive, engaged community leader, and long-time resident of Cabarrus County began to think about the growth of Cabarrus County, the current community needs, and what those needs would be in the future.

“When one considers the growth trajectory of our community, and the future needs we will have for things like food, housing, education, and childcare, we need to begin pooling and accumulating resources to generate a sustainable long-term solution for these important community services,” Bratton said.

After sharing his thoughts and concerns with fellow community leaders, Bratton was able to recruit others to help join the cause and determine the viability of a community foundation. Together with Jan Beatty-Hendley, Britt Leatherman, Pat Horton, Holt Morrison, Doug Stafford, Kelly Propst, and Jon Yancey, the group hired the consulting firm HunterKemper to lead a feasibility study to determine if there was sufficient community interest in starting and supporting the first community

foundation dedicated to Cabarrus County. The results were convincing, and in February 2024, the group decided to proceed with the plans to launch the Greater Cabarrus Foundation.

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## **The role of a community foundation**

Community foundations are public charities that support a geographical area versus a single organization. They catalyze and expand giving in a multitude of ways that support local nonprofit organizations and drive positive change. Their deep understanding of local dynamics, combined with their flexibility and responsiveness, positions them as crucial partners in community development. With that as its organizational framework, the Greater Cabarrus Foundation will have three primary functions, fundraising, grant making, and collaboration.

With respect to fundraising and resource development, the Greater Cabarrus Foundation will work with donors to clarify what the donor wishes to accomplish and direct gifts for the exact purposes that are outlined by the donor thus aligning donor passion and intent with community needs.

By pooling donations, the Foundation will create more 'buying power' to address critical needs and to establish endowed funds that grow over time, thus supporting long-term sustainability.

The grantmaking function entails utilizing knowledge of community needs to strengthen the ecosystem of nonprofit organizations across Cabarrus County. The Foundation will focus grantmaking in support of Cabarrus nonprofits whose work addresses critical predictors for health and wellbeing. These include housing, food, access to medical care - including mental and behavioral health, safe and nurturing environments for children, the elderly and survivors of domestic violence, skill building, education, employment, and independent living.

The focus will be on providing increased and long-term support for operations and capital needs by providing a variety of grantmaking programs, frequently including donor-advised funds, a permanent community endowment fund, and various field of interest funds for specific nonprofits that address one or more of the social determinant issues.

The Foundation will have a particular focus on endowed giving, which will provide lasting operating support of these important nonprofit organizations which are helping to solve the greatest issues in our community.

According to board member Doug Stafford, a long-time county resident and hospitality industry executive, “contributions to the Foundation will not replace ongoing annual support but will create new opportunities through donations, pledges and legacy gifts to establish ‘gifts that keep in giving’ and that have a meaningful, long-term and positive impact on our community.”

Another important objective of the Foundation will be to support community collaboration. The approach will bring together various stakeholders – nonprofit organizations, businesses, government entities, donors, and community members – to collaborate on solutions and initiatives.

As an example of this community collaboration, Foundation board member and financial management executive, Jan Beatty-Hendley noted “to determine the most pressing needs in our community, the Greater Cabarrus Foundation will rely on the

Community Needs Assessment, which is produced every four years by the Cabarrus Health Alliance. This will ensure that the Foundation is addressing both current and future needs which lead to community health and a flourishing Cabarrus County.”

## **Leader selected**

To lead the new organization, the board of the Greater Cabarrus Foundation has selected Cam Cruickshank, Ph.D., who currently serves as the President of Cabarrus College of Health Sciences. Cruickshank will assume his new responsibilities at the Foundation on July 1.

“Cam is no stranger to non-profits, fundraising, or starting new organizations” said Greater Cabarrus Foundation board member and President of Yancey Financial, Jon Yancey. Cruickshank has over three decades of experience in non-profit organizations, including over 20-years as a higher education executive and as a board member in non-profit organizations such as the Salvation Army of Greater Charlotte and the Cabarrus Healthcare Foundation. His executive experience includes serving as a chief development officer at Madonna University, in Livonia Michigan where he and his team raised over \$10 million in three years while he served in that role.

“Cam also has extensive experience in start-up organizations and in launching new initiatives, as he has founded companies, a college within a university, a new branch campus, and dozens of new academic and extracurricular programs”, said Yancey. Since he arrived in Concord in 2020, Cruickshank has also used his know-how in start-up organizations by serving as a mentor to founders of companies who wish to grow and establish roots in Cabarrus County through the venture mentoring service (VMS) program at the Cabarrus Center for Entrepreneurship.

Cruickshank's efforts in fundraising at Cabarrus College resulted in a remarkable 189% increase in the number of college donors during his tenure. These fundraising successes also include the establishment of the 1942 Club, the alumni association for Cabarrus College, and several new endowed and institutional scholarships, which provided much-needed financial support for students.

In addition, Cabarrus College of Health Sciences was recently identified as a named beneficiary for the Cannon Charitable Trust, thereby providing preferred access to grant opportunities for capital projects through the Cannon Charitable Interests.

However, the hallmarks of Cruickshank's tenure at Cabarrus College have been both an incredible increase in enrollment and his unwavering commitment to fostering diversity and inclusivity. Under his stewardship, college has grown by over 50%, from 475 students in 2020 to over 760 students today. The population of students from ethnically diverse backgrounds also surged from 20% to 46%, reflecting a commitment to creating an inclusive learning community and eliminating educational disparities.

"I feel tremendously blessed to be a part of this great community. Cabarrus County is a special place, where people have great pride in the community and work together to solve problems and help one another. This opportunity to assist others in our community both today and in the future, and to help build and grow the Greater Cabarrus Foundation is a tremendous honor. I am extremely grateful and very much looking forward to getting started", said Cruickshank.



Cam Cruickshank

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