April 12, 2012

Dear Steven and Maggie [DTH editors],

The members of the Carolina Black Caucus express our concern for the lack of understanding of the collective hurt felt by many in the Black community in response to the killing of Trayvon Martin. This tragic incident has garnered the attention of the world. The UNC community has drawn national attention due to an insensitive Daily Tar Heel editorial cartoon (March 28, 2012) that drew the ire of many Black alumni, faculty, staff, and students. Most Americans are emotional regarding the topic, which lends itself to passionate and uncomfortable dialogue. Our enlightened academic village should be respectful of a community that has historically been the victim of bigotry and bias.

The wheels of justice appear to turn very slowly in the Martin case, which lends itself to gossip, fear mongering, untruths, and racist commentary. However, we are encouraged by the recent arrest of the shooter, George Zimmerman. It is our hope that justice will prevail and the disturbing actions by the Sanford police department will be made clear.

In solidarity, we implore the Carolina community to be more thoughtful and considerate of its portrayal and summary of this tragedy. The racial bias that accelerated Zimmerman’s actions must be identified, explored, and understood to move America forward in its quest for true freedom and equal opportunity for its citizens. The denial of the hatred, profiling, and racism exposed through this killing only serves to keep America from being its best at a time when we can least afford to be unified around individual rights. All Americans, regardless of race, religion, sexual orientation or gender identity, must be able to walk the streets of Chapel Hill and beyond without fear for their safety.

Respectfully,

Carolina Black Caucus

2011-12 Steering Committee

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