University Commission

on History, Race, and a Way Forward

*Minutes*

Virtual Meeting – streamed on HRWF YouTube Channel

**Monday, January 30, 2023**

Commission on History, Race, and A Way Forward (January 30, 2023)

**DRAFT** Minutes

P**resent:**

**Commission Members:** Co-Chair Patricia Parker, Co-Chair Jim Leloudis, Nicholas Graham, Danita Mason-Hogans, Simona Goldin, Danielle Hiraldo

**Guests:** Dalton Locklear, Marissa Carmi, Frankie Bauer, Tia Hunt

YouTube Link for Meeting: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lthatu2cw4g>

1. Welcome and Introduction

Co-Chair Parker welcomed everyone to the January Meeting of the University Commission on History, Race, and A Way Forward.

Co-Chair Parker called the commission’s attention to the death of Tyre Nichols at the hands of Memphis Police and systems that normalize violence and brutality. The commission held a moment of silence for Tyre Nichols and his family.

Co-Chair Parker completed the roll call of members present,

Co-Chair Parker entertained a motion to approve the minutes from the November 2022 meeting. The minutes were approved unanimously.

1. Land Acknowledgement

Co-Chair Leloudis introduced Dr. Danielle Hiraldo, Director of the American Indian Center, and offered gratitude for her engagement and work to establish language for a land acknowledgement that will be recommended to the Chancellor for use across the University. Co-Chair Leloudis emphasized that this is a necessary first step in a larger reckoning with UNC’s relationship with American Indian peoples.

Danielle informed the Commission that the draft Land Acknowledgment has been shared with the First Nations Graduate Circle, Carolina Indian Circle, and Dr. Dan Cobb at the American Indian and Indigenous Studies Program. She informed the Commission of her interest in sharing the draft with the Occaneechi band of the Saponi Nation. Danielle then thanked Co-Chair Parker and Co-Chair Leloudis for their previous conversations with these groups.

Co-Chair Leloudis thanked Danielle for her updates and welcomed guests from the First Nations Graduate Circle and Carolina Indian Circle.

Dalton Locklear, president of Carolina Indian Circle, introduced himself, followed by Tia Hunt, a member of the Carolina Indian Circle. Graduate students Marissa Carmie and Frankie Bauer introduced themselves and expressed appreciation for the Commission.

Marissa Carmie informed the Commission that she and Frankie have reviewed the Land Acknowledgment draft and are sharing it with other students for further comments. This will be completed on February 13, 2023.

Dalton Locklear reported on the feedback from the Carolina Indian Circle. Their requests were as follows:

* Acknowledgment of Tuscarora People
* Removal of language referring to “State Recognized Tribes.”
* Acknowledge the federal recognition of the Cherokee.
* Removal of the word “historic.” Change this to “Indigenous tribes with roots in North Carolina,” or “Indigenous tribes rooted in North Carolina.
* “Nations across turtle island” should replace the line “nations throughout the Americas.” Include a footnote defining “Turtle Island.”
* The first two sentences are too passive and should acknowledge the university’s involvement in colonization, particularly in the taking of land from the Occaneechi Band of the Saponi tribe.
* Acknowledge that North Carolina tribes were not the only ones affected by colonization.
* Be more specific in how the University will support Indigenous people.
* Be more inclusive of the hands that built the University. Include the line “The University was physically built through the labor of enslaved people.”

Co-Chair Leloudis thanked Dalton for the time he and other students put into their close reading of the Land Acknowledgement, He asked if there was anything the students would like to elaborate on.

Marissa Carmie added that there is an opportunity for this Land Acknowledgment to serve as a brief introduction to this issue that is contextualized by a larger version. She reemphasized Dalton’s point that some language in the draft was vague and offered a longer contextualized version as a solution.

