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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

On June 30, 2022, Virginia Governor Glenn Youngkin appointed four new members to the University of Virginia Board of Visitors (BOV).¹ The BOV is the supreme decision making body at the University, charged with setting the budget, making strategic decisions, and hiring the President. The decisions made by the Board directly affect everyone, but particularly marginalized groups, in the University community. One of the newest members appointed by Governor Youngkin is UVA alumnus Bert Ellis (CLAS '75, Darden '79). **Due to Mr. Ellis' previous and current actions at UVA, the University Democrats and the Democratic Party of Virginia call for his resignation or removal from the Board of Visitors.**

During the 1974-75 academic year, Mr. Ellis was the Chair of the University Union, a predecessor to today's University Programs Council. In this position, he organized student events using University funds. That year, the Union and Ellis held an event entitled *The Correlation Between Race and Intelligence*, featuring William Shockley, an unabashed racist, white supremacist, and eugenicist. This event is a stain on the University's past, especially due to the event's intentional scheduling during Black Cultural Week.² As the University continues to grapple with its history of slavery, racism, and eugenics, Mr. Ellis' appointment is not only regressive, but also directly insulting to countless students and student organizations who have worked relentlessly to make Charlottesville more equitable.

Nearly fifty years later, Mr. Ellis has yet to acknowledge the irreparable damage caused by the event and continues to espouse bigoted postulations, writing in 2021 that "The University is also overrun with courses that exist for no other purpose but to make a big deal about race and gender."³ In 2019, Mr. Ellis took it upon himself to fly to Charlottesville with the intention of removing a sign that criticized the University's treatment of minority students from a Lawn room door with a razorblade.⁴ This overreach sets a concerning precedent surrounding student free speech, and continues a trend of hostile interactions with students from underrepresented backgrounds by Mr. Ellis. As such, based on past and recent actions, he is not fit to serve on the Board of Visitors.

As the flagship institution of higher learning in the Commonwealth, Ellis' appointment imperils the reputation and direction of the University. The regressive and dangerous positions that Mr. Ellis has taken at the University should disqualify him from making any long term decisions on behalf of Virginia and the student body. Whereas we believe Mr. Ellis' appointment to the Board of Visitors was a grave misstep by Governor Glenn Youngkin, the University Democrats at the University of Virginia, along with the Democratic Party of Virginia, call for the resignation of Mr. Ellis from the Board of Visitors or his removal by the Governor.

¹<https://www.governor.virginia.gov/newsroom/news-releases/2022/june/name-936301-en.html>

²<https://www.cavalierdaily.com/article/2022/08/ellis-at-center-of-controversy-over-eugenecist-speaker-while-at-u-va-archives-show>

³<https://thejeffersoncouncil.com/year-end-uva-update-from-bert-ellis/#more-726>

⁴<https://www.baconsrebellion.com/wp/a-backlash-at-last/>