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RFA Newsletter

University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill

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The President's Letter

Emerging from Covid, Re-membering our RFA Community

At UNC and in Orange and other surrounding counties, Covid is now at a low ebb; all of North Carolina, in fact is now rated as “low” risk for covid by the U.S. Centers for Disease Control.

With this welcome news, it has been a real joy to begin to recreate our retired faculty community in person. Those who attended our September and November meetings have been treated to unusually stimulating talks by two outstanding leaders of Carolina’s performing arts organizations, as well as the pleasure of getting together with each other once again.

At our September luncheon meeting, we heard an inspiring talk by Vivienne Benesch about the past, present and future of UNC’s Playmakers Repertory Company (her talk is also posted on the RFA website). And at our recent November meeting, we heard an equally stimulating talk by Alison Friedman about her past experiences with arts management in China and her vision as executive and artistic director of Carolina Performing Arts (see highlights below).

We also are discovering more and more University programs that would welcome the involvement of retired faculty members. The Philosophy Department is eager for retired faculty to serve as judges for the North Carolina High School Ethics Bowl competition in January; no experience necessary. The Sheps Center for Health Sciences Research is seeking volunteers over 75 years old to participate in a major NIH research study on the potential value of statins for preventing dementia in older adults. Both the Retired Faculty Seminar and the Retired Faculty Conversations group are starting up in the Spring semester. And the Intergenerational Philosophy course will be taught again in the Spring semester, and is eager to have retired faculty participate. See announcements of all these opportunities below.

We can do so much more together as a community of retired faculty when we can gather and exchange ideas in person. At our next meeting, on February 16, our speaker will be Professor Nick Law of the Department of Physics and Astronomy, and at our April 20 meeting we hope to announce the 2023 winner of the RFA’s Leadership Award and elect next year’s officers. Please save the dates, and join us!

In the meantime, the RFA Executive Committee and I wish all of you peaceful, healthy, and enjoyable holidays. – Pete Andrews

Save the date: Next RFA meeting is Thursday, February 16th, 12:00-2:00 pm.



Alison Friedman Headlines RFA's November Meeting

At our November 17 meeting, Alison Friedman gave a dazzling talk about her initiatives in promoting cross-cultural understanding through the performing arts in China over the past two decades, and how that experience led her to become executive and artistic director for Carolina Performing Arts in 2021. She also shared some of the highlights of the upcoming Spring 2023 CPA season.

There is a passionate through line to Alison's career and her vision for Carolina Performing Arts, which is building bridges through the arts: building bridges between nations, such as between China and the U.S. despite their governments' policy differences; building bridges between cultures and communities, such as across racial and ethnic divides in the U.S.; and building bridges among academic disciplines and with other university units.

Motivated by a high school course in the Chinese language, a comparative Chinese literature major at Brown, and a Fulbright fellowship to study performing arts in China, in 2009 she founded Ping Pong Productions, an arts organization based in Beijing. Over the course of eight years, her organization brought to China many performing groups, including for instance a production of *Top Secret: The Battle for the Pentagon Papers* by the L.A. Theatre Works, a production of *Midsummer Night's Dream* by Tim Robbins and the Actors' Gang, and a

production of the Pulitzer-prizewinning Broadway play *Disgraced*, each of which raised questions for discussion that could be addressed through the arts that might not be allowed otherwise. She also arranged for Chinese arts groups to travel abroad, some of which returned to newfound appreciation at home. In 2017 she was appointed artistic director of the West Kowloon Cultural District Authority in Hong Kong, a mammoth new arts complex that included five performing arts centers, two museums, and a huge outdoor public park space; and in 2021 she accepted UNC's offer to succeed Emil Kang as director of executive and artistic director of CPA.

CPA's current season was mostly planned before her arrival, honoring commitments that had been postponed by covid. One of the productions about which she is most excited is the contemporary opera *Omar*, composed by MacArthur award winner Rhiannon Giddens and commissioned by CPA, which tells the story of Omar ibn Said, an early 19th century Muslim scholar who was brought to America enslaved and left one of the only autobiographies of such a person written in Arabic: some of his papers are in UNC's collection. One event which she has added to the spring program is the Hong Kong Ballet, which will perform a new interpretation of *Romeo and Juliet* set to Prokofiev's music in the setting of rival Chinese gang culture: it will be seen only in New York City and Chapel Hill.

