

cover  
story  
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# NET GAIN



When Major League Soccer announced plans last November to bring a “NEXT Pro” team to the Triad, Reese McCormick '23 (Marketing) was ready with her resume. As it turned out, her lifetime of soccer experience, her marketing degree and recent internships came together to provide the winning shot on goal.

McCormick, who graduated in May, is now the marketing and partnership coordinator with the Triad’s new professional soccer team: Carolina Core FC. Based in High Point, Carolina Core FC will kick off its inaugural season in 2024, serving as a professional development league on the pathway to MLS and bringing professional soccer to the region.

“It’s an absolute dream job,” says McCormick, who has played soccer since she was 4 and coached for many years. She now has a front row seat to the development of an exciting new sports offering here that will be the nation’s 28th MLS NEXT Pro team. “Instead of having to go to Raleigh or Charlotte, people from anywhere in the Triad can now go 30 minutes down the road and have a chance to watch professional soccer,” McCormick says. “I get to come to work and talk about soccer and all my passions while marketing the area I grew up in.”

## Transfer Window

McCormick attended High Point’s Wesleyan Christian Academy, where she played soccer, before heading off to play briefly at the University of South Carolina at Aiken. After a semester, she decided she wanted to be closer to home and have more time to focus on academics, so she transferred to UNC Greensboro’s Bryan School of Business and Economics. While there, she excelled as a student and as a Team Leader in the School’s unique offering called the Blueprint Series.

The series, required for the majority of Bryan students, takes students through four professional development courses focusing on competencies employers are looking for in new hires. Students

learn to identify their own personal strengths and values, build their communication and problem-solving skills, write resumes and cover letters, develop networks and even practice interviewing for jobs. UNCG is the only school in NC to require this type of for-credit course, which is co-taught by student Team Leaders selected for their high GPAs and leadership skills.

## Practice Makes Perfect

In addition to serving as a Team Leader, McCormick has helped train other students to lead in the program. She was a perfect fit for that role because she took ownership immediately, worked hard and committed herself to her goals, says Maggie Breitenbach, the undergraduate professional development specialist with the Bryan School. “Reese leads authentically, which has made it possible for other students to see themselves as leaders. She’s helped educate her peers on why soft skills – such as how to effectively communicate, lead and solve problems – are so important.”

McCormick relied on these skills herself to land three distinct internships while in school, including one that she co-created with her employer to fill a need. She worked with Imago Dei Soccer Academy, overseeing social media and marketing for U23 teams and successfully growing social media engagement by 632 percent. She followed that with a graphic design internship, designing brochures and marketing materials for Kotis Properties. Finally, she worked at Mack Trucks as a communications specialist intern.

All that led to a role in the front office of what can seem like an episode of *Ted Lasso*. She and Breitenbach hope her trajectory serves as a model for other students in the Blueprint Series.

“Reese truly has taken this program to heart, put in the work and now she’s seeing those incredible results,” Breitenbach says. “She’s shown students that if you buy into what we’re teaching here, you can get your dream job before you even graduate.” ■

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Reese McCormick  
'23 (Marketing)



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