

University Commission on History, Race, and a Way Forward

Meeting Agenda + Approved Minutes

Virtual Meeting – streamed on HRWF YouTube Channel



THE UNIVERSITY
of NORTH CAROLINA
at CHAPEL HILL

Monday, February 21, 2022

3:30-3:35PM

Call to Order

- Welcome
- Roll Call
- Approval of Minutes: November 29, 2021

*Jim Leloudis & Pat Parker,
Co-Chairs*

3:35-4:30PM

Commission Updates

- Land Acknowledgement
- Equity Initiative in Local Schools
- Virtual Museum Update: Partnership with UNC Libraries
- Barbee Cemetery Project
- Unsung Founders (Community Touchpoint)

Various Commission Members

4:30PM

Adjourn

Commission on History, Race, and a Way Forward (February 21, 2022) Approved Minutes

Present: **Commission Members:** Co-Chair Patricia Parker, Co-Chair James Leloudis, Delores Bailey, Graham Watkins, Kenneth Janken, Nicholas Graham, Ronald Harris, Simona Goldin, Danita Mason-Hogans, Giselle Corbie-Smith, Josmell Perez

YouTube Link for meeting: <https://youtu.be/mmi0A9 RAu8>

I. Welcome and Introduction

Commission Co-Chair Pat Parker welcomed Commission members to the first meeting of 2022.

Co-Chair Leloudis asked if there were questions, additions, or discussion points related to the November minutes. Minutes from the November meeting were approved unanimously.

II. Updates

Land Acknowledgement

Co-chair Leloudis shared they have been in touch separately with both Greg Richardson (Executive Director, NC Commission of Indian Affairs) and Danny Bell (Commissioner, representing Wake Co., NC Commission of Indian Affairs) for their advice on reviewing our draft land acknowledgement . Upcoming meetings with the staff of the American Indian Center and also leaders of the First Nations Graduate Council. First Nations Graduate Council have language to share – and the co-chairs are seeking information on their process. Look forward to sharing language with the commission for comment. Our hope to have this done before the end of the semester. Invited group to participate in the work.

Equity Initiative in Local Schools

Co-chair Parker reminds the group this is a prioritized project and asks the question, “How are the legacies of slavery manifested in our institutions?” Then introduced Danita Mason-Hogans and Simona Goldin as leads of the initiative. Commissioner Mason-Hogans shared that she and Commissioner Goldin have been working joyfully on the project. Commissioner Goldin shared how much she has learned from Commissioner Mason-Hogans and her gratitude for working on the project. They are turning to voices of community. Shared also that Commissioner Bailey’s comments from the webinar have been impactful with regards to this work.

This will be a two pronged program. The first - establishing an educational program for the Chapel Hill school children – specifically the descendents of enslaved people. The second –

thinking about what kind of learning opportunities can we design for UNC undergraduates and graduate students so that when they come to UNC-Chapel Hill, they are learning from what is and continues to be the history and histories of this place. Will hope to first engage undergraduates in thinking of the institution of public education, and particularly, in this place. Also, be reverential and respectful of the communities they will learn from and about.

Co-chair Parker shared she and Co-chair Leloudis presented to Carolina Housing staff who are invested in this university. This work resonates with people.

Virtual Museum

Co-chair Leloudis introduced Commissioner Nick Graham. Graham shared this is revisiting discussions we have had many times in this group regarding The Carolina Story, the virtual museum of university history. Created in 2006 a part of an earlier effort to share a comprehensive history of the university. There have been modest updates to text over time, but is now significantly out of date. Now has a problem with emphasis (ex., Julian Carr.) This is not history we would stand behind. Instead of a full revision, we are proposing to take down the site and presenting a plan to move forward. Needs to be a collaboration between this commission and university libraries. Propose hiring a consultant – consulting firm that focuses on public history. They will help us evaluate current history offerings and envision a new approach for how we share campus history as well as help us sustain the work. Next steps, working on draft proposal and soon it will go to the commission for feedback and the through campus administration.

Co-chair Leloudis reminded group that the hardest part of this is sustaining this. Getting information out on the web is sometimes the easiest part. Hard work to keep it fresh and accurate. Want to make recommendations to senior administration about putting some permanent resources into this work. Commissioner Mason-Hogans asked when last time a book on university history was written. Answer – book done at the bicentennial, Light on the Hill. Co-chair Leloudis shared there has been idea of producing a small resource of campus history. Something we could distribute – orientation each year, of faculty and staff. It could be a valuable resource for the community.

