

*Constituent Universities*

Appalachian  
State University

East Carolina  
University

Elizabeth City  
State University

Fayetteville State  
University

North Carolina  
Agricultural and  
Technical State  
University

North Carolina  
Central University

North Carolina  
State University  
at Raleigh

University of  
North Carolina  
at Asheville

University of  
North Carolina  
at Chapel Hill

University of  
North Carolina  
at Charlotte

University of  
North Carolina  
at Greensboro

University of  
North Carolina  
at Pembroke

University of  
North Carolina  
at Wilmington

University of  
North Carolina  
School of the Arts

Western Carolina  
University

Winston-Salem  
State University

*Constituent High School*

North Carolina  
School of Science  
and Mathematics

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August 21, 2017

The Honorable Roy Cooper  
Office of the Governor  
20301 Mail Service Center  
Raleigh North Carolina 27699-0301

Dear Governor Cooper:

We write to alert you to significant safety and security threats at the UNC-Chapel Hill campus relating to the Silent Sam statue, and to seek your assistance as the chief executive of the State of North Carolina to address these urgent concerns. UNC-Chapel Hill is the only campus in the UNC System that has a Civil War monument of this type on its property and it places the campus and the Chapel Hill community in a uniquely visible and precarious position.

As you are well aware, the tragic events earlier this month in Charlottesville, Virginia, which resulted in the death of a woman, have caused heightened activism and volatility on college campuses across the nation. The recent toppling of a statue in downtown Durham and the damage to a Robert E. Lee statue at Duke Chapel have added to a climate that threatens to make similar statues a flash point for violence that could spiral out of control and threaten the safety of our students and campus community.

The Silent Sam statue was erected in 1913 and has been an object of debate and contention for many years. The statue has also been vandalized several times in recent years, and UNC-Chapel Hill now monitors the area with cameras and police patrols.

Chancellor Folt has notified us that the law enforcement staff at UNC-Chapel Hill believe that it is only a matter of time before an attempt is made to pull down Silent Sam in much the same manner we saw in Durham. Based on our interactions with State and local law enforcement, including the State Bureau of Investigation, an attempt may occur at any time.

Given the statue's prominent location on one of the most historic part of UNC-Chapel Hill's campus; its proximity to residence halls, the Old Well, the Davie Poplar, the financial aid office, classroom buildings; a major Chapel Hill thoroughfare and public protest site (the Old Chapel Hill Post Office, now known as "[Peace and Justice Plaza](#)"); and the likelihood that a protest would draw large numbers of people, including many outside groups that are active in North Carolina, campus and local law enforcement are concerned that a student or other bystander could be seriously injured in any confrontation at the site. Similarly, town and/or university operations could be significantly disrupted.

As leaders of the University, we rely on the experience and judgment of our experienced law enforcement professionals to make informed decisions about how to keep the UNC System's campuses safe for students. The safety of our students is our highest priority. Given the substantial security threats that we face at UNC-Chapel Hill in connection with Silent Sam, we believe it is essential that the State of North Carolina take necessary steps to ensure safety. We would not be able to face parents whose students are harmed in a violent confrontation if we did otherwise.

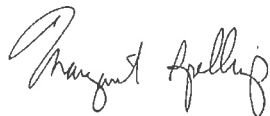
UNC-Chapel Hill faces the likelihood of dealing with possible demonstrations and continued threats to campus safety and security on an ongoing basis. The attention to this issue is not going away. As the school year begins, UNC-Chapel Hill has been placed in a position where it must devote limited law enforcement resources to the potential activities surrounding Silent Sam, while at the same time continuing to maintain a safe and secure environment throughout the rest of the campus. UNC-Chapel Hill expects to incur significant additional ongoing security costs as a result.

Further, because of these imminent and ongoing potential safety and security threats, we wish to notify you that there is a strong likelihood that the University will require substantial law enforcement and emergency services support from your office as you may determine should be made available through State and Federal agencies.

We believe that any protests, demonstrations, and acts of vandalism could also potentially result in significant damage to the Silent Sam statue itself. While removing Silent Sam from its location on campus could preserve the monument and prevent damage, it is our understanding that, pursuant to Section 100-2.1 of the North Carolina General Statutes, only the State or the North Carolina Historical Commission - and not UNC-Chapel Hill or the UNC System - may take action to preserve monuments like Silent Sam. Moreover, our assessment is that there are real safety and security risks associated with either taking the statue down or leaving it up. Therefore, we urge you to consider convening the North Carolina Historical Commission to take up this matter and to consider what steps should be taken, consistent with the law.

The University's primary goal is to preserve the safety and security of the campus community, and it is a goal that we are certain you share. It is for this reason that we request you to take appropriate action to help avoid violence and address the significant safety risks to the UNC-Chapel Hill students and the campus, as well as the risk of damage to the Silent Sam monument. As you well know, our campuses are home to thousands of young people whose parents entrust them to our care, as well as to many faculty, staff and others. Their safety must be our most urgent priority.

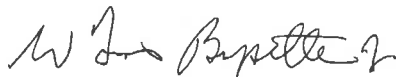
Sincerely,



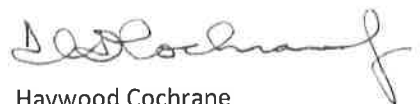
Margaret Spellings



Carol Folt



Lou Bissette



Haywood Cochrane