Overall, Alison's vision is to continue to focus on building bridges through the arts based on the significant and still-growing reputation of UNC in the national and international world of performing arts; to build bridges across the campus with other UNC disciplines and units; and to build bridges with the local community to expand awareness of the arts as a centerpiece of UNC's strength. – Pete Andrews

[Report from Faculty Council](#)

Reports from Faculty Council (October 7 and November 4, 2022)

Chancellor's remarks. At the November Faculty Council meeting, Chancellor Guskiewicz discussed the affirmative action cases before the Supreme Court

involving UNC and Harvard, in which UNC continues to defend the importance of including race as one of multiple factors in UNC admissions decisions. He also mentioned the recent Tarheel bus tours, on which two busloads of faculty members visited 27 North Carolina communities in both the East and the West.

Provost remarks. Provost Chris Clemens introduced Barbara Stevenson, who is in charge of safety for students studying abroad. She has developed procedures to mitigate travel risks for students studying abroad so students will not be involved in tragic incidents like the one in Korea where two college students (not from UNC) were killed in a crowded celebration on the streets. Provost Clemens also discussed the university's move from the online class resource Sakai to Canvas.

UNC Hospital RESPTC site designation. UNC was recently selected as one of three hospitals newly designated as a Regional Emerging Special Pathogen Treatment Center (RESPTC) by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. Led by Dr. Michael Cohen and his colleagues, the RESPTC will serve as a special care unit to treat serious, highly communicable infectious diseases such as Ebola or monkeypox.

Resolution 2022-06: On Amending the *Faculty Code*. After extensive discussion at its October meeting, the Faculty Council approved several significant changes to the *Faculty Code* that were recommended by the Committee on University Governance, changing the number of years served by the faculty chair and secretary. Currently, UNC's Chair of the Faculty serves a single three-year term but has neither a designated chair-elect nor any official role for the immediate past chair, and the Secretary of the Faculty serves a renewable five-year term. The Faculty Council voted that the Chair of the Faculty be elected instead for a single four-year sequence, with the first year as chair-elect, the next two years as chair, and the final year as immediate past chair sitting on the Advisory Committee. The resolution also reduces the term of the Secretary of the Faculty from five years to four years, renewable once. The resolution can be found at https://facultygov.unc.edu/wp-content/uploads/sites/261/2022/10/Res-2022-6-Chair-and-secretary-amendment_2022-11-04.pdf.

Resolution 2022-07: Graduate Stipends. The President of the Graduate and Professional School Government, Theodore Nollert, described the need for larger stipends for graduate students, and the Faculty Council unanimously approved a resolution calling for an increase in minimum stipends for graduate students and

for a plan to provide regular pay increases. A minimum 9-month stipend of \$25,000 for Ph.D. students and a minimum of \$16,000 for Masters level students was proposed.

Master of Applied Professional Studies (MAPS) program. Dr. Laura Kuizen, director of MAPS, described this new interdisciplinary Masters program that is geared to students with diverse interests across disciplines.

Committee Reports. A brief review of the Faculty Hearings Committee was described by Professor Charlotte Boettinger.

October Faculty Council meeting:

Chancellor's Remarks: Chancellor Guskiewicz announced the four winners of the Hettleman Prize for 2022, and also commented on several illustrious speakers who have visited our campus recently, including Jamie Dimon (chairman and chief executive officer of JPMorgan Chase) and Fred Smith (founder and chairman of FedEx). One of our own RFA members, James Peacock, was thanked by the chancellor for his leadership 15 years ago in establishing the Global Center. The chancellor also reminded Faculty Council of University Day on Oct. 12 and the Tarheel Bus Tours on Oct. 19.

Provost's Remarks: Provost Chris Clemens reiterated his commitment to the faculty and to the reorganization of the provost's office to serve the faculty. He has created a faculty awards committee that will nominate and recognize the accomplishments of many of our fellow faculty.

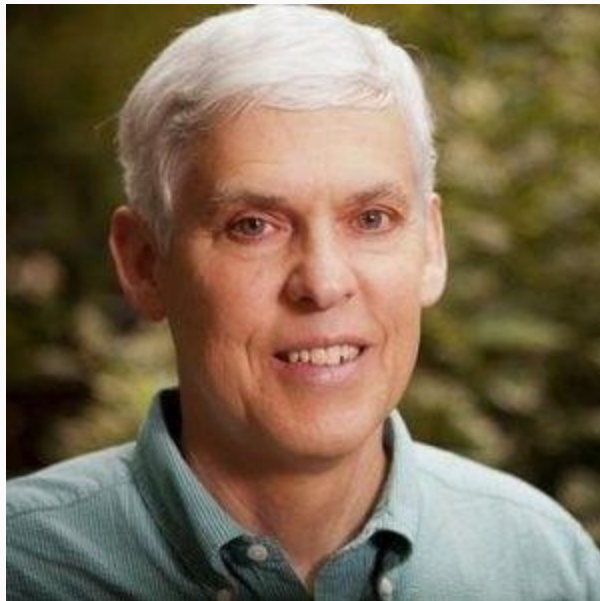
The new chief of police at UNC, Brian James, was introduced, and pledged to support students and faculty in a peaceful and respectful way.

