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**Campus Safety Commission**  
The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill  
<http://campussafetycommission.web.unc.edu/>  
***TRUST: Truth, Respect, Unity, Safety, and Transformation***

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**Statement on the UNC System's settlement with the Sons of Confederate Veterans**  
**December 6, 2019**

The Campus Safety Commission expresses its disapproval of the recently announced settlement of a lawsuit by the UNC System involving the transfer of the Confederate Monument formerly on McCorkle Place ("the Monument") to the Sons of Confederate Veterans ("SCV") and the payment to SCV of \$2.5 million in University funds.

We acknowledge that, at one level, campus safety is enhanced by the permanent removal of the Monument from the UNC Chapel Hill campus. It was a constant safety risk to the members of the campus community and repeatedly proved its danger through conflicts and injuries where it stood. It also was a menace to the wellbeing of the community as a persistent reminder of the dominance of white supremacy. We are glad it is gone.

However, we find that the circumstances of its transfer to the SCV, accompanied by \$2.5 million in University funds, sends a disturbing message to our campus, our students, and the broader community that gives value to the Monument's historically racist purpose, in effect undermining the main reason it was removed in the first place. By any measure, the UNC System handed the SCV a major victory in this settlement. We have grave concerns that this will embolden that organization, and others like it – telling them that they can come to menace Chapel Hill and our campus and expect to succeed. We believe that this capitulation leaves our community, and especially African-Americans in our community, *less*, rather than more, safe.

We express our condemnation of the outcome of the settlement as well as the process that led to it. Specifically, we note:

The UNC System chose to settle a lawsuit that it no doubt would have won handily. The SCV's ability to make a claim about the monument derived entirely from its purported ownership of the Monument. But the SCV did not own the monument. It argues that it came into ownership of the monument in January of 2018 when UNC breached some supposed "express condition" of the 1913 gift that the Monument remain on campus "forever." That theory is invalid as a matter of North Carolina law, and transparently so.

Because the SCV's lawsuit was so obviously groundless, there was no apparent reason to pay the SCV \$2.5 million to settle it. Were the board of directors of a corporation to settle a case it plainly could have won, and authorize the payment of \$2.5 million of the corporation's money to do so, the members of the board of directors would face charges that they were breaching their fiduciary duty to the corporation. They would have to explain the real basis of their decision very persuasively if they wanted to avoid this.

Because the process that led to the disposition of the Monument was entirely secret, and because it was strategically announced the afternoon before Thanksgiving so as to hinder public discussion and scrutiny, the public knows no more about the real reasons for this settlement and payment than the groundless ones in the court documents.

We are therefore hard pressed to see the decision to hand \$2.5 million to the SCV as anything but an endorsement by the UNC System of the SCV's disturbing, historically inaccurate, white-supremacist agenda. This action is an affront to the UNC community and the larger public that highlights a betrayal of, and threat to, our community's black and brown members. And it violates every principle for which this institution of higher learning stands.