



STATEMENTS

October 28, 2010

University Comments on Football Records Lawsuit

UNC-Chapel Hill issued statements today in response to a lawsuit filed by eight N.C. media organizations about public records and the NCAA and campus investigation of the football team:

On the context for the lawsuit:

“The University is 100 percent committed to complying with our obligations under public records laws. We have been responsive to the media and to the exceptionally large number of records requests they’ve submitted. We’ve devoted an unprecedented level of personnel and resources to processing and complying with the requests. We met with The News & Observer about their concerns and felt like we were being responsive. So I’m disappointed by the lawsuit. We recognize the media’s legitimate interest in the football story, but we can’t ignore federal and state law with regard to confidential student and personnel records.”

-- Chancellor Holden Thorp

On the University’s obligation to protect student privacy:

“We don’t make judgments about who wants private student information or why. Our duty is to apply the law consistently and correctly. We provide the records we’re allowed to share under federal privacy law, and withhold the records that those laws deem private.

“The University is entrusted with lots of confidential information about our students. They and their families expect us to hold that information in confidence because it’s required by federal law and because it’s the right thing to do. A football player has the same basic privacy rights as any student on campus.”

-- Leslie Strohm, Vice Chancellor and General Counsel

Key Facts:

- UNC-Chapel Hill has received more than 80 public records requests related to the football investigation. One public records officer has spent more than 600 hours on public records requests on this issue over the past three-and-a-half months. The University has provided thousands of pages of documents in response to the requests.
- Chancellor Thorp authorized hiring additional staff to help meet the demand for reviewing and responding to football-related public records requests.