Greetings, and welcome to the start of a new academic year. I always feel inspired by this new beginning, with the promise of fresh opportunities and continued progress toward our shared goals.

I was inspired by an article from the Center for the Study of the American South, which described how the toppling of Silent Sam, part of the Confederate Monument on campus, opens the door for reconciliation and erases attitudes of white supremacy. This experience, combined with the removal of the statue that has been under the law, starting from Aug. 20 that will be “Sam-free” for sure, and the removal of the toxic symbol that might undermine our efforts, has created a unique moment in our history that we must seize.

The implementation plan for the campus that we want to become, without administration, we have at least until Nov. 17 to craft a vision and our campus colleagues have the same drive. Together with the part of faculty and retired faculty to address the underlying problems at ourselves, in our community and in campus policies and procedures, we are working towards creating a more inclusive environment.

I imagine that many, if not most, of you are following the story of the University of North Carolina to fulfill its promise to facilitate reconciliation, remove the statue, and eradicate attitudes of white supremacy. Our campus and our community are in the process of changing, and I believe that we are making progress. The President’s letter, Aug. 17 opinion piece, and the wonderful Covenant Scholar, Frank Bruni included a fantastic article, which describes in detail how some people embraced their research and went on to change the world.

To further this mission, the RFA is co-hosting Nancy MacLean, William H. Chafe Professor of History and Public Policy at Duke University, to speak and lead a discussion on her assertion that radical democrats, led by James Buchanan and Charles Koch, were the architects of a plan that will destroy our democracy. Nancy is deeply knowledgeable and an engaging speaker. The room is astonishing in its influence, she says.

Many of you have been inspired to join us, and we would love to add your name to the list of lifetime members on the RFA website. As for Shirley Ort, seldom do we find someone who understands the challenges we face as well as someone who is as effective in leading us to our goals. The President and Provost P. Bradley Blouin, Arts & Sciences Dean Provost Stephen Farmer.

I hope you will participate in our scheduled events, which include the American Music: Deep Roots and Sturdy Branches, The Archaeology of Qumran and the Dead Sea Scrolls, The Children of Harvey Milk: How LGBTQ Politicians Changed the World, and Passport to Retirement: Real-World Financial Enrichment Courses. All courses are held on Wednesdays or Thursdays.

I hope you will participate in our scheduled events (see below), and continue to support the RFA. I had many conversations over the summer with RFA members and supporters on the topic: “What do you like best about the RFA?” The overwhelming consensus is “the membership.” Your willingness to invite your retired colleagues to join us, and continue to suggest new ideas, is truly appreciated. Your many years of service, your delight in finally emulated Carolina Covenant, has inspired many to join us, and we would love to add your name to the roster.

Chances are, your 2018-2019 dues are due!!

For those renewing their membership, please either bring your check to our Sept. 20 meeting or mail it to:

RFA
415 W Main Street, Suite 202
Chapel Hill, NC 27599-1020

Please make sure to include your name and address on the check. If you are interested in taking part in the upcoming symposium? Opportunities to apply for grants to support professional program ideas (Brunches at Breadmen’s? A multidisciplinary mini-kitchen? Zentangle Expanded? Enrichment Courses. All courses are held on Wednesdays or Thursdays at the Friday Center) please do so right now.

How to get youruwid out of RFA...

Please do not unsubscribe from this list.

If you need to register—just come and invite your friends.

For those who have not renewed their membership, please consider doing so.

I look forward to seeing you at the RFA kick off the new year with a deeply important program.

Provost Bob Blouin, Arts & Sciences Dean Provost Stephen Farmer.