

To the UNC Board of Governors,

A group of concerned UNC Chapel Hill alumni expresses their “profound disappointment” in the Board of Governors’ vote to repeal diversity, equity, and inclusion policies in the UNC System. The group includes graduates spanning over more than 55 years, including members of UNC’s Black Pioneers, former Congressman Mel Watt, incoming chair of the UNC Board of Visitors Alge Crumpler, former UNC Student Body President Dr. Justin Young, former UNC Associate Provost and Chief Diversity Officer Archie Ervin, retired Superior Court Judge Donnie Hoover and several current and former members of the Carolina Alumni Board of Directors. The following statement represents the personal opinions of the undersigned.

May 25, 2024

Statement on the UNC Board of Governors’ Vote to Dismantle Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Policies at Public Universities in the UNC System

This statement is to express our profound disappointment with the May 23rd, 2024, decision by the UNC Board of Governors to abandon a decades-long commitment to making North Carolina’s public universities accessible to all.

The move to eliminate Diversity, Equity and Inclusion programs, staff and initiatives in the UNC System is a decision to walk away from the very resources that have historically contributed to the success of countless marginalized and underrepresented students.

The Office for Diversity and Inclusion’s mission at the state’s flagship institution, UNC-Chapel Hill, innocuously champions “inclusive excellence.” It seeks to “celebrate all members of the Carolina community, to broaden our collective understanding, and foster a sense of belonging by uplifting diverse identities, cultures, experiences and perspectives.”

Thursday’s BOG’s actions imperil this vision.

Furthermore, the Board’s vote, sequestered from the input of opposing voices, demonstrates a callous disregard for the thousands of alumni who have benefited from UNC’s diversity initiatives. Our university stands tall, buoyed by the accomplishments of these alumni whose exceptional talents bring honor to the UNC name.

The very commitment that the Board’s decision ended Thursday is the platform that has propelled our alumni to serve with distinction in numerous leadership roles within North Carolina and the nation at large.

UNC has emerged as a public and national model in democratizing education and serving the greater public interest as the university of the “people.” Why not honor the achievements of DEI programs such as the Carolina Covenant, an academic scholarship program, or Project Uplift, a 50-plus-year-old initiative —created to empower high school seniors to believe UNC’s inclusive values would support and welcome them in their higher education pursuits? Why not be proud of the accomplishments of Carolina’s Postdoctoral Program for Faculty Diversity, one of the nation’s oldest and most prestigious faculty diversity pipeline programs in the country?

As the Board of Governors, you are accountable to the people you serve. The UNC System owes it to the state and to the nation to honor its commitment to be of service to all students who have earned their way into some of the best higher education institutions in our nation.

Future generations of North Carolinians will see this decision as a “slap in the face” and will not feel welcomed, supported, and most importantly valued, because of Thursday’s Board’s action to eliminate the historical commitment to all N.C. citizens.

Submitted by Concerned Carolina Alumni who remain actively engaged in the University and its welfare.

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Charles Campbell, '01

Crystal Cene, '95

Bernadine Cobb, '84

Alge Crumpler, '00

Nicole Dozier, '88

Henry O. Foust, '79

Sam Fulwood, '78

Atrayus Goode, '07

Demetrius Hagins, '89

Keith and Deborah Hersey, '88

George Hicks, '89

Joseph C. High, '76

Kathleen Cullins High, '78

The Honorable Donnie Hoover, '71

Edith Hubbard, '66

Kwame Jackson, '96

Walter A. Jackson, '67

Quisha Mallette, '17 JD

Phillip McAlpin, '75

Euba Wilkerson McKoy, '93

Henry C. McKoy, Jr ('95 BS, '18 PHD)

George McDaniel, '67

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Oscar Vaughn, '87
The Honorable Melvin Watt, '67
Chuck Watts, '77
Stick Williams, '75
Rowland Yancey, '89
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