

HISTORY DEPARTMENT STATEMENT ON ACADEMIC FREEDOM AND FACULTY CONTROL OF CURRICULUM

We undersigned faculty members of the Department of History have been informed that a majority of the Council of Chairs for the College of Arts and Sciences recently voted in favor of a statement that calls on the College to “resist any attempts from outside the relevant Department to influence curricular decisions based solely on the specific content of any courses that have been duly approved by the Department and the relevant College-wide faculty Curriculum Committee.” We strongly support this defense of elementary academic freedom.

More specifically, we protest the College’s successful effort to prevent the teaching of History 383, “Big-Time College Sports and the Rights of Athletes,” as planned by our esteemed colleague Professor Jay Smith for Fall 2017. Professor Smith is a widely recognized authority on this subject, the relevant faculty committees in the Department and the College duly approved the course, and Professor Smith taught it very successfully in both the Summer School and Fall semester of 2016. Contrary to some accounts in the media, it is clear to us that this was not an autonomous “chair’s decision.” Clearly, this course and the professor teaching it were singled out for unprecedented and adverse scrutiny. Under these circumstances, our respected department chair, Professor Fitz Brundage, felt pressured by the administration to cancel any future offerings of the course until Fall 2018, concerned about adverse consequences for the department if he proceeded with the scheduling of the course in the Fall 2017. In the absence of any other credible explanation, we believe that the College took this action to block broader understanding of the recent scandals in UNC’s major intercollegiate athletic programs and

other violations of legal, moral, and academic standards in the history of modern college athletics.

Comprehensive Standard 3.4.10 of our accrediting agency, the Commission on Colleges of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACSCOC 2016), requires that “the institution places primary responsibility for the content, quality, and effectiveness of the curriculum with its faculty.” The suppression of History 383 clearly violates this standard and threatens the University’s reaccreditation. We see it as a serious infringement of freedom of inquiry, a fundamental feature of intellectual life in every authentic university. While it may now be too late to reinstate History 383 for Fall 2017, we call on the College to publicly confirm that it will not interfere with its being offered by Professor Smith in Fall 2018 and thereafter.

(Signed)

Karen Auerbach
Assistant Professor

Cemil Aydin
Associate Professor

William L. Barney
Professor

Chad C. Bryant
Associate Professor

Marcus G. Bull
Andrew W. Mellon Distinguished Professor

Melissa M. Bullard
Professor

Kathryn J. Burns
Professor

Emily S. Burrill
Associate Professor

Flora Cassen
Assistant Professor

Daniel Cobb
Associate Professor

William R. Ferris
Joel R. Williamson Eminent Professor

Emma Jane Flatt
Assistant Professor

W. Miles Fletcher
Professor

Joseph T. Glatthaar
Stephenson Distinguished Professor

Karen Hagemann
James G. Kenan Distinguished Professor

Jerma Jackson
Associate Professor

Kenneth R. Janken
Professor

Konrad H. Jarausch
Lurcy Professor of European Civilization

Lauren Jarvis
Assistant Professor

Michelle T. King
Associate Professor

Klaus W. Larres
Richard M. Krasno Distinguished Professor

Miguel Abram La Serna

Associate Professor

Wayne E. Lee
Dowd Distinguished Professor

Lisa A. Lindsay
Bowman and Gordon Gray Distinguished Term Associate Professor

Malinda Maynor Lowery
Associate Professor

Terence McIntosh
Associate Professor

Fred S. Naiden
Professor

Raul Antonio Necochea
Professor

Susan Dabney Pennybacker
Chalmers W. Poston Distinguished Professor

Louis A. Perez
J. Carlyle Sitterson Professor

Jon David Powell
Instructor

Cynthia Radding
Gussenhoven Distinguished Professor

Donald J. Raleigh
Jay Richard Judson Distinguished Professor

Donald M. Reid
Professor

Iqbal Singh Sevea
Assistant Professor

Daniel J. Sherman
Lineberger Distinguished Professor

Sarah D. Shields
Bowman and Gordon Gray Distinguished Term Professor

William Sturkey
Assistant Professor

John W. Sweet
Associate Professor

Michael T. Tsin
Associate Professor

Kathryn Turk
Assistant Professor

Benjamin C. Waterhouse
Associate Professor

Harry L. Watson
Atlanta Alumni Distinguished Professor

Brett E. Whalen
Associate Professor

Molly Worthen
Assistant Professor