

December 22, 2020

Chancellor Glenn Boyce  
Provost Noel Wilkin  
University of Mississippi  
University, MS 38677

Dear Chancellor Boyce and Provost Wilkin,

The American Historical Association has become aware of the recent decision at the University of Mississippi not to renew the contract of Dr. Garrett Felber, assistant professor of history. The AHA is concerned about the possibility that Professor Felber's activism relating to racism and incarceration might have affected a decision on his employment status. This would be inappropriate and a violation of either his First Amendment rights or his academic freedom, or both. We are also concerned about questions of procedure governing this disciplinary action.

The AHA is the largest association of professional historians in the world. Our 11,000 members include college professors, secondary school teachers, students, and historians working in museums, national parks, and innumerable other venues. The organization is committed to the idea that study of all aspects of the past, and their connection to the present, no matter how troubling, are fundamental not only to the practice of history but also to the functioning of democracy. Moreover, the [professional standards](#) we articulate and promote are cited frequently inside and outside the academy.

These standards assert that "all institutions employing historians should develop and follow clearly written procedures governing disciplinary action. These procedures should embody the principles of due process, including adequate mechanisms for fact-finding and avenues for appeal." Whenever possible, we believe, there should also be mechanisms for input from department faculty. In the case of Professor Felber, publicly available information raises questions about whether the course of action that led to the termination of his appointment has followed proper due process procedures and has maintained his right to access institutionally based fact-finding and appeal mechanisms.

In addition, the AHA considers the scholarly and public-facing projects developed by Professor Felber to be important to the discipline and its role in public culture. Whatever the denouement to this process, we hope that the University of Mississippi will continue the good work on many fronts undertaken by Professor Felber during his time at the institution.

Sincerely,



Mary Lindemann  
AHA President