RESOLUTION 16-23
A RESOLUTION TO PETITION ACTION AGAINST AGGRESSIVE ACTS DIRECTED TOWARDS MINORITIES AT THE UNIVERSITY

29 NOV 2016 INTRODUCED BY BRIAN A. COUSSENS, GPSF VPIA
29 NOV 2016 REFERRED TO GPSF RESOLUTIONS DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE
29 NOV 2016 PASSED 4-0 BY RESOLUTIONS DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE; REFERRED TO GPSF SENATE
06 DEC 2016 PASSED 40-5-0 BY GPSF SENATE

WHEREAS, the Graduate and Professional Student Federation supports free speech and freedom of expression as granted under the US Bill of Rights and regards such guarantees essential to a vibrant learning community and, therefore, asserts that University interference in matters of free speech should be limited,

WHEREAS, the University’s dedication to diversity, as stated in the University mission statement, its statement on “Core Diversity Values,” and its statement on non-discrimination, suggests that one area in which the University administration should intercede are in acts that endanger the institution’s diversity, particularly in instances of hate speech and targeted aggressive acts and vandalism,

WHEREAS, such an aggressive act (Appendix 1) and vandalism did occur on this campus, wherein several posters advertising a lecture about the first African American to matriculate in an all-white Southern university were vandalized,

WHEREAS, this vandalism constitutes targeted aggression given that the act involved posters for a lecture on efforts against state-sponsored discrimination against minorities,

WHEREAS, this act, thereby, violates the UNC Honor Code, Part II, Section C, Subsection 1, “Conduct Affecting Persons” (Honor Code, pp. 6–8), as it constitutes a threat and intentionally causes emotional and psychological harm to the targeted groups,

WHEREAS, this act constitutes vandalism and destruction of University property, as the affected posters were paid for by the Center for the Study of the American South, a center of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill,
WHEREAS, this act also, thereby, violates the UNC Honor Code, Part II, Section C, Subsection 2, “Conduct Affecting Property” (Honor Code, p. 8), as it constitutes “destroying” or “damaging” “property belonging to the University,”

WHEREAS, the University administration has not issued a statement condemning this act,

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE GRADUATE AND PROFESSIONAL STUDENT FEDERATION that the GPSF condemns acts of hate speech and targeted aggression and vandalism on the campus of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the GPSF petitions the University administration to…

(1) Conduct a thorough and proper investigation of this and future incidents,
(2) Ensure that the person or persons responsible for the act receive appropriate disciplinary action, including but not limited to, the restitution of the cost of the vandalized posters and appropriate punishment under the Honor System,
(3) Issue a statement condemning speech acts—whether verbalized, written, pictorial, or otherwise—which expressly target minorities and protected categories on the University’s campus,
(4) Consider, devise, and/or enforce policies which protect the populations listed as protected categories under the University’s non-discrimination policy from speech acts—whether verbal, written, pictorial, or otherwise—which intentionally endanger or do harm to members of those communities, whether physically or emotionally, and
(5) Invest in resources and programs to support inclusivity and diversity at the University of North Carolina;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the GPSF, in its advocacy role for graduate and professional students at the University, shall present these affirmations and petitions to the following persons or bodies at the University:

(1) President Margaret Spellings,
(2) the Board of Governors,
(3) Chancellor Carol L. Folt,
(4) Vice Chancellor Winston Crisp,
(5) the Board of Trustees,
(6) the Faculty Council,
(7) the Employee Forum,
(8) Student Congress, and
(9) the Student Body President, Bradley Opere, and

Done this day, the sixth of December two thousand and sixteen.

Brian A. Coussens
Vice President of Internal Affairs

G. Dylan Russell
President
Appendix 1: Recorded Act of Vandalism and Hate Speech

2016 Charleston Lecture in Southern Affairs
Joseph Bathanti

Thursday, November 17, 4:30 PM
Pleasant's Family Assembly Room
Wilson Library, UNC

In 1944, Alma Stone Williams, an African American musician from Atlanta, Georgia, attended Black Mountain College for its eleven-week summer session. She already had degrees from Atlanta University and Spelman College (where she had graduated as valedictorian), but that summer she became the first black student to attend Black Mountain College. This occurred ten years before Brown v. Board of Education and twelve years before Autherine Lucy, another African American woman, matriculated in 1956 at the University of Alabama for a mere three days. While Lucy is generally credited as the first African American student to attend an all-white college in the Jim Crow South, it appears that Williams initially cracked that barrier.

Joseph Bathanti teaches English and Creative Writing at Appalachian State University. He is the author of nine poetry collections, three novels, a short story collection, and a book of nonfiction essays. Bathanti served as Poet Laureate of North Carolina from 2012-2014.

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