

**For Immediate Release**

## **College Advising Corps to Partner with Duke University to Reach Underserved Students in Rural North Carolina**

**Partnership Supported by Belk Endowment Gift**

**Durham, N.C. (March 5, 2014)** – The College Advising Corps (“Advising Corps”), a national non-profit based in Chapel Hill, announced today that it will be joining forces with Duke University to provide college advising to underserved students.

Duke, the 24th higher education institution to partner with the Advising Corps, will place recent college graduates as college advisers in underserved high schools in rural North Carolina. Duke joins the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, North Carolina State University and Davidson College as Advising Corps higher education partners in North Carolina. The addition of Duke, Davidson, and NC State, alongside long-time partner UNC-Chapel Hill, was made possible by a three-year, \$10 million grant from the new John M. Belk Endowment (“JMBE”).

Duke and other Advising Corps partners are addressing the dearth of college access guidance in American high schools. Studies show that the student-to-college adviser ratio in the United States is 467 to 1. The average student spends 20 minutes with a college counselor per year.

“We are thrilled to welcome Duke to the College Advising Corps,” said Advising Corps Founder and CEO Nicole Hurd. “Duke will be a great partner in ensuring that more North Carolina students have a post-secondary opportunity, strengthening the state’s workforce and economy.”

Duke will commit to recruiting 10 recent college graduates to serve as full-time advisers with the program, bringing the total number of advisers to almost 90 in North Carolina. The initiative will be administered by Duke’s Community Service Center, with participation from Duke’s Office of Civic Engagement. Many units across campus, including the Office of Financial Aid and Office of Admissions, will support the training and work of the college advisers.

“We at Duke are very excited to be partnering with the Belk Endowment and the Advising Corps to enhance college access in North Carolina,” said Eric Mlyn, the assistant vice provost for civic engagement at Duke. “This program is a natural fit for Duke and our commitment to using our resources to address some of our most pressing societal challenges. Our graduates will bring their knowledge and commitment to high schools around the state, and I speak for many colleagues here at Duke when I say that we are excited and ready to become part of the Advising Corps team.”

The partnership is made possible by JMBE’s \$10 million gift to the Advising Corps, announced last month at the White House College Access Summit. The JMBE grant aims to send more students from rural North Carolina high schools to college and other training programs with the goal of improving their futures and strengthening the workforce in their communities.

“Increasing college access for North Carolina's students requires our state's public and private colleges to lend their leadership, expertise and resources,” said Kristy Teskey, executive director for JMBE. “JMBE celebrates Duke's participation in this critical work.”

Duke’s commitment further supports the Advising Corps’ growth strategy for the upcoming years, which includes placing 474 advisers in 515 high schools and serving 165,000 students in the 2014-15 school year. The Corps commits to continue to scale over the next five years, with a growth target of 1,000 high school placements and 300,000 students served per year.

Duke is joining a program that has demonstrated significant impact in improving higher education access. A study by Stanford University showed that students who work with Advising Corps advisers are 73 percent more likely to apply to a 4-year institution of higher education and 67 percent more likely to be accepted to a college/university than a student who does not meet with an Advising Corps adviser.

### **About Duke University**

Duke University enrolls more than 14,000 students in its undergraduate, graduate and professional programs. The university has a strong commitment to applying knowledge in service to society, both near its Durham, N.C., campus and around the world.

For more information, please visit [www.duke.edu](http://www.duke.edu).

### **About the College Advising Corps**

The College Advising Corps, based in Chapel Hill, N.C., works to increase the number of low-income, first-generation college and underserved high school students who enter and complete higher education. To deliver on this mission, the College Advising Corps places well-trained, recent college graduates from 24 partner institutions of higher education as full-time college advisers in the nation’s underserved schools. The College Advising Corps provides the support that high school students need to navigate the complex processes of college admissions, securing financial aid and enrolling in schools that serve them well. For the 2013-14 school year, the Corps had 375 advisers in 423 high schools in 14 states serving 128,000 students. For more information, please visit [www.advisingcorps.org](http://www.advisingcorps.org).

### **About the John M. Belk Endowment**

Based in Charlotte, N.C., the John M. Belk Endowment is a private family foundation whose newly defined mission is to empower the 21<sup>st</sup> century workforce by creating pathways to prosperity for underrepresented students by increasing their access to and completion of higher educational opportunities in North Carolina. Beginning in 2014, the John M. Belk Endowment will award more than \$13 million annually in grants to programs and institutions aligned with this mission, which is based on the vision of its founder, the late John M. Belk. Mr. Belk served as the mayor of Charlotte and CEO of Belk Inc., the nation’s largest family-owned and-operated department store company. He created the John M. Belk Endowment in 1995 to fund a national merit scholarship program for his beloved alma mater, Davidson College. For more information, please visit [www.jmbendowment.org](http://www.jmbendowment.org).

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