

# UNIC

UNIVERSITY OF NORTHERN COLORADO  
FALL/WINTER 2020

magazine

JUSTICE  
IS LOVE  
OUT LOUD.

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**DEFINING**

*Moments*

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Leading Beyond Crisis

# Fellow Bears,

When the class of 1910 had “Rowing Not Drifting” inscribed on the Horace Mann Gates on Central Campus, they captured a core value of a young institution that would remain a guiding principle for us more than a century later — to move forward with intention.

Late last fall, as the semester wound down and we prepared to develop our strategic plan for the decade ahead, that phrase naturally fit our efforts. We endeavored to work together to move the institution toward our common goal of success for every student.

Little did we know that 2020 would bring unprecedented challenges to UNC and the world. We find ourselves rowing in uncharted waters. A pandemic, economic uncertainty, and social unrest provoking a renewed movement for justice provide for us three challenging, revealing, transformational, and *defining moments*. How we respond as a university community reveals our core and character and will shape us for generations to come.

Appropriately, this issue’s theme is “Defining Moments,” reflected in these pages as we share defining moments past and present (page 16), discuss policy changes and our work to pursue anti-racism (page 22), introduce you to some of the new university leaders who are guiding our efforts (page 26), and reflect on how educators are experiencing and innovating K-12 teaching during this time. As you will see, this year’s events have not been distractions from our strategic goals, but instead have served to sharpen our focus on student success as our community came together.

We recognize that ours is not the first generation of Bears to face such moments. Earlier this year, we lost Emeritus Professor Robert Larson, who taught history at UNC from 1960 to 1990. He authored the well-known UNC history book *Shaping Educational Change*. His book takes us through the life and times — some tame and some turbulent — that our students, faculty, staff, and administrators faced in the university’s first 100 years. In his forward to Larson’s book, alumnus and author James A. Michener called this university a “feisty institution.”

It’s an apt description for a university that perseveres and leads. As I walk across campus these days and pass by those gates, I see our students on their way to classes, just as so many Bears before them. And while this year has been so different from previous years, one thing remains the same: Like the students before them who have faced defining moments, they are continuing to pursue their dreams, find their paths and move forward with intention. I am inspired, and I think often of the foresight of that long-ago class of Bears who understood the “feisty,” purposeful nature of our university.

Rowing, Not Drifting,



Andy Feinstein  
President



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PHOTO BY WOODY MYERS

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## Editor’s Note

This issue of *UNC Magazine* focuses on some of the “Defining Moments” the university community has faced this year, and highlights the work of students, faculty, staff, alumni and friends to address economic, social and health-related issues on campus.

## ON THE COVER

Addressing social and racial justice is among defining moments for UNC in 2020. See articles starting on pages 16 and 22 for a look at how UNC has responded. Bears’ women’s basketball player Brooklyn Evans wears her thoughts on justice and says, “I am truly blessed to be playing basketball, or even living, so I like to be the happiest I can be and give love.”

PHOTO BY WOODY MYERS

# The View from Here

## KILLING THE CORONAVIRUS

When the COVID-19 pandemic hit, the role of UNC's Facilities staff became more crucial than ever.

In January, Facilities and Environmental Health and Safety started noticing information about an illness spreading on the other side of the globe.

"By March, we were sensing that it was near," says Steven Abbath, manager of Custodial Services.

Abbath and his colleagues started checking personal protective equipment and disinfectant stock levels, tracking the supply chain and reviewing their typical processes. They always step up disinfection during cold and flu season, and a few times per year as needed to respond to Student Health Center requests for more aggressive cleaning due to a more contagious illness that could show up on campus, so they applied those tactics once again, tailored for what was known about the novel coronavirus.

As UNC started sending students, faculty and staff home for remote learning and work, the Facilities staff continued cleaning and monitoring buildings. Over the summer, crews moved furniture to encourage proper social distancing in classrooms and public spaces. They deep cleaned in preparation for fall. And since students and others arrived back on campus, they have continued doing their part to protect the Bear community.

➔ Read the whole story at [unc.link/clean-campus](https://unc.link/clean-campus)

PHOTO BY ROB TRUBIA



## Funding Important Work



### GRADUATE STUDENT RECEIVES TRAIL RESEARCH GRANT

Many of Colorado's numerous trails and open spaces are heavily used — which can lead to costly and time-consuming constant trail maintenance. UNC graduate student Ara Metz is hoping to help Boulder, Colorado, better maintain its trails and open spaces so people can continue to enjoy the outdoors.

Metz is working with UNC's Sharon Bywater-Reyes, Ph.D., an assistant professor of Environmental Geoscience, and Chelsie Romulo, Ph.D., an assistant professor in the Department of Geography, GIS, and Sustainability, on a research project funded by a one-year, \$10,000 City of Boulder grant.

The research focuses on the city's extensive trails through the use of drones and ground data collection to better understand the level of erosion that's occurring.

"We're going to look at all of these different variables to enable the City of Boulder's Open Space and Mountain Parks to plan their trails, if they need to do trail maintenance or just looking at the conditions of undesignated trails that people make on their own," Metz said.

### UNC MAINTAINS TREE CAMPUS USA DESIGNATION

The Arbor Day Foundation recognized UNC as a Tree Campus USA for its commitment to effective urban forest management. The Tree Campus Higher Education program is in its 12th year, and UNC has earned recognition every year since 2014 by maintaining a tree advisory committee, a campus tree-care plan, dedicated annual expenditures for its campus tree program, an Arbor Day observance and a student service-learning project.

### PROFESSOR CONTRIBUTES TO STATE HEALTH CARE PLANS

Professor Thom Dunn helped lead the state of Colorado in developing its first set of health care plans addressing ethical standards of care in times of crisis, from natural disasters to pandemics, when health care systems are at risk of becoming overwhelmed.

Dunn served on Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment committees to create crisis standards — such as how to manage scarce medical resources during surges in demand — as a resource for hospitals and emergency medical services as the COVID-19 pandemic began.

"Our first task, and it was tense, was to help create crisis standards of care for hospitals and how they would triage, and how they would treat the most people possible," Dunn said, noting the difficult compromises imposed by certain scenarios in which some patients would be unable to get access to life-saving devices such as ventilators.

### ENTRANCE EXAMS OPTIONAL FOR UNC APPLICANTS

High school students graduating next spring will not be required to submit a college entrance exam when applying to UNC. A statewide exemption allows colleges and universities to make the ACT and SAT optional for students graduating in spring 2021 and entering college in fall 2021.

"We have data to support that students' achievement in their high school courses is a very strong indicator of success from the time they enroll to graduation at UNC, and we support this change," said Kim Medina, UNC assistant vice president of Enrollment Management.

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*Funding Important Work  
cont. page 4*

Funding Important Work cont.

## NSF GRANTS \$1 MILLION TO DEVELOP ASSESSMENT TOOL

The National Science Foundation awarded two UNC faculty members a \$1.077 million grant to improve teaching in college-level environmental science courses.

To help instructors make evidence-based decisions on how to test their students' understanding of complex concepts, Assistant Professor Chelsie Romulo and Professor Steven Anderson are developing a program that will assess students' understanding of connections among food-energy-water concepts.

"In all of education, our main objective is for students to learn, and there are lots of different ways to teach so students can learn, as well as tests to see if learning is happening — that's the piece that's difficult," Romulo said. "In order to assess, we need tools for assessment; we need to test instructors and students together to see if what the instructor is doing is effective."

## STUDENT RECEIVES \$5,000 FELLOWSHIP

Gabriela Masztalerz, a junior Honors student majoring in Speech-Language Pathology, received the National Collegiate Honors Council's \$5,000 2020 Portz Fellowship for her research project, "Accent Modification and Identity: A Phenomenological Study Exploring the Experiences of International Students and Immigrants/Refugees."

Her project focuses on individuals who, after experiencing accent discrimination, seek services to help shape their accents to sound similar to the standard accent of a region.

"While accent modification has been shown to positively affect the lives of its clients, many people believe it is also a forceful attempt at Western globalization that simultaneously diminishes cultural integrity," she said. "I wanted to explore this topic because I believe it is important for future speech-language pathologists and the general population to know how this therapy affects the personal, social and professional identities of different individuals, specifically international students, immigrants and refugees."



Experts, including Scott Franklin, Ph.D., a professor of Biology at UNC, aren't surprised that devastating wildfires events are occurring. Franklin said that a combination of bark beetles damaging trees, drier and warmer weather events and vast availability of fuel from wood debris has created the perfect storm this fire season. Read more at [unco.edu/news](https://unco.edu/news)

## UNC TUITION FOR 2020-21 REMAINS UNCHANGED

UNC remains the state's most affordable research university with in-state tuition for the current academic year staying at the previous year's rate. The Board of Trustees approved an interim budget in June for the 2020-21 fiscal year.

UNC President Andy Feinstein said that holding tuition flat was the right call, and trustees were in full support. Trustee Steven Jordan noted the effort to "ameliorate the effect on students" given the impact of the coronavirus pandemic. Outgoing Student Trustee Malaika Michel-Fuller added that "it sends a really positive message to the students that their financial well-being is of importance to UNC."

## STATE REAUTHORIZES UNC TEACHER EDUCATION PROGRAMS

The Colorado State Board of Education approved reauthorization of UNC's 34 teacher-education programs with an extension of conditions in literacy instruction for two endorsement areas offered at the university.

A state review team issued the recommendation to the board, noting UNC's adherence to state standards and progress in the two conditional areas following the previous site visit in 2018. While the programs, Elementary Education and Early Childhood Education, significantly revised their courses dedicated to literacy instruction with textbook changes to ensure better coverage of content aligned to the science of teaching reading, they must further demonstrate that their curriculum conforms with state standards for scientific-based reading instruction practices.



For more UNC News stories, please visit [unco.edu/news](https://unco.edu/news)



# Syllabus

## GEOG 185: Introduction to Drones

### THIS NEW COURSE EXPOSES STUDENTS TO THE FUNDAMENTAL CONCEPTS AND GEO-SPATIAL USE OF DRONES.

As technology advances, so does UNC's faculty expertise. Two summers ago, Professor of Geography and GIS Jim Doerner, Ph.D., began the process of learning to fly drones and becoming Federal Aviation Administration (FAA)-certified as a drone pilot. This fall, those preparations led to a new course, GEOG 185: Introduction to Drones. First-year Geography and GIS students who take the course will continue to build on the concepts they learn throughout their coursework at UNC. Students from other disciplines can sample geography via the course, as well.

"Students will learn to fly drones safely and ethically," Doerner said before the course started. "Whether they fly their drones recreationally or professionally, they'll benefit from this course. They'll use image-processing software and mapping technologies to create maps that can be used to analyze societal problems."

Due to COVID-19 restrictions, Doerner had to move the lecture portion of the course online and split the 24 students between the two class days for labs. It ended up being a win: Rather than working in groups of two, students in each cohort got to fly a drone solo each time they flew the drones.

The first time they took the drones to the skies, Doerner said some students new to drones were enthusiastic, yet hesitant about the potential for crashing an expensive piece of equipment. But their confidence quickly grew. Some discovered the "fast mode" setting in the drone software. Doerner calls drone-flying fun and empowering.

"It's a sense of, 'Wow, I did something I was a little nervous about doing,'" Doerner says.

In addition to learning the content needed to pass the FAA test to become certified as a commercial drone pilot, students gain skills for a variety of industries — Doerner quotes a projection that by 2025, there will be 100,000 new jobs in the unmanned aircraft industry. And drones aren't just useful for

#### DRONE TALK

The recreational drone model used by the class, the Ryze Tello, rings in around \$100 and weighs less than half a pound, which allows UNC to use drones for class without registering them with the FAA.

The Geography, GIS and Sustainability Department also has three additional drones: two DJI Mavic 2 Pros used for general mapping, and a Parrot Bluegrass Fields drone, used for vegetation mapping and other applications that require the Parrot's multispectral scanner.

geography and GIS mapping. Drone technology, with thermal sensors, cameras and other add-ons, can be used to monitor crop health, look at heat loss of buildings, find lost hikers in search and rescue efforts, take cinematic footage for ad campaigns, survey damage for insurance companies, track natural disaster damage, aid in conservation efforts, track animal migration, monitor crowd safety, ensure fires are extinguished and more.

Because of the ubiquity of drone technology, several UNC faculty and staff across disciplines have their FAA licenses. On the academic side, they include Geography and GIS' Jess Salo, Ph.D., Jieun Lee, Ph.D., and Chelsie Romulo, Ph.D.; Anthropology's Andy Creekmore, Ph.D.; and Earth and Atmospheric Sciences' Sharon Bywater-Reyes, Ph.D.

Students also learn about ethical issues: Be safe (don't fly over roads or crowds), respect privacy (use the Golden Rule) and don't abuse the power of aerial surveillance. In other words, mind your own business, make sure you have the rights to be flying where you're flying and have fun.

