East Carolina University

by James I. Martin Sr., 2006

See also: University of North Carolina System

North Carolina's only public university located in Greenville traces its origins to the East Carolina Teachers Training School, which came into existence amid substantial controversy in 1907. After competing with seven other localities, Greenville was chosen as the site for the campus, largely because of Pitt County's offer of 243 acres and $100,000 for a new facility. Much of the success of East Carolina during its initial years can be attributed to the dynamism of school president Robert Herring Wright, a Sampson County native who had studied at the University of North Carolina, Johns Hopkins, and Columbia University. Wright led East Carolina from 1909 to 1934. He inaugurated the institution's first four-year curriculum in 1920, and East Carolina Teachers Training School changed its name to East Carolina Teachers College the following year. In 1922 the first Bachelor of Arts degrees were awarded, and seven years later the first Master of Arts program came into existence.

By the early 2000s East Carolina University was the third-largest institution in the consolidated University of North Carolina System, with a total enrollment of nearly 20,000 students, 102 undergraduate degree programs, and 85 graduate degree programs. The School of Medicine, while addressing the health care concerns of the region, is also a pioneer in robotic surgery and telemedicine.

Reference:
