Monday, May 24, 2021

3:00-3:05PM  Call to Order
  • Welcome
  • Roll Call
  • Approval of Minutes:
    o February 22, 2021 Meeting
    o April 26, 2021 Meeting

3:05-3:30PM  Updates
  • April resolution to the Chancellor
  • Denial of tenure to Nikole Hannah-Jones

3:30-3:45PM  Report on work with Turn of Events
  Announcement of project group meetings and expectations

3:45-4:00PM  Update on Barbee Cemetery Work

4:00PM  Adjourn
Commission on History, Race, and a Way Forward (May 24, 2021)
Approved Minutes

Present: Commission Members: Co-Chair Patricia Parker, Co-Chair James Leloudis, Nicholas Graham, Danita Mason-Hogans, Ronald Harris, Kenneth Janken, Joseph Jordan, Sydni Walker, Danita Horton, Dawna Jones, Seth Kotch

YouTube Link for meeting: https://youtu.be/g-vdScNSI2g

I. Welcome and Introduction

Commission Co-Chair Jim Leloudis welcomed Commission members to the meeting and thanked them for being there. Co-Chair Pat Parker completed a roll call from those present on the Zoom screen. Minutes of the February and April meetings were both approved unanimously.

II. Updates from the co-chairs

Co-Chair Leloudis provided an update on the removal of names submitted to the Chancellor in April. Over the last 9 months, the commission voted on nine different individuals for name removal. The process went through subcommittee and then to the commission for approval, and the final group was voted on by Qualtrics survey. The overall recommendation was sent to the Chancellor, and he is in the process of pulling together a special committee, following the process set forward by the Board of Trustees. Dossiers and cover letter are public documents and available on the commission website (https://historyandrace.unc.edu/)

Co-Chairs address adding commission voices to those denouncing the BOT’s refusal, as of this meeting date, to consider the faculty recommendations that Nicole Hannah-Jones be appointed with tenure. Co-chairs address that the commission has a responsibility to address the issue and believe it is connected to race and to the work of historical truth telling at the heart of our charge. Co-chairs opened the floor for input during the meeting.

Commission members discussed not only “denouncing” the BOT decision, but making the commission statement more action-oriented and specifically stating what the commission would like to see done. Commission members suggest requesting an emergency open-meeting to consider the recommendations to grant Hannah-Jones tenure; and it is important to request transparency about the process taken place to date. Local community members have shown support to Nicole Hannah-Jones, and that has not been shown in media coverage. Commission conversation about clarification of tenure process, and the inaction of the Board of Trustees after the process was followed through university departments, Dean’s office, Promotion & Tenure Committee. Co-chair Parker clarified that someone denied the last step of the process and therefore denied the tenure of Nicole Hannah-Jones; similar to Merritt Garland not getting a hearing when he was nominated for the Supreme Court.
Commission members expressed confusion – suggesting that those in the general public may also feel that way, particularly due to lack of transparency of the process and what has happened. Co-Chair Leloudis shared that the current Chair of the BOT did not have his term renewed and this was the last scheduled meeting of the board as it is currently composed. Group conversation about who is responsible for the tenure review process not moving forward.

Co-Chair Parker brings up commission statement and how it should include a recommendation for immediate action; follow the process and represent the values of our great institution. Group discusses keeping focus on the Board of Trustees and their responsibility for this situation. Believe this body should include a request for transparency from our own leadership. Also important for this commission to tell the story and educate about how these things happen.

Co-Chairs wrapped up conversation – with next steps to draft statement for commission to approve. Commissioner Joseph Jordan agrees to help co-chairs with statement. A note, when we reference groups speaking out, will add community voices that have been in support.

III. Report on work with Turn of Events

Co-chair Leloudis reviewed work with Turn of Events. Slide shared conversations with subcommittees, and then April consensus workshop with the full commission. All archived on YouTube and on the commission website.

New structure focuses on project groups. These are Communicating the Work, Equity Initiative in Local Schools, Land Acknowledgement, Names on the Landscape, and Barbee Cemetery/Unsung Founders Memorial.

IV. Update on Barbee Cemetery

Commissioner Seth Kotch thanks the community members they are working with. Situations like what we are experiencing now harm the work, and we are grateful to the descendent partners. We are learning how to work with and for them and the support the work they have been doing for generations.

The community advisory board comprised of descendants of people buried at Barbee cemetery has been convened three times now. The new project structure of the commission will keep the project moving in a great direction. Future work includes signage, oral history project – supported by Humanities for the Public Good, and training descendent interviewers to do interviewers. Preservation and conversation efforts are so important – and UNC Libraries is our partner.

