November 9, 2026

To: Members of the Board of Trustees at UNC-Chapel Hill
From: AAUP chapter of UNC-Chapel Hill

The American Association of University Professors (AAUP) is growing faster in North Carolina than anywhere else in the United States.

UNC-Chapel Hill AAUP has over the past few years rigorously tried to defend faculty governance and academic freedom against an unprecedented level of political interference.

We are heartened by the midterm election results, not because we desire a partisan intervention in academic affairs by one political party in favor of another, but because we hope this result will end all interference by politicians and other outside interests in the policies and curricula on our campus.

As such, we call upon you, as a Trustee of UNC-Chapel Hill, to endorse the following necessary actions:

1) Commit to campus policies conceived through faculty governance, produced in dialogue with our Chancellor and other campus administrators;

2) Defund the scandal-ridden and political boondoggle School of Civic Life and Leadership (SCiLL);

3) End false austerity measures (such as Service First) that have led to proposed cuts to staffing and graduate student funding amidst student enrollment increases and other revenue growth;

4) Confirm that accreditation will be a non-governmental, apolitical process, which is not the case with the proposed Commission on Public Higher Education; and

5) End interference in faculty hiring.

Last summer, we learned in an article in *The News and Observer* that at least three of you expressed concerns that "the board meddles in matters beyond its purview." One of you expanded on this concern, writing: "Our board has been led by individuals who oftentimes put their own principles ahead of what is best for UNC, and as a result, our board has gone outside of its lane on several occasions." Another member concurred, writing: "There are times that the Board forgets that our role is oversight." Another member agreed, concluding: "We must be regularly reminded of our role as Board members and respect those duties and boundaries."

AAUP-CH agrees with your concerns about BOT overreach. Eight of the twelve members of BOT have terms ending in 2027 and we enthusiastically concur with one of you who wrote: "Reform is needed to make sure future boards are not overly influenced by outside political forces." But we should not wait until next year. The time to undo this political interference, and the damage it has caused, begins now. As such, we urge those members who anonymously expressed concerns to make them known, and that you speak to the five critical points listed above during your meeting of November 11-12, 2026.

We believe that UNC-CH is the greatest public University in the nation. The political interference over the past several years has threatened both our reputation and our practical ability to teach our amazing students. We urge you to recommit to *Lux, libertas.* You have a critical role to play to reverse these recent trends and restore faith in faculty governance and academic freedom.

First. And For All.
https://unc-ch-aaup.org/