

Dear Carolina Community:

I am writing today to share my thoughts about a very difficult but important topic that has been on everyone's minds this week: sexual assault and sexual violence.

As chancellor, nothing matters more to me than the safety and well-being of our campus community and how our University responds to these issues and your concerns. In every situation, we must be fair to all of the individuals involved and not rush to judgment – regardless of how that approach and the time it takes might be viewed in the court of public opinion.

I understand that people want me to speak out whenever there is an incident of public interest, but I cannot comment on specific cases as I do not want to bias or jeopardize the fairness of the process. This topic matters to us every day. We take every allegation extremely seriously. If we ever find shortcomings or problems, we will admit to them and fix them. Your feedback is helpful. We want people to feel empowered to share opinions and to be engaged in a thoughtful and respectful way.

The issues involved in sexual assault are challenging. Inevitably, some will walk away from the process disagreeing with the outcome. That does not reflect in any way on the integrity of our employees or our process.

We are committed to ensuring every step of our policy and procedures is correctly followed. Sometimes, to get it right takes longer than anticipated. But in the end, a respectful, reliable and equitable investigation must be the result. I want to reassure you that Carolina follows the highest standards based on federal law and guidance. The comprehensive changes we made in 2014 included more clearly defining consent, streamlining and better publicizing reporting options, adding confidential resources, and changing the adjudication procedures. We added

resources to provide compassionate care and accommodations for those who need support with their day-to-day logistics, academics or work. For details, please visit http://safe.unc.edu.

The results so far are promising – we are encouraged by an increase in reporting. This trend suggests that our education, prevention and awareness programming is taking root and that our community members feel more comfortable coming forward. We also know they expect to be treated fairly. Our Equal Opportunity and Compliance Office reports a 52 percent increase in formal investigations of sexual assault and a 156 percent increase in requests for accommodations, resources and other support between 2013-14 and 2014-15.

I have confidence in the people responsible for our campus process, including our Title IX Office, Student Affairs and the Department of Public Safety. They are outstanding professionals who care deeply about our students, faculty and staff. We are all dedicated to prevention, safety, treating people with compassion and respect, achieving fair outcomes and continuing to do everything possible to getting these processes right.

Sincerely,

Carol L. Folt
Chancellor