

Dear Chancellor Folt and Provost Blouin,

The following statement comes from the Administrative Board of the Library regarding the relocation of the monument of the Confederate soldier into one of the libraries. Thank you for receiving this statement, and for your leadership.

Respectfully,

Mark Crescenzi, Chair
Administrative Board of the Library

ABL Statement regarding the relocation of Silent Sam

The Administrative Board of the Library opposes the placement of the monument of the Confederate soldier (“Silent Sam”) in any of the University’s libraries. In accordance with UNC’s Policy on Prohibited Discrimination, Harassment and Related Misconduct, the Libraries are “committed to providing a safe, diverse, and equitable environment to all members of the Carolina community.” Relocating this statue into one of UNC’s libraries would inhibit their fundamental mission of “research, teaching, learning, and public service for the campus community, state, nation, and world” and create an unsafe and untenable environment for our students and staff.

Our Libraries provide an inclusive, safe learning environment where students can discover, process, and develop knowledge. Relocating this statue into a UNC library would also relocate a volatile ongoing debate into a physical space that would alter the learning environment of that space and those who work to support it. The Libraries have always archived, preserved, and made accessible a variety of print-based research objects that might be considered offensive or distasteful. Librarians and archivists across the nation are at the forefront of the preservation of the First Amendment, yet they do so by preserving access to knowledge. The presence of this statue in a UNC library at this time would inhibit such access.

The staff of the Libraries are entitled to this same safe and equitable environment, and we must be cognizant of the impact this statue would have on this community. Moreover, none of our libraries have the resources to accommodate the risks and challenges that would accompany this monument. Wilson Library, for example, does not have sufficient fire protection to handle the increased risk of fire that accompanies the continued protests and counter-protests of the monument. The safeguarding of the statue would also be a financially impracticable challenge to the security of Wilson Library’s irreplaceable, world-renowned collections.

We recommend that the monument be placed in a location such as the North Carolina Museum of History—a place dedicated to the interpretation of history through exhibitions and educational programs, with the presumption that the NCMH has or can be provided with the necessary security resources to house the statue safely.