

## Peacock, James L III

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**From:** RFA  
**Sent:** Saturday, October 1, 2022 3:05 PM  
**Subject:** UNC Retired Faculty Association -- Newsletter (September 2022)

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## RFA Newsletter

*University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill*

Vol. 15, No. 3, September 2022

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### **The President's Letter**

#### **Engaging and Empowering Retired Faculty Members**

Another Fall semester has begun, and with it, a fresh start for the Retired Faculty Association. After two and a half years of Covid-restricted Zoom gatherings, being back together brings welcome new energy and renewal of our sense of community with one another as well as re-engagement with the university.

We have just had our September meeting in person at the Friday Center, highlighted by a lively talk by Vivienne Benesch, Artistic Director of UNC's Playmakers Repertory Company: "Such Stuff as Dreams Are Made On."

Our Faculty Council has just passed a strong resolution on freedom of speech by faculty members, and on the responsibility of University leaders to support and protect them in exercising that freedom, drawing in part on language suggested by the RFA Executive

Committee.

The Associate Provost for Digital and Lifelong Learning, Todd Nicolet, and the Friday Center staff recently hosted a welcome-back reception for all retired faculty members. He invited their assistance in increasing access to UNC educational offerings for all North Carolinians throughout their lives, both in person and online. Executive Vice Provost Amy Locklear Hertel also spoke, emphasizing the Provost's commitment to supporting and advocating for the faculty and the value of the retired faculty to the University; and she encouraged members of the Retired Faculty Association to take active roles in the life of the university.

Carolina Public Humanities has offered a 50% discount for RFA members to nearly all its programs.

The Graduate School has invited us to identify retired faculty speakers for a panel on academic careers, and to suggest judges for a "Three Minute Thesis" (3MT) competition.

And additional opportunities are available for RFA members to partner with other UNC units: see the RFA website under "Volunteer opportunities" and "Educational opportunities."

UNC now has more than 1,000 retired faculty members. We are a resource of shared experiences and values to one another, as well as an under-utilized asset to the university: we are the mentors the students and alumni(ae) remember, and an oral history resource of the university's values and traditions.

My hope for this year is that more of our emeritus/emerita faculty will join the Retired Faculty Association, and that all our members will choose to be more active in it: creating community with one another, voicing your concerns and suggestions, and participating in the life of the University. The RFA is intended to serve all our retired faculty members: come join us in making it so. <https://uncrfa.web.unc.edu/wp-content/uploads/sites/5536/2020/12/RFA-Membership-Form-Newfillable.pdf>

-- Pete Andrews

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Save the date: Next RFA meeting is Thursday, November 10th, 12:00-2:00 pm.

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## Nominations Invited for the RFA Leadership Award

Retired faculty members are invited to nominate candidates for the **Retired Faculty Association Leadership Award**. The award is given in alternate years to honor a retired faculty member or administrator at UNC-Chapel Hill who has shown unusual leadership in serving the retired faculty community, the university, and/or the wider community. Nominations should include the names of the nominee and nominator; position or status of each, a statement of the qualifications of the nominee for the award; curriculum vitae or resume of the nominee, and contact information for the nominator, the nominee and one or two additional individuals who could provide letters in support of the nomination. **The deadline for nominations is October 31.** Please submit nominations to Professor Emeritus James Peacock ([peacock@unc.edu](mailto:peacock@unc.edu)) and Pete Andrews ([pete.andrews@unc.edu](mailto:pete.andrews@unc.edu)).



## Vivienne Benesch Headlines RFA's September Meeting

Talk about a dramatic opening! Fulsomely introduced by longtime PlayMakers favorite and now fellow RFA member Ray Dooley, the star speaker at our first RFA luncheon meeting of the new semester was Vivienne Benesch, Producing Artistic Director of the PlayMakers Repertory Company and a professor of the practice in UNC's Department of Dramatic Arts. (That's three full-time jobs, if you're counting. Most theatre groups have an artistic

director *and* a managing director.) Energy, enthusiasm, compassion, and a sharp mission focus were all on display as Viv talked about PRC's 100-year history (think Prof Koch and Paul Green and even Thomas Wolfe) and gave us a glimpse of where the company is headed under her leadership.

