

## **Introduction and Welcome to “Public Universities and the Humanities”**

**By Lloyd Kramer**

- I. Welcome to this special forum on “Public Universities, the Humanities, and Education in North Carolina.”**
  - A. We have organized this event at UNC’s Program in the Humanities to encourage more discussion of the role of the arts and humanities and social sciences in modern public schools, public Universities and contemporary public life.**
  - B. I’m Lloyd Kramer, a professor in the UNC History Department, and the Faculty Director of the Program in the Humanities and Human Values.**
    - 1. It’s my pleasure to be part of the team that has organized this event; and I thank the great staff at the Program in the Humanities for the work they do every day.**
    - 2. The Program in the Humanities and Human Values has been organizing public programs and seminars for over 35 years.**
    - 3. Our goal has always been to foster dialogues between people in the university and people in diverse professions and social groups outside the university; and you’ll find more information about our mission and activities on the back side of the agenda and in our program brochures.**
    - 4. I am especially pleased and honored to be part of a program today that brings together outstanding UNC faculty and University leaders with imaginative members of the North Carolina business and technology communities.**
    - 5. Each of our participants will offer valuable perspectives on the continuing public debate about whether or how**

**the humanities and arts should still be part of what students learn in our public schools and universities.**

**C. We have come together here on the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of several momentous events that occurred in the United States in 1965:**

- 1. In that year Congress passed the Voting Rights Act to ensure that all US citizens would have the right to vote.**
- 2. It also passed legislation creating the Medicare system that would provide health care for older Americans.**
- 3. In that same transitional year, Congress created the National Endowment for the Arts and the National Endowment for the Humanities.**

**D. So we can celebrate today the wise public actions in 1965 that affirmed the right to vote, the right to good health care in old age, and the essential public importance of the arts and humanities.**

**E. Healthy, voting citizens clearly need something to keep their minds active and engaged with public life; and in that faraway time there was much political support for both the humanities and the arts in our great universities.**

**II. But the context has changed, so that many teachers and scholars now believe they must constantly justify or defend the liberal arts in general and the humanities and the creative arts in particular.**

**A. There is wide public agreement that Americans need to know about computer technologies, good business methods, and basic science and math—the STEM subjects.**

**B. Such skills are viewed as the path toward employment and a successful life in the modern global economy; and we are helping our students at UNC gain these essential skills.**

**III. But in this new global economy and technological society, how can the liberal arts also be important for future public leaders, democratic societies, and economic innovations?**

- A. In short can we still afford the luxury of studying literature or history or philosophy or music and art?**
- B. Some schools are cutting back in all of these areas; and the technical skills receive increasing emphasis in many of our universities.**
- C. At UNC we are rightly celebrating our new Nobel-award winning scientist Aziz Sancar and our innovative, entrepreneurial leadership in many emerging and technical spheres.**
- 1. We had great innovation pods on our main campus quad yesterday, showing new initiatives that are emerging in our dynamic university programs and research centers.**
- D. We at the Program in the Humanities celebrate these achievements, and we also want to affirm the achievements of our great writers and artists and musicians.**
- E. But why do we still need to study the humanities and liberal arts in our public universities? And if we study such traditions, how do our approaches need to change or stay the same?**
- F. These are our questions for today; and they are questions that people at UNC will continue to discuss in coming months.**
- G. I would note, for example, that Fareed Zakaria—author of the important recent book “In Defense of a Liberal Education” will be coming to UNC to speak on March 8 (Frey Foundation Distinguished visiting professor in the College of Arts and Sciences).**
- IV. Zakaria stresses the importance of what he learned from the liberal arts when he came from India to America as a young student; but many others are far more skeptical about the value of these subjects or about the ways in which they are now taught, or about their economic value and relevance for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century.**

- A. Disagreements about these issues are going to continue to affect our state and our public universities; and there is much uncertainty about how the humanities may fit into our future curriculum as we continue to transform public education.**
  
- V. Before I introduce our first three speakers this morning I want to thank our friends and colleagues here at the Alumni Center and Carolina Club—especially Elizabeth Rubio-- for their assistance in making this forum possible; and I want to thank all of our generous friends who regularly support the Program in the Humanities.**
  - 1. I also want to recognize and thank the public school teachers who are here today; and I ask the teachers to stand**
    - A. Our morning program will conclude with a discussion session in which our executive director at the Program in the Humanities (Max Owre) will pose questions from the audience, which we invite you to submit throughout the morning; our staff will collect them.**
  
    - B. Many of us will also continue the discussion into lunchtime conversations downstairs, where (if you registered for the lunch) you will receive an admission nametag.**
  
    - C. Our panel discussions are thus the starting point for an ongoing conversation—and not a simple declaration of permanent truths; our conversation will thus continue today and in the coming months and in the coming years.**

- I. To launch our conversation we have three distinguished panelists in this first session.**
  - A. Our first speaker is Marianne Gingher, who is an award-winning teacher in the Department of English and Comparative Literature;**
  - B. She currently holds a Bowman and Gordon Gray Term Professorship for Distinguished Teaching; and she is also an outstanding, award-winning writer, whose novels, short stories, memoirs and edited collections have attracted wide praise and public attention.**
  - C. Marianne grew up in Greensboro and attended Salem College; and her writing often focuses on the lives and experiences of people in our region of the country.**
  - D. She is also interested in sharing literature and the arts with diverse public groups; for example, she was co-founder of the Jabberbox Puppet Theater, which performs around the state.**
  
