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April 28, 2023

UNC AFSA Annual Report – 2022-23

Dear UNC Alumni Free Speech Alliance Members and Tar Heel Friends,

Last month we (UNC AFSA or the Alliance) completed our first full year of operation as a 501(c)(3) non-profit alumni organization dedicated to [our mission](#) of free speech, academic freedom, and viewpoint diversity at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

In sum, it is hard to believe the progress UNC-CH and the State of North Carolina made during the 2022-23 school year, furthering each of these interests. While we claim no credit, we do believe we have become part of a social fabric actively advocating for and monitoring a positive pathway. We have joined a major national movement whose aim is to achieve a more open academic atmosphere across America and in the State of North Carolina.

During our first full year, the UNC Alumni Alliance expanded [our board](#) to eleven members and our membership to 450 people. We closely followed all developments relating to our mission at the University and in several instances [corresponded](#) with the Administration, board of trustees, and board of governors. In each case, we were extremely pleased and grateful to be respectfully and seriously received. Our first goal is to build a relationship of trust and a reputation of tactful honesty with all constituencies at Carolina.

In addition to taking public action, we consulted with various faculty members, students, and some of their organizations, and attended many events on campus. We wanted to see for ourselves how University rules relating to institutional neutrality, open inquiry, civil discourse and courtesy, and viewpoint diversity were followed. We believe networking with faculty and students are a key to success. With this in mind, our affiliated Student Free Speech Alliance group has applied for university approval, and we have significant student interest.

Success in coming years will also require that we generate quality content advocating for our mission and sponsor programs that enhance University viewpoint diversity. Over the last year, we created a [website](#) and published [18 newsletters](#) related to local and national mission-related news and opinion; sponsored two events in Chapel Hill, including the February 23 speech by Douglas Murray (his [speech video](#) has 32,000 views) and a membership dinner; and co-sponsored three more events at Stanford, Cornell, and MIT Universities, where affiliated alumni free speech organizations exist.

Close collaboration with these 15 university groups through the [National AFSA organization](#) is another key to our success. Our new national organizational video appears [here](#). It includes Jenna Robinson, a UNC AFSA and national AFSA board member and the Executive Director of the James G. Martin Center for Academic Renewal in Raleigh.

We expect the number of AFSA organizations to grow significantly across the country in the near future, including inside North Carolina. Finally, we collaborated directly with [non-profits](#) like FIRE, ACTA, Heterodox Academy, and the Common Sense Society, among others. All of these groups welcome and support alumni organizations like ours.

Importantly, our board is extremely pleased with the level of interest in our first Annual Fund, and we are confident that we will be able to support an even more active calendar on campus and across the State during the 2023-24 school year. While we centered our activity in Chapel Hill during this first year, we plan to expand our board extensively across the State and to sponsor development events wherever Tar Heel alumni are concentrated. Our next reception will be in Charlotte in the summer or early fall.

I would like to thank our members and board for their tremendous energy, time, and support during this start-up year. We will spend the summer planning for the next school year and for the long-term. We hope to sponsor 4-5 speeches, debates, or conferences on campus and around the State next year, similar to the Douglas Murray event. Most of our resources are now being directed toward building membership and programming on campus for next year, and that's where any money given now will go.

On behalf of all of our board members, I can say that it has been a joy to discover how open the University is to positive change relating to academic freedom and First Amendment issues. The UNC-CH board and Administration are leading these developments.

While there remains much [resistance](#) to [common sensical ideas](#), we believe the people of the State of North Carolina are reasserting a proper role in governance of their universities. In his presentations at Chapel Hill in February, Douglas Murray asked where the real journalists in his business and real adults in our university communities have gone. Today, alumni at UNC and other prominent universities are coming forward to strengthen the educational experience at their alma maters. Accordingly, we encourage debate about all important issues relating to UNC-CH, and we submit that teaching the U.S. Constitution and other documents basic to our history is not "indoctrination." Every citizen must understand the basis of American government and our freedom to speak and debate. UNC AFSA board member Frank Hill places the Murray speech and America's place in the world in clear perspective [here](#).

Some more very good news: We believe that UNC's governing principles concerning free speech and open inquiry are now equal to any university in the country, including the University of Chicago. Furthermore, NC and UNC-CH are now recognized as [national leaders](#) through the State's direct endorsement, via its educational governing boards, of institutional political neutrality, the banning of compelled speech, and the planned establishment of a new [School of Civic Life and Leadership](#). We believe these developments will improve the University's strategic, competitive, and national position. In time, all education in North Carolina will benefit.

What's needed now in Chapel Hill? We know—from University-sponsored polling, our active involvement with the University as alumni over the years, and our presence on campus recently—that change is utterly necessary. While we have one of the top universities in the world, plans and principles must translate into actions and change. What is needed is an accelerated cultural progression toward openness giving all students and faculty confidence that they can say and study whatever they want and follow the truth wherever it leads. They need more freedom and support to advance an education worth investing in, marked by free civil discourse and study. This was possible in the past, and it is possible today.

Each of our board and active UNC AFSA members would agree that our organization offers a unique way for your time and money to make a significant difference. While a leading public research university in Chapel Hill blossomed over the last three decades, we all recognize that a creeping and stifling cancel culture also took root, as it has across many schools in America, that is unfriendly to Western/American history and Arts & Sciences. In this sense, UNC AFSA represents an independent option that has not existed for UNC alumni and is long overdue. Your most effective, direct-impact, and long-lasting dollars to benefit UNC-CH might best be invested independently through us.

I hope you will consider a gift of \$100, \$500, \$1,000, or larger as we head into the summer to support our effort in the 2023-24 school year. Great programming is expensive. You can make an on-line gift via the link [here](#) or send us a check to the address at the top of this letterhead. Every gift matters significantly. Also, if not done already, please become a member by offering us your email address to receive our newsletters and programming notices and invitations. ***Or send this report to anyone who might be interested.*** While we do not yet have gift categories, I can tell you that gifts of \$1,000 or more would place you in the Chair's and, more important, our Carolina Ram's elite inner circle, his "Tip of the Horns" Club.

Since the beginning, all of our board members have been pledged to spend your funds wisely, making a difference at Chapel Hill for free speech, academic freedom, and viewpoint diversity through a prudent, reasonable, and fact-based presence. We are pursuing the mission with an eye to having some age-adjusted, responsible fun in the process, as we all enjoyed as students. Life is too short without maximizing goodwill at Carolina. Now more than ever, the Tar Heel brother- and sisterhood will prevail in our special college town.

We hope you will join us by becoming a UNC AFSA member in the spirit of *Lux Libertas*, the inspiration for our treasured, world class university since 1789.

Sincerely yours,

Doug Monroe

UNC Alumni Free Speech Alliance Board Chair
On behalf of the entire UNC AFSA Board

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