

With Dean Fuse- It's Definitely a

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Each year, hundreds of black and Native American students arrive at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill to find themselves preparing for one of life's toughest challenges.

No mom, no dad, no high school teachers — many wonder how they will survive in the world of University Life 101.

But for the past five years, students' fears have been eased by Rosalind Fuse-Hall, former associate dean in the Office for Student Counseling.

Fuse-Hall's 6-foot-and-a-half statuesque build, her dominating presence and fade, may seem intimidating to some. But to the freshmen—searching for someone to care—Fuse-Hall is just what the doctor ordered.

Starting this fall, however, freshmen and others at the University will have to look elsewhere.

On Jan. 14, during a Board of Governor's meeting in Chapel Hill, UNC-System President C.D. Spangler announced that Fuse-Hall would fill the role of secretary of the 16-campus UNC-System.

"This is an incredible job opportunity," said Fuse-Hall, who applied for the job after a friend sent her a description of the position that had been vacated for a year.

Although she applied for the job last summer, Fuse-Hall didn't hear anything until the end of November, when she was called in for an interview and met with Spangler. She was offered the job in mid-December.

"I did not take the job as soon as it was offered," Fuse-Hall said. "I had to think about it. I had to think about a lot of things.

"I had been interviewing and had to consider one other professional consideration," said Fuse-Hall, who was chosen as one of 100 up-and-coming achieving women leaders from



Fuse-Hall always had an open door for good conversation...

across the country by the group Leadership America.

Chuck Stone, Walter Spearman professor of journalism and mass communication, said he was delighted to hear of Fuse-Hall's appointment.

"I just think it's excellent," he said. "It is so encouraging to see that happening."

While the news of Fuse-Hall's appointment took many by storm, most surprised by the announcement were the students, who have turned to her many times for career, academic and personal counseling.

"I just couldn't believe she was leaving," said Andrea Jones, a sophomore Pharmacy major from Fayetteville. "It was so unexpected.

"We're going to really miss her in the Office for Student Counseling," Jones said.

Also struck by Fuse-Hall's leaving was her administrative assistant, Beverly Hester-Stephens and her assistant dean, Darryl Lester, who recently joined the staff.

"It's a double emotion," he

said of Dean's Fuse-Hall's departure from the office. "I was just beginning to develop a good working relationship with her—but I'm still very happy for her."

In her job as associate dean, Fuse-Hall worked to increase the retention rate of minority students by overseeing programs such as the peer tutoring and academic excellence sessions, the Minority Advisor program and the Life after Carolina Series.

Rahsaan Johnson, a sophomore from Washington, D.C., who is grateful for these programs said, "Dean Fuse-Hall was an asset to this University that cannot be replaced.

"The University can try, but it will never find someone with the qualifications, the ability, the kindness and the caring of Dean Fuse-Hall," he said.

A 1980 graduate of UNC and a former Miss BSM, Fuse-Hall said leaving the Office for Student Counseling was probably one of the hardest decisions she has had to make.

"I thought about it, I contemplated it and I prayed about it," said Fuse-Hall, who

had declined other job offers in the past. "The thought of losing my students was overwhelming."

But the thought of not taking advantage of the opportunity to influence education from the top was equally, if not more disturbing to Fuse-Hall.

"(The students) should be honored and proud, as I am honored and proud, that they have developed someone like myself who can go to General Administration and bring their perspective with me," Fuse-Hall said. "That is why I had to rationalize to myself what I was doing, so I could be comfortable enough to leave my students."

Fuse-Hall said the new position will broaden her horizons and her views on the educational system.

"It will provide me with not only an aerial view of education, but for the first time since I started in education, I have what I have always asked for—the opportunity to do some work around policy," Fuse-Hall said.

Fuse-Hall succeeds D. G. Martin Jr., as secretary. She will be the liaison between Spangler

and the 16 universities' Board of Trustees as well as the UNC-System Board of Governors. Martin is now the system's vice president of public affairs.

Despite her promotion, Fuse-Hall said it's important for people to understand that her position doesn't make policy.

"The Board of Governors make policy," she said. "But the old investigator that I was when I went to the U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission understands that it's the legwork that goes into presenting the information that dictates how policy comes out."

At 36 years of age, Fuse-Hall's promotion is a welcomed reward after years of dedicated public service.

After receiving her law degree from Rutgers University, Fuse-Hall worked as an investigator for the U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission and served as assistant director of minority affairs at St. Lawrence University in Canton, N.Y.

But it was during her tenure in law school that Fuse-Hall fought her biggest battle and won.

"I watched my law-school graduation from a hospital bed," said Fuse-Hall, who was diagnosed with lymphoma, cancer of the lymph glands a few weeks before graduation.

Upon learning that she had to have a summer of chemotherapy, Fuse-Hall, the new lawyer that she was, tried to negotiate herself out of it.

"My doctor, who is still my doctor today, said, 'You have two choices, you could live or you could die. That's it,'" she said. "That was just a big transitional time for me."

But fighting cancer, going through chemotherapy and losing all of her hair, not only proved to Fuse-Hall that she could fight anything, but it also "taught me an important lesson about beauty in our community."

"I was wearing a long fall