—Rebecca Dell

JOELLE JENKINS '20

Environmental and Sustainability Studies with minors in Africana Studies and Biology

PHOTO BY WOODY MYERS

## I'm a Bear

Over the summer, Joelle Jenkins, McNair Scholar and senior majoring in Environmental and Sustainability Studies with minors in Africana Studies and Biology, founded the BlacademicUS Twitter account that shares resources and stories of Black people in academia; it has already gained over 1,400 followers. Jenkins is also the president of UNC's Student Leadership for Environmental Action Fund (Student LEAF), a student-led organization aiming to bring more sustainable practices to the campus community through empowerment and education. She reflects on why she created the Twitter account and her passion about environmental justice issues.

**On Twitter, users can share posts with specific hashtags to join a trending topic.** An example is Black Birders Week, where Black bird watchers shared photos and other content regarding birds using the hashtag #BlackBirdersWeek on Twitter.

**In high school, I didn't have the resources I needed** to see what other Black students went through based on their college experiences, something like a reference guide. Then, with Black Birders Week happening, I wanted to know all the other co-organizers' experiences, so I thought it would be perfect to create that resource.

**Being part of the BlackAFInSTEM group on Twitter,** I was influenced by this and other Twitter content, which led me to create the Twitter page to be kind of a guide mainly for Black students.

**The account is managed by four students, each bringing their own academic backgrounds to the platform.** I share content regarding ecology and environmental justice. Terra Ware, a UNC student studying Biology with a Pre-Health emphasis, shares content on gender and sexuality advocacy; Liad Sherer, a 2020 UNC graduate who studied History with an emphasis in Secondary Education, shares historical content; and Veronica Mixon, a student at the University of Alabama studying Psychology with an emphasis in Clinical Mental Health and African American Studies, shares health and wellness content.

**I wanted to create something where all Black academics could come together** and share their experiences because there's not one page everyone can come to and just learn. Like, who knows

what a high schooler may want to go into? It could be psychology, it could be biology, and so, I just wanted to create that platform.

**I have plans to utilize ongoing and trending hashtags on Twitter to include more diverse voices and perspectives in the mix.** The long-term goal of BlacademicUS is to grow its followers, raise awareness and create different chapters at universities across the U.S. This would be a very helpful tool for Black students and institutions trying to create a more inclusive environment.

**The BlacademicUS team** is also planning to share student spotlights and personal experiences, such as what they wish was different at their universities.

**My UNC experiences have influenced my passion** for starting this project and bringing awareness about the issues and experiences of people of color on campus.

**Recently, National Geographic and Amy Poehler's "Smart Girls" highlighted students and professionals of color (including myself)** on their social media accounts for Black Mammalogist's Week (Sept. 13-19). They also highlighted our current research and related interests. Although I served as one of the graphic designers/artists, I felt honored to have my research highlighted on their page(s). My research study involves looking at the intersection of identities Black individuals hold and how that may impact their consideration of natural environments.

**One of the main reasons I chose UNC's Environmental and Sustainability Studies program** was because faculty members strive to connect both objective and subjective matters to issues happening in the U.S. and beyond, including racial injustices and environmental concerns. People typically separate the two, and when you do that, you fail to acknowledge issues that inhibit progress towards equity for all in this country, reinforcing them. I also chose the Environmental and Sustainability Studies program because faculty members teach you the skills you need to succeed in this field as well as caring about people and their values.

**I chose UNC because** I wanted to stick close to home and knew other Black students at UNC. The smaller size (compared to other universities in the state) helped me feel more confident in making decisions for my academic career.

—Joelle Jenkins as told to Katie-Leigh Corder

➔ View the BlacademicUS Twitter account at [twitter.com/BlacademicUS](https://twitter.com/BlacademicUS)

# GO BEARS!

## DOCUMENTING A LEGACY

**UNC WOMEN'S BASKETBALL STAR SAVANNAH SMITH RETURNED TO HER ALMA MATER AS A GRADUATE ASSISTANT FOR HER FORMER TEAM. NOW, SHE'S WORKING ON A PROJECT CONNECTING BEARS PAST, PRESENT AND FUTURE.**

UNC women's basketball standout Savannah Smith left UNC in May 2019 with a Graphic Design degree, experience under three coaching staffs and the school record for career points scored (2,013).

Less than a year later, she returned with a different sort of profile, after a quick stint with a professional team in Madrid and deciding she'd rather live near family and friends in Colorado. Smith is working on a master's of Business Administration at UNC and is a graduate assistant with her old team.

Her stat sheet these days includes the number of basketballs needed for practice, the number of social media posts to design, and the number of letters she's collected from alumni as part of a new initiative she brainstormed with Assistant Coach Jana Pearson. Called "The Legacy Project," it's a way to connect past, current and future players.

"We knew Savannah could really link the past to the present and help former Bears feel a continued sense of connection even if coaching staffs change," says Head Coach Jenny Huth, who coached Smith for one year. "Our vision is to raise up and inspire the next generation of young women, and this project models that vision. That somehow, someday, when you watch us play you see passion, authentic relationships, gratitude, discipline, respect and competitiveness, and it inspires people young and old."

Since starting as a graduate assistant in December 2019, Smith has created a Facebook group for women's basketball alumni and reached out with a request for former players to write letters to current players — players who might even bear the same jersey number.

It's a full-circle project for Smith, who grew up attending UNC basketball camps and cheering for the same player, D'shara Strange, whose scoring record Smith broke her senior year. Now Strange, an inductee in UNC's 2020 Athletics Hall of Fame class, is participating in the Legacy Project.

Strange wrote to junior guard Brooklyn Evans, who now wears Strange's old jersey, number three, saying:

*As you put on that Northern Colorado Bear insignia that lays across your chest, whether it's your practice jersey, game jersey, travel t-shirt or polo, do so with pride and understand that you*



SAVANNAH SMITH '19, Graphic Design

*have an obligation every single time you put it on. An obligation to your teammates, the Greeley Community, the University, and to YOURSELF to show up as your best self in every "arena" whether it's the classroom, the court or community service.*

Strange's letter reinforces the longstanding culture that the project is meant to celebrate. Smith wants the project to help carry on the dedicated, caring, positive and optimistic culture built by the hard work of the generations before her. She envisions a network that will serve women athletes beyond school and throughout their careers.

Smith also describes the importance of continuing women's basketball's deep connections with the Greeley community. Her older sister, also a UNC alum, teaches first grade at Billie Martinez Elementary School in Greeley, and Smith says her sister's students look forward all year to the annual Kid's Game at Butler-Hancock Athletic Center.

"The people who I really looked up to, I was able to become one of those people for someone else," Smith says, as she and her team believe in making a positive impact on those around them.

"You can be an amazing basketball team, but at the end of the day if you're not good people, then I don't think that matters," she says.

—By Rebecca Dell

## Researching Venom Resistance

UNC graduate student Neil Balchan is studying the blood of venom-resistant rodents in an effort to help reduce venomous snakebite deaths.

On a sandy, dry road in Weld County, Colorado, UNC graduate student Neil Balchan casually pulls a red, 5-gallon bucket from his car and puts it down a few feet away. Then, he dips a long pole into the bucket and lifts out a rattlesnake. He walks several yards down the road, the snake dangling from the pole, then gently places it on the ground. The snake has spent several days at a UNC lab, and now it's back where it was found.

Working with Professor of Biological Sciences Steve Mackessy, Ph.D., Balchan came to UNC from Manitoba, Canada, to earn his master's degree in Biology. He's studying predator-prey interactions, specifically between rattlesnakes and rodents in Colorado.

He's been fascinated by snakes and other reptiles since he could remember, and when it came time to choose a graduate school, he knew he wanted to work with Mackessy, a renowned snake-venom expert.

"Dr. Mackessy is an authority in this field, and he's done incredible work in both this and several other research areas through his career," Balchan says. "Having a faculty member like that advise a research project is incredibly valuable."

Balchan is particularly interested in understanding why some rodents seem resistant to rattlesnake venom.

Most often, when a rattlesnake bites and injects venom into a rodent, the rodent dies and becomes a meal for the snake; however, Mackessy and Balchan are seeing some populations of rodents that "detoxify the venom."

Balchan studies numerous species of rodents as well as rattlesnakes and their venoms to better understand why and how certain rodents are venom resistant.

"Rodent blood is complex beyond regular blood in the sense that some rodents can inhibit rattlesnake venom function," Balchan says. "The rodents here in northern Colorado may have some level of resistance, or even immunity, to local rattlesnakes, so we're

trying to pull that blood apart and understand what's happening at the protein level that could be resulting in that."

And the key to that resistance could have a significant impact on human lives where antivenins are in short supply.

According to the World Health Organization, "Around 81,000 to 138,000 people die each year because of snake bites, and around three times as many amputations and other permanent disabilities are caused by snakebites annually."

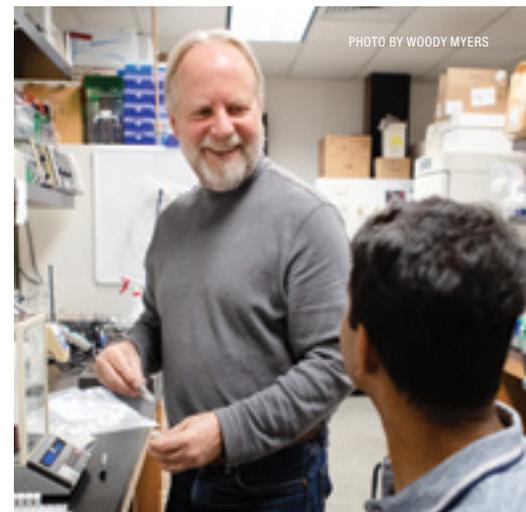
Balchan hopes his research will help lower those numbers. "This is something we tend to ignore or hear very little about, and by studying venoms and how venom varies, we can hopefully mitigate these numbers," he says.

Shortages in antivenins are due to cost and the different types of venom. According to Mackessy, one vial of antivenin costs anywhere from \$2,500 to \$10,000. A typical bite usually requires a minimum of four to 10 vials. He's even heard of cases where 40 to 60 vials of antivenin have been used due to life-threatening reactions.

Costs aside, there are differences in venoms. If a person is bitten and envenomated by an African cobra, antivenin made for a rattlesnake in the U.S. wouldn't help because of the uniqueness of compounds found in venoms.

"In the U.S., we primarily have one antivenin, CroFab, that's been in use for a number of years now," Mackessy says. "It's highly purified and effective in treating rattlesnake and other viper bites in this country."

For their research, Balchan and Mackessy capture snakes in their natural habitats and bring them to the lab at UNC. They collect venom and blood for any potential genetic work in the future, then return to the spot where the snake was collected and release it.





**NEIL BALCHAN**  
Master's student in the Venom Analysis Lab

PHOTO BY WOODY MYERS



“If we can collect an animal in the wild and interact with it to collect genetic information and venom, then we’ve got a responsibility to put that animal back where we took it from,” Balchan says.

“These animals are important components of ecosystems,” Mackessy says. “There’s a tendency for people to want to kill anything that they don’t understand, and rattlesnakes are an animal that falls into that camp; however, if you kill this animal, you may also be eliminating the source of a drug that could someday save your life.”

Mackessy says Balchan has contributed greatly to the work being done at UNC. “Neil has been working in the lab for about a year and a half, and basically hit the ground running,” Mackessy says.

“The very first day he was here, he was out in the field doing work.”

Balchan’s long-term plans involve a research-focused career as a professor or another area where he can spend his worklife “playing with snakes, for a lack of better terms.”

But wherever life takes him, he plans to keep in contact with Mackessy.

“I really do think that Steve and I will be in touch for the rest of my career and for the rest of our lives, really, in some capacity,” he says.

—Katie-Leigh Corder

 Watch our video at [unco.edu/unc-magazine](https://unco.edu/unc-magazine)

## Impact

# Calling on a Community

**JUSTIN VENMAN SAYS WORKING FOR UNC AS A STUDENT CALLING ALUMNI HAS OPENED DOORS, FOSTERED OPTIMISM AND GIVEN HIM OPPORTUNITIES HE NEVER EXPECTED.**

When Justin Venman came to Greeley from the little town of Divide, Colorado, with a population under 100, the smaller feel of the Greeley community really appealed to him compared to the larger cities of other universities he visited. “It was almost kind of an immediate thing where I knew, ‘Hey, this place has a really nice community. This is something that I want to be a part of.’”

The second semester of his freshman year, he found himself getting to know that community on a much larger scale when he began to work as a student caller for UNC as a student advancement ambassador.

Venman was one of 20 students this past fall semester who called UNC alumni and friends to talk with them about the university and to ask them to support students through gifts to scholarships and other university funding initiatives. While Venman says asking people to contribute financially was intimidating at first, it didn’t stay that way for long.