Most people don't know that UNC boasts the second oldest department of drama in the nation. And PlayMakers is one of the last resident theatre companies still operating in the United States. Working alongside and learning from a faculty and staff of professional actors, designers, artisans, and scholars are emerging talents from three graduate programs: the Professional Actor Training Program plus the Technical Production and Costume Production Programs. Viv made the not-inaccurate analogy to a "teaching hospital" for professional theatre artists, also one of very few such programs in the country.

Most of her focus for the present and future was on greater community involvement, defining "community" more broadly. Yes, more interaction with other campus institutions and yes, involvement with more parts of Chapel Hill, but also yes, well beyond those natural connections. "Radical inclusion" is how she puts one of her goals, particularly of underserved populations. As one of her first acts, Viv put PlayMakers Mobile back on the road to "engage communities outside our theatre walls, free." She believes that "everyone should be able to access theatre." She also talked about "expanding what we perceive theatre to be." She wants to create "brave spaces, not just safe spaces." Theatre should be a place of both entertainment and debate, she said. She wants PlayMakers to engage audiences not just passively. "We want people to be sharp, curious, and aware," she said.

Her passion for the theatre shone through with every line. Her touchstone was a line from Prospero in Shakespeare's *The Tempest*: "Such stuff as dreams are made of." The text of her talk can be found on the RFA website under the "Member News" tab. – Bob Lauterborn

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## [Report from Faculty Council](#)

Chair of the Faculty Mimi Chapman welcomed everyone to the September 9 meeting of Faculty Council, and introduced new students and staff leaders.

Provost Christopher Clemens reported on a variety of university issues. He reiterated his commitment to support the faculty as his primary job. He has reorganized the Provost's Office to focus on faculty support. One of his initiatives is to put more resources into the Center for Faculty Excellence to elevate its visibility so that it can, for instance, create formal committees to reward faculty accomplishments and nominate them for honors. In combination with other university resources, the Provost's Office has restored the funding to the university libraries.

Provost Clemens welcomed the six new incoming deans in the School of Dentistry, the College of Arts and Sciences, the Gillings School of Global Public Health, the Hussmann School of Journalism and Media, the School of Nursing, the School of Social Work, as well as the new head of the UNC Graduate School. He also announced the new School of Data Science and Society as well as expanding Digital and Lifelong Learning, and reported on the progress to be in better compliance with Americans with Disabilities Act guidelines. Finally, he elaborated on his three guiding principles: solidarity, shared governance and grace.

Mimi Chapman led a discussion on Free Speech Issues on Campus, including a number of recent AAUP report listening sessions, focused on faculty perceptions of being silenced on a variety of issues related to their teaching and research. She introduced Professor Michael Gerhardt from the law school to discuss free speech and the First Amendment, including speaking a citizen rather than for the university and the role of balanced speech at universities. He reported that his testimony during President Trump's impeachment trial resulted in many threats against him, but he persisted.

Professor Eric Muller introduced **Resolution 2022-5: On the Right and Duty of Faculty Members to Speak Freely and the Duty of the University to Protect Faculty Speech**. This resolution reaffirmed the right and duty of faculty members to speak publicly on matters of local, regional, national, and international importance; the right to indicate their university affiliation in doing so, so long as they do not indicate that they speak for the University as an institution; and the responsibility of the University and its leaders to advocate for and defend the rights of faculty members to speak and write on all matters within the ambit of their research, teaching, and service. The resolution was unanimously approved with two edits to the original document, including safeguarding the safety of those who speak publicly and also stating that the resolution applied to all faculty members of any designation. (click this [link](#) to the Faculty Council agenda, and a copy of the original resolution 2022-5).

The final agenda item was a closed session on Honorary Degrees and Awards.  
-- Lynne Vernon-Feagans

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## Retired faculty members can audit classes at UNC. Here's how.

Persons who have reached the age of 65 or older are eligible to audit a UNC class at no cost. They must fill out a drop/add registration form and then bring the permission to the Office of the University Registrar to complete the process. Audit requests will only be accepted after the end of the official registration period (Last Day for students to add a class or late register) when it has been determined that there is still space available in the class.

