

UNC -Chapel Hill Chancellor Resigns, Orders Confederate Monument Pedestal Removed Intact

By Donna Martinez

Tuesday, 15 January 2019 11:03 - Last Updated Tuesday, 15 January 2019 11:15

UNC-Chapel Hill Chancellor Carol Folt has resigned effective at the end of the academic year. She announced her resignation in a letter in which she also ordered the removal of the pedestal of a confederate statue, commonly known as Silent Sam. The pedestal was removed the evening of January 14, the same date of her letter. Following is the text of her letter: At the start of this semester and new year, I see possibility and promise and am filled with the sense of the limitless potential that makes Carolina such a vital place. In that spirit, I would like to share two important announcements with you.

First, you've heard me say many times that it is the privilege of my life to serve as chancellor of this great university. I'm deeply proud of what you've accomplished and what we've accomplished together since I became a Tar Heel nearly six years ago in 2013. I am writing today to let you know that I have decided to step down as chancellor following graduation, at the end of the academic year.

I have always been driven by the "new and the next," working with people to take on challenges, solve problems, create frameworks for success, and act to achieve them. Over our years together, we have created a deep and thoughtful shared vision for Carolina's future—the Blueprint for Next—and we used it to propel our historic Campaign for Carolina past its mid-point goal of \$2.25 billion last summer. With the dedication and care of our staff and faculty, our schools are advancing curricula for the future and our students and alumni are succeeding in all fields. We've raised nearly \$500 million in scholarships and aid, and our community is making discoveries every day that save lives and advance our state and society. As I have reflected on all of this, I've decided that this is the right time for me to pass the leadership of our outstanding university, with all its momentum, to the next chancellor, and look ahead for my own "new and next."

There is much I intend to accomplish with you in the next few months. I will continue to focus on our core mission, do all I can to make sure every person on our campus can thrive and feel welcome, and push forward with Carolina's campaign and history task force. There has been too much recent disruption due to the monument controversy. Carolina's leadership needs to return its full attention to helping our University achieve its vision and to live its values. And I want this semester to be exciting and fulfilling for every one of our soon-to-be graduates.

Most importantly, we must always do what we can to make sure our faculty, students and staff have a creative, innovative work and living environment, one that is inclusive, forward-looking and safe. This year for example, we reached our highest level of research funding ever (5th in the nation in federal funds), continued to see historic increases in first-year applications and levels of philanthropy, and pushed ahead as a national leader in affordability, access and

UNC -Chapel Hill Chancellor Resigns, Orders Confederate Monument Pedestal Removed Intact

By Donna Martinez

Tuesday, 15 January 2019 11:03 - Last Updated Tuesday, 15 January 2019 11:15

student graduation rates. These accomplishments show how talented and dedicated our community is and what can be achieved even in the face of disruption. Just imagine what is possible if we can put our full attention to the potentials and needs of the future.

Second, I have authorized the removal of the base and commemorative plaques from the Confederate Monument site in McCorkle Place. As chancellor, the safety of the UNC-Chapel Hill community is my clear, unequivocal and non-negotiable responsibility. The presence of the remaining parts of the monument on campus poses a continuing threat both to the personal safety and well-being of our community and to our ability to provide a stable, productive educational environment. No one learns at their best when they feel unsafe. The independent panel of safety experts we convened in November to help us review options for the monument that we presented to the UNC Board of Governors made a strong and compelling case for risks to public safety. The fact that despite our best efforts even since then, threats have continued to grow and place our community at serious risk has led me to authorize this action.

As I have said before, safety concerns alone should preclude the monument from returning to campus. This was also the strong preference of the UNC-Chapel Hill Board of Trustees. The base and tablets will be preserved until their future is decided. While I recognize that some may not agree with my decision to remove the base and tablets now, I am confident this is the right one for our community – one that will promote public safety, enable us to begin the healing process and renew our focus on our great mission.

As we celebrate Carolina's 225th year, we are poised for a strong future. Supported by citizens of our state, generations of dedicated faculty, students, staff, donors and alumni, we are accomplishing great things for the state and the nation. Carolina is better positioned than ever to be the "university of and for the people." I believe Carolina's next chancellor will be well placed to build on our momentum. And with your help and energy we will make this another semester filled with Tar Heel energy, creativity and action.

Respectfully yours,

Carol L. Folt

Chancellor