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Chairman

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Dear Board of Trustees of the University of North Carolina:

The tenured faculty in the Department of Mathematics are disappointed that the Board of Trustees has yet to approve an appointment with tenure for Nikole Hannah-Jones in the Hussman School of Journalism. We understand that the Hussman School of Journalism is not part of the College of Arts and Sciences so appointments and tenure may work differently than our system. However, the faculty in the Hussman School of Journalism voted to appoint Ms. Hannah-Jones with tenure, and we understand that this was approved by the Provost. Ms. Hannah-Jones is a highly respected and decorated journalist, and her lectures are highly regarded as well. While we recognize that the Board of Trustees has the final say in tenure decisions, in the history of UNC the Board of Trustees has followed the advice of the Provost in all other cases. Additionally, the Knight Chair Professorship has never in the past been given without tenure at UNC.

We stand in solidarity with our colleagues in the Hussman School of Journalism and fully support their decision to hire Ms. Hannah-Jones with tenure. In order to maintain the highest standards of academic integrity and freedom, as well as to serve the University's research mission, it is important to keep even the appearance of political interference out of tenure and hiring decisions. To do otherwise risks permanently damaging the University's national and international reputation, could damage University recruitment and retention, and could impair the ability to attract private and federal funding and philanthropic donations.

We respectfully request that the Board of Trustees demonstrate its commitment to academic integrity and freedom by reviewing the recommendation of the faculty, external evaluators, and university leadership to grant Nikole Hannah-Jones tenure. This action would re-affirm our University's commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion, which is the cornerstone of Carolina Next and endeavors to serve all North Carolinians.

This letter was unanimously approved by 16 assembled tenured faculty of the Department of Mathematics.

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