“There’s definitely a little bit of anxiety when you first begin, but I found that really starts to go away when you realize that you’re talking to almost a future version of yourself. These are people who went through the same thing you did, and you already have this connection with them.”

Venman, a senior Chemistry major with a minor in Earth Sciences, says he didn’t really understand the importance of giving back to higher education until he saw the difference support made for fellow students.

“This is so important, and this is doing so many things for so many people. I’m not financially insecure about going to school, but I know there are a lot of people who are, especially now. Funding from alumni and friends can mean the difference between going to college and not going to college for some people. Seeing that happen first-hand is amazing.”

Making those calls during a pandemic has led to a few changes for Venman. Instead of sitting side-by-side with other callers at the on-campus call center,

he’s making about 120 calls per night (every night except Mondays) from his room. UNC’s Phonathon program has been a staple of alumni outreach for years but has taken on new importance during the pandemic because fewer alumni are able to visit UNC and connect with students in-person.

“It feels a little less formal now. I’m taking some time out of my night, I stop studying and I start calling,” Venman says. “I use it as a time to look for advice and talk to some people who went through the same things that I’m going through. I think the atmosphere is a little warmer in some ways because we’re all in this together. There’s this sense of unity between everyone. Reaching out to this greater community that UNC has, it’s an optimistic thing for me.”

The optimism, he says, comes from the positivity he hears from alumni. He recently spoke with an alumna who teaches elementary school.

“She was teaching online classes. I told her, ‘Hey, that sounds really hard. That’s got to be tough with those little kids.’ She said, ‘It’s provided me some amazing opportunities. It’s really taught me to improvise as an educator.’ She saw it as such a positive thing and found all these areas to be optimistic about. I made an ask for a gift, and she responded that she wanted ‘to give back to the place that gave me so much.’ It taught me a lot about having a positive outlook,” Venman says.

His experience working as a student caller has been rewarding in many ways, he says. “It has brought me out of my shell in a lot of ways. I got to be Klawz at a couple of events. When I first signed up to be a caller, I never thought I’d be doing something like that. Then, there I am a year later in a bear suit having the time of my life. There have been so many cool opportunities to get to know the UNC community. It’s opened a lot of doors for me.”

—Debbie Pitner Moors



**JUSTIN VENMAN**  
Senior Chemistry major  
Student Advancement Ambassador

PHOTO BY WOODY MYERS

## Field Notes

### RESEARCHING COVID-19 SPATIAL PATTERNS IN COLORADO

Jieun Lee, Ph.D., an assistant professor of Geography, GIS, and Sustainability; and Ivan Ramirez, Ph.D., a visiting assistant professor of Health and Behavioral Sciences at the University of Colorado, Denver, explored COVID-19 incidents and deaths from March 14, 2020, to April 8, 2020, looking at social vulnerability and chronic health conditions. They used GIS tools to investigate the geography of the pandemic and published their findings in the *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health* over the summer. Results demonstrate that positive COVID-19 cases and deaths emerged and intensified in mountain communities west of Denver and in urban areas along the Front Range. Eventually new centers of risk evolved in eastern Colorado.

### RESEARCHERS STUDY DIGITAL SCREENING INTERVENTION TOOL

Despite disruptions caused by COVID-19, UNC researchers received approval for a second year of funding, totaling \$1 million over two years, to study the effectiveness of a risk-screening tool in reducing the incidence of unwanted pregnancies and sexually transmitted infections (STIs) among adolescents and young adults. This phase of the project includes a clinical trial with at least 200 participants, ages 14-24.

Stephen Wright, Ph.D., co-principal investigator and professor of Applied Psychology and Counselor Education, said, "The cliexa digital platform offers a brief screening tool to assess multiple areas related to patient care (e.g., sexual risk, depression, anxiety, resiliency) across medical and mental-health settings. This information can then be utilized by providers to follow up with appropriate testing, treatment and prevention efforts." Early results were presented virtually at the National Reproductive Health Conference.

### GRANT HELPS CREATE DIGITAL ARCHIVE FOR ARTIFACTS

Andy Creekmore, Ph.D., an associate professor of Anthropology, received a \$6,500 grant from the Colorado Statewide Internet Portal Authority (SIPA) Micro-Grant Program.

The grant is being used to make UNC's collection of more than 3,000 Southwestern and Plains prehistoric and historic artifacts publicly accessible through Digital UNC with an online searchable and Google-indexed database.

"What we want to do is get photographs and descriptions of everything we have on Digital UNC so that anybody anywhere in the world knows we have it and can learn something about it," Creekmore said. "If you're a scholar or grad student and want to research these artifacts, you can come here. We really just want to share it broadly, which is kind of an ethical responsibility at a minimum."



# BACK TO SCHOOL 2020

Educators have found themselves adapting and working in settings that have distanced them from students and changed how they teach. Here, they share their thoughts and insights from the past six months.

By Jaclyn Zubrzycki  
Photos By Woody Myers



**T**he end of the 2019-20 school year was like nothing anyone had ever experienced — until the start of 2020-21 school year. Beginning in March, policymakers and education leaders around the state decided to close schools to stem the spread of COVID-19. Most schools began operating virtually, many for the first time. The return to school this fall has looked different in different communities, but in Colorado, many educators and students also returned to classes online or through a hybrid in-person/online model.

Here, with the first six months of the pandemic behind them, educators reflect on what they've learned as they've looked for new ways to teach and connect in a changed world.



**“My approach has been: We have to do less, we have to do it better, and we have to know why we’re doing it. Choose fewer things — you can’t cram it all in — but choose wisely, know why you’re doing those things, and do them really well.”**

## **CARY SMITH '09**

**Principal, Greeley Central High School  
Master of Arts, Educational Leadership**

Cary Smith has worked at Greeley Central High School, the city’s second-largest high school, for 22 years. But the pandemic means that 2020 has been a year of firsts: The first virtual staff meeting, the first virtual town hall, the first time teachers had to navigate teaching at home.

The beginning of remote learning at Greeley Central was “death by a thousand cuts,” Smith says. The school, which had not previously had a remote-learning program, extended its spring break in March; eventually, it became clear that no one would be returning to the building as policymakers tightened restrictions. The school and district leaders worked to make sure every student had access to Chromebooks and the technology they needed as all classes went virtual.

Over the summer, Smith had to reconfigure the school’s schedule several times to accommodate changing policy guidance. The school opened this fall with a hybrid model: High schoolers learn at home three days a week and attend school two days a week on a rotating schedule. Things like the first day assembly, the homecoming parade, sports and dances are still on hold. “Those things have been hard for students and staff. They were a big part of our culture,” Smith says.

The changes to teaching and learning have also been profound. Some students are babysitting, or don’t have strong internet access in their homes, as they try to manage classes. Smith says he is concerned about gaps that may have emerged this year. “Some of the deficits, we don’t realize it right now. Kids are going to have missed things.”

But, he says, there has been a silver lining: “This forced us to look not only at what we’re teaching, but are kids learning it, do they have access to it? Have I laid out folders in a way that makes sense to them? It has forced us to think more about learning than about teaching,” Smith says. He says his teachers have had to be flexible and rely on one another as they figured out how to truly engage students online.

“We’re steeped in 140 years of tradition. It’s very cool,” he says. “But it can be a fault if we’re like, that’s not how we do things here. We need to examine that. There are different ways to teach and different ways to learn.”



## RENÉE WELCH

Director, UNC Center for Career Readiness

UNC's K-12 Educator Employment Days is the largest in Colorado, giving recruiters, administrators and educators-to-be the chance to mingle and meet one another in person.

In 2020, however, the fair was canceled due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Renée Welch and her team at the UNC Center for Career Readiness had to look for ways to remotely connect employers and people hoping to work in schools.

Now, the Center for Career Readiness is relying more on a platform called Handshake to connect prospective educators and employers virtually.

Welch says that there is something lost when recruiters and candidates can't meet in person. Her hope is that 2021's fair can take place in person once again.

But she sees some upsides to virtual recruiting: "It might enable people from more geographic locations to be able to recruit UNC students," she says. "It makes me wonder if we might, moving forward, have a blend of in-person and virtual events."

The American Association of Employment in Education has not yet released its annual supply and demand report, which helps Welch pinpoint changes to the employment market in education each year. Overall, people graduating in 2021 are entering a challenging

job market. "Since May, it's been really hard," she says.

But, she says, the demand for teachers and educators has been great and growing stronger over the past decade. In many cases, there are more positions than candidates — so those hoping to work in education may not face as many obstacles finding work during the pandemic-triggered economic recession.

"Hopefully, that means people can have some of their values met and have some choice in terms of the districts and schools they're interested in working for," Welch says.

And, she says, students and educators will develop a whole new set of skills due to the switch to online learning and teaching.

**"All districts will have students from different socioeconomic groups and demographics that have experienced COVID in a way that is disproportionate to people in groups with more privilege and access. That work cannot be separate from the work of an educator."**



## DAYANA FAUVER '18

First Grade Teacher, Sixth Avenue Elementary,  
Aurora Public Schools  
Bachelor of Arts, Center for Urban Education

The COVID-19 pandemic arrived midway through Dayana Fauver's first year teaching first grade at Sixth Avenue Elementary in Aurora. An extended spring break quickly gave way to the reality that the entire fourth quarter would be conducted online and spent reviewing previously taught content.

Fauver's biggest concern was for students at her school whose families were more transient or experiencing homelessness. "When they come to school, it's a safe haven; there's some stability there," she says.

Aurora Public Schools and school communities worked together to contact students and their families and ensure they had access to essentials, like food, in addition to the information and technology they needed for virtual school.

Of the 21 students who had come to her class in person, about 13 showed up online most days during that fourth quarter. Language was an obstacle for some families. Others moved during the pandemic. Spotty internet access and shared devices were also common challenges.

The transition to online learning was new for Fauver, who described herself as "theatrical" and "really happy" as an in-person teacher. But, she has found ways to engage her students, including doing science experiments online.

The fall of 2020 presented a new challenge: Last year, she knew her students before the transition to online learning happened, and the first graders had more than half a year in school. This year's first graders are new to school and her classroom.

As of early October, Fauver was preparing for a return to school that involved learning yet another new way of teaching: A hybrid model where she simultaneously teaches some students in person and others remotely. She was cautiously excited: concerned about safety during the pandemic but overall confident in her school's plans, which mean students are in small groups.

Overall, she says of online teaching, "it's a ton of extra work." Prepping things and learning how to do things virtually can be a challenge. She also has four children at home, so juggling their

**"Stay positive. It will be OK. Be open to learning new things. Find what works for you and in your classroom."**



“You don’t have to be a pro at everything. For instruction, use what you’re comfortable with you can say to your students, we’re doing a project, and I’d like to you to learn through doing the project.”

## MATTHEW FARBER, ED.D.

Assistant Professor, Technology, Innovation and Pedagogy  
Coordinator for K-12 and Secondary Education

schedules and hers has made for a hectic fall.

But there have been some silver linings to the transitions, she says, including a stronger sense of camaraderie between teachers. “We’re not in this by ourselves; we’re in this as a team,” she says.

And, she says, “we have more of a grasp of how to teach virtually than in the spring. If you looked at what we were doing then versus now, you’d see it’s changed in a positive way.”

“This is the new normal now,” she says. “Even if we go back in-person, I’m still going to continue to use a lot more of the tech.”

In Matthew Farber’s classes at UNC, undergraduate and graduate student teachers-to-be might be using anchor.fm to create a podcast they can share with their classmates. Or they might be tracking their avatar’s progress in Classcraft, a program that depicts learning as a quest.

Farber’s education classes—including a course focused on teaching remotely—model the sort of technology-facilitated approach to learning he hopes teachers might bring into their own classrooms as more and more learning happens online.

Farber, a regular contributor to the popular education site Edutopia.org and author of an upcoming book on games and social-emotional learning, says that as the COVID-19 pandemic pushed schools and classes online for the first time, many adopted what he has heard referred to as “emergency remote teaching” or “pandemic pedagogy.” That is, their classes were being offered online, but the educators offering them didn’t have skills or background in maximizing the strengths of online school.

That’s not the fault of teachers or schools, he says—teaching remotely requires a different approach and set of skills, and the events of last spring were unprecedented, to say the least. And teaching online is often more work than teaching in person. “Teachers have always brought work home with them,” he says. But now, “the school day never ends.”

But Farber believes there are opportunities to build on the strengths of technology in the classroom as educators get more used to working in an online environment.

“We don’t want education to backslide, to be more direct instruction, less hands-on experiential learning,” he says. Instead, educators can focus on learning about and implementing pedagogical approaches like flipped learning or project-based learning that maximize the time students have with teachers and promote students’ autonomy.

“We learn by making, sharing and constructing something that is personally meaningful. Really good educational technology is informed by this idea.”

He adds that it’s important not to get caught up in things that are engaging but superficial rather than focusing on more substantive online learning approaches.

