

Leslie Boney Bio

Leslie Boney serves as Vice President for International, Community and Economic Engagement, developing systemwide initiatives to connect university international program offices, public service officers and lead economic development representatives with each other and with external partners. He works with the University Council on International Programs, the NC Center for International Understanding and UNC Exchange Programs to increase UNC's connectedness to the world, and boost international student recruitment and travel abroad. He brings together campus engagement coordinators to increase responsiveness to community needs. And he coordinates the UNC Economic Transformation Council to increase systemwide and regional economic development partnerships. Other activities include include coordinating UNC's efforts to enhance entrepreneurship on campus and throughout the state and working with the UNC research office to increase and improve innovation and technology transfer throughout the system.

Prior to joining UNC, Mr. Boney was a senior associate with MDC, Inc., a nonprofit research firm specializing in economic and workforce development, where he managed a two-state rural development initiative for the Duke Endowment and co-managed a study of rural poverty with Duke University's Terry Sanford Institute of Public Policy.

In earlier positions, he was executive director of Policy, Research and Strategic Planning for the North Carolina Department of Commerce and staff director for the 25-member North Carolina Rural Prosperity Task Force, which, led by Erskine Bowles, developed a series of recommendations to re-energize rural economic development in the state. As director of the Commerce Work First Project, he led a successful effort to get North Carolina businesses to hire and retain more than 16,000 welfare recipients and helped develop a statewide "Next Steps" initiative to assist transitioning welfare recipients in career advancement. As Governor Hunt's director of Community Involvement, he led the development of the statewide Support Our Students initiative, a statewide mentoring program for at-risk middle school students.

He currently serves as Governor Perdue's appointee to the Southern Growth Policies Board and as the University's representative on the N.C. Economic Development Board. In addition he is a member of the board of the Center for International Understanding, the Rural Economic Development Center, the NC Board of Science and Technology, on the Governor's Innovation Council and the Governor's China Council. He also serves on the board of two private nonprofits: the Food Bank of Central and Eastern North Carolina and the Rural Faith-Based Community Development Corporation board.

A former reporter and high school teacher, Mr. Boney's published work includes articles on economic, workforce and community development.

Mr. Boney received his B.A. in English and Psychology from Amherst College. He is a native of Wilmington, NC and lives in Raleigh with his wife and twin children.

Short version:

Leslie Boney is a North Carolina native who grew up cheering for the ACC and David Thompson.

He's spent most of his adult life developing policy for and running programs in the state, for projects ranging from volunteer development to afterschool programs to welfare reform to poverty reduction. Most of his work has focused on economic development, with a leaning toward rural economic development.

After jobs with the NC Governor's Office, the state Department of Commerce and with MDC, he now works for Erskine Bowles at the UNC System office, in charge of the University's Economic Development and Engagement work.

Leslie serves on the state Economic Development Board, the Rural Center Board, the state Board of Science and Technology, the Governor's Innovation Council, the Southern Growth Policies Board, the Rural Faith-Based CDC and the Food Bank. In his free time, he blogs on innovation policy and chases 10-year-old twins around his house in Raleigh.