



## University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill Chapter

### Statement on UNC Administrators' Serial Breaches of Trust

February, 2021

The UNC campus community learned last week that the University's pay-off to the Sons of Confederate Veterans (SCV)—\$74,999 to stay away from the Chapel Hill campus plus \$2.5 million to relocate the Silent Sam statue—was not negotiated by a 5-person subcommittee of the UNC Board of Governors (BOG), as previously reported. Instead, the November 2019 settlement was reached by UNC-system lawyers, the SCV's lawyer, and UNC-Chapel Hill's Vice Chancellor for Public Affairs, Clayton Somers, a high-ranking member of the Chancellor's Cabinet and a former aide to legislator Tim Moore. This news means that interim Chancellor Kevin Guskiewicz was either inexcusably ignorant or deliberately dishonest in front of a large audience at the Faculty Council meeting in December of 2019, when he insisted that "we [at Chapel Hill] were not consulted" about and did not "weigh in" on the decision. One week later the BOG named Guskiewicz the permanent chancellor at Chapel Hill.

UNC's dissembling in the SCV case is not unprecedented under the Guskiewicz administration. Just one month before the interim chancellor's performance at Faculty Council, UNC-Chapel Hill released a Department of Education report showing the institution's blatant disregard for sexual assault victims and violations of the Clery Act, dating back at least as far as 2013. Although the report was delivered to the University in August 2019, the institution informed the public only on November 18, "following inquiries from media outlets, including The News & Observer."

In August 2020, we learned from the media that the chancellor and the provost failed to reveal to the faculty or the public the contents of an Orange County Health Department memo recommending online-only instruction for the first five weeks of the fall semester and significantly reducing density in UNC's dorms. The University rejected those recommendations. Faculty Chair Mimi Chapman described UNC leaders' deceptive tactics as a "serious breach of trust."

In the wake of revelations about the SCV settlement, law professor Eric Muller used similar language. The chancellor's duplicity, if it could not somehow be explained, "would feel like a breach of confidence to me, a breach of trust."

The members of UNC's AAUP chapter agree. The serial dishonesty displayed by the chancellor and his associates regarding the most sensitive and important matters confronting the University in recent years has eroded our confidence in UNC's leadership. Transparency and faculty participation form the bedrock of effective shared governance at universities. To move the campus forward with mutual trust and a realistic prospect of shared problem-solving, we urge Chancellor Guskiewicz, and others who have contributed to UNC's pattern of institutional dishonesty, to step down.