



UNC
COLLEGE OF
ARTS & SCIENCES

THE UNIVERSITY
of NORTH CAROLINA
at CHAPEL HILL

DEPARTMENT OF ART & ART HISTORY

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June 24, 2021

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Dear Members of the Board of Trustees:

On behalf of the Department of Art & Art History, I urge you to immediately consider and approve the faculty and administration's recommendations to hire Nikole Hannah-Jones as a Knight Chair with tenure in the Hussman School of Journalism. Not to do so jeopardizes the core principles and foundation upon which the University is built: open inquiry and dissemination of knowledge. The tenure process, moreover, ensures that this inquiry can take place outside the constraints of politics, ensuring academic freedom. Indeed, one might put these ideas in the words of our Carolina motto: *lux, libertas*.

Because other white Knight Chairs were approved with tenure, your actions read as racialized politics, whether intended that way or not. We in the Department of Art & Art History know full well that the arts have, throughout history, been the targets of political interests, often leading to silencing and censorship. We are extremely concerned that your inaction today places future tenure and promotion cases in precarious positions, should the subjects that we research, the art we create, or the positions we take be deemed unacceptable or controversial. We expect this to have a detrimental effect on our scholarship, while making it difficult to continue to recruit top-notch faculty to UNC.

We exist now in a climate of crisis and low morale, with major Black scholars leaving campus and national and international damage being done to our institutional reputation. To not act is to act, and right now your inaction is hostile to our university's stated public mission and values:

Our mission is to serve as a center for research, scholarship, and creativity and to teach a diverse community of undergraduate, graduate, and professional students to become the next generation of leaders. Through the efforts of our exceptional faculty and staff, and with generous support from North Carolina's citizens, we invest our knowledge and resources to enhance access to learning and to foster the success and prosperity of each rising generation.

Nikole Hannah-Jones is one of our own, and she has become a highly-recognized leader in her field. She brings diverse perspectives, innovative approaches and professional expertise to our students. The faculty in the School of Journalism have carefully considered her credentials and have unequivocally decided that she is deserving of tenure. We wholeheartedly support their decision. Please do the same.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Carol Magee". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long, sweeping tail on the "e".

Carol Magee
Chair and Associate Professor