

Dr. Bill Roper
Board of Governors Remarks
July 23, 2020

Good morning everyone,

It was in October of 2018, twenty-one months ago, that I was asked to take on this role of interim president of the UNC System.

I've spent most of my working life in public service, and to have the privilege of leading this wonderful institution has been a high honor.

There have been some bumps in the road, to be sure. But please know that the good experiences far outweigh the bad. The work that we have done together is so important for the future of our students and to North Carolina, that even the most challenging moments hold real value.

Getting to work with an incredible set of chancellors and to be involved in bringing new chancellors into the fold stands at the top of my list of positive experiences.

Also, I've been extremely fortunate to work with an amazing team of leaders at the UNC System Office. Our institutions and our state benefit from the hard work they do every day.

And it has been my remarkable good fortune to work with and for my good friend Randy Ramsey and the other strong leaders of the Board of Governors. Thank you, Randy, for your thoughtful, kind, and enlightened leadership. And thank you to the entire Board for allowing me this honor to serve.

In the future, others will reflect on how the last year and half figures into the long and storied history of the UNC System and the state of North Carolina. But, of all the things we've accomplished together, I'd like to think that people will remember:

- How our continued progress toward our Strategic Plan goals led to record enrollments, record graduation rates, and an all-time high in funded research;
- How this work has helped ensure that our institutions serve more students from low income families and rural counties;
- How our rapid response to COVID-19 maintained the rigor and integrity of our instruction, research, and service, while keeping our students, faculty, and staff safe;
- And, how our institutions have mobilized to combat the threat the pandemic presents to our state's health and to our economy.

But that's about the past. The *future* is about my good friend Peter Hans coming into this important leadership role for the UNC System.

Over the past few weeks, I've been spending a lot of time with Peter, and I look forward to seeing the important things he is going to accomplish at the helm.

I have promised him that I will be helpful in any way that I can, and I have told him that I will even answer the phone when he calls ... most of the time.

But before he arrives, there's still work to be done. I have another eight days as interim president. We remain hard at work tackling a number of critical issues, chief among them:

- Refining our institutions' plans to deliver on their educational, research, and service missions – and to do it safely, while we are still in the midst of COVID-19
- Managing the fiscal uncertainty that we face as a result of the pandemic
- And supporting the work of the UNC System Racial Equity task force so that this process, which is so critical to the ongoing vitality and relevance of this institution, delivers tangible and actionable results

Thanks, everybody, once again for the support and guidance you've offered.

Please know that Maryann and I are very happy campers. We are grateful to have had this opportunity. We certainly didn't plan for it, but we appreciate it nonetheless. We wish you all the best.

We anticipate great things ahead for the UNC System and the whole state of North Carolina.

Thank you.