Commissioner Graham shared that outside perspective and experience will be valuable. But the question for us is, what does the university want to present about itself? Co-chair Leloudis shared an example of what he was talking about earlier, and a great reference for us, Diamonds Dinosaurs & Democracy: A short, short history of South Africa by Francis Wilson. There are models out there for how you might do this.

Question from Commissioner Harris – what do we have “in house” in terms of a digital repository, etc. What are we able to do in house already? Commissioner Graham shared he is not at all worried about technology. The libraries have the expertise, a research services team that works on digitization, and lots of possibilities for creativity. The real challenge is in the content, and in the presentation and sharing. And also think through who our audiences are.

Commissioner Goldin commented about the accessible, engaging history. A book would be a great teaching tool, shoring up our shared understanding and giving us language to talk about things that are hard to talk about and give us a way to move forward. Co-chair Parker commented this also speaks to our process. This is an opportunity to get some tools and mechanisms in place so that this work can be transformative. Commissioner Corbie-Smith expressed interest in documenting our process to offer other organizations a place to start from instead of starting where we started from. Also think about whose history gets told and how that is archived.

Co-chair Leloudis shared this would be a great panel for the upcoming USS Spring 2023 conference (that we will be hosting). Conversation continued with the group, and the idea of documenting the process and not just the outcome is essential. Interest in getting together the group to work on this (possible) white paper. The university libraries are an essential partner in this process.

Barbee Cemetery Project

Recently, a firm was out to do a ground penetrating radar survey. It will be a more thorough mapping of the graves there so that we can understand the land more fully. Lorie Clark recently reached out to request a formal role for descendants in the university's ongoing curation and stewardship of the Barbee property. Her request speaks directly to the principles we have tried to work from and a great step for the broader umbrella project; finding ways to build new partnerships and build trust. The co-chairs are in conversation with the Provost and Chancellor's Offices on how to move forward and institutionalize what she is asking for there.

Commissioner Kotch and Commissioner Jones (Seth & Dawna) couldn't be here today and send their regrets. They will be stepping back on their leadership role on this project. We will be reorganizing as we think about carrying the work forward.

Co-chair Leloudis shared information about his undergraduate research seminar, and a little of what they have learned this semester in the archives. Learning more about people that were enslaved on the Barbee property. Commissioner Mason-Hogans mentioned the good work of the NC Botanical Gardens as an example for the commission. Request from Co-chair Parker to participate in this important work. Appreciation for Seth and Dawna for the wonderful work leading and framing this project.

Unsung Founders

Co-chair Parker reminded commissioners that the unsung founders memorial was a gift to the university from the class of 2002. The chancellor has asked us to make recommendations on the broader plans for the memorial. We are righting the process in terms of community engagement and community decision making with regards to the memorial. We are grateful to Commissioner Mason-Hogans and Commissioner Bailey to assist in convening a series of community conversations. We are building a foundation of

trust. The first of those conversations was on December 15. University Ombuds Dawn Osborne-Adams helped facilitate the conversation with the following community members; Charlene Register, Reverend Robin Campbell, Burnice Hackney, and Esphur Foster. It was a wonderful conversation and a fitting follow-up to the webinar. We hope this will be a series of conversations to help us consider what is next for the memorial.

Building Name Removal

Commissioner Bailey asked where the group was that is working on name removal. Co-chair Leloudis shared that you can find links to all the meetings of the [Chancellor's Committee to Review the History Commission Resolution](#) on our website. It is chaired by Dean Mike Smith. They have been invested and very deliberative in their work. Conversation continued about process and how that relates to our group. The process is that our resolution goes to the Chancellor, and the Chancellor creates a special committee to review the resolution. Their recommendation goes back to the Chancellor and then he will share that with the Board of Trustees. Co-chairs will make sure the commission has notice when the trustees consider what the chancellor sends to them. Upcoming BOT meetings are March 23-24 and May 18-19.

Co-chairs thanked Commissioner Bailey for asking the question since it has been a big part of the commission's work.

Meeting was adjourned at 4:27PM.