

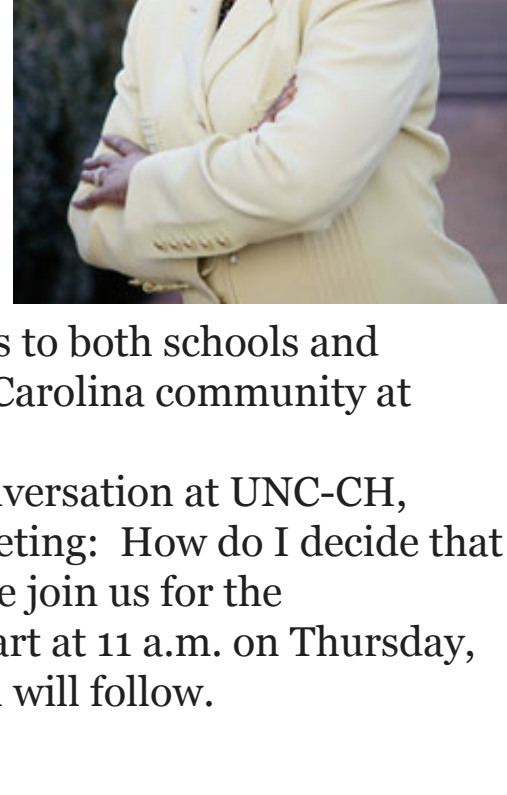
In this newsletter

- [A report on AROHE and the RFA.](#)
- [Let's recruit colleagues from other schools](#)

An important conversation on diversity and belonging

Who gets to “belong” at UNC-Chapel Hill? On Nov. 15, we’ll discuss that simple but complex question with Dr. G. Rumay Alexander, the University’s associate vice chancellor and chief diversity officer.

Dr. Alexander, who is also a professor of nursing, is widely recognized as a national leader in advocacy for inclusive excellence in academia. At UNC-CH, she has pioneered many successful initiatives, with hundreds of participants, including “Difficult Conversations” for students, staff and faculty, “Diversity Syllabi” for the Faculty Council, and recent THINKposium gatherings on topics such as implicit bias, the “lived experience” of racial difference and belonging. She has also provided important information on the need for diversity across multiple dimensions to both schools and departments on campus and to the Carolina community at large.



She has built a culture of honest conversation at UNC-CH, which she is sure to bring to our meeting: How do I decide that I might, or might not, belong? Please join us for the conversation. The discussion will start at 11 a.m. on Thursday, Nov. 15, in the Friday Center. Lunch will follow.

Meeting registration

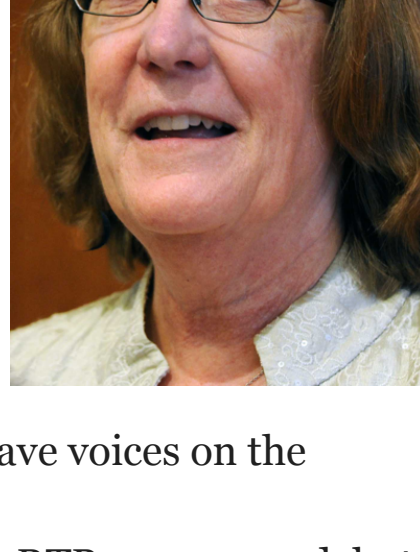
Please SIGN UP for the Nov. 15 meeting at the Friday Center from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. on “Belonging” with Dr. G. Rumay Alexander. We need your RSVP by Thursday, Nov. 8, so we will know how much food to order. Please sign up now while you are thinking about it! Simply [click here](#). (If the link fails, send a message to rfa@unc.edu with your name, and the name(s) of any guests you plan to bring.) Please plan to pay \$20 per person by cash or check at the door.

The President’s Letter

Uncertainties on the way forward

I attended a powerful discussion recently at the Sonja Haynes Stone Center on “Rebuilding Community” with speakers from the University of Virginia (Deborah McDowell) and Georgetown University (Marcia Chatelain), who help guide their universities on issues relating to their racial histories.

It reinforced for me the scope of the task ahead: restructuring a public university so that it is built on the values of inquiry, discovery, creativity and communication, regardless of the source of the ideas. Since all universities (including UNC-CH) were founded without such a commitment, the initial restructuring may be viewed as disruptive, even though the underlying values are clearly shared. Despite the obstacles the speakers described, I also saw some hints of ways forward for UNC-CH:



1. Address policies and procedures (we have voices on the Faculty Council).
2. Identify pressure points (companies in RTP were named, but you may know of others).
3. Involve everyone, from students to (especially) retirees.