You will be asked to provide additional information [full name, date of birth etc.] when you bring the drop/add form to the Registrar's office. This information will be used to register you as an auditor. A copy of the registration transaction will be given to the student if requested to provide to the class instructor at the beginning of the term.

To audit courses in the professional schools you will need to speak with the individual school to get the add form signed by the instructor and department chair and the bio-demo form completed. The Registrar at those professional schools should have those forms.

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## Friday Center Daytime Enrichment Courses

The Retired Faculty Association is a partner in the UNC Friday Center's commitment to lifelong learning, both digital and in person, and both as instructors and participants. Registration for the Friday Center's Fall 2022 Daytime Enrichment Courses is now available; costs range from \$15 to \$45 per course. Explore and register at

<https://register.fridaycenter.unc.edu/curriculum/programArea/pagePersonalEnrichmentMain.jsp>



## Meet an RFA Member

A partnership between the Retired Faculty Association and UNC Press has allowed the republishing of out-of-print books by UNC retired faculty who believe their previously published book/s might be of interest in today's world.

Lynne Vernon-Feagans, a recent retired faculty and RFA executive committee member, has just successfully republished her book *Children's Talk in Communities and Classrooms* that was originally published by Blackwell in 1996.

Her book traces the transition to school for a group of low wealth Black children as well as a matched set of children from more privileged backgrounds in the Chapel Hill area. The book describes in detail the actual language the children used in their home neighborhoods and in their classrooms, combined with other important family and child school competency data. Both quantitative and qualitative methods were used to analyze the data.

Results suggested that these Black children's language and school competencies were similar to or actually superior to the language and school competencies of the children from more privileged backgrounds. The Black children's competence was especially evident in their neighborhood storytelling and interactions with others, as well as their competence on school- like tasks.

Unfortunately, the classroom teachers in the schools did not often



recognize these superior competencies, and this clearly impacted the Black children's feelings about themselves as learners in school. Discussion focuses on the misconceptions about low wealth and Black children during the 1990s and the discrimination the children often faced in making the transition to school. The findings in this book seem particularly relevant today as young children of color still face challenging subtle racism in the classroom and elsewhere.

John McLeod of UNC Press and Professor Emeritus James Peacock are the key people involved in the republishing effort. Previous republished books include one by Professor Dorothy Holland and others about the desegregation of Durham schools: by Professor James Peacock on Muslim fundamentalists in Indonesia, and by Professors Ruel Tyson and James Peacock on Primitive Baptists in the Blue Ridge mountains. **Contact Jim Peacock ([peacock@unc.edu](mailto:peacock@unc.edu)) if interested in republishing a book.** – Lynne Vernon-Feagans

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## **[Carolina Center for Public Service Invites Retired Faculty Members to Volunteer](#)**

The [Carolina Center for Public Service](#) invites retired Carolina faculty to join them in their work of connecting the energy and expertise of both the University and the community to provide students, faculty and staff with deep and transformative experiences and working to create collaborative and interdisciplinary solutions to local and global challenges. Retired faculty support this work by reviewing applications and nominations for scholarships, awards and fellowships, offering their expertise in guest lectures for service-learning courses or community engagement programs and offering non-academic skills trainings that help equip students with the capacity to become more effective in their service work. **Contact [ccps@unc.edu](mailto:ccps@unc.edu) if you are interested in getting involved with the Center in any of these ways** or sign up for the

Public Service News [here](#) in order to stay updated on their programs as well as opportunities promoted by community partner organizations.

## Updated Faculty Retirement Planning Guide

An updated, downloadable version of the **UNC Faculty Retirement Planning Guide** was recently posted on the UNC Human Resources website at [https://hr.unc.edu/wp-content/uploads/sites/222/2022/08/OHR21\\_Retirement\\_Guide\\_08.19.22.pdf](https://hr.unc.edu/wp-content/uploads/sites/222/2022/08/OHR21_Retirement_Guide_08.19.22.pdf) . Its most extensive new text appears under **Retired Faculty Privileges**. This reflects a May 2022 UNC Faculty Council Resolution supported by the RFA that clarifies rights and privileges of faculty retirees, especially about how emeritus/emmerita status should be granted.



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