



*Celebrating Our Community*

September 6, 2017

MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR

### **There is Nothing Silent about Silent Sam**

As the nation's oldest public university, our institution has witnessed generations of progress for Black faculty, staff, and students. However, the statue of Silent Sam has remained as a daily reminder of the continued pain that consumes many across our campus. The statue has become, and has always been more than just stone and metal to innocently memorialize Confederate soldiers. Yet, it was erected purposefully to all who walked in its shadow, that no matter our advancements as a people, we would always be viewed as not equal and unwelcomed. You need look no further than Julian Carr's speech at the statues dedication in 1913. The majority of Confederate monuments and statues like Silent Sam were constructed well after the Civil War to relay messages of hate, violence, and intolerance to oppose the creation of the nation that we still struggle to become.

The Carolina Black Caucus was founded to not only celebrate our community, but to also advocate for a more diverse and inclusive campus, which is counter to the very existence of Silent Sam. We stand encouraged by the recent efforts of our university, state, and local leaders as they attempt to develop strategies for the statues eventual removal. We will continue working alongside campus and community partners to petition the NC Historical Commission for the statue's removal and to challenge the General Assembly to repeal such an illusive law that is sparing Silent Sam's last days on our grounds. The messages from the statue have been anything but silent. We recognize that our past will always be remembered, but our pain should never be placed on a pedestal to be revered.

O.J. McGhee  
Carolina Black Caucus, Chair