In my nearly 40-year association with UNC-CH, I know of no other moment when it has been more important to be informed and to be engaged. We have the opportunity here to focus on the value of disruption, the value of a “reset.” During our meeting on Nov. 15, we can take the first step to help guide the campus and contribute our experiences.

The first step is “Belonging.” Yes, it is seemingly a small step, but it is essential. Unlike the results of the election (I can’t believe I need to write this letter without knowing those), or the next steps on UNC-CH Confederate monument (also unknown to me), I DO know that we have some power, especially if we feel that we all belong.

We will be guided in this discussion by G. Rumay Alexander, associate vice chancellor and chief diversity officer (see article above). Please join us on Nov. 15 at the Friday Center. The meeting will begin at 11, and lunch will be served at noon. Please REGISTER by clicking on [this link](#). (If you have problems, you may email rfa@unc.edu with your name, and the name(s) of any guests you plan to bring.) We will arrange to have a parking pass sent to you in advance of the meeting.

— Pat Pukkila



A newcomer looks at AROHE

Barbara Moran, former dean of the School of Library and Information Science, attended the AROHE conference in Atlanta on Oct. 7-9, on behalf of the UNC RFA. Here is her report:

This was the ninth biennial conference of the Association of Retirement Organizations in Higher Education, but it was my first AROHE conference. I went to make a presentation about the UNC-CH Retired Faculty Seminar sponsored by RFA and the Institute for Arts and Humanities. There was a great deal of interest in the presentation and the presentation meshed well with one of the themes of the conference: “Transforming the All Important Transition to Retirement.” About 170 people attended AROHE, representing retirement organizations from across the U.S. and Canada.

I knew very little about AROHE before the conference but left with a wealth of information not only about the various types of retirement organizations that exist but also about the many innovative and helpful ways these organizations support the well-being of retired faculty and staff. I learned that there are many “flavors” of retirement organizations, for example, some that only include faculty but others that also include staff. The organizations range in size from fairly small ones to others (such as the one at the University of Washington) with over 2,000 members. Retirement associations also vary in their organizational structures, staffing patterns and funding. There is just as much variety in the programs that are being offered by these organizations and, unfortunately, I don’t have space to cover all the useful programs and projects that were discussed.

I was especially interested in some of the programs designed to prepare faculty to make the transition to

retirement, including a program at Emory that provides peer mentors to new retirees and another at Berkeley where an experimental Resilient Aging Lab has been established. I was also very impressed with the examples of both printed and online information that various retirement organizations had produced to help faculty and staff preparing to enter retirement. One of the themes that came up over and over at the conference was that individuals nearing retirement need to be offered information more than once, and the information should be provided using multiple formats. There is no one “right” way to help individuals transition to retirement, and universities and retirement organizations should continue to explore the most effective ways of ensuring that all employees nearing retirement are adequately informed not only about factual things such as changes in benefits but also about the psychosocial changes that result from entering this new stage in life.

Another interesting group of presentations focused on legacy projects; these are programs that highlight the academic legacy of retiring faculty. For instance, some institutions provide funding for the creation of capstone or legacy projects of scholarly or creative work, and others assist retirees in recording oral histories and establishing archives relating to their history at the institution. Attending the AROHE conference broadened my perspectives and left me with great respect for the interesting and important work being done by retirement organizations. More information about the conference and about AROHE can be found at <https://www.arohe.org/>.

Bring Our Colleagues Aboard

From Don Stedman, a former RFA president and our liaison to the UNC system.

RFA Friends: As you well know, the Research Triangle is chock full of academic and professional talent. That includes the faculty of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. But it also includes hundreds of retirees of faculties of colleges and universities outside North Carolina who retired here because of our rich academic, cultural, health and research resources. Or they may be Tar Heels who are returning home after a long and successful career on the faculty or senior administrations of other institutions of higher education like ours. These colleagues are welcome to join our RFA as associate members. As you go about your work and socializing here, keep this in mind. As you meet retirees from other universities, think about recommending that they join RFA. Our RFA website tells who is eligible and how they might join us. Or just send me their names and contact information, along with your recommendation. I will contact them to see if they would like to be considered.

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