



P.O. Box 8
Chapel Hill, North Carolina 27514

March 3, 2025

Dr. Kevin M. Guskiewicz
President, Michigan State University

Dr. Thomas D. Jeitschko
Interim Provost and Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs, Michigan State University

Dear President Guskiewicz and Provost Jeitschko,

We represent the University of North Carolina Alumni Free Speech Alliance. Along with Michigan State Alumni for Free Speech, we are affiliated with the national Alumni Free Speech Alliance (AFSA), composed of 27-member university organizations. AFSA is a growing organization at universities and colleges across America.

Our mission at Chapel Hill is “to promote and defend free speech, academic freedom, and viewpoint diversity.” We are a non-profit without political affiliation composed of members across the political spectrum who try to model the governing principles of education in the State of North Carolina, which include open inquiry and institutional neutrality.

Today, we write in support for Dr. Marisol Quintanilla’s tenure being reviewed this semester and into the summer. As you know by now, she is an AFSA board member, and several of us have gotten to know her well over the last few years. Of course, MSU knows Marisol as a colleague since 2016. The letter in your possession of January 10, 2025 from FAIR (the Foundation Against Intolerance & Racism) summarizes her impeccable qualifications for tenure.

Of course, normally, our mission would not include judging such things as university faculty tenure. Given this, why would we write you now? Because, since learning of the department and college panel votes to deny Marisol tenure, after significant review, we believe these results were improperly discriminatory and based on political ideology, rather than professional merit.

Accordingly, you can imagine how pleased we were to learn last week that Dean Matthew Daum of the College of Agriculture and Natural Resources had reversed those determinations and approved Dr. Quintanilla’s tenure. Moreover, and recognizing that your review is the next step in the tenure process, we encourage you to follow Dean Daum’s recommendation based on Marisol’s qualifications, abilities, and character.

For those of us who know Marisol well now, we can only say she is one of the bravest and finest people we know in our association, and we are certain many of her academic peers and current and former students believe the same.

As background, all UNC AFSA and AFSA board members believe in fairness, meritocracy, and diversity of both viewpoints and backgrounds, not only within universities but across society. In fact, those of us who are old enough to have been engaged in the public and private sectors for

decades have strived for just that during our careers. Furthermore, many of us were among the students who integrated America's school systems along the lines of sex and race.

Dr. Quintanilla's journey is one of perseverance, dedication, and excellence. Born and raised on a farm in Chile, she built an impressive academic career that ultimately led to her earning American citizenship. She is a highly accomplished scholar, devoted wife, and key provider to her family. Her deep commitment to her faith and profession further exemplifies her character. Dr. Quintanilla's remarkable personal and professional achievements make her an outstanding candidate for tenure.

To conclude, we should note that for the first several years of UNC AFSA's history, we had the pleasure of working with faculty, students, and trustees who benefited from Chancellor Guskiewicz's leadership. We knew you, Chancellor Guskiewicz, as a supporter of our mission (again, free speech, academic freedom, and viewpoint diversity). As a scientist, we know you believe that both scientific inquiry and educational institutions benefit from self-examination, competing ideas, and an environment of robust, reasoned debate.

As concrete examples of your efforts at Carolina, President Guskiewicz, you were a champion of UNC's innovative Program for Public Discourse, among other key free speech and diversity initiatives. When incidents of censorship occurred on campus, you were quick to respond. You were always generous with your time and receptive to our alumni-led efforts to uphold our University's motto, *Lux Libertas*—light and liberty.

We are deeply grateful for that and for the welcome reception we received from your administration and many faculty members. Progress at Carolina continues, though reaching consensus amidst controversy is never easy.

Yes, without question Dr. Quintanilla offers superb academic credentials, but she has also actively engaged in vital discussions on meritocracy, gender theory, Title IX, and identity theory—offering precisely the kind of rigorous debate we believe is vital to higher education. While her positions on these issues may be unpopular with some colleagues, such dialogue is essential to stave off institutional dogmatism and to advance the pursuit of scientific truth.

Dr. Marisol Quintanilla should not be punished for engaging in the same free speech and robust civil discourse that we cherish at our respective institutions. Brave, accomplished academics like Dr. Quintanilla keep our universities on the cutting edge with their thoughtful criticism, outside-the-box thinking, and willingness to voice controversial concerns with the best interests of higher education at heart.

Not only an exceedingly productive researcher and practitioner, Dr. Quintanilla is courageous, passionate, and utterly dedicated to the pursuit of truth and the betterment of society.

We sincerely hope you will concur with Dean Daum to grant Dr. Quintanilla promotion with tenure. Doing so would strengthen Michigan State's reputation for scholarly excellence and academic freedom and ensure Dr. Quintanilla's leading research in agriculture continues to benefit both the University and the broader community in Michigan and beyond.


We appreciate your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Harrington Shaw
Managing Director – UNC '24
UNC Alumni Free Speech Alliance


Doug Monroe
Chair – UNC '78
UNC Alumni Free Speech Alliance

Board - UNC Alumni Free Speech Alliance


John Bruce

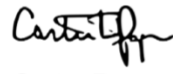

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