

Statement of the Faculty Executive Committee Regarding Academic Freedom and the UNC Press Board

As a matter of academic freedom and of UNC System policy, faculty members must be able to speak freely without fear of reprisal or retaliation. We write to express our dismay about the UNC Board of Governor's failure to reappoint Professor Eric Muller to the UNC Press Board, and failure to explain its rationale.

The UNC Press Board unanimously nominated Professor Muller for a third term of service, and unanimously reelected him to be its chair. His nomination was submitted to the UNC Board of Governors along with two others. The other two nominations were approved, but Professor Muller's was not. The UNC Press Board asked the UNC Board of Governors to explain the non-reappointment. To date, no explanation has been given.

In the absence of an explanation for this action, we are concerned that the failure to reappoint Eric Muller, an esteemed public scholar and thought leader, reflects disapproval of his public statements related to the University's disposition of the confederate monument and other matters related to race.

We expect decision-making to be accompanied by transparency so that affected faculty members and the University community understand why decisions were made. We expect decisions from our governing bodies to reflect mutual respect and regard for academic freedom, both at the Press and throughout the University system.

July 20, 2021