“There are a lot of missed opportunities if we spend too much time creating decorative classrooms.”

Farber is particularly interested in the potential of game-based learning and technology to support social-emotional well-being. During the pandemic, the emotional wellness of students is top of mind for many educators. “It’s important to put students’ social-emotional learning first,” he says, adding that there are resources, including a set approved by the Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL) that teachers can use to promote well-being virtually.

He says teachers and schools need to also be mindful of access and new equity issues that have arisen due to the pandemic. “Design for students in the margins, and you’re designing for everyone. The important thing will be to keep building access,” he says. “I’d like to think this will prepare us in the future.” **UNC**

### Resources and Related Reading

“Making a Game of It,” Matthew Farber’s advice for engaging kids in game-based learning  
[unco.edu/news/articles/game-based-learning-coronavirus.aspx](https://unco.edu/news/articles/game-based-learning-coronavirus.aspx)

Bear-in-Mind Podcast with Matthew Farber: “Learning Through Games”  
[unco.edu/bear-in-mind/39-learning-through-games.aspx](https://unco.edu/bear-in-mind/39-learning-through-games.aspx)

“Coronavirus Caused Rapid Changes in Education Model: Resources for Parents and Teachers”  
[unco.edu/news/articles/coronavirus-caused-changes-education-model.aspx](https://unco.edu/news/articles/coronavirus-caused-changes-education-model.aspx)



ROWING  
NOT DRIFTING

THE  
HORACE MANN  
GATE

DEFINING

# Moments

By Debbie Pitner Moors

Photos courtesy of UNC Archives

UNC has heeded a call of “Rowing Not Drifting” for more than a century through social, political and economic challenges. In 2020, the university responded to budget issues, a global pandemic and a racial justice movement as it focused on student success and worked to move forward with resilience and an enduring sense of community.

*M*ore than 100 years ago, the class of 1910 dedicated a gift to the university — a stone and brick pair of columns and a wrought iron gate constructed along 10th Avenue on Central Campus. It was called “The Horace Mann Gate” for educational reformer and public education advocate Horace Mann. Inscribed in the gate are the words “Rowing Not Drifting.”

In the 110 years since, there have been wars and pandemics, economic ups and downs and marches for suffrage, peace and racial justice. These have been challenges and calls to action on UNC’s campus, and through it all, generations of Bears have passed those gates with a reminder to persevere.

Here, we share a look at critical moments past and present, along with the university’s vision for the decade to come.

#### **DEFINING THE COMING DECADE THROUGH THE LENS OF STUDENT SUCCESS**

In his annual State of the University address on Sept. 10, 2020, President Andy Feinstein shared UNC’s responses to current challenges after an unprecedented spring and summer. In that context, he highlighted the ongoing efforts of the Strategic Enrollment and Student Success plan that began with a discovery phase in November of 2018.

By fall 2019, strategic visioning had moved forward through university-wide working sessions, town halls and forums to develop a vision for 2030. That vision focused on five key elements:

- Putting students first in our decisions and actions
- Empowering inclusivity and drawing strength from the diversity of our university and state
- Investing in our people to foster their growth and success
- Personalizing instruction and providing distinctive educational experiences
- Strengthening our bonds with our local community and state in order to grow and thrive together

By the end of 2019 and into the early months of 2020, action teams began to implement foundational efforts for each of those elements. But, by March 2020, the pandemic had placed those elements within a new budgetary and social reality. Faculty and staff moved classes online and sought ways to offer students vital resources virtually.

Student success was suddenly viewed through a much different lens — but it remained core to decisions and actions, and the strategic planning work that continued in fall 2020.



Before the pandemic overshadowed the spring semester, work that began the previous year made progress toward strategic goals to make it easier for students to navigate pathways into UNC, locate resources and receive support, and complete degrees in a timely manner and with as little debt as possible.

Last year, Feinstein worked with Aims Community College President Leah Bornstein, Ph.D., to launch the Aims2UNC program, which helps students transition directly to UNC after earning an associate degree at Aims.

“Aims2UNC has garnered statewide recognition and accolades from the governor and legislative leaders,” Feinstein says.

Through this program, 27 new UNC students arrived on campus this fall, and there are now 127 Aims students working toward a transition to UNC.

UNC’s leadership among Colorado’s public higher education institutions also helped develop and ensure passage of a new funding formula for colleges and universities.

“Instead of rewarding overall enrollment numbers, the new formula incentivizes us to ensure access for students of color, those from low-income families or who are the first in their family to go to college. It also encourages institutions to provide resources for the neediest students to graduate,” Feinstein said.

# MEETING 2020'S *Challenges*

As the university community develops its vision for 2030, it does so with the challenges and opportunities of three defining moments in one unprecedented year.



## 2020: BUDGET DEFICITS

In January and February 2020, budgetary issues were a topic of intense discussion for faculty, staff, students and the administration. Many in the university community vocally and publicly expressed concern over cuts to faculty and staff and their implications for student success.

UNC continued working with the state legislature to address higher education funding, while at the same time reorganizing to focus on greater efficiency and student success efforts. The university was beginning to see positive results. But, as the pandemic began to unfold over the spring, projections were revised, with a \$24 million shortfall forecast for the fiscal year due to a decrease in state support, enrollment declines and a lower demand for housing and dining.

The university addressed this shortfall with general fund and cash reductions.

“Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, we were also on track to realize a generous increase in state funding — likely 7%. At the end of the session, the state made a 58% cut to the higher education budget to address declining revenues — that’s a half billion dollars. They backfilled much of that reduction with one-time federal coronavirus relief aid. We still took an effective 5% cut to our state appropriations,” Feinstein said. “This year’s cut could have been much deeper. By working with other higher education leaders, we were able to persuade the state to limit the severity of the cuts.”

## 2020: A GLOBAL PANDEMIC

As cases of COVID-19 emerged in Colorado, Feinstein announced on March 11 that classes would move to remote delivery.

Provost Mark Anderson, Ph.D., and Vice President for Student Affairs Katrina Rodriguez, Ph.D., led efforts throughout the summer to fine-tune plans for fall classes and prepare for a range of contingencies for fall semester. They worked closely with state

officials, faculty and staff, and members of the community to develop plans that would address safety concerns about COVID-19 and identify and address potential impacts on students and their families.

As plans unfolded, regular recorded briefings, email digests and web updates focused on transparency and sharing information. Classroom furniture was arranged for social distancing, signage was installed to remind people to wear masks on campus, and Lawrenson, Turner and Hanson-Willis Halls were prepared to house isolated/quarantined students. On August 24, students returned to class — with approximately 17% of courses offered fully face-to-face, 35% hybrid (mixture of face-to-face with some online components) and the remainder (48%) fully online.

## 2020: A CALL FOR EQUITY AND INCLUSION

Equity and inclusion — already a strategic planning priority — took center stage as global anti-racism protests called for justice and reform. Earlier in the year, Chief Diversity Officer Tobias Guzmán, Ph.D., had begun working with colleagues to identify policy changes and steps that would more fully align with university values of equity and inclusion. (See page 22, “Sharing Uncomfortable Conversations.”)

In June and July, Guzmán and other campus leaders met with students, faculty, staff and alumni, gathering ideas and recommendations for action. Efforts included a panel discussion co-hosted with the City of Greeley, required implicit bias education for faculty and staff, expanded training for officers in the UNC Police Department and dialogue between UNC officers and students, affirmation of UNC’s commitment to cultural and resource centers, and university-wide recognition of cultural heritage months and other events to honor the histories of UNC’s diverse community.



PHOTO BY WOODY MYERS

# DEFINING Moments OF THE PAST

Over the years, students, faculty and staff have faced social and global change and challenges. UNC's archivists gathered images and information about some of the moments in UNC history that have shaped the university we know today.



## 1917: WORLD WAR I

During World War I, the Colorado State Teachers College (CSTC, now UNC) offered its facilities to the U.S. War Department, and a Student Army Training Corps (S.A.T.C.) was established on campus. S.A.T.C. trainees lived in four barracks constructed on campus, took courses such as conversational French and German and participated in campus activities and athletics.

## 1918: A GLOBAL PANDEMIC

When the influenza pandemic struck Colorado in the fall of 1918, the State Board of Health allowed CSTC to remain open under a strict quarantine. Visitors weren't allowed to come to campus, and students were not allowed to go downtown. During the quarantine (Oct. 9 to Dec. 18, 1918), classes continued, but classroom windows had to remain open. All social and extracurricular gatherings were canceled, and student lodgings were inspected daily by sanitary police.

## 1933: A GREAT DEPRESSION AND A LITTLE THEATRE

In 1933, UNC President George W. Frasier determined that the summer recreational program was lacking in the field of dramatics. He asked temporary instructor



Helen Langworthy to develop a summer theatre program to provide educational opportunities for students and bring culture to the college and community during the tough times of the Great Depression. Langworthy continued as Little Theatre of the Rockies' director until she retired in 1965. Noel Coward's "Hay Fever," was one of eight plays produced during the first LTR season in 1934.

## 1941: WORLD WAR II

As the U.S. entered a global conflict, President Frasier worked with the U.S. War Department to provide space on campus to host the Army Air Forces Western Technical Training Command. Over 400 men came to Greeley to train and served around the world during and after World War II. In this photo, Earl Godwin wears his gas mask in Snyder Hall.





### 1969: BLACK AND BROWN COALITION

In spring of 1969, a coalition of the Afro-American Student Union (AASU) and Los Latinos presented a list of 27 demands to student leadership and administration, asking for better representation of minorities in staffing and minority group studies in academic programs, as well as better assistance and more equitable treatment to minority applicants. On April 11, the coalition held a rally to present and explain their demands to a crowd of 700 students, faculty and staff. Five days later, a rally with approximately 2,000 campus community members was held at the Garden Theatre, where UNC President Darrell Holmes (at the podium) outlined plans for increasing the hiring of faculty members from minority groups as well as initiating a fundraising drive to create additional scholarships for minority students from low-income families.

Representing the coalition: (from left to right) Jesse Venegas, leader of Los Latinos; Adrian Capehart, leader of the Afro-American Student Union; and Steve Rhodes, Associated Student Council president, who represented the Council's endorsement of the coalition.

### 1969-1970: KENT STATE AND VIETNAM PROTESTS

The Colorado State College (CSC, now UNC) community participated in a nationwide demonstration against the war. Known as the Vietnam Moratorium, it began on Oct. 14, 1969, with a midnight peace vigil as 650 members of campus marched from the College Center (now the University Center) to the Garden Theatre to honor the fallen, followed by a day of speeches and singing. In this photo taken May 7, 1970, approximately 1,000 UNC students joined 4 million of their peers across the U.S. in responding to the tragedy at Kent State and the bombing of Cambodia in what became the first nationwide student strike.



### 1984: FIRST LGBTQ+ SUPPORT SERVICES

In 1984, the Greeley Gay and Lesbian Alliance was founded, and with support from the Student Representative Council, they requested that “sexual preference or orientation” be added to UNC’s Equal Opportunity disclaimer. The Board of Trustees unanimously voted against the request three times in four months. In 1993, after years of opposition, the Trustees passed a resolution committing to “equal protection of all groups on campus, including gay and lesbian individuals.”

UNC opened the Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, and Transgender Resource Office in 1998, which eventually became today’s Gender and Sexuality Resource Center (GSRC). In 2016, the Board of Trustees added the terms “gender identity” and “gender expression” to the Equal Opportunity statement, and in 2017, the GSRC moved from the University Center to its own house on 10th Avenue. **UNC**





Tobias Guzmán, Ph.D., UNC's chief diversity officer and associate vice president for Student Affairs, is a '94 alumnus.

# Sharing Uncomfortable Conversations

By Debbie Pitner Moors

As UNC considers policy, cultural and systemic changes to address campus climate, conversations bring truth into focus.

**O**n July 15, 2020, in the now familiar pandemic landscape of virtual meetings, a number of UNC and City of Greeley representatives logged on to take part in “Tell Me More,” a panel discussion and “community conversation on race and communities of color.”

The panel gathered in response to the anti-racism movement that was growing across the U.S. and around the world. It offered listeners an opportunity to ask questions and hear perspectives in an effort to develop understanding and bring change.

Representing UNC were Tobias Guzmán, Ph.D., chief diversity officer and associate vice president for Student Affairs; Shawanna Kimbrough-Hayward, director of the Center for Human Enrichment/TRiO Student Support Services; Myria Davis, a graduate student in Marriage, Couples, and Family Counseling/Therapy and Marcus Garvey Center interim coordinator; and Grant Stephens, a senior Human Services major and UNC football player.

As panelists prepared to share their stories and discuss issues such as bias, privilege, inclusivity and systemic racism, the facilitator asked each to introduce themselves.

As he talked about his personal experiences, Stephens recounted a moment when he wanted to take a break from the events that were consuming news and social media.

