

History Graduate Student Statement of Support for Maya Little

As individual graduate students of the History Department at UNC studying, among other topics, African-American, indigenous, civil rights, anti-colonial, revolutionary, labor, queer, accessibility, Jewish, and feminist history, we stand with Maya Little and her courageous act of nonviolent civil disobedience at Silent Sam. From a historical perspective, we recognize that Maya joins a long line of activists and revolutionaries who have employed this strategy to gain dignity, justice, and equality for all people when structures of power and legal systems have failed to do so.

Carol Folt and her administration have clearly failed in their responsibility to ensure the safety and well-being of all of UNC's students. Removing Silent Sam, a memorial to racism and white supremacy, would be both moral and legal. Instead, Folt chooses to spend \$1,700 a day to defend Silent Sam while paying UNC graduate students \$1,200 a month. She allowed outside white supremacist and neo-confederate groups to rally around Silent Sam with the protection of UNC Police, putting our campus community at risk.

When the administration refuses to protect its community, it is the duty of students, faculty, staff, campus and graduate workers to do so by challenging institutional racism and oppression. Maya Little took that responsibility on her shoulders by properly contextualizing a statue that was already drenched in black blood. Built in 1913 by white supremacists who enslaved and murdered black Americans, the statue continues to serve as a rallying point for violent white supremacist groups today. We support Maya's actions unequivocally. Now it is our turn to stand for diversity and equity on campus. These are our demands:

- We demand that Chancellor Folt remove Silent Sam
- We demand that the administration not take action against Maya Little for her act of civil disobedience
- We demand that UNC's Trustees remove the 16 year moratorium on renaming campus buildings, including our own Hamilton Hall, named after KKK apologist Joseph Grégoire de Roulhac Hamilton
- We demand fair compensation for the campus workers who cleaned Silent Sam of blood, when it is Folt who should take have taken responsibility for attempting to whitewash UNC's history
- We demand that the administration act to address institutional racism on campus

Until these demands are met, we will continue to call out the culture and structures of white supremacy at UNC. We will continue to call out UNC administrators who refuse to redress our institution's participation in slavery, Jim Crow, and continued racial inequality. We will continue to stand by those who protest these vestiges of white supremacy on campus and beyond.

Signed,

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