Frankie Bauer offered the idea of a printed version of the Land Acknowledgment alongside a QR Code that links to a fuller history of UNC’s relationship with the Indigenous community. He emphasized that a longer version of the Land Acknowledgment runs the risk of leaving too much information out of the shorter version.

Marissa Carmie agreed and offered the solution of including a final sentence with an invitation for readers and listeners to learn more.

Co-Chair Leloudis asked the students to describe other priorities.

Dalton Locklear responded by reiterating the importance of the Land Acknowledgment. He reminded the Commission that other universities have done this already and UNC is behind the curve here. He also pointed out the importance of having support for American Indian Staff.

Tia Hunt added that Indigenous education should be required for all incoming students.

Marissa Carmie informed the Commision that a cluster hire of Indigenous faculty and staff is underway. She also said that culturally relevant mental health resources for Indigenous students should be a priority. She went on to express the importance of tuition and fee waivers for students in North Carolina tribes. The Carolina Indian Circle has a working document of demands, and Marissa said she will share this with the Co-Chairs.

Frankie Bauer added that it is important for the Land Acknowledgment to be a living document.

Co-Chair Parker thanked the students and added that this work is part of a collective effort to move forward together. She also acknowledged work going outside of the commission and said there is a need for a network that brings all this work together.

Co-Chair Leloudis seconded the importance of the Land Acknowledgment being a living document. He reiterated that this is an ongoing process and the importance of remaining vigilant to maintain that process.

Danielle Hiraldo thanked the Co-Chairs for providing space for this conversation and the students for their engagement.

Danita Mason-Hogans also expressed gratitude to the students. She reminded the Commission of the work of Commissioner Larry Chavis who has promoted awareness on this issue. She then expressed her ongoing support for the students’ work.

1. Updates

Co-Chair Parker updated the commission on the Unsung Founders and Barbee Cemetery Projects. She informed the commission that the guiding principle for these projects is to engage descendants as equal partners in addressing challenges and finding a way forward that incorporates truth telling, healing, and justice. Meetings have been ongoing over the past two years. The Co-Chairs are now ready to move forward with developing goals to meet the objectives of each project.

The objectives of the Unsung Founders Memorial include reseating the monument’s base on an adequate foundation and correcting the topographical issues that cause the sculpture to be cluttered with debris, creating a site that is appropriately contemplative and reverential, perhaps with additional hardscaping, providing signage to help people understand the intent of the sculptor’s design (based on a statement prepared by Do Ho Suh) and that of the Class of 2002, and representing at the site, the voices of descendants and their understanding of the memorial’s significance for reconciliation and repair.

The objectives of the Barbee Cemetery project include creating a site that is appropriately contemplative and reverential, perhaps with additional hardscaping, such as fences and walkways, developing and installing signage that will teach about the role of Indigenous dispossession and Black enslavement in the history of the University, and incorporating best practices from Black cemetery projects elsewhere in the nation that have effectively engaged descendant community

Co-Chair Parker informed the commission that in the short term, both these projects require the expertise of a landscape architect that has knowledge and experience in centering the voices of descendant communities and other stakeholders. Evan Yassky, the University Architect, is currently compiling a list of landscape architects with this specialized expertise. The Co-Chairs are also getting suggestions from the descendant community members and others.

Co-Chair Leloudis updated the Commission on the Spring 2023 Universities Studying Slavery Conference. He announced that registration is now live and can be found on the Commission website.

Commissioners Danita Mason-Hogans and Simona Goldin updated the commission on the Community Book Club, From Here to Equality: Community Read and Conversations. This event will take place at Chapel Hill Public Library throughout February, March, and April. The goal of the book club is to bring together various constituencies to discuss the process and history of reparations and repair in the Black community, particularly in Orange County.

Co-Chair Leloudis thanked the Commissioners for their work and emphasized that the Book Club project is only the beginning of work such as this.

1. Conclusions

Co-Chair Parker took questions and comments from Commission members and thanked everyone for their attendance.

The meeting adjourned at 4:27pm.