Lead in Drinking Water: There was a report by the committee that is investigating the lead found in water fountains in 10 university building, as well as progress being made in eliminating it from all drinking water sources on campus.

Proposed Changes to Faculty Code: Most of the meeting then focused on proposed changes to the Faculty Code that have been studied now for a number of years. Joy Renner (chair, Committee on University Government) reported that her committee met with leaders from other similar universities about the length and duties of their faculty chairs and secretaries. The ensuing discussion also discussed compensation for the chair, which varies greatly depending on the

school or department of the Chair's appointment. Because the discussion was lengthy, it was decided to table any vote for the updated Faculty Code until the November meeting.

Faculty Assembly: Professor Jan Hannig, chair of the UNC-CH Faculty Assembly delegation, gave an update on our connections with other UNC campuses.



Meet an RFA Member

Bill Andrews, who retired from the Department of English and Comparative Literature in 2019, doesn't miss his old job much. He devoted 43 years to his profession and enjoyed faculty positions at Texas Tech, the UW-Madison, the University of Kansas, and UNC. A specialist in African American literature before World War I, he had the opportunity to lecture on his research at universities on every continent except Antarctica. What he likes about retirement is the freedom he has to pursue writing and editing projects that lure him back to his computer to do things he still enjoys.

One project that's absorbing his attention is the third book he's written on the origins and early history of African American autobiography. His first two books focus on the now-famous and the lesser-known pre-1865 slave

narratives, the bedrock on which African American literature was built. Currently he's halfway through writing a book on the lives and life stories of the 27 African Americans who produced autobiographies during the Reconstruction era. These autobiographies represent a mosaic of Black America in the early years of national freedom. The book surveys a wide range of men and women from different regions, backgrounds, classes, and occupations, from the first African American graduate of West Point to a pair of female conjoined twins from North Carolina who became an internationally celebrated song-and-dance duo.

Bill's interest in the history and cultures of slavery as well as the life-writing about it is probably the main reason why he's become involved in advocacy and support efforts for the incarcerated or those recently released from prison in North Carolina. The son of a farm boy who became a Sears executive, Bill has planted a vegetable garden everywhere he's lived. But he maintains that North Carolina soil is the best for his favorite summer fruit – okra.

IAH Retired Faculty Seminar Invites Participants (Spring 2023)

The Retired Faculty Association (RFA) at UNC, in collaboration with the Institute of Arts and Humanities (IAH) at UNC, has a long history of offering a seminar for newly retired UNC faculty members entitled "Creating a Life You Love in Retirement." The seminar focuses on the ways in which faculty see retirement as a new phase in life with both opportunities and challenges. The seminar syllabus contains articles and books about aging and retirement, with a special emphasis on the retirement of university faculty members. The most satisfying aspect of the seminars, however, has been faculty members sharing their past experiences as well as their future interests and goals.

The upcoming seminar will start in February 2023 and extend through eight weekly sessions, meeting for two and half hours each week in Hyde Hall, and concluding in early April. IAH has graciously agreed to provide lunch each week as well as a final dinner in April, when the seminar concludes.

Two retired faculty members – both participants in an earlier seminar – will lead

the 2023 seminar: Lynne Vernon-Feagans (lynnevf@email.unc.edu) (Emerita, School of Education) and Peter Ornstein (pao@unc.edu) (Emeritus, Department of Psychology and Neuroscience). Recently retired faculty who are interested should contact Lynne or Peter as soon as possible.

Retired Faculty Conversations (Spring 2023)

In 2021, the Retired Faculty Association began offering an opportunity for retirees to participate in a four-session series of faculty conversations via Zoom. The four sessions concluded with a potluck dinner for current and previous group participants at the home of one of the moderators.

The idea for the Conversations project responded to a perceived need by faculty from different parts of the university to get to know each other and to talk about a range of issues raised by retirement practices at UNC and personal experiences. The topics for discussion are based on a longer eight-week Retired Faculty Program (1.5 hours per week) offered by the Institute for Arts and Humanities in cooperation with the RFA. We have had seminar participants who have decided to continue in the program by taking the additional Conversations series.