Unsung Founders Memorial also now the responsibility of this group. Reminder that we asked the university to step back from any plans they had to move the memorial. Looking forward to conversations about this.
Commissioner Jordan shared that there is another committee working on the placement of public art. Co-chair Leloudis clarified that the Chancellor is still looking to the commission for recommendations on Unsung Founders Memorial. Conversation with the community will be enormously helpful and important.

Group conversation about available funds to support compensation for commission members. Co-Chair Parker shared that we asked commission members to let us know what they need in order to do the work.

Co-Chair Leloudis addressed that this is Miriam Chisholm’s last meeting and thanked her for her extraordinary work with the commission. Co-Chair Parker shared that Miriam has accepted a research position at Duke and is applying to medical school. She congratulated Miriam on those accomplishments. Miriam thanked the commission members for their kind words and looking forward to seeing all the amazing things the commission will accomplish.

Meeting adjourned at 4:00 pm.

Attachments: 05/24/21 HRWF Presentation slides
UNIVERSITY COMMISSION
ON HISTORY, RACE, AND A WAY FORWARD

May 24, 2021
3:00-4:00PM
Virtual Meeting – HRWF YouTube Channel
MAY 24, 2021. FULL COMMISSION MEETING

I. Welcome & Approval of meeting minutes
   i. 02/22 draft minutes: HRWF Full Commission Mtg.
   ii. 04/26 draft minutes: Workshop with Turn of Events

II. Co-chair updates
   i. April resolution to the Chancellor
   ii. Denial of tenure to Nikole Hannah-Jones

III. Report on work with Turn of Events
   i. Announcement of upcoming project group meetings & what to expect

IV. Update on Barbee Cemetery Work
Resolution to the Chancellor
RECOMMENDATION TO THE CHANCELLOR ON THE REMOVAL OF NAMES

On behalf of the Commission on History, Race, and a Way Forward, we submit this recommendation that the names of the following men be removed from the buildings that afford them a place of honor on our campus: Kemp Plummer Battle (Battle Hall), Robert Hall Bingham (Bingham Hall), John Washington Graham (Graham Residence Hall), Bryan Grimes Jr. (Grimes Residence Hall), Joseph Grégoire de Roulhac Hamilton (Hamilton Hall), Cameron A. Morrison (Morrison Residence Hall), James Johnston Pettigrew (Pettigrew Hall), Thomas Ruffin Jr. (Ruffin Residence Hall), and Zebulon Baird Vance (Vance Hall). The accompanying dossiers provide the evidentiary basis for this recommendation.

Four premises, developed in each of the dossiers, have guided the commission’s deliberations and warrant attention here:

• The figures whose lives and careers are examined in the dossiers were not merely "men of their times."
• The fact that a set of ideas and actions was once "conventional" does not absolve past actors of the responsibility noted above.
• The buildings addressed here are not benign memorials.
• Removing a name from a building or other campus feature does not erase the university’s history.

Taken together, these premises and corresponding evidence exceed the tests for a strong case for name removal, as specified in the "Board of Trustees’ Policy for the Consideration of the Removal of Names on University Buildings and Public Spaces" (adopted on July 16, 2020).

Today, we stand at a moral crossroads, much the same as our predecessors during Reconstruction and in the early years of the twentieth century. We have an opportunity to redress racial injustice, past and present; to promote reconciliation and healing; and to fulfill the promise of what we call the "people's university." Let us continue that work with courage and conviction. Let us move forward by telling the truth about the past.

Members of the commission approved this recommendation by unanimous vote on April 13, 2021.

HRWF Commission work with Turn of Events
HRWF WORK WITH TURN OF EVENTS

Conversations with subcommittees
• March 8, 2021: https://youtu.be/5Af2dJDi-ZY
  Curriculum Development and Teaching

• March 15, 2021: https://youtu.be/2hv2BZ6ge1c
  Engagement, Ethics, and Reckoning

• March 22, 2021: https://youtu.be/De9U0_KOEHU
  Archives, History, Research, and Curation

Consensus Workshop with Full Commission
April 26, 2021: Virtual Meeting through Zoom
NEW STRUCTURE

Project Groups

- *Communicating the Work*
- *Equity Initiative in Local Schools*
- *Land Acknowledgement*
- *Names on the Landscape*
- *Barbee Cemetery and Unsung Founders Memorial*
Update on Barbee Cemetery Project