

Nutrition Department student letter against Silent Sam proposal

December 7, 2018

We would like to thank Beth Mayer-Davis for her transparency in relaying information from Monday's FEC meeting. In light of the Faculty Council meeting at 3pm on Friday, Dec 7th, we would like to share our concerns with Chancellor Folt's plans for Silent Sam:

- The statue and the [bigotry it represents](#) have no place on an inclusive campus.
 - A letter from over 50 Black faculty at UNC have stated that reinstating the statue anywhere on campus sends a message that "UNC is not a welcoming place for Black people."
<https://www.dailytarheel.com/article/2018/09/letter-black-faculty-silent-sam-0907>
 - We stand with UNC's Black Student Movement. We agree that 1) The location of the education center in Odum Village, an important space for the Black community, is particularly insensitive and 2) UNC's leadership has failed to demonstrate that they are allies of students of color.
http://www.uncbsm.com/silentsam?fbclid=IwAR1Aa37GxHexTKT89dFI9bWnN06BYMUIRjr2CRbLHMMWPI_zPJq-8_ZhtdQ
 - We stand with other student groups, including the Campus Y, Mi Pueblo, the Black Congress, Defend UNC, UNC Black Congress, GPSF, and the Undergraduate Executive Branch.
 - **Action:** Do not relocate the statue on UNC's campus.
- The cost of the education center is absurd (\$5.3 million in construction and \$800,000 a year). Alternative uses of this funding:
 - Minority student spaces, like a Latinx center (see letter from Mi Pueblo UNC below)
 - Dental insurance
 - Increased wages for employees who do not make a living wage (this includes restoring full-time positions to employees who have been cut to part-time positions or ensuring that companies the university contracts out to pay their employees a living wage)
 - Increased support for mental health services on campus
 - UNC has failed to identify appropriate funding sources associated with erection and maintenance of the education center to enshrine Silent Sam. This has led to confusion about whether the Board of Trustees decision to increase student fees by \$65 will be used in the construction of the proposed center (see GSPF statement below)
<https://www.dailytarheel.com/article/2018/11/unc-student-government-clashes-with-board-of-trustees-over-maintenance-fee-increase>
 - **Action:** Spend funds on initiatives that support people of color. Relocate educational effort (information about statues, the construction of UNC's campus, building names, etc) to a permanent collection in a library.

- **Action:** Maintain transparency with students so as to enable students to listen to and understand administrative decisions. This is important in maintaining open communication between students and administrators and is key to student self-governance.
- The “mobile police force” in response to protests is also costly and counterproductive. The proposed force would cost \$2 million a year and include \$500,000 worth of extra equipment.
 - Cost: see alternative uses above
 - Police force: Silent Sam was toppled because University leadership failed to have a productive dialogue with students and the larger university community through protests and civil disobedience for over 50 years. (<http://silencesam.com/uncategorized/323/>). Rather than invest in an increased police force, the University should invest in improved dialogue with students, staff, faculty and the Chapel Hill community.
 - Story: Thursday 12/6 edition of Morning Education from Politico, <https://www.politico.com/newsletters/morning-education/archive>
 - **Action:** Invest in efforts for meaningful community dialogue in order to prevent the community from resorting to more drastic action, like toppling a statue.

We were hopeful to hear Professor Beth Mayer-Davis speak so strongly for inclusion at our End of the Year Luncheon on Wednesday. As such, we hope that the Nutrition Department will support all of its students by championing for an inclusive UNC campus, one without Silent Sam. We hope that the department and faculty will support any students planning on participating in the actions surrounding the StrikeDownSam movement on campus by stating that students shouldn't be punished for advocacy and protesting white supremacy on campus.

We urge Nutrition Department faculty to be our voices and express our concerns at the Faculty Council on Friday, December 7th. We also encourage the Department to open a space for communication between students and faculty before the Board of Governors meeting on Dec 14th, perhaps in conjunction with other departments at Gillings (<https://www.northcarolina.edu/apps/bog/index.php>).