“One day I came home from the gym, and this is in the midst of all the protesting, and looting, and rioting that’s taking place. I love spending time with my mom, so I sit down on the couch, and she’s watching the news, and I said ‘Can we just turn on something different? I’m burned out on this.’”

Stephens’ mom, Janice, an English teacher who gifted her son with the power of language, wasn’t moved by his fatigue.

“She told me something that changed me as a man for the rest of my life. She said, ‘Son, don’t ever get tired of seeing the truth, because the day you do, you will grow to accept lies.’”

Stephens shared his mom’s wisdom with the panel in an effort to encourage listeners to find truth and answers in uncomfortable moments. “My mom said, ‘Always fight for people, and don’t ever get so comfortable where you are to think that you couldn’t be the next boy on a T-shirt. You have to fight as if your life is at risk.’ So that’s the thing that I pose as a challenge to Black and white Americans, because it was me in that moment. We need to check our comfort in this country. Accept the uncomfortable conversations.”

In the wake of tension and politically charged events, the need for understanding — of language, bias and historical trauma — is foundational in the learning and awareness stage before it becomes transformational. The climate on a campus, if it fosters threatening/bullying behavior, microaggressions and bias, can make success less attainable, or even impossible, for students, faculty and staff most affected by that negative climate. Bringing an equity-minded lens into organizational practices and policy creates accountability, which leads to positive systemic effects and an inclusive climate.

Diversity, equity and inclusion are important factors in every student’s journey at UNC, which are issues that Guzmán and UNC’s administration are incorporating into the university’s strategic plan.



In December 2019, five key elements were identified as priorities for UNC for the next decade. Each reflects equity, and one spelled out specifically the goal of “empowering inclusivity and drawing strength from the diversity of our university and state.”

With the 2030 vision clear, Guzmán was looking forward to further developing equity-related changes when 2020 started.

“Probably 20 years ago the university tried something, and that was probably in name only,” he says. “What’s different now is the dual approach of changing systems and policy, along with climate and culture and having the support of President Andy Feinstein, Provost Mark Anderson and the cabinet to make those changes. I am convinced they are committed.

“You can’t just have programs and events that showcase cultures and ethnicities and not have policy changes,” Guzmán says.

It was work that Guzmán was looking forward to beginning when, in March, the entire campus emptied during the pandemic. That created a completely different campus climate and a host of related concerns. According to the Centers for Disease Control, people of color have been disproportionately impacted by the coronavirus through lack of access to health care; their occupations; discrimination; educational, income and wealth gaps; and housing. Students of color were returning home to those concerns and others while still trying to focus on classes remotely. Students in the LGBTQ+ community faced difficulties as they left their UNC support systems, while stay-at-home orders made it more difficult for victims of domestic violence to get help.

“Now we have the components of mental health, isolation, fear and anxiety, all coupled with the pandemic and inequality and identity vulnerability,” Guzmán says.

He and the Division of Student Affairs team checked in regularly with students, and through spring and summer 2020. UNC’s cultural and resource centers worked to develop ways for students to stay connected to their campus communities and offered mental health resources for students struggling with the pandemic’s impacts.

As anti-racism protests began to take place around the country after the death of George Floyd, Guzmán says students who were at home were able to be agents for change within their own communities, and many who remained nearby became involved in the Greeley community.

“Over the summer, I was able to attend several events in Greeley where students were in charge of marches. Their voices were loud, and their message was clear,” Guzmán says.

“You can’t just have programs and events that showcase cultures and ethnicities and not have policy changes.”

—Tobias Guzmán



As students began to return to campus this fall, and the university community worked to regroup and address the 2030 vision plan, Guzmán outlined efforts to institute change and address systemic racism.

“To transform a system and structures, the ‘people work’ has to happen first,” he says. “And the people work is really the education, the exposure, the awareness and the relationship building. Simultaneously, we have to create policy and revise existing policy to be able to drive the change you hope to see.” he says. He worked with the campus community to identify six main focus areas:

### 1. Campuswide Professional Development

Guzmán says the campus community — especially since George Floyd’s death — has expressed a strong interest in knowing more about how to be anti-racist.

“They want to know, what is implicit bias? And how many times does implicit bias happen on a daily basis? And they want to understand about microaggressions that happen every day to Black, Indigenous and people of color (BIPOC), and women, and LGBTQ+ community on our campus. That kind of campuswide education, which is personal and professional development, is absolutely necessary.”

### 2. Recruitment of Faculty and Staff of Color and Other Underrepresented Identities

“I don’t buy the idea that ‘nobody wants to come to Greeley,’ or that ‘Black or Latinx scholars would not want to work at UNC.’ I believe we have to try harder, do better and change how we recruit potential faculty and staff. There is power in shoulder-tapping among communities of color and underrepresented identities, and we don’t do that. We’ve got to figure out the best strategies for UNC to be able to recruit faculty and staff of color and other underrepresented identities,” Guzmán says.

### 3. Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) Standards

“I don’t think it should just be left to having the DEI office being focused on this work. We should have

meaningful metrics in each of our evaluations to strengthen DEI work and efforts across campus. And that is for everybody on campus,” Guzmán says. “Using the mantra ‘what gets measured, gets done’ is simple, and we all have ways we can accomplish this.”

Guzmán cited examples like writing grants that provide funding for research that focuses on equity, inclusion and diversity; mentoring a McNair scholar and supporting them in their research; developing effective teaching strategies for the educational advancement of students from groups underrepresented in higher education; or establishing joint initiatives with state or national organizations with an emphasis on equity and inclusion.

#### 4. **DEI Outreach and Communication**

Shining a light on the work being done at UNC enriches understanding. “We have scholars — undergraduates, graduates and faculty — who do incredible research and creative works. We can share that story and communicate so much toward our DEI efforts,” Guzmán says.

#### 5. **Information Governance**

Often, when data is gathered, it is presented as an aggregate — information about student demographics as a whole. But deeper exploration of that data can help the university understand student needs and address issues related to retention and student success. “We need to use a combination of qualitative and quantitative information or data to assess lived experiences of students,” Guzmán says. “I can hand you a dataset that says we’re at a 70% retention rate, but if we just look at the 70% aggregate, we may miss the fact that we’re actually losing a larger percentage of our BIPOC students. So, the question that I ask is who are those students? What do they look like? Where do they come from? We need to know that so we can take the appropriate action and intervene accordingly.”

#### 6. **Identify Bullying or Threatening Behavior**

Creating a climate where all students can be successful is about changing the culture so that barriers to learning are lifted.

“It’s about how we treat each other,” Guzmán says. “The root of bullying and threatening behavior is an imbalance of power. Behavior can manifest in verbal abuse, or behavior that is humiliating, intimidating and creates a toxic or hostile workplace. I know we’re not unique in this. We’ve got to work on this on our campus because it contributes to an unhealthy climate and creates an impression, idea or mood of systemic devaluing of our students, faculty and staff.”



The July panel with the City of Greeley was one of several action steps Guzmán and university and community leaders hope to continue in the coming year, to foster those “uncomfortable conversations” that address the need for systemic change.

As Shawanna Kimbrough-Hayward, director of the Center for Human Enrichment/TRiO Student Support Services, spoke at the Greeley/UNC panel, she expressed the importance of listening.

“When people of color speak about the experiences they have, believe them. These are lived experiences. There’s no need to make up a story of abuse. Believe what people of color tell you — that’s how you can learn. Then use your privilege and stand beside us and walk through this world with us.

“I would truly, truly hope that through these dialogues — and it cannot be a one-and-done conversation — there must be clear actions put in place to make meaningful change in the Greeley community. I am tired of hearing ‘We’re going to talk about it,’ and there is no action. At this point, there needs to be action behind everything we do to bring about change in our community,” she says.

And that action, says Grant Stephens, may start with something as simple as listening to a one-hour panel discussion on race.

“There are going to be many racist people in America. We can’t control that,” he says. “But how do we counter that? How do we fight that, how do we use our voice to make the world a better place? You can start by just saying to some of your buddies, I know (this panel) may not sound like the coolest thing ever, but let’s just see. It takes like an hour out of our day. Let’s just listen and hear the conversation, and maybe we can make a better climate. That’s the one thing you can do right now. That can make the world a better place.” **UNC**

#### **LEARN MORE**

➤ To watch the “Tell Me More” panel, go to [unco.edu/unc-magazine](https://unco.edu/unc-magazine)

➤ For resources related to Diversity, Equity and Inclusion, go to [unco.edu/equity-inclusion/education-resources](https://unco.edu/equity-inclusion/education-resources)

# Leading BEYOND CRISIS

By Rebecca Dell

*Leaders have a great impact on the tone, culture, goals and vision of an organization. For each of the colleges and academic areas at UNC, the top leader is the dean, reporting to Provost Mark Anderson. Amid 2020's uncertainty, three new deans joined the ranks at UNC.*

**E**ach of them was drawn to UNC by different elements of the colleges, with varied backgrounds at public and private institutions across the country. They want to see UNC offering more unique, integrated, transdisciplinary programs; they plan to support undergraduate and graduate research; and they're working together to support UNC's students and mission as a whole.

Here, we introduce these three leaders and share their vision for UNC's future.





## **INTRODUCING: SHER GIBBS, PH.D.**

*Dean of the Kenneth W. Monfort College of Business (MCB)*

SherRhonda (Sher) Gibbs, Ph.D., had a clear vision for UNC by the time she arrived on campus this summer from the University of Southern Mississippi's School of Management. She'd been brainstorming what she would do as a college dean for the previous three or four years.

"My vision for MCB is to continue with building leaders from the ground up and positioning the college to be the leading business school in immersive business education and career preparation," Gibbs says.

In light of that vision, today at MCB, cross-campus collaborations are in the works to create programs in cybersecurity, cybercrime, data analytics and data science. Gibbs is leading a collaborative approach with industry personnel to create curricula that prepares students with the skills employers are looking for. She plans to enhance UNC's online offerings, add an entrepreneurship concentration, form a student success center and start a student business incubator. She'll require students to take courses in financial literacy, and a special topics course on app development and economy will be offered in the spring. She has her eye on innovation, with the support of UNC President Andy Feinstein.

Before she dreamed of becoming a dean, Gibbs started as a mass communications major at Grambling State University in her native state of Louisiana. She remembers having one particularly harsh English professor who helped hone her written communication skills.

"People were terrified to turn in assignments because she would just rip it apart. It had to be perfect." Gibbs says.

That professor told the class that if they were there to be like Oprah Winfrey, "you can forget about it," Gibbs remembers. "She said, 'If you want to start out making a good income when you exit college, you should go major in computer science.'"

Gibbs changed majors, earning her degree in computer science, and started her career at IBM. She went on to work for the Mayo Clinic in medical records and health care information technology, getting her MBA while working full-time in Minnesota. During her time at the Mayo Clinic, Gibbs started her first business in specialty retail and catering. The entrepreneurial spirit continues to play a prominent role in her life, and she considers herself to be an expert in recognizing opportunities.

"I recognized early on in my career at the Mayo Clinic that there were only two people who seemed to be promoted into leadership: the doctors who had MDs and very, very tall males. I was neither of those things and realized I needed to make a change."

Shortly after this realization, Gibbs applied for and eventually earned a Ph.D. in Management, hoping to affect her future teams in terms of attitudes around leadership and culture.

"Everyone in an organization is valuable and can be the source of a great idea... whether it's a custodian, vice president or entry-level staff member. Great ideas can come from anywhere!"

Along the way, she picked up a motto that has stuck with her. "Ask for what you want," she says. "Very few people are given opportunities without asking."

As a faculty member at the University of Southern Mississippi, Gibbs revamped the entrepreneurship program. To prove her motto, she moved up into leadership by seeking a job elsewhere, then asking Southern Miss for a counteroffer.

Eventually her dean, knowing her goals, began nominating her for dean positions. One from UNC caught her eye with the words "innovation," "entrepreneurship" and "Software Engineering program."

"They were looking for someone with my background. It was in a state that I'd always wanted to come visit and explore. And it was the right time. They were looking for an unconventional candidate. And that ended up being a good fit for me."

### **ALUMNI! DO YOU WANT TO GET INVOLVED OR GIVE BACK TO MCB?**

Gibbs invites you to reach out to her:  
SherRhonda.Gibbs@unco.edu

### **FAMILY CONNECTION**

Gibbs' daughter, a first-year student, plays soccer for the UNC Bears

## INTRODUCING: JENNIFER NUTEFALL

Dean of Libraries



When you talk with Jennifer Nutefall, her interests rise to the surface quickly: Social justice. Family. Pop culture. Her cat, Sam, adopted two years ago from the Humane Society where she volunteered in Silicon Valley. And libraries.

She took her first library position at age 16, going on to work in the libraries at Syracuse University while she studied to be a sports journalist. Helping people answer questions and find what they needed felt

fulfilling, which kicked off a 22-year career in libraries. She partnered with faculty to build research skills into their courses, earned two master's degrees and moved into administration. After serving most recently as the university librarian at Santa Clara University, she became UNC's new dean of University Libraries in the summer of 2020.

