



News Release

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UNC-Chapel Hill Announces Completion of Independent Counsel's Inquiry on Academic Irregularities, Takes Action to Address Findings

(Chapel Hill, N.C. – October 22, 2014) – The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill today announced the results of an independent investigation conducted by former federal prosecutor Kenneth Wainstein into past academic irregularities at Carolina and took immediate action to address the findings. Today's actions build on the reforms already undertaken in the years since first learning about the issues.

Mr. Wainstein's investigation found:

- Two people within the department formerly known as African and Afro-American Studies (AFAM)—Julius Nyang'oro and Deborah Crowder—were responsible for offering hundreds of irregular classes at UNC-Chapel Hill between 1993 and 2011.
- These so-called “paper classes” were irregular in that they had no class attendance or faculty involvement, and Ms. Crowder, a non-faculty administrator, managed the classes and graded the papers.
- Over the course of their 18-year existence, the paper classes affected 3,100 out of a total of 97,600 undergraduate students who were enrolled at the University during that time period.
- Student-athletes accounted for 47.6 percent of enrollments in the irregular classes.
- Many of the student-athletes were directed to the classes by academic counselors in the Academic Support Program for Student-Athletes. These counselors saw the paper classes and the artificially high grades they yielded as key to helping some student-athletes remain eligible.
- Academic advisors in the Office of Academic Advising also directed non-athlete students to these courses.
- Various University personnel were aware of red flags, yet did not ask questions. There was a failure of meaningful oversight by the University.

Mr. Wainstein's investigation found no indication of wrongdoing in any academic departments beyond AFAM, that no current coaches were involved or aware and that the reported wrongdoing ended in 2011.

“Mr. Wainstein has found that the wrongdoing at Carolina lasted much longer and affected more students than previously known. The bad actions of a few and the inaction of others failed the University's students, faculty and alumni, and undermined the institution as a whole,” said UNC-Chapel Hill Chancellor Carol L. Folt. “This conduct could and should have been stopped much earlier by individuals in positions of influence and oversight, and others could have sounded the alarm more forcefully.”

“I apologize first to the students who entrusted us with their education and took these courses. You deserved so much better from your University, and we will do everything we can to make it right,”



continued Folt. “I also want to apologize to the Carolina community – you have been hurt both directly and indirectly by this wrongdoing, even though you had no knowledge or responsibility for it, and many of you were not even here when most or all of it occurred.”

Based on Mr. Wainstein’s findings, the University will take the following actions and launch a number of new initiatives:

- Launch a new public records website (<http://publicrecords.unc.edu>) to enhance accountability, responsiveness and efficiency around records requests. That site is live as of today.
- Add faculty to a group that reviews student-athlete eligibility and progress toward degree.
- Establish a working group to ensure there are clear, consolidated and confidential channels through which people can raise their hand and share concerns. The working group will also recommend how best to oversee the University’s commitment to integrity and compliance with all applicable laws, regulations and policies.
- Continue to align and advance existing advising and support programs for student-athletes, further integrating the delivery of academic and career advising to include intensive and early attention to major exploration and post-college opportunities.
- Conduct an institution-wide policy and procedure audit that will allow the University to identify any remaining redundancies and gaps, and create a mechanism for periodic re-evaluation.
- Develop and implement an expanded process for the systematic, consistent evaluation and review of every unit and department. The Provost or appropriate director will be authorized to launch a special department review as needed.
- Immediately implement a plan to stabilize the Department of African, African American and Diaspora Studies. Similarly, director of athletics Bubba Cunningham has been executing a plan to bolster integrity and accountability throughout the Athletics organization.
- Take fact-based personnel actions, including terminating or commencing disciplinary action against nine University employees. Others implicated in the report include former University employees.

“I appreciate Mr. Wainstein’s hard work, professionalism and diligence in bringing us to today,” said UNC President Tom Ross. “I expect the findings will enable Chancellor Folt to build on earlier reforms and take the decisive steps needed to bring to a close the remaining questions and concerns around this matter. I will work closely with her and with the UNC-Chapel Hill Board of Trustees and the UNC Board of Governors to take what we’ve learned and ensure that Carolina emerges a stronger university dedicated to our students and our state.”

“In February, President Ross and Chancellor Folt tasked us with conducting a comprehensive and independent investigation to get to the bottom of the irregular class scheme that went on for almost two decades on the Chapel Hill campus,” said Wainstein, a partner with Cadwalader, Wickersham & Taft LLP. “We have spent the past eight months investigating every possible academic and athletic angle of that scheme, and today’s report lays out our findings and the full story behind the irregular classes. I want to thank President Ross, Chancellor Folt and the staff and students of the University for their exceptional cooperation with our investigation and for their commitment to unearthing the truth about this difficult chapter in the history of one of the country’s finest universities.”



Since first learning about these irregularities, Carolina has implemented numerous reforms, including new policies and processes to ensure compliance with teaching workloads and regular reviews of department chairs; ConnectCarolina, a new electronic student and course record database to help the University better track students enrolled in independent study and other courses; regular classroom visits to confirm classes are being held as scheduled; and additional oversight and support has been added for student-athletes for each sport in the Department of Athletics.

“Carolina is already stronger as a result of our journey over the past few years. Throughout our history, no single moment has defined us, but we are at our best when our most difficult moments teach us,” said Folt. “Our core mission as an institution is academics. I believe we can also offer strong and successful athletics programs, and that in fact athletics advances our academic mission. While we accept full responsibility for the past, the wind is in our sails for the future because our students, faculty and staff are so strong.”

Mr. Wainstein’s report can be accessed in its entirety at carolinacommitment.unc.edu. As previously announced, UNC-Chapel Hill will share publicly all documents cited in Wainstein’s report to enhance transparency around these records.

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