

**Subject:** [sswunc] Update from the Office of Dean Denby-Brinson | Thursday, Feb. 2, 2023  
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**From:** Office of Dean Ramona Denby-Brinson  
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## UPDATE FROM DEAN DENBY-BRINSON

*for faculty, staff and students*



FROM THE OFFICE OF THE DEAN

**Thursday, Feb. 2, 2022**

Dear Colleagues,

We have a number of things to update you on today.

### **Behind-the-scenes equity work**

In recent months, the University has made funding available to address salary inequities. We have used this opportunity to make us stronger as an institution. Thanks go out to Assistant Dean **Joe DiConcilio** and his HR and finance teams; to Director of Planning and Operations **Dana Caudill**; and to HR Officer **Carolyn Adams** for their behind-the-scenes work in implementing applicable Labor Market Adjustment Reserve (LMAR) increases.

### **Your voice in our future**

We've been working collectively on our "Strategic Plan[t]ing" project since this time last year, and we have made a lot of progress! Our goals are to plant a healthy foundation, nourish an inclusive environment and cultivate organizational change.

We've completed the top two critical steps in the past two months, and the results will inform us on our way forward. Thank you to

everyone who has supported this journey!

- **December 2022** | A “Climate and Culture” survey about the School went to three groups of stakeholders: faculty and staff; alumni; and community partners. We heard from 74% of staff and faculty in our climate and culture survey, 16% of our alumni, and 27% of our community partners.
- **January 2023** | Survey data was presented to the Senior Administrative Council ([SAC](#)) and a number of other faculty and staff leaders, followed by that group’s half-day “Strategic Planning” session identifying three or four strategic priorities.

Prior to this winter, we gathered for these milestones:

- **November 2022** | SAC leadership team’s half-day “Strategic Leadership” to focus on how the group operates as a strategic leadership team
- **October 2022** | SAC half-day “Equity Kaleidoscope” session to develop a framework and architecture for inclusive excellence to inform the planning process
- **August 2022** | School-wide “Strategic Plan[[t](#)]ing Kick-off Event”

### **Strategic plan[[t](#)]ing next steps**

You are encouraged to review the attached Executive Summary file of our survey results before joining us next **Thursday, February 9**, for our “All School Strategy Update & Feedback Conversation” at Extraordinary Ventures in Chapel Hill. *Check your calendar invite for details!* With your help, we will create the best strategy and plan to carry our school forward.

### **Recognizing early career achievements**

Please congratulate Associate Professor [Rain Masa](#) and Assistant Professor [Will Hall](#), our inaugural L. Richardson Preyer Early Career Scholar Award winners. Rain and Will are being recognized for their demonstrated service to the state of North Carolina and their significant contributions in scholarly research and teaching at the

School. Thanks to the generosity of longtime donor Rich Preyer, the inaugural L. Richardson Preyer Chairs will have research funding available for five consecutive years in support of their community-based research.

### **Addressing workforce needs across North Carolina**

Through an online MSW program, we are making plans to harness technology to make our top-notch Carolina MSW education more accessible to North Carolina residents. Pending review and approval from The Graduate School and our accrediting body, our online MSW program will launch in January 2024. It's an ambitious goal propelled by the growing workforce shortage in our nation. We'll come back to this topic again in future updates.

### **2023 Society for Social Work and Research Conference**

The School was once again [well-represented](#) at the 2023 SSWR conference from January 11–15 in Phoenix. We proudly celebrated Assistant Professor **Rachel Goode** during the award ceremony on Saturday. She received SSWR's [Deborah K. Padgett Early Career Achievement Award](#) in honor of her work in treating obesity and eating disorders among African American women and those experiencing poverty. In addition, faculty members **Todd Jensen**, **Cindy Fraga Rizo** and **Lisa de Saxe Zerden** were honored for their scholarship and leadership in the social work profession by being named [SSWR Fellows](#).

At the conference, we introduced our [2023 Impact Report](#) with “swag” that sent attendees to [sww.impactreport.unc.edu](https://sww.impactreport.unc.edu) to overview the School's collaborative research institutes, centers and labs.

### **SSWR President**

In Phoenix, we also learned that Dean Ramona was elected president of SSWR, the esteemed professional organization dedicated to the advancement of social work research. As of Feb. 1, she represents more than 1,800 members from over 200 universities and institutions. She shared that she is proud and humbled by this honor.

### **Save the dates**

**March 21** | Distinguished Alumni Award winner **Mia Ives-Ruble**, a 2009 graduate and a nationally recognized disability rights and civil

rights leader, presents “The Pain Points: A Story of Empathy and the Journey Toward Macro Social Work” from Tate-Turner-Kuralt Building (and virtually) as our 2023 Bobby Boyd Leadership Lecturer.

**April 3** | NYU Professor **Michelle Munson**, a widely published and internationally recognized expert in mental health services and interventions for adolescents and young adults, is the keynote speaker in our Legacy Speaker Series at Tate-Turner Kuralt Building.

*We look forward to seeing you at the All-School event on Thursday, February 9 at Extraordinary Ventures! Breakfast will be available from 8:30 a.m. The event begins at 9 a.m.*

—FROM THE OFFICE OF THE DEAN

Questions?

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