



THE UNIVERSITY
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at CHAPEL HILL

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THE UNIVERSITY OF NORTH CAROLINA AT CHAPEL HILL

COLLEGE OF ARTS AND SCIENCES

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June 24, 2021

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Dear Members of the UNC Board of Trustees,

As Chair of the Department of Statistics and Operations Research (STOR) and with the general support of STOR faculty, I write urging you to consider the tenure case of Nikole Hannah-Jones as soon as possible. As a faculty member and department chair, I rely on tenure conferral as an academic process with its well-established procedures, checks in place and limited outside influence. I have no direct knowledge of the work by Nikole Hannah-Jones but trust the judgment and due diligence of my colleagues in the School of Journalism, as I hope others would do when considering STOR tenure cases, despite the very different departmental and unit cultures across the university. I ask you to do the same for the sake of academic integrity.

I also urge you to find more constructive ways to work with the university administration, especially around politically sensitive issues such as the Nikole Hannah-Jones and other cases. Even in a STEM department as distant from politics as STOR, the effects of these cases, tried in the court of public opinion, have been damaging. Prospective graduate students mention these cases as reasons for declining our offers; faculty we are trying to recruit ask about them during interviews; negative press makes departmental fundraising and the solicitation of large donations more difficult. These are just a few examples specific to STOR, not speaking of other negative effects to the university at large.

Sincerely,

Vladas Pipiras
Professor and Chair
Department of Statistics and Operations Research
UNC-Chapel Hill