"What really caught me in the job description was the focus on social justice and looking for a dean that could come in and really talk about and work through and articulate what the role of the academic library is in social justice," Nutefall says.

Her journey with social justice began at George Washington University in Washington, D.C. As a librarian there, she partnered with a faculty member who incorporated thought-provoking service learning into a writing course. Later, Nutefall watched students "grapple" with their identities at Santa Clara, which required all students to take an experiential social justice course. There, Nutefall and her colleagues started an undergraduate diversity fellowship.

"I think that it is important for libraries to take a stand on acceptance, on inclusion, on diversity," Nutefall says. "And it's not just in our collections, and whose voices are being heard, how things are being interpreted, who's writing about all of that, but in terms of the speakers that we bring in, the language that we use, all of that."

She plans to strategically approach how UNC's James A. Michener Library and the Howard M. Skinner Music Library can continue to embrace equity and inclusion.

For example, some students may not have regular access to computers, and using the library as a place to study and access computers or loaner laptops for remote classes can make a difference in their success and ability to do well in those classes.

Nutefall says UNC has already done a lot of work with open educational resources (OER) to make textbooks and other resources available at no cost to UNC students. She plans to work to open access to more research, flying in the face of traditional publishing practice.

"As a public institution, we really have an obligation to have the research done here be accessible to the public," Nutefall says.

She'll also work with her colleagues to develop ways to support undergraduate research.

"My ultimate goal for the libraries is to be so integrated throughout the university that there will never be a question of, 'Why is there a library here, or do we even need a library anymore?'" she says. "Because we're educational partners — integrated throughout the university and curriculum. And the university community cannot imagine itself without us."

### DID YOU KNOW?

2021 will mark the 50th anniversary of the James A. Michener Library

### NUTEFALL'S TOP FIVE BOOK RECOMMENDATIONS

*The Library Book* by Susan Orlean

*Eleanor & Park* by Rainbow Rowell

*Life After Life* by Kate Atkinson

*Mrs. Everything* by Jennifer Weiner

*White Fragility* by Robin DiAngelo

## **INTRODUCING: JERI-ANNE LYONS, PH.D.**

*Associate Vice President for Research  
Dean of the Graduate School*

As a 12-year-old, Jeri-Anne Lyons decided that she wanted to become a scientist and work in a hospital lab. Today, she's not only a researcher but a leader of research as she begins her new role overseeing UNC's research activities and helming UNC's Graduate School.

In July, Lyons officially took over the Graduate School from interim dean (and current associate dean) Cindy Wesley, Ph.D., after former dean Linda Black, Ph.D., stepped down from the position to return to the teaching faculty of UNC's Clinical Counseling program.

Lyons' path through college started at the University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point — a school she describes as similar to UNC — with a degree in Medical Technology and minors in Chemistry, Spanish and Music. She went on to earn a Ph.D. in Immunology, focusing on multiple sclerosis (MS) in animals.

During her postdoctoral fellowship at Washington University in St. Louis, she worked in an MS clinic with patients and their families, continuing her research and work as a faculty member.

Most recently, as a faculty member at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, she taught and mentored students, leading research on light therapy for MS patients.

"Graduate education and research really are my passions and where I really find a lot of joy in helping students through their programs," she says.

She plans to facilitate collaborations among graduate school programs to create unique offerings for graduate students. She envisions a holistic graduate experience where students learn to be instructors, researchers, grant-writers and faculty members. She also plans to champion UNC's best resource: its people.

"In terms of both roles, AVP of Research and dean of the Graduate School, I see myself largely as an advocate and a support," Lyons says.



PHOTO BY WOODY MYERS

One of her priorities is growing UNC's research activity to attain an R2 Carnegie Classification research ranking, which she says will result from supporting faculty and students in identifying and applying for funding opportunities.

"I look forward to working with the Office of Undergraduate Research to promote research opportunities for undergraduate students here at UNC," she says. "We have strong undergraduates and strong graduate programs."

Her work with the Office of Undergraduate Research will expand graduate student opportunities to mentor undergraduate students and undergraduate opportunities to get into research labs.

Lyons' interest in research makes her a great fit to continue growing UNC's culture of inquiry and discovery.

"[With research,] you get to spend every day digging in the sandbox, figuring out what the question is," she says. "And then playing around until you figure out what the answer is." **UNC**

# A Community Effort

UNC alumna Grace Franklin started a new job during a pandemic — and joined a team effort to keep her community healthy.

In February 2020, Grace Franklin '15 had just stepped into her new role as the public health director for San Miguel County in southwest Colorado. She was excited about the opportunity to revamp the county's programs in family planning, WIC (Women, Infants and Children), and immunizations.

But two weeks into her new job, Franklin found her plans for shaping the community's health system derailed by a global pandemic — something that wasn't on her mind when she was setting her career path.

Originally from San Diego, Franklin earned her bachelor's degree in Conflict Resolution before enrolling at UNC in 2013 to pursue her master's through the Colorado School of Public Health.

"The concentration at UNC is community health education, which was very appealing to me — how you communicate in a way that will resonate with people to make healthy behavior changes an automatic choice," she says.

Her advisor worked with her to create a customized approach to her studies. "She was like, 'This is what you're interested in. This is how we can take these concepts and help build your knowledge base,'" Franklin says. "(Faculty) really encouraged me to stretch myself, come up with ideas and be innovative."

A graduate assistantship and an internship also helped her find her focus.

"I did a lot of work with one of my adjunct professors and did my internship with her at a local nonprofit called Look Both Ways, which is a Loveland-based sexual health education nonprofit."

That internship led Franklin to work with the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment and, eventually, to her new role as public health director for San Miguel County. She arrived there just as COVID-19 was emerging as a public health threat, and it took priority over everything she planned to work on.

"The first two weeks coming into the pandemic, it was fairly chaotic," she says, adding that, as a newcomer, she hadn't had the opportunity to build relationships and was still learning about the community.

"It's a rural frontier community that has a strong tourism economy. From the mountain town of Telluride

all the way out to the ranches in Egnar, the needs vary significantly. And the risks for the spread of this virus vary, as well. I didn't really know that or who to talk to," Franklin says. "But, the beauty of this place is that because it's so small in number and people lean on each other, the sense of community is tremendous."

In March, one of the challenges they faced was turnaround on testing. "The ability to test folks and understand how the disease was spreading was the biggest bottleneck. There would be times where we did the nasal swab test to see if there was an active infection. It would take three weeks to get a test result. By that time, it's useless," Franklin says.

Meanwhile, Colorado mountain communities with ski resorts were making headlines for COVID-19 outbreaks. But with the bottleneck in active case testing, they couldn't easily determine their population's exposure. Then, two community members who own a biotech company offered a solution.

"They reached out to us and said, 'Hey, we don't have active contagion testing, but we do have an antibody test we've been developing, and we'd love to offer it to our entire community,'" Franklin says. "They provided the lab processing and transportation of the test for free, and then the county paid for the supplies for testing and the staffing to administer it."

The test, which requires a blood draw, looks at a person's immune response specific to this coronavirus strain. Out of a population of 8,000, there were 5,500 people tested from throughout the county.

"We were the first county in the nation to do such wide-sweeping testing," Franklin says. Much to their relief, the results in late March and early April told them that San Miguel County had a fairly low infection rate. And, with a statewide stay-at-home order, those numbers remained somewhat contained until mid-summer. Then, as with many communities, those numbers began to climb, and communication and education efforts continued to be key initiatives — and a challenge in a tourism community.

"We have folks coming from all over, with different understandings, different policies and different expectations about this disease and its containment,"

*“We have folks coming from all over, with different understandings, different policies and different expectations about this disease and its containment.”*

—Grace Franklin '15



Franklin says. Trying to help educate the constantly changing tourist populations required continual efforts by the community and local businesses.

Another challenge was rooted in a language barrier. “We have over 20% Latinx population. Really early on, we saw they were disproportionately being affected by this virus... But we were like, ‘OK, we’ve got this. We have some Spanish, speaking educators.’ But we have a whole subset of folks from Guatemala who don’t speak Spanish as their primary language. They speak a language called Chuj. We were missing this entire subset. So, we saw a spike really early on in this Guatemalan community just because we weren’t getting the information to them that they needed,” she says.

“We recognized a gap in care for people to get the critical information needed in the language and method that they prefer,” she says. “By intentionally building an outreach campaign that responded to the needs of this often unseen population, we were able address the needs of the community as a whole.”

The challenges across socioeconomic and cultural diversity meant Franklin and her team had to respond nimbly, and she says that her education at UNC offered her hands-on experience that has made a difference in how she was able to meet that challenge.

“UNC is extremely special and unique in the sense that it has such a tailored experience,” Franklin says. “A lot of the classes connect you with other community organizations that need help, and you’ve got to take concepts and actually put them into action. And then you digest it and learn so much more from it.”

—Debbie Pitner Moors

# Alumni Notes

Editor's note: Alumni Notes items are submitted by alumni and are not verified by the editors. While we welcome alumni news, *UNC Magazine* is not responsible for the information contained in these submissions.

 **Submit Alumni Notes online**  
at [unco.edu/unc-magazine](http://unco.edu/unc-magazine)

 **Follow along on Twitter @UNCBearsAlumni**  
for up-to-date alumni news and highlights

## 60s

**Donald Tanner**, BA '62, Richardson, Texas, rounded out a successful career working and leading businesses across the Rocky Mountain and Southwest region. Now retired, he has served on several boards and commissions including past service on the Richardson Methodist Hospital Board in Richardson, Texas and current service with the Collin County Health Care Advisory Foundation, which administers funds for county indigent health Services.

**Eileen Volpe** BA '64, MA '78, Greeley, Colo., is publishing a book of poetry titled *Independent Thoughts From California and Colorado*. It contains approximately 350 poems in six categories: states, animals, politics, religion, holidays and U.S wars.

## 70s

**Donald Benjamin** BA '70, MA '78, Cedaredge, Colo., just published a new mystery novel, *The Road to Lavender*. Set in western Colorado, it's the story of a deadly treasure hunt and the plucky courage of a determined young woman. It is available through Amazon.com.

**Jean Patton** BA '70, MA '72, Lafayette, Colo., retired in December 2019 from The Nature Conservancy, where she was the communications manager for the national program LANDFIRE (a partnership with the U.S. Department of the Interior and the USDA Forest Service).

**Edward Bingham** BA '71, Livermore, Colo., retired from the Denver Police Department as a Captain in 2005. In 2020, he published three fiction books, *Snow Stalker*, *Broken Justice*, and *Final Justice* which are available on Amazon.

**Roger Dudley** BA '71, Denver, Colo., retired from the Denver Public Library in 2019 and received the Rosenstock Lifetime Achievement Award from the Denver Posse of Westerners that same year.

**Charles West** BM '71, Centreville, Va., was elected to honorary membership in the

### Alumnus and Former Coach Celebrates 90

Congratulations to lifelong UNC Bear Robert "Bob" Blasi MA '57. Coach Blasi served as the Head Coach of the UNC Bears Football team 1966–1984, during which the Bears won five Division II Rocky Mountain Athletic Conference titles, celebrated a 10-0 season in 1969, and made their first Division II playoff appearance in 1980. He earned a UNC Honored Alumni Award and is a member of the UNC Athletics Hall of Fame and Colorado Sports Hall of Fame. Coach Blasi is pictured here at his 90th birthday celebration wearing the 1969 commemorative team cap.



International Clarinet Association, which will be conferred in Ft. Worth, Texas in 2021.

**Kent Corkran** BA '72, MA '73, King City, Ore., retired after 44 years with the federal government.

**Blues Bland** BA '76, Plymouth, Minn., is a playwright and a member of The Playwright's Center. Before being canceled because of the pandemic, his one act play "Causality" was chosen to be presented in the 2020 Minnesota Fringe Festival.

**Richard Jordan** BS '76, Monument, Colo., a Certified Public Accountant (CPA), retired from Lockheed Martin after 31 years.

**Daniel Townsend** BA '78, MA '80, Ludington, Mich., retired after 42 years as a professional geologist.

**Mary Jo Drew** BA '79, Loveland, Colo., is being honored with the President's Award by the American Association of Blood Banks (AABB) for her mentoring of early career blood banking physicians. The AABB is the leading international blood banking professional association.

## 80s

**Dorna Schroeter** MA '81, Rhinebeck, N.Y., published the story of velcro the first in the children's series, *How an Idea from Nature Changed Our World. The Story of EcoMachines*

will be printed this summer. The stories support the Next Generation Science Standards.

**Lisbeth Palmer** BS '82, Las Vegas, Nev., was recently named the executive director for the Nevada Senior Games Inc, an official state member of the National Senior Games Association.

