

POWERING PROGRESS

BRYAN SCHOOL AND VOLVO TEAM UP TO TRAIN PROCUREMENT LEADERS

Behind every Volvo or Mack truck headed down the highway is a staggering supply chain: nearly \$6 billion spent annually, 50,000 parts, and 3,600 suppliers. After payroll, it's the company's biggest expense – and the most mission-critical.

LUKE MCGALLIARD '03
Senior Talent
Acquisition Partner,
Volvo Group

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NEW PATHS IN PROCUREMENT AND SUPPLY CHAIN

The Bryan School's new degree offerings in strategic procurement and supply chain management include:

- An **undergraduate concentration** within the major of information systems and supply chain management.
- A **graduate-level concentration** within the information technology and management master's degree program.
- A **graduate certificate** intended for professionals who want to enhance their skills through online study.

feature story

PHOTOGRAPHY BY BERT VANDERVEEN
WRITTEN BY DAWN MARTIN



inding professionals who can manage procurement complexity isn't just helpful – it's essential. That's why Volvo Group Purchasing North America has teamed with the Bryan School of Business and Economics to shape the next generation of strategic procurement leaders.

Thanks to the partnership, the school offers two new robust concentrations and one graduate certificate within the Department of Information Systems and Supply Chain Management. The programs are intended to better train students for the evolving field of purchasing, also known as procurement.

"The need for this type of expertise has really exploded in the marketplace," says Sam Chinnis, a lecturer in information systems and supply chain management. "As operations and supply chain become more globally complex, procurement becomes more of a strategic position. It goes far beyond a buyer functionality. Together, Volvo Group Purchasing and the Bryan School have been very proactive in addressing this demand."

Discussions began in March 2024 when the Volvo Group's chief procurement officer visited the company's North American site from its global headquarters in Sweden. Recognizing a growing need for local professionals who could adapt to complex supply chain issues and drive results, she challenged the company's Greensboro talent acquisition team: Could they develop a strategic purchasing program with a local university?

Luke McGalliard '03, a senior leader in talent acquisition for Volvo Group Purchasing North America, immediately thought of the Bryan School. A 2003 Bryan School graduate, McGalliard knew of Volvo and UNCG's well-established partnership. The two entities have long worked together to develop students through career fairs, alumni networking opportunities, and discussion panels. Today, Volvo is one of the leading employers of Bryan School graduates, and about 300 of its employees are UNCG alumni.

While the Bryan School already offered training in purchasing, there was an opportunity to increase the program's strategic focus. Companies now need supply chain professionals who understand the role procurement plays in a business' goals. Graduates should know how to manage supplier relations, negotiate complex contracts, and work with ever-changing international trade regulations. Success requires the ability to network, collaborate with others, manage projects, understand the impact of AI, and adapt to industry transformation.

The newly designed programs will be a win-win for students as well as area companies, McGalliard says.

"This allows employers to build a bench for these early career professionals upon graduation," he says. "At the same time, we have the chance to open students' eyes to existing opportunities and the need companies have for this talent." Likewise, the online certificate provides a way for those already in the profession to bolster their knowledge and potentially grow their careers.

By focusing on procurement, the new curriculum offerings also differentiate the Bryan School's supply chain program from other universities in the region, Chinnis adds. He believes the new focus will better prepare students for jobs, not only at Volvo but also at other manufacturing firms that seek talent to thrive in a global marketplace.

"I'm hoping it's going to help be a better fit for some of these jobs that are out there," Chinnis says. "It should give these students an edge interviewing and landing these jobs that they wouldn't have otherwise had." ■