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November 24, 2014

Office of the President
University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign
364 Henry Administration Building, MC-346
506 S. Wright St.
Urbana, IL 61801

Dear President Easter and President-Elect Killeen:

We, the Board of Officers of the American Philosophical Association, write to protest the action of the Chancellor and Board of Trustees of the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign in withdrawing the offer of a tenured position to Professor Steven Salaita. This action constitutes a violation of Professor Salaita's right of free speech and, indeed, an assault on academic freedom in general. This action also flouts well-established norms of academic hiring, and should be taken only for weighty and pertinent reasons. In this case, the withdrawal was made because of remarks by Professor Salaita that he had a First Amendment right to make. That such an extreme action was taken on such an inappropriate basis must have a chilling effect on faculty speech and discourage scholars from participating in public debate about controversial issues.

Furthermore, we condemn the Board of Trustees' action on ethical grounds. Professor Salaita was extended an offer on which he had full and sufficient reason to rely given that his credentials had been given full academic review through the level of the Chancellor. It is clear that Professor Salaita was meant to rely on that offer, given that his courses at the University of Illinois had already been scheduled. Good faith acceptance of that offer required Professor Salaita to take the necessary steps toward joining the University of Illinois faculty: Professor Salaita resigned from his tenured academic position, his wife resigned from hers, and the family home was sold preparatory to moving to Illinois. UIUC placed Professor Salaita and his family in a highly vulnerable position by making a conditional offer while at the same time expecting him to rely on that offer. The Board of Trustees' decision has thus imposed on Professor Salaita and his wife severe personal and professional costs. We find this deplorable. We stand with the AAUP and our fellow professional organizations in condemning the action of the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign.

Yours sincerely,



Cheshire Calhoun, chair
for the Board of Officers of the American Philosophical Association