**Kimberly McCord** MME '85, DME '99, Shelton, Conn., is the author of *Teaching the Postsecondary Music Student with Disabilities*. She is also an adjunct professor at New York University.

## 90s

**Douglas Birdsall** BA '91, MA '10, Greeley, Colo., became a sergeant with the Greeley Police Department in 2018, and is currently the supervisor for the Gang Unit.

**Robin Brewer** MA '91, EDD '98, Greeley, Colo., retired after 19 years at UNC in the School of Special Education. She is now supporting teachers of students with significant support needs throughout Colorado.

**George Teal** BA '92, Castle Rock, Colo., won the Republican party nomination in June 2020 for the primary election for Douglas County Commissioner, District 2.

**Mark McCarthy** BA '93, Greeley, Colo., has authored his first book, *Untangling My Kite*, a culinary memoir that gives the reader a look

at the underworld of restaurant cooking and correctional food service.

**Peter Marcell** MA '94, Austin, Texas, was hired as the director of Learning and Development of Workforce Technology at USAA. In his new role he is creating a learning center of excellence to support USAA's mission of being the provider of choice to the military community.

**Elizabeth Ruthmansdorfer** BA '95, Oak Creek, Wis., has established the law firm of Ruthmansdorfer Law Group, S.C. in South Milwaukee, Wisc. She also recently authored her first book, *The Mommy Club: A Journey of God's Will*.

**Rhett Polka** BA '96, Windsor, Colo., is the owner of One80 Physical Therapy and was issued a United States patent for the physical therapy system that he uses in his clinics in Loveland, Windsor and Highlands Ranch, Colo.. A native of Loveland, Polka opened One80 Physical Therapy in 2005 and has been growing the model ever since. He has been sought after by NFL players, division I athletes, division I strength coaches, CrossFit Open World Champions, Radio City Rockettes and Olympic athletes from across the U.S.

**Lois Flagstad** PhD '97, Miami, N. M., retired after 37 years in higher education. She served students, most recently, as vice president of Student Affairs in Minnesota, Colorado, Nebraska, Lithuania, and South Dakota.

**Jill Lliteras** MA '97, Erie, Colo., has recently been given the honor of being selected as the Colorado National Distinguished Principal of the Year for 2020. Currently the principal of Prairie Ridge Elementary School, she has guided several participatory processes to clarify school mission and vision, laying the groundwork for focused goals that align to increase student achievement. At the center of these efforts has been her passion for collaboration and creative teamwork as

a pathway to helping students meet their academic goals in an environment that balances high expectation with high levels of targeted support. Lliteras has leveraged this approach to lead the turnaround success of two struggling schools, both of which were successfully moved from Priority Improvement status to Performance Status in just one year's time.

**Matthew Means** BM '97, Reno, Nev., was recently appointed Inaugural Dean of the University of Nevada-Reno Honors College. While a student at UNC, Means served on the university's Board of Trustees.

## 00s

**Jennifer Yentes** BA '00, Omaha, Neb., in spring 2020, was promoted to associate professor with tenure at the University of Nebraska-Omaha in the Department of Biomechanics.

**Nicholas Sunday** BS '03, Avon, Colo., recently helped create, and became vice president of the Colorado Amusement and Music Operators (CAMO). In addition to being General manager of Alpine Vending & Video, Inc, and a contributor to the Stern Operators Council (SOC).

**Lincoln Hayes** BA '07, West New York, N.J., wrote a science fiction TV pilot script *Librarians of the Jules Verne*. It was an official selection into the Tagore International Film Festival.

## 10s

**Letisha Brown** BA '10, Blacksburg, Va., has been promoted to the rank of assistant professor of sociology at Virginia Tech. She has recently published article in the *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health*.

## Virtual Voices



Alumni shared their experiences and insights through a series of virtual alumni career panels that you can watch on demand at [alumni.unco.edu/careers](https://alumni.unco.edu/careers). Perspectives include the impact of UNC shared by alumni during the Careers in Education panel.

"For me, going back to school as a non-traditional student, I was raising my family, working full-time and going to school. Being part of the Cumbres cohort as well as the Stryker Institute made my experience at UNC great. Having those cohort groups gave the great support that I needed to keep my head above water."

—Nancy Wendirad '05

"The biggest impact that UNC had on me was getting to know people from other countries. I knew that I was interested in meeting people from all over the world. I had an opportunity to study abroad while I was there. I was also very involved on campus, whether it was alumni services, if it was as a tour guide, and I just overall enjoyed my time at the university."

—Adrienne Bergenfeld '04



## Bear Network Career Connections

Help UNC students put the Bear Network to work by gaining career connections and insights to succeed after graduation.

Visit [alumni.unco.edu/careers](https://alumni.unco.edu/careers) to get involved in UNC's alumni career programs and services.



**Samantha Fox-Kantor** BA '13, MA '15, Denver, Colo., serves as the nightside assignment editor for KDVR-FOX31 Denver and Channel 2. She recently won two Heartland Emmy Awards for team coverage of the 2019 Bomb Cyclone and I-70 inferno crash. Fox-Kantor also celebrated her marriage to husband Robert Kantor in September.

**Kelsey Eickelman** BA '15, Highlands Ranch, Colo., graduated from the University of South Florida (Morsani College of Medicine) with a master's degree in physician assistant studies. She is currently working at an internal medicine practice in Orlando, FL.

**Cameron Smith** BM '17 Glasgow, United Kingdom is studying at the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland, recently earning a Master's of Music in cello performance and pursuing

additional study for the Master's of Arts course in chamber music and composition. Smith has performed alongside the Scottish Ensemble, the Royal Scottish National Orchestra and twice selected to perform in the Rosin Chamber Music Festival.

**Christopher Mullen** PhD '18, Fort Collins, Colo., was appointed as the Executive Director of The Workforce Institute in July. It's a think tank that helps organizations drive performance by addressing human capital management issues that affect both hourly and salaried employees.

**Chloe LaMar** BA '19, Erie, Colo., just graduated Summa Cum Laude from Regis University with her master's degree in Criminology.

### Alumni Receive 40UnderForty for Regional Service

Four UNC alumni received the 2020 BizWest Media 40UnderForty award to recognize their professional accomplishment and strong commitment to community service. Congratulations to:

- Bianca Fisher BS '07, Greeley Downtown Development Authority
- Kara Harbison MA '05, Poudre Valley School District
- Allie Steg Haskett BA '03, University of Northern Colorado
- Janese Younger BS '11, First Bank



## Connect to Your Bear Network

Get involved and get connected to your UNC alumni Bear Network when you join a UNC Alumni Group.

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–Camille Foster '21  
International Affairs

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# FROM THE VAULT

## GENERAL WISDOM

**Lessons from the U.S. Marine Corps' first woman three-star general.**



Lieutenant General Carol A. Mutter was the first woman to be nominated to a three-star rank in the U.S. military, the first woman promoted to three-star general and an inductee in the National Women's Hall of Fame. Throughout her life, she's pursued excellence. Now, in her retirement, she continues to help others do so by sharing both her story and her time.

Born and raised in Colorado, Mutter decided to pursue a math degree at UNC because it was close to home and affordable,

and she wanted to follow in the footsteps of a female junior high math teacher. But, then she was recruited into a summer program with the Marines at a time when less than 1% of the Corps was women. That summer turned into a 31-year career in the Marines.

When she went to Officer Candidate School in 1967, Mutter says, women took a limited role when it came to combat training.

"We did go to the rifle range, and we were taught which end of the weapon the bullet comes out," she says. "We got to throw grenades, too. The men stood back. They were a little concerned."

Her math degree led her to work along other avenues. She started out working with computers and trained other women officers. She continued adding to her toolbelt, taking on a variety of roles as she moved bases with her husband, Colonel James Mutter. She studied strategy and tactics and how to fight wars, and she handled logistics and finances.

"If you're comptroller for an organization, you know everything that goes on in your organization because they can't do anything without spending money," she says.

She enjoyed the work and agreed with military values, so when her initial three-year contract ended, she stuck around. She says that the Marine Corps' relatively small size and budget meant they were particularly open to innovation, such as having a woman lieutenant general.

In addition to her range of knowledge, her leadership and decision-making tactics made her an ideal candidate for the three-star role.

"First, I ask a lot of questions. I do my homework. I try to learn as much as I can about the question at hand, and then I make sure I know when I have to make the decision," she says. "I like to try to talk to those who



 General Carol A. Mutter was also featured in the June 1996 issue of *UNC Magazine*, then called *Spectrum*. Read her story at [unco.edu/unc-magazine](http://unco.edu/unc-magazine).

would disagree ahead of time, before the decision becomes public, as much as possible. So that they're not blindsided, and they understand why I made the decision contrary to what they recommended."

Since retiring in 1999, General Mutter spends a lot of time volunteering along with her husband.

"You can work a lot of hours when you work for free," she says.

In addition to giving speeches and traveling, they work with schools to encourage girls in STEM and support organizations such as Women Marines Association (Mutter was formerly the president) that help veterans transition back into civilian life. She says that transition can be especially difficult for women.

"People don't think of women as military veterans or as veterans who have gone through a combat experience, seeing some of those nasty things that it's hard to get over," she says. "There's not even enough of assumption to ask the question, did you serve, are you a veteran? If you're wearing a Marine Corps T-shirt, is that your husband's or your son's T-shirt? Not yours. So, that makes it real difficult."

Fortunately, both General and Colonel Mutter could understand their spouse's experience to a large extent, and their support for each other served them well. She calls him her best mentor and friend. He retired before her to support her career.

"He says the care and feeding of a two-star general, let alone a three-star general, is a full-time job. So he had to quit to take care of me," she says. "People get their money's worth out of the senior military and their spouses."

But she would tell you that being a Marine is worth the sacrifices.

"It is not easy to become a Marine, and Marines believe our own public relations," she says. "We believe we're the best, and having been able to be a Marine for over 31 years was very special."

—Rebecca Dell

# In Memory

## 1940s

Virginia Rice Lindblad BA '43, MA '68  
 Laurel Loos Williams LCC '44, BA '60  
 Marcia Anderson Wilcoxon BA '46  
 Yvonne Walker Milliken BA '47  
 Donald Potter AB '47, MA '48  
 William Andris BA '49, MA '51  
 Donald Bodeen BA '49  
 Barbara Klee Clark BA '49  
 LaDonna Peterson Hutchinson BA '49  
 Alice Hertzler Thompson BA '49

## 1950s

Lorene Boge Dick BA '50  
 Helen Douthit Reutlinger BA '50  
 Robert Mixer MA '51  
 Nancy Downen Poush BA '51  
 Marshall Sanborn BA '51  
 Forrest Cook AB '52, MA '54  
 Betty Dahlgren Dellinger BS '52  
 Rowland Elder BA '52, MA '52  
 Wilson Perry BA '52  
 Robert Williams AB '52, MA '60  
 Jean Crakes Ambrose BA '53  
 Donald Engelhardt BA '53, MA '54  
 Carolyn Ballah Gelenter BA '53  
 Dorothy Boyd Layton BA '53  
 Arthur Papenfus MA '53  
 Darrell Rains AB '53, MA '54  
 Melvin Thistle BA '53, MA '58  
 Earl Young BA '53  
 Harold Burshtan MA '54  
 Elmira Martin Cudney BS '54  
 Mary Gladin Hofmann BA '54  
 Lawrence Nonnie BA '54  
 Donald Bender BA '55, MA '56  
 Robert Lanari BA '55  
 Joyce Locks MA '55  
 Thelma Hayes Metcalf BS '55  
 Bruce Anderson BA '56, MA '59  
 John Brainerd BA '56  
 Sara Cameron BA '56  
 Ida Halverson Charles MA '56  
 Richard Connell BA '56, MA '59  
 Lawrence Dussliere MA '56  
 Dallas Jelsma BA '56  
 Verl Nash MA '56  
 Wayne Nordell BA '56  
 David Wilson BA '56  
 Leonard Dalen MA '57  
 John Leach MA '57, MA '62, EDD '66  
 Harriet Leafgren MA '57  
 Edith Niederhoefer MA '57  
 Nelwyn Samford MA '57  
 Gordon Tomasi BA '57, MA '58

Sueo Yamashita BA '57, MA '58  
 James Beitel BA '58  
 Arlen Debus BA '58  
 Joyce Yingling Kirkman BA '58  
 Carl Pollock BA '58, MA '59, EDD '67  
 Wanda Sievers MA '58  
 Nora Stevens MA '58  
 Charles Steward MA '58, EDD '68  
 Myles Vallejo MA '58  
 Bruce Beitler MA '59  
 Lynn Coates BA '59, MA '62  
 Walter Davies BA '59  
 Richard Elwell BA '59  
 Donald Furuta BA '59  
 Dominick Genova BA '59  
 Frank Kadlecek BA '59, MA '60  
 Joan Iacabone Murray BA '59, MA '62, EDS '67  
 Jimmie Shook BA '59, MA '67  
 Joe Slobko BA '59

