

[Received from Professor Jay Smith, April 17, 2019]

Colleagues:

The UNC-Chapel Hill campus has witnessed a series of alarmingly aggressive actions on the part of neo-Confederate activists in recent weeks. On March 16, members of the group "Heirs to the Confederacy" visited the [campus with firearms in full view](#). On March 31, two members of the same group [defaced the Unsung Founders Memorial](#) and inscribed threatening messages directed at noted anti-racist activists who are also graduate students in the History department. Just this past week, on April 10, 2019, Interim-Chancellor Guskiewicz reported that [Davis Library staff discovered anti-Semitic paraphernalia](#) on the library's tables and bookshelves, an act that may or may not be related to the vandalism of March 31.

In light of these events, the recent news that UNC campus police officers appear to have [fabricated criminal charges](#) against Mark Porlides, an anti-racist activist and graduate student, is simply intolerable. These facts, as they seem indisputable, require a transparent and thorough investigation: 1) UNC campus police officers filed false reports, as they are [also alleged to have done against a UNC undergraduate](#) last year; 2) campus police, on reviewing the body-cam footage, would have known that the arresting officer's account was false; 3) campus police took no steps to rectify the error, giving the appearance of a conspiracy to pursue an unjust prosecution; 4) Porlides, who was banned from McCorkle place for three months and who had to make four separate court appearances throughout his ordeal, secured the exonerating film footage only after his lawyer subpoenaed the relevant records (which the police had previously withheld from the Orange County DA's office); 5) all charges against Porlides were dropped, without further comment from the police, as soon as the body-cam footage went public.

Student activists have complained for months that campus police seem more concerned for the rights and safety of white power protesters than for the rights and well-being of UNC's own students. UNC police even used an [undercover cop to infiltrate](#) the anti-racist movement on campus. This latest incident underscores the seriousness, and the solid foundations, of those longstanding complaints. As concerned faculty who wish to secure a safe, welcoming, affirming place for all members of the community, and who are especially determined to safeguard the rights of all UNC students, we call on the administration to:

--conduct a transparent, public investigation of the above described events by an independent reviewing body empowered to ascertain the conduct of campus police and the response of all supervisors in the Office of Campus Safety and Risk Management

--dismiss any police officers who participated in the filing of false reports against Mark Porlides

--conduct an investigation into any and all connections UNC campus police may have with white supremacist organizations

These steps are the minimum measures *immediately required* at UNC-Chapel Hill. Plans for future public discussions about campus safety must not be permitted to defuse, defang, or defer timely administrative action at this time of emergency.

Respectfully submitted,

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