The IAH Retired Faculty Program is typically offered in the Fall semester and Conversations in the spring, but this year both will be offered during the Spring semester of 2023. Participants have come in from Chapel Hill and beyond. Those interested in participating in upcoming Conversations may contact one of the moderators, Joanne Gard Marshall (School of Information and Library Science, marshall@ils.unc.edu) or Robert (Bob) Peet (Department of Biology, Peet@unc.edu).

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; watch this site for announcements of its

Spring 2023 offerings as well. <https://register.fridaycenter.unc.edu/curriculum/programArea/pagePersonalEnrichmentMain.jsp>.

Participate in a Research Study on Preventing Dementia

UNC's Sheps Center for Health Sciences Research invites RFA members to participate in a major NIH research study on the potential value of statins for preventing dementia in older adults. They are looking for volunteers who are at least 75 years old, do not have heart disease or dementia, and are not currently using a statin (such as Atorvastatin or Lipitor, Simvastatin or Zocor). Participants can join the study by phone or videoconference, receive the drug by mail, and be followed by phone, health records, or home visits if needed. If interested, see <https://preventabletrial.org/home.cfm> or contact Dr. Christine Kissler at the Sheps Center (christine_kistler@med.unc.edu).

Judges Wanted for High School Ethics Bowl (no experience needed!)

UNC's Parr Center for Ethics invites retired faculty and other community members to serve as judges for its award-winning [National High School Ethics Bowl](#) program.

The NHSEB is an educational outreach program designed to get thousands of students nationwide thinking, talking, and working together on tough moral and political issues. The program's collaborative, yet competitive format (unlike speech and debate) is based on the idea of a conversational dialogue. The goal is to work together toward something *true* or *reasonable* rather than to subdue the opposing argument with superior rhetoric. Students are evaluated based on the clarity and quality of their reasoning, as well as the ways they engage with each other's ideas: ideally, honestly, respectfully, and productively.

NHSEB's headquarters at the Parr Center hosts two major events each year, bringing hundreds of high school students to the UNC Chapel Hill campus: the [North Carolina High School Ethics Bowl](#) (January 28) and the [NHSEB National](#)

[Championship](#) (March 31-April 2). For more information about the NHSEB program, or to volunteer, please contact ethicsbowl@unc.edu.

Intergenerational Philosophy

During Spring semester 2023, Professor Michael Vasquez of the Philosophy Department and Parr Center for Ethics will once again offer [his course in Intergenerational Philosophy](#), in which members of the Retired Faculty Association for several years have enjoyed participating. The course is a rewarding opportunity to create an intergenerational space for learning and discussion about life's most pressing questions.

At its core, philosophy is about asking questions and critically reflecting on our beliefs and values, and Professor Vasquez believes it is best practiced in the company of others. His hope is that by drawing on the rich and varied experiences represented across generations, we can promote lifelong learning and strengthen the ties of the Carolina community.

The course will meet Tuesdays and Thursdays from 2:00 to 3:15. To participate, contact Philosophy Teaching Assistant Professor & Director of Outreach Michael Vazquez (michael.vazquez@unc.edu).

Carolina Public Humanities

Carolina Public Humanities sponsors many stimulating educational programs on timely topics throughout the academic year, and offers a 50% discount to dues-paid members of the Retired Faculty Association for participation in any of its programs except its Great Books conversations (call for discount). Its fall brochure is available at <https://humanities.unc.edu/programs/>; watch the same website for the announcement of its Spring 2023 programs.

Peer Learning Opportunities

You're never too old to learn...or to teach! The Legend of King Arthur...Reading Shakespeare...American Beginnings...Hollywood in the 1940s...The Irish Identity: A Cultural History...Appreciating Opera...Art Meets Literature...Climate Change: What Does the Science Tell Us?...WWII in the Pacific Theater...Great Minds of the Western Intellectual Tradition.

That's just a random sampling of the more than three dozen courses available from the two Chapel Hill senior learning groups: Shared Learning and Peer Learning. The courses are taught by retired people who are experts in their fields or who have a deep interest in the subject, either in person or on Zoom or in a hybrid form. The fees are nominal, and in both cases you can take as many courses as you like in a semester for one fee. Both are also eager to hear from you if you'd like to propose teaching a course on a subject dear to your heart. Check them out

at <https://sharedlearning.us> and <https://peerlearningofchapelhill.com/index.html>, or for further information contact Professor emeritus Bob Lauterborn (lauterprof@aol.com).

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. 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/emerita status should be granted.



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