

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION FOR THE ADVANCEMENT OF COLORED PEOPLE

CHAPEL HILL-CARRBORO Branch #5689. P.O. Box 1236 Carrboro, N.C. 27510

April 2, 2019

Kevin Guskiewicz, Interim Chancellor; Derek Kemp, Associate Vice Chancellor for Campus Safety and Risk Management, Jeff McCracken, UNC Chief of Police

Cc: Town of Chapel Hill's Community Policing Advisory Committee

Dear Chancellor:

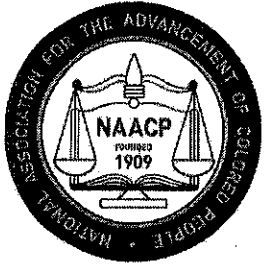
Thank you for taking the time to meet today with representatives of the Chapel Hill-Carrboro NAACP. We have grave concerns over the ongoing and dangerous situation on UNC-Chapel Hill's campus that involves white supremacists, anti-racist demonstrators, and UNC Police. The vandalism this past weekend of the Unsung Founders Memorial and of an art installation with "racist and other deplorable language" and apparent threats to antiracist individuals underscores the severity of the problem. It is our belief that the decisions, conduct, and disposition of UNC Police have led us to the dire present circumstances.

It is no accident that two weeks prior to this vandalism, on March 16, UNC Police allowed what was apparently the same group that committed the vandalism, Heirs To The Confederacy, to stroll around campus armed with guns and other weapons for an hour before politely asking them to leave with a handshake and without arrest. The group's parade through campus brought to mind the days, not so long ago, when Ku Klux Klan would ride their horses through Chapel Hill's black neighborhoods as a form of intimidation. The inaction of UNC Police has directly emboldened these white supremacists.

However, this is not an emboldening garnered from merely the actions of the last couple of weeks. In the wake of the 2017 white supremacist rally in Charlottesville, Va., that led to the murder of an antiracist and injury to many others, student antiracists here engaged in robust sit-ins at UNC's Confederate monument ("Silent Sam"). Ever since, UNC Police has created the distinct impression that they are on the side of the white supremacists by treating antiracist demonstrators as the enemy.

Numerous white supremacists have made violent threats and statements toward the antiracists. UNC Police (and officers under its command from other departments) went undercover to spy on the antiracists, spent hundreds of thousands of dollars protecting a monument to white supremacy, worn copious amounts of riot gear and wielded military-style weapons, egregiously deployed smoke bombs and pepper foggers on antiracists, conducted repeated rough physical handling of antiracists, targeted antiracists with spurious criminal charges with the apparent aim of discouraging their protests and to create false grounds for trespassing them from McCorkle Place, and lied in court to try to make those charges stick despite video evidence to the contrary. Not once has UNC Police even demonstrated self-reflection by stating an apology or implementing a course-correction.

It is no wonder that the white supremacists, who have been given every benefit of the doubt and courtesy imaginable, feel emboldened. Whether it is the intent or not, the actions of UNC Police have made it clear that the antiracists are seen as the enemy. The white supremacists have received that message loud and clear. Our fear is that if the University does not takes some swift, affirmative steps, someone is going to get seriously hurt or killed.



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Anna L. Richards
President

James E. Williams, Jr.
1st Vice President

Richard Paddock
2nd Vice President

Joal Hall Broun
3rd Vice President

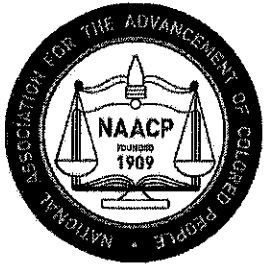
Dawna Jones
Secretary

Margaret Krome-Lukens
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Malcolm Tye Hunter
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Interim Chancellor Guskiewicz, you have written recently of wanting to restore trust in the University and its police department among the community. An insular committee and an internal investigation, as you have proposed, will not achieve that goal. You have said you want to be a "bold" leader. No committee or investigation needs to be conducted to know that the first thing UNC should do is to immediately rescind the remaining trespass orders among antiracists, students who can't set foot on certain parts of their own campus. It is deplorable. The trespass orders and arrests of these antiracists will be a shameful mark on this period of UNC's history and on the individuals in positions of power. The second step would be to charge the individual who was caught carrying a gun on campus on March 16 to show that there are not two sets of rules. Police confiscated canned goods from antiracists for a canned food drive because UNC considered them weapons. Again, the message is clear: Antiracists with canned vegetables equals danger, white supremacists carrying guns does not.

Further, as concerned citizens who live in this community—who work on, study on, and visit the campus—we expect to hear in a timely manner from your office:

- Your specific plans for an investigation into the UNC Police conduct surrounding the March 16 (past internal investigations of UNC Police are further cause for distrust)

- How Alert Carolina will be re-evaluated since no alert went out about the white supremacists parading through campus with guns

- What UNC Police hiring practice protocols are with regard to nationwide (and even local) issues with white supremacist organizations infiltrating police departments (as per a 2015 FBI report)

- Some concrete steps, beyond what you have already promised, that UNC can take to give UNC Police some semblance of accountability and transparency to the town and community. One measure we strongly urge is to make UNC Police participate in the town's Community Policing Advisory Committee, which recently invited Chief Jeff McCracken to attend a meeting and he declined.

Accompanying this letter, is a series of documents that demonstrate a sampling of the deep history of racism surrounding UNC Police from just the past 50 years.

The stated mission of UNC Police says that its "primary purpose" is to "support the University's core mission of teaching, research, and public service" in part by "maintaining an environment that fosters education and community-oriented service." In 2015, Chief McCracken said, "There are a lot of people who for very legitimate reasons across the country have those feelings [that police officers are a violent threat]. And we want to do whatever we can to make all our students feel comfortable with the officers that are in charge of protecting them here."

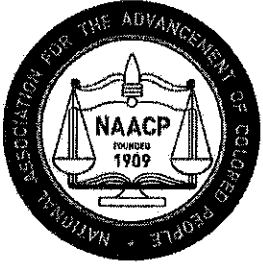
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We hope that the University and UNC Police can take a step back and re-evaluate whether UNC Police is working toward or against that mission and sentiment.

We hope this is the beginning of a dialogue. We look forward to a response to the issues raised above, and to future meetings.



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