## 1960s

Helen Carlock Carlson BA '60  
 Dariel Clark MA '60  
 John Ernst MA '60  
 Barbara Benson Hakanson BA '60, MA '61  
 John Huntzinger BA '60  
 Leo Giles BA '61  
 Harold Grimes BA '61  
 Richard Severson MA '61  
 Joyce Stone BA '61  
 Myron Sustacek MA '61  
 Marcia Tonkel BA '61  
 Ronald Wagner MA '61  
 Marino Casem MA '62  
 Angelo Daurio BA '62, MA '67  
 Martin Gonzales BA '62  
 Allan Porter BA '62  
 Daniel Ratkovich BA '62, MA '68  
 Gary Snow BA '62  
 Dorothy Hanton Stewart BA '62, MA '66  
 James Van Meter BA '62, MA '64  
 Sherron Nay Acker BA '63  
 Roy Betz BA '63, MA '67  
 Ronald Bollig BA '63, MA '66  
 Clair Gunther MA '63  
 James Hess BA '63  
 Roy Kahler BA '63  
 Jerry Larson MA '63  
 Gretchen Kitzmiller Plath MA '63  
 Paul Garrier BA '64  
 Kenneth Gifford MS '64, EDD '70  
 Harold Heller EDD '64  
 Sharon Parr Hoover BA '64  
 Eunice Peterson Kronholm MA '64  
 Carlos Leal, Jr. BA '64, EDS '71  
 Daniel Meyer MA '64  
 Verna Vance Segelke BA '64

Richard Stevens BA '64, MA '65  
 Edward Wellman MA '64  
 Barbara Phelps Borom BA '65  
 Thurman Carver BA '65  
 Carol Hutchinson Douglas BA '65  
 Arthur Greb BA '65, MA '73  
 Lloyd Mather MA '65  
 Roger Milner BA '65, MA '80  
 Albert Noice EDD '65  
 Ryburn Sago BA '65, MA '69  
 Roy Voggesser MA '65  
 Beverly Hamm Wheeler BA '65  
 Jack Wilson BA '65  
 James Zancanella EDD '65  
 Kenneth Sorg BA '66  
 Bette Vote BA '66  
 Zelina Hickox MA '67  
 Jennifer Anderson Johnson BA '67  
 William Johnson MA '67  
 Robert Liljander BA '67, MA '68  
 Leon Moyes MA '67  
 Betty Kelly Perrotti BA '67  
 Agnes Theimer Peterson MA '67  
 Arlene Ring BA '67  
 Roy Shepherd BA '67  
 Wendell Conover MA '68  
 Jan Dunlap MA '68  
 Doyle Henley MA '68  
 Tom Katsimpalis EDD '68  
 Patricia McDonald BA '68  
 William Nicholson BA '68  
 Bob Shaw BA '68, MA '75  
 Leo Simon BA '68  
 Gary Buhler BA '69  
 Cecilia Haffner Hansen BA '69  
 Blaine Moore EDD '69  
 Gayle Newlon MA '69  
 Mary Schulz EDD '69  
 Jack Wilson MA '69

## 1970s

Raymond Degenhart BS '70, MA '70, PHD '73  
 Patrick Johnson BA '70  
 Sharon Cogburn Seery BA '70  
 Martin Stefanic BA '70  
 Earlean Walter Toliver-Dixon BA '70, MA '77  
 William Vollmer MA '70  
 Lois Towle Bedford-Bright BA '71  
 Karon Harvey MA '71  
 Robert Hix MA '71  
 Leon Magur MA '71, DA '73  
 James McCabe MA '71, EDS '81  
 Nita Weber Moser BA '71  
 Robert Porter BA '71  
 Nancy Hall Roberts MA '71  
 Katherine Schlapp BA '71  
 Marcia Bachman Smith BA '71, MA '77  
 John Babel BA '72, MA '87

Ray Barron BA '72  
 Melinda Jantz Gerlofs BA '72  
 Bertha Hill Hutson MA '72  
 Marvin Lane BA '72 Ma '73, EDD '84  
 Jonathan Vaught BA '72  
 Ann Barrett Barrett BA '73  
 Lisa Chaney Chase Bussell BA '73, MA '80  
 Susan Ryan Eaton BA '73, MA '80  
 Chiyo Nakata Horiuchi EDD '73  
 Irene Suszko BA '73, MA '81  
 David Craig MA '74  
 Frank Farina PHD '74  
 Jennifer Intulaksana BA '74  
 Marilyn Matthews MA '74  
 Terry Mitchell BS '74  
 Peter Rhyne BA '74  
 Dorrin Rolle MA '74  
 Dale Schmaljohn EDD '74  
 Elaine Doughman Shelley BA '74  
 Kenneth Tutt MA '74, EDD '77  
 Jennifer Anderson BA '75  
 Barbara Batangan BA '75  
 James Bertrand MA '75  
 Margaret Allen Greivel MA '75  
 Donna Harris Jacupke MA '75  
 Jane Todd Prichard MA '75  
 Harry Stephens PHD '75  
 Jill Fangman Svoboda MA '75  
 Cedric Taylor MA '75  
 David Allen MA '76  
 Jeanette Poepel Dunn EDD '76  
 Sheila Feeney MA '76  
 Sammy Martinez MA '76  
 Ronald Porter BA '76  
 Richard Richards DA '76  
 Charlotte Andrade Rodriguez-Andrade MA '76  
 James Barton EDS '77  
 JoAnn Dohe MA '77  
 Connie Hunt BA '77  
 Norman Lindauer BA '77  
 James Stephens BA '77  
 Berton Barrett MS '78  
 Frederic Frech MA '78  
 Terry Mieger MA '78  
 Donald Picard MS '78  
 Betty McMillian Sessions MA '78  
 Robert Todd BA '78  
 Larry Cookman BA '79  
 Linda Skaggs Friedle BA '79  
 Patricia Jones BA '79  
 Donald Vick EDD '79  
 James Youngs BA '79

## 1980s

Joann Bliss BS '80  
 Ruth Croft Major MA '80  
 Deborah Stewart Sierra BA '80  
 James Hansen BS '81

Jody Angstadt Kwasny BS '81  
 Yvonne Lutje Sheard BA '81  
 Helen Britton Bolognesi BS '82  
 Richard Davin MA '82  
 Geraldine Harris MA '82  
 Virginia Leone MS '82  
 Stephen Rath MA '82  
 Charles Ross BA '82  
 Nancy Shonk MA '83  
 Isidro Griego MA '84  
 Robert Kern DA '84  
 Benjamin Robison MS '84  
 Mark Hawkins BS '85  
 Nichole Enochs Henkowski BS '85  
 Patricia Holstead Field BSN '86  
 Sarah Melchert Dreher MA '87  
 Christine Woods de Rael EDS '87  
 Donald Ziegler BS '87  
 Susan Hiteshew Davis MS '88  
 Randy Marsh BS '88

### 1990s

Steve Cooksley BS '91  
 Gregory Davis BS '91  
 Mary Jane Hall Hutto MA '91  
 Lori Sundrup BA '91  
 Alexander Fotenos BS '92  
 Jennifer Eubanks McGirl BA '94  
 Casey Newell MA '94  
 Catherine Weinmeister MA '94  
 Robyn Prangley Kellogg BS '96  
 Susan Weil MA '96  
 Amy Campbell BA '98  
 Barbarosia Williams Richardson  
 PSY '98

### 2000s

Kristi Prior BA '00  
 Julia Gonzales MA '02  
 Matthew Braafhart BA '03  
 Kevin Price BA '03  
 Matthew Broderick BA '05  
 Aragorn Spaulding BS '07 MS '18  
 Gabriel Tinker BS '09

### 2010s

Walter Becker BA '12  
 Tiana Cunningham BA '18  
 Laura Hoffman EDS '18

### Faculty

Garth Allen  
 Franklin Cordell  
 William Heiss  
 Patricia Graham  
 Karen Jennison  
 Dana Johnson  
 Stephen Powers



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## Last Look

Gal Faganel, a professor in the UNC School of Music, hadn't seen his cello students in person since the university moved classes online in the spring due to COVID-19. Despite adapting to a virtual learning space, he still longed for side-by-side instruction with his students. It occurred to him that the outdoors could enable him to offer bonus lessons over the summer for his incoming and continuing students.

He arranged for individual hourlong lessons at the pavilion in Glenmere Park in Greeley. Students were asked to wear masks, and Faganel provided music stands and chairs kept at a distance as an additional precaution.

It's been so successful that Faganel is toying with idea of incorporating some of the newfound hybrid teaching strategies into his regular curriculum when the pandemic ends. Regardless of the modality, Faganel strives for high-quality personalized instruction and creating a sense of family among his students.

"There's this can-do attitude about this that we're here for students and have a deep responsibility for that," he said. "That's what my mentors did for me."

—Nate Haas '04

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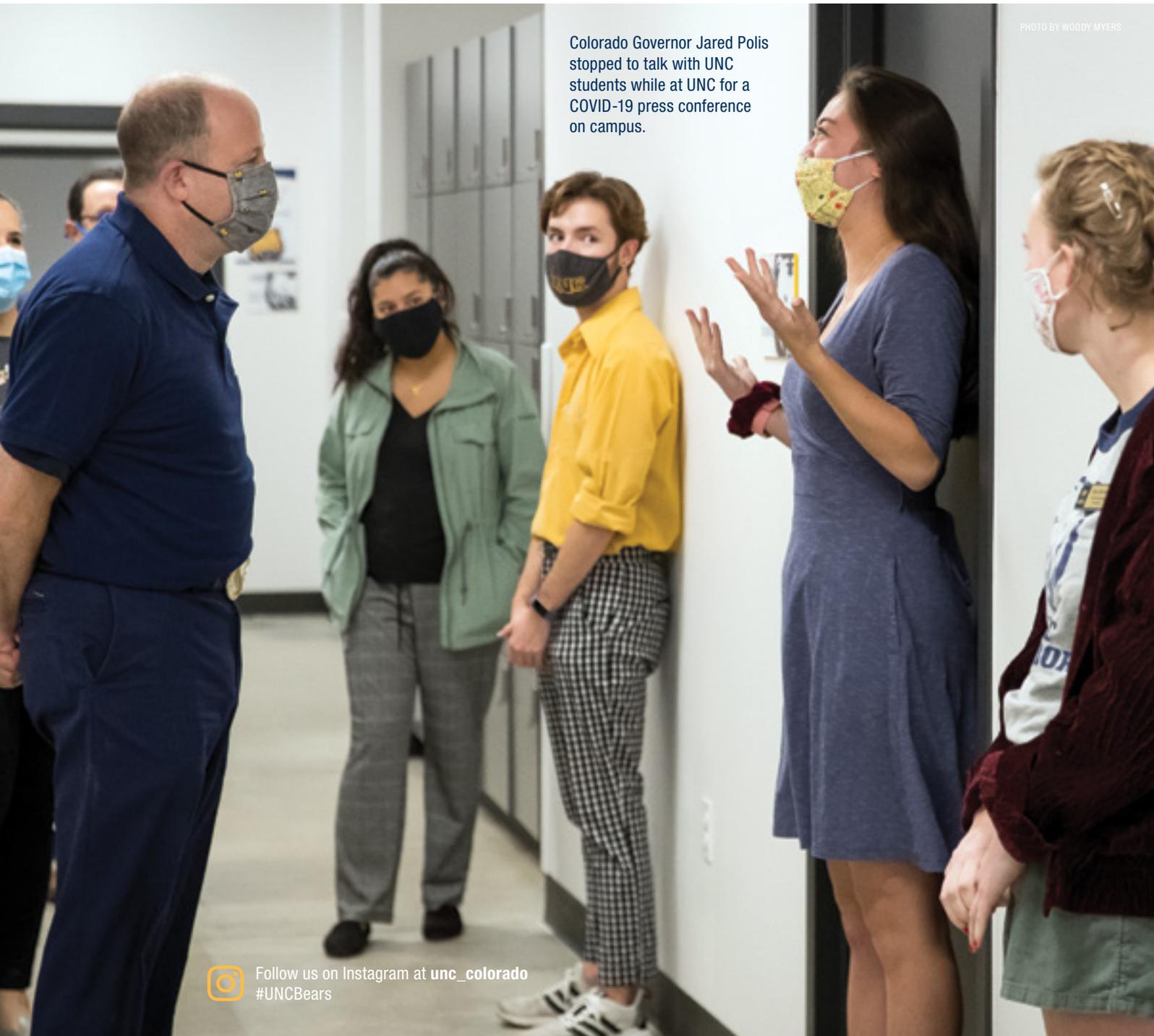
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Colorado Governor Jared Polis stopped to talk with UNC students while at UNC for a COVID-19 press conference on campus.

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