- II. Our second speaker, UNC President Tom Ross, also grew up in Greensboro and has life-long connections with people and institutions throughout North Carolina.**
  - A. He graduated from Davidson College, and then received his law degree here at UNC-Chapel Hill.**
  - B. He joined a law firm in Greensboro and later served for many years as a judge on the NC Superior Court.**
  - C. He also became involved in legal reform issues before leaving his judgeship in 2001 to become executive director of the Z. Smith Reynolds Foundation—where he helped to support community groups and projects throughout the state.**
  - D. He moved on from the Foundation to become President of Davidson College before his appointment as President of the UNC system, which began on January 1, 2011.**

- E. Tom Ross has thus seen the evolution of higher education in North Carolina at both private and public institutions, but he also has wide experience outside of colleges and universities.**
- F. As members of this audience know, he will soon be leaving the Presidency of our University to take up other activities; but he will leave with our deep appreciation for his distinguished leadership of the UNC system.**

**III. Our third speaker on this panel will be Michael Tiemann, who is currently the vice president of Open Source Affairs at Red Hat, Inc. here in North Carolina.**

- A. He grew up in the Northeastern United States rather than in Greensboro, and he graduated from the Moore School of Electrical Engineering at the U. of Pennsylvania.**
- B. His work focused from the beginning on computer software and he became an early advocate for the free software movement.**
- C. He strongly supported Richard Stallman's GNU Manifesto, which called for open source software.**
- D. Michael moved out to California and became the entrepreneurial co-founder of a software company called Cygnus Support, which later became Cygnus Solutions.**
- E. Cygnus merged with Red Hat in 2000 and this merger brought Michael to North Carolina.**
- F. In addition to his leadership in the software field and his work at Red Hat, Michael Tiemann is deeply involved in the arts.**
- G. He serves as Vice Chair of the Board of Trustees at the North Carolina School of the Arts; and he has developed a state-of-the art recording studio in Chatham County.**

**IV. We're honored to have these three speakers, who will each have about 15 min. to share their perspectives on the humanities and public education.**

It's now my pleasure to introduce the three speakers for our second session.

- V. **Our first speaker will be Claude Clegg, who is the Lyle V. Jones Distinguished Professor in the Department of African American and Diaspora Studies and in the History Department.**
- A. **Professor Clegg has just come to UNC this fall after many years on the faculty in the History Department at Indiana University—where he served at various times as a Department Chair, an Associate Dean and Associate Provost and also associate editor of the *Journal of American History***
  - B. **His arrival at UNC, however, is really a homecoming because he grew up in Salisbury, NC and attended UNC-Chapel Hill as an undergraduate.**
  - C. **He later went on to the University of Michigan to complete a PhD in History before moving to Indiana.**
  - D. **He therefore knows about our peer public universities in two Midwestern states.**
    - 1. **His teaching and scholarship focus on modern American and African American history; he has published numerous articles and three outstanding books in these fields.**
    - 2. **It's great for our students and faculty that Claude has returned to UNC as a distinguished colleague.**
- VI. **Our second speaker, Carol Folt, is known to all of us because of her outstanding and energetic leadership as our current Chancellor here at UNC-Chapel Hill.**
- A. **She grew up in Akron, Ohio and went to the U. of California at Santa Barbara, where she majored in aquatic biology; then she received a PhD at the U. of California, Davis in Ecology.**
  - B. **She went on to a long, distinguished career on the faculty at Dartmouth College; and she ultimately rose through various administrative positions to become Dartmouth's**

**acting president before she joined us in Chapel Hill as our new chancellor in 2013.**

**C. Chancellor Folt is a great ambassador for our University and she uses her vision, imagination and determination to deal creatively with our diverse challenges and opportunities.**

**D. We are very pleased that she has joined us for today's program because she has wide-ranging experiences in the sciences and she has worked at both private and public institutions; she also has very strong interests in the arts and humanities—and she is optimistic about the future.**

- VII. Our third speaker today, Bill Moore, is another great supporter of UNC and an advocate for public higher education.**
- A. He grew up in North Carolina and graduated from the US Naval Academy; he received his MBA from UNC-Chapel Hill.**
  - B. He is currently a Professor of the Practice of Finance in the Kenan-Flagler Business School, where he also offers great advice for both undergraduate and graduate students.**
  - C. Bill has been a leader in the investment banking business and in the management of private equity firms.**
  - D. He is the chairman of the Board of RTI International, which brings innovative new research on health, advanced technologies, and economic development to businesses and governments around the world.**
  - E. Bill has also been an active supporter of the Humanities, serving on the Board of Trustees at the National Humanities Center and as Chair of our own Program in the Humanities External Advisory Board throughout the 1990s when Warren Nord was the Program's Director.**
- VIII. It's an honor to have each of these speakers with us today.**



