

2 August 2020

STUDENT LEADERS DEMAND REVERSAL OF DECISION TO STATION UNCPD
DURING FALL 2020 MOVE IN

University Administrators,

We, the undersigned student leaders and organizations, are writing to express our deep concern, disappointment, and frustration regarding the decision to station UNC Police Department (UNCPD) officers outside residence halls during the Fall 2020 on campus move-in.

For the reasons outlined below, we oppose the presence of law enforcement serving as any type of welcoming committee for students and families, and we demand that the university cease in this action immediately.

Firstly, it should be noted that the Carolina Housing Mission Statement states the following:

“**Carolina Housing** works to provide convenient **housing** that is *safe, inclusive, and supportive*. We strive for students to experience a *welcoming* home in our on-campus communities, build life-long friendships and develop skills for their current and future success as they journey through their Carolina experience.”

The mission of Carolina Housing is clear in its aim to promote a safe, inclusive, supportive, and welcoming environment. Allowing UNCPD to be present at residence hall entrances is in **direct opposition** to this goal as many students and families will not be comfortable or feel “welcomed” in this setting.

Secondly, we will offer context as to why this decision is harmful and hurtful to Carolina students, notably our Black and Brown students. For generations, members of the aforementioned communities have fought to be heard and prioritized—not only in this country, but at this university. More specifically, interactions between students and police at UNC have been historically dangerous. This is highlighted in the UNCPD response to Silent Sam protests as well as the consistent over policing of South Campus, an area in which many of UNC’s Black and Brown undergraduates have resided since the university first opened its doors to these communities.

This decision to position police officers in and around each of the residence halls into which students are moving comes at a time in the history of the United States when Black and Brown bodies continue to be disregarded by those in power. Black and Brown bodies are still being brutalized, disregarded, and ignored when it comes to making decisions to safeguard their lives. As we continue to mourn the recent death of civil rights champion, Congressman John Lewis, we demand that Carolina embody one of his [final commands](#): “*When you see something that is not right, you must say something. You must **do** something.*” This is what we do today and seek to do always as lifelong learners, but we can no longer afford to do this for the university. The recent events across America, most notably the murders of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, Ahmaud Arbery, and countless other Black individuals only serve to emphasize the constant fear and physiological effects that Black and, at many times, Brown people endure as a result of police presence. The **American Psychiatric Association (APA)** has recently stated that police presence

disproportionately exacerbates “stress, anxiety, and other mental health disorders” in the Black community. In addition, members of other marginalized racial groups and the LGBTQ+ community have consistently had harmful and dangerous encounters with police and are more likely to come into contact with law enforcement as a result of over policing, discrimination, and racially-charged violence.

The presence of UNCPD during move-in will only result in an increase in unnecessary anxiety for thousands of students, and specifically our Black students.

Police presence does not foster a sense of safety nor a feeling of comfort.

Furthermore, we would like to reiterate what has been said repeatedly throughout the summer by dozens of student leaders. As stated most recently by the Commission on Campus Equality & Student Equity in their [Emergency Resolution](#):

“...we become more disappointed in the way our senior [University] leadership has chosen to communicate with its most valuable stakeholders: students...We have had to, on several occasions, request in writing that our student body be more effectively informed on decisions made by University leadership – never mind our original request asking for more student involvement in the university’s decision-making process itself.”

In this particular scenario surrounding UNCPD, a key student organization (whose mission is to represent the housing concerns of on campus students to UNC Administration) was left out of this decision: the **Residence Hall Association (RHA)**. Our student organizations cannot fulfill their purpose if the University continues to exclude adequate and appropriate student representation at the decision making table - as was done with this decision. Additionally, students of color should *always* be included in conversations and prioritized, especially when decisions directly and disproportionately affect and harm their communities.

We support the CDC’s higher education guidelines and have been actively promoting these instructions since their release this summer. That being said, an effort to promote mask wearing and social distancing on campus does not need to come with police presence. It only further antagonizes Carolina students and contributes to a long-lasting negative relationship between students and UNCPD and, by extension, UNC Administration.

We know that given the troubling decision to re-open campus, our shared goal is to provide the safest possible return for our peers and we remain committed to that aim. The current university decision to supply police as a welcome crew, however, does not achieve this goal. In fact, it will only lead to further misunderstandings and frustration within our Carolina family. We look forward to a timely response as Carolina students begin a new week of moving in on Monday, August 3.

We require a response by 9pm this Sunday evening, August 2nd, and will stand for nothing less than the decision being rescinded.

Sincerely,

The Undersigned

Signatories

Kira Griffith, President

UNC Residence Hall Association (RHA)

Elliana Alexander, Vice President

UNC Residence Hall Association (RHA)

Lamar Richards, Chair

Commission on Campus Equality and Student Equity (CESE)

Tamiya Troy, President

The Black Student Movement (BSM)

Julia Clark, Vice President

The Black Student Movement (BSM)

Greear Webb, Co-Chair

BSM Political Action Committee

Victoria Bryant, Co-Chair

BSM Political Action Committee

Reeves Moseley, President

Undergraduate Student Body

Preeyanka Rao, Vice President

Undergraduate Student Government

Ryan Collins, President

Graduate and Professional Student Federation (GPSF)

Jalyn Howard

Graduate and Professional Student Federation (GPSF)

Clay Morris, Director of Evaluations

Campus Y

Darian Abernathy, Chair

Carolina Union Board of Directors

Sarah Bradley, President

Carolina Union Activities Board (CUAB)

Kensley Sutton, President

Carolina Athletic Association (CAA)

Braidyn Davis, Co-President
Sexuality and Gender Alliance (SAGA)

Brianna Ramgeet, President
Caribbean Students Association (CSA)

Tsion Coulter, Co-President
Organization for African Students' Interests & Solidarity (OASIS)

Mina Yakubu, Co-President
Organization for African Students' Interests & Solidarity (OASIS)

Danny Bowen, Chief of Staff
Undergraduate Student Government

Nikhil Rao, Senior Advisor
Undergraduate Student Government

Dwayne Hamilton, Senior Advisor
Undergraduate Student Government

Raleigh Cury, Senior Advisor
Undergraduate Student Government

Keshav Javvadi, Speaker
Undergraduate Senate

Kathy Jaramillo, Co-President
Mi Pueblo UNC

Juan Castro, Co-President
Mi Pueblo UNC

Campus Organizations & Committees Represented:

Residence Hall Association (RHA) Executive Board '20-'21

The Black Student Movement (BSM)

Undergraduate Student Government

Graduate and Professional Student Federation (GPSF)

The Commission on Campus Equality and Student Equity

Carolina Union Board of Directors

Carolina Union Activities Board (CUAB)

The Student Advisory Committee to the Chancellor (SACC)

Sexuality and Gender Alliance (SAGA)

Caribbean Students Association (CSA)

Campus Y

Mi Pueblo

Asian American Center Campaign

Organization for African Students' Interests & Solidarity (OASIS)