Sharon L. Gaber, Ph.D., is the fifth chancellor of the University of North Carolina at Charlotte. Known as North Carolina’s urban research university, it leverages its location in the state’s largest city to offer internationally competitive programs of research and creative activity, exemplary undergraduate, graduate, and professional programs, and a focused set of community engagement initiatives. UNC Charlotte maintains a particular commitment to addressing the cultural, economic, educational, environmental, health, and social needs of the greater Charlotte region.

With a student population soon to exceed 30,000 (due to a 33% increase in enrollment since 2009), it is the fastest-growing — and third-largest — institution in the 17-member University of North Carolina System. Its diverse student body, 37% of whom are first-generation college students, comes from 47 states and 105 countries.

An academic with a background in city and regional planning, Gaber was named by Education Dive one of five higher education leaders to watch in 2018 and beyond. She is recognized nationally for her efforts as president of the University of Toledo to increase enrollment, improve graduation and retention rates, keep education affordable, increase research funding, improve connection to the surrounding metro region and make the campus environment diverse and inclusive. Prior to her five years in Toledo, Gaber served as provost and vice chancellor for academic affairs at the University of Arkansas. She has also been an interim provost at Auburn University and a faculty member and administrator for the University of Nebraska-Lincoln.

Gaber earned an A.B. in Economics and Urban Studies at Occidental College. She received an M.P.L. in Urban Planning from the University of Southern California and a Ph.D. from Cornell University in City & Regional Planning.

Gaber is the author of articles on regional and urban planning, public policy and the social dynamics that affect community decision-making. She also is co-author of a book on planning research methods. Deeply engaged in community and regional activities, she has served as the Mid-American Conference representative on the Division 1 NCAA President’s Forum and as a member of the NCAA Strategic Plan Committee. She was named a YWCA Northwest Ohio Milestone award recipient for women’s leadership in 2020.

Officially the first woman to serve as chancellor of UNC Charlotte, Gaber follows the trail blazed by founding educator Bonnie Cone, who led the institution from 1946-1966 through several stages of growth.