Sincerely,

Students from the Department of Nutrition

Note: Some students brought additional issues to our attention since we wrote the letter (like supporting the grading strike). We left the text of the letter as is, but would like to acknowledge that the letter above does not encompass all student concerns. Students were encouraged to leave additional comments in italics with their signature.

Mikayla Bowen, BSPH Nutrition, 2019

Kayla Warechowski, BSPH Nutrition, 2019

Sahil Vasa, BSPH Nutrition, 2019
Elle Glenny, PhD candidate, 2020
Allison Lacko, PhD candidate, 2020
Janki Patel, BSPH Nutrition, 2019
Shannon Applegate, MPH/RD, 2020
Ashley White, MPH/RD, 2020
Alex Doherty, BSPH Nutrition, 2019
Asta Feng, MPH/RD, 2019
Jennifer Sadler, PhD, 2020
Natalia Rebolledo, PhD student, 2021
Reatna A Taylor, MPH/RD Nutrition, 2018
Nooshin Ghazi-Moghaddam MPH/RD Nutrition, 2018
Annie Chen, BSPH Nutrition, 2019
Aurore Victor, JD (MPH/RD Nutrition 2019)
Carmen Prestemon, BSPH Nutrition, 2020
Kendra Nelson, MPH/RD Nutrition, 2019
Laetitia Meyrueix, Nutrition PhD student, 2021
Jacqueline Chang, MPH/RD Nutrition, 2018
Adante Hart, MPH/RD Nutrition, 2018
Kate Chou, MPH/RD Nutrition, 2019
Sarah DeSantis, MPH/RD Nutrition, 2020
Zola Collins, MPH/RD Nutrition, 2020
Rawan Ajeen, BSPH Nutrition, 2019
Allison Kleppe, MPH/RD Nutrition, 2020
Natashia Rogers, MPH/RD Nutrition, 2020
Tania Aburto, PhD, 2019
Yiqing Wang, PhD candidate, 2020
Natasha Vos, MPH/RD Nutrition, 2018
Meenu Immaneni, BSPH Nutrition, 2020
Melissa Lorena Jensen, PhD Nutrition, 2020
Julia Baker, MPH/RD Nutrition, 2020
Lilia Pedraza, PhD, 2019
Erin Hancock, MPH/RD, 2020
Evan Paules, Nutrition PhD Student, 2020
Caroline Nelson, MPH Nutrition, 2019
Matt Paysour, MPH/RD Nutrition, 2020
Angela Fruik, MPH/RD Nutrition, 2018
Nicholas Dutton, MPH/RD Nutrition, 2020
Anna Kahkoska, PhD candidate, 2019
Melissa Rosenberg, MPH/RD Nutrition 2019
Mariela Arias, MPH/RD Nutrition, 2020
Julie Hooper MPH/RD Nutrition, 2019
McKenzie Caldwell, MPH/RD Nutrition 2018

Riley Griffin, MPH/RD Nutrition, 2020

Demi Eckhoff, MPH/RD, 2019

Kagan Griffin, MPH/RD, 2019

Liza Robinson, MPH/RD, 2019

More awareness regarding disability and disability rights

Jennifer Parent, MPH/RD Nutrition 2019

Courtney Brooks, MPH/RD Nutrition, 2018

Statements referenced above from Mi Pueblo and GSPF:

In the wake of recent events threatening not only our community, but many on UNC's campus, we cannot stand idly by and do nothing. Mi Pueblo proudly stands in solidarity with the Black Student Movement. We disapprove of the proposal put forth yesterday by Chancellor Folt and the Board of Trustees, a proposal that would house Silent Sam in a \$5.3 million building, with annual security costs of upwards of \$800,000, in the current Odum Village site.

Odum Village was shut down due to violations of fire safety codes and is now part of a larger project to expand campus development. At the forefront of this development, the administration is proposing to house Silent Sam, a confederate statue that symbolizes white supremacy, racism, and violence, in a \$5.3 million building in a location that holds deep, historical connections to the African American community on campus. The site is also close to South Campus and Rams village, where a large percentage of African American and other minority students reside. This move could not say more about where the values of the administration lie.

