Dear Colleagues,

It is with very, very mixed emotions that I announce that Mr. Thom Rakes has declared it is time for his retirement, effective May 1, 2019!

Although I am very happy for Thom, after 22 years leading the UNCW Career Center, our entire campus community will miss his leadership and progressive and creative approach to helping our students and alumni secure jobs and careers all over the US and beyond. But personally, I will miss his friendship and sage guidance related to career services and many other student development areas.

Thom was my first official hire in March of 1996. Since then he has been a true friend and colleague to me and many among the UNCW family.

Thom has successfully completed many significant projects and developed many new services and programs during his tenure as director, too numerous to completely list here. Most notably, he developed outstanding collaborative efforts with Alumni Relations, the Parents Council, and University Advancement, and worked in great partnership with all our academic colleagues. He developed the Certified Internship Program, Skill Seeker model, and was instrumental in the ETEAL Initiatives, and he modernized our career services portal and software systems to assist our students with gaining undergraduate jobs on campus and securing careers after graduation.

Many of our graduates would attribute the thrill they experienced when successfully landing a job or career to Thom’s and his staff’s efforts. Simply put, Thom has always been driven by helping UNCW students understand how to make connections between gaining skills and confidently presenting those skills in order to land work.

We will have ample time and opportunity to celebrate Thom’s contributions, but in the interim please join me in congratulating him on a long and accomplished professional career!

Best,
Pat

~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~
Patricia L. Leonard
Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs
University of North Carolina Wilmington
Wilmington, NC 28403
Leonard@uncw.edu
910-962-3117-office

NOTICE: Emails sent and received in the course of university business are subject to the North Carolina Public Records Act (N.C.G.S. §132-1 et seq.) and may be released to the public unless an exception applies.