

## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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### **SECU Foundation Provides \$500,000 Grant for UNC School of Government Fellowship Pilot**

**Raleigh, N.C.** – A \$500,000 grant in support of Lead for North Carolina, a new pilot developed by the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill School of Government, was announced today by the member-funded SECU Foundation and the university. Representatives from State Employees' Credit Union and SECU Foundation joined UNC School of Government faculty and staff on campus for the formal announcement and check presentation made by SECU Foundation Board Chair Bob Brinson. The grant will assist with first-year funding for 20 college graduates to participate in the cohort program, which is designed to recruit young leaders in the state and provide them with training and placement in a two-year paid local government fellowship.



*Bob Brinson, SECU Foundation Board Chair (left) presents ceremonial check to Mike Smith, Dean of the UNC School of Government.*

The UNC School of Government is the largest university-based local government training, advisory, and research organization in the United States. Its non-partisan, policy-neutral work helps public officials and citizens understand and improve state and local government. The definitive goal of Lead for North Carolina is to improve the quality of life in underserved communities, cultivate the next generation of public service leaders, diversify government, and help bridge the public sector recruiting gap for government/public service organizations. Participating Lead for North Carolina SECU Fellows will be placed in small towns and counties across the state where community challenges and the need for young talent are the greatest.

“As strong supporters of education, we are proud to partner with the UNC School of Government for our first venture in education funding for college graduates,” commented Mr. Brinson. “This is an incredible opportunity for North Carolina’s young adult leaders interested in exploring public service careers to learn more about the inner workings of local government and the communities they serve. The Foundation’s grant is an investment in the future of our state, one that we hope will provide significant and long-term dividends for our state and citizens.”

“SECU Foundation’s investment in Lead for North Carolina will help attract young people to local government as a career and encourage college graduates to work in their hometowns or in distressed communities,” said Mike Smith, dean of the UNC School of Government. “Public officials have told us they need to expand their workforce, and I’m thrilled that SECU Foundation has chosen to invest in North Carolina communities by entrusting us with training, placing, and mentoring these fellows.”



“With a focus in Tier 1 counties, this is a valuable initiative to benefit future leaders in our state,” added SECU Foundation Executive Director Jama Campbell. “The Lead for North Carolina fellowship complements another Foundation project, the SECU Public Fellows Internship program, which ties into the same theme of connecting bright young talent with opportunities in rural communities. We are excited to help the UNC School of Government get their new program off the ground!”

*Jama Campbell*

### **About SECU and the SECU Foundation**

A not-for-profit financial cooperative owned by its members, SECU has been providing employees of the State of North Carolina and their families with consumer financial services for over 81 years. The Credit Union also offers a diversified line of financial advisory services including retirement and education planning, tax preparation, insurance, trust and estate planning services, and investments through its partners and affiliated entities. SECU serves over 2.3 million members through 265 branch offices, nearly 1,100 ATMs, 24/7 Member Services via phone and a website, [www.ncsecu.org](http://www.ncsecu.org). The SECU Foundation, a 501(c)(3) charitable organization funded by the contributions of SECU members, promotes local community development in North Carolina primarily through high impact projects in the areas of housing, education, healthcare and human services. Since 2004, SECU Foundation has made a collective financial commitment of more than \$154 million for initiatives to benefit North Carolinians statewide.