Just last week, Mi Pueblo and the Multicultural Affairs and Diversity Outreach Committee of the Executive Branch of Student Government co-hosted a forum to discuss the need for a Latinx Space on campus for the increasing Latinx population here at UNC. This is an issue the Latinx community has been fighting for almost two decades, and it is not a problem unique to our community. But after years of being told there is not enough funding for Latinx space on campus, after being handed empty promises about hiring staff to support the community--for \$5.3 million to suddenly appear in support of a statue that deliberately hurts those in our community and outside of it--we have had enough. That money could be allocated to build spaces for minority groups on campus; it can go towards supporting UNC Arts programs; it can go towards raising TA pay, and a myriad of other issues on campus.

We are not only trying to fight against what the statue represents, but we are struggling to comprehend how the university can tout diversity on its brochures while it undercuts our communities on campus. As a Latinx community, we stand united with other groups in opposition of this proposal. Our fight is their fight, and none of us win unless we all do.

El Pueblo unido jamás será vencido,

Mi Pueblo Executive Team



December 4, 2018



THE GRADUATE AND PROFESSIONAL
STUDENT FEDERATION

To Whom It May Concern:

On December 3, 2018, Chancellor Folt and the Board of Trustees released a 4-point plan concerning the future of the Confederate monument, Silent Sam. While The Graduate and Professional Student Federation is pleased that the plan does not return the monument to its' original location at McCorkle Place, we are horrified by the irresponsible and reckless nature of the proposed future of Silent Sam. This proposal blatantly ignores the majority of graduate and professional student voices, and furthermore, fails to assure students that they will not bear the responsibility of directly or indirectly paying for the proposal. Consequently, The Graduate and Professional Student Federation strongly opposes the Board of Trustees' proposal.

The Executive Board of The Graduate and Professional Student Federation elicited feedback from graduate and professional students from October 3 to November 3. An overwhelming majority (95%) of students indicated their wishes for Silent Sam to be removed from campus in its entirety, moved to a location of less prominence, or disposed of altogether. By creating a museum, inspired by the need to find Silent Sam a new home, the plan not only brings the statue back to campus but also puts it in a location of equal or possibly even greater prominence than where it was before. Furthermore, the graduate and professional students who answered the survey emphasized the value in proper contextualization of Silent Sam and stressed the need for acknowledgment of the University's role throughout its history in conjunction with the monument. This value was not addressed adequately in the proposal set forth by the Board of Trustees. Ultimately, the proposed plan does not epitomize the values or ideals of graduate and professional students.

In addition to ignoring the opinion of the graduate and professional student body, this plan fails to identify appropriate funding sources associated with erection and maintenance of the building. Recently, the Board of Trustees, in conjunction with the Tuition and Fee Advisory Taskforce (TFAT), chose to raise student fees by \$65.39 starting in Fall 2019 to address deferred maintenance of campus buildings without presentation to the Student Fee Advisory Committee (SFAC) or the Student Fee Advisory Subcommittee (SFAS). This completely undermines the notion of student self-governance. According to an article published by The Daily Tarheel on November 29, 2018, this large increase in student fees is meant to offset the funds that we cannot rely on the state to consistently provide. If the University does not have sufficient funds to address desperately needed maintenance of buildings (including safety violations and updates associated with accessibility for all peoples), the University certainly does not have the funds to establish or maintain any new, extraneous buildings. We are troubled by the fact that TFAT and the Board of Trustees feel they are allowed to bypass initial committees which oversee student fees. At some point, whether directly or indirectly, it is clear that additional student fees will be used to finance Silent Sam's new home and this will likely happen without student consent.

Every student should have the right to walk on this campus, feeling safe and welcome, and the right for their financial contributions to go toward the enhancement of their education. We, the graduate and professional students of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, believe that the Board of Trustees' proposal does not align with these ideals. We urge Chancellor Folt, the Board of Trustees, and the Board of Governors to take this opportunity to find solutions that bridge the divides that exist and to ensure that the voice of students is included in identifying these solutions. We need a plan that promotes healing for the University community and the larger state community, not a plan that merely attempts to paper over these divides with a \$5.8 million price tag.

The Graduate and Professional Student Federation