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Research Triangle Foundation names Geolas as its new CEO

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A familiar face to the Triangle business community is returning to the market to become the new president and CEO of the **Research Triangle Foundation** of North Carolina.

Bob Geolas, the executive director of **Clemson University's** International Center for Automotive Research, has been selected by the Research Triangle Foundation board to succeed Rick Weddle, who left in February to take a new job in Orlando. He starts the week of Nov. 28.

RTF's interim President and CEO Liz Rooks remains on staff and will return to her previous position as executive vice president of the foundation.

Geolas, a graduate of N.C. State University and a native of Raleigh, served as director of N.C. State University's Centennial Campus Partnership Office from 2000 until 2004 before he took the job at Clemson University in Clemson, S.C. In addition to his role as director of CU-ICAR, Geolas was also associate vice president for economic development for Clemson University.

Geolas, 47, described his appointment as the top leader at Research Triangle Park as "the ultimate job."

"When I found out I was being offered the job, I was immediately humbled," he says. "This is the park I grew up with, and anybody who has lived here knows how the park has been transformational for our state. And to have the opportunity to help shape that vision for the next 50 years is a tremendous opportunity."

While Geolas was at Clemson, CU-ICAR's 250-acre research park generated nearly \$250 million in investments and \$500 million in development, creating more than 2,300 new jobs, according to the university. Corporate partners with operations on the campus include BMW, Hubbell Lighting and St. Francis Health System.

John Kelly, Clemson University vice president for economic development, said in a written statement issued Nov. 8 that Geolas played a central role elevating CU-ICAR from a green field concept to a leader in advanced automotive research and education through its public-private partnerships.

While at Centennial Campus, Geolas directed campus operations and coordinated development of nearly 1.5 million square feet of space for its university facilities, government agencies and corporate partners.

The Research Triangle Foundation is the owner and manager of the 7,000-acre Research Triangle Park corporate park located midway between Raleigh and Durham. RTP was founded in 1959 and has more than 170 companies employing more than 38,000 workers. RTP's largest tenants include IBM, **GlaxoSmithKline**, Cisco, **RTI International** and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency.



TBJ FILE PHOTO

Bob Geolas, shown in this file photo from his days working at Centennial Campus, will be the new CEO at the Research Triangle Foundation.