



THE RECTOR AND VISITORS OF THE
UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA

April 13, 2021

MEMORANDUM

TO: The Buildings and Grounds Committee:

Robert D. Hardie, Chair	Barbara J. Fried
Whittington W. Clement, Vice Chair	Louis S. Haddad
Robert M. Blue	C. Evans Poston Jr.
Mark T. Bowles	James V. Reyes
Elizabeth M. Cranwell	James B. Murray Jr., Ex-officio
Thomas A. DePasquale	Mazzen S. Shalaby, Student Member

and

The Remaining Members of the Board:

L.D. Britt, M.D.	Babur B. Lateef, M.D.
Frank M. Conner III	Angela Hucles Mangano
John A. Griffin	Ellen M. Bassett, Faculty Member
Maurice A. Jones	

FROM: Susan G. Harris

SUBJECT: Minutes of the Meeting of the Buildings and Grounds Committee on April 13, 2021

The Buildings and Grounds Committee of the Board of Visitors of the University of Virginia met, in open session, by electronic communication means at 4:29 p.m. on Tuesday, April 13, 2021. Robert D. Hardie, Chair, presided.

Committee Members Present: James B. Murray Jr., Robert M. Blue, Mark T. Bowles, Whittington W. Clement, Elizabeth M. Cranwell, Thomas A. DePasquale, Barbara J. Fried, Louis S. Haddad, C. Evans Poston Jr., James V. Reyes, and Mazzen S. Shalaby

L.D. Britt, M.D., Frank M. Conner III, John A. Griffin, Maurice A. Jones, Babur B. Lateef, M.D., Angela Hucles Mangano, and Ellen M. Bassett were also present.

Present as well were James E. Ryan, Jennifer Wagner Davis, K. Craig Kent, M.D., M. Elizabeth Magill, William Ashby, Melody S. Bianchetto, Adam Daniel, Stephen M. Farmer, Margaret S. Grundy, Susan G. Harris, Timothy J. Heaphy, Donna P. Henry, Michael J. Citro,

John C. Jeffries Jr., Megan K. Lowe, Clark “Chip” L. Murray, Alice J. Raucher, Debra D. Rinker, Colette Sheehy, and Anda S. Webb.

Mr. Hardie addressed the action item around the contextualization of university statues and memorials. He said this was an extension of a resolution the Board had passed in the fall. He turned the meeting over to President Ryan to discuss the work that has been done and the action items going forward.

Contextualization of University Statues and Memorials

President Ryan referred to the memo written by Michael Suarez, the chair of the Naming and Memorials Committee. He said in previous board meetings, the Board approved the resolution about the contextualization of the Jefferson statue and also approved the creation of the Naming and Memorials Committee. The more he thought about it, the more he believed the University should contextualize more than just the Jefferson statue through digital contextualization.

Mr. Ryan said the basic idea behind the proposal is to provide more education about the historic landscape, and educating people is consistent with the University's mission. Accomplishing this through digital means enables the University to provide more detail and accessibility, and it is easier to add information or update information as knowledge evolves. Rather than just focusing on the Jefferson statue, it will allow a walking tour which would include the Washington and Jefferson statues on the Lawn, “The Aviator” statue outside of Clemons Library, the Homer statue, and the new Memorial to Enslaved Laborers. You will be able to learn as much as you want both about the creator of the statue or memorial and what it depicts. He said he thinks this will enhance the experience of those who visit the Grounds for the very first time or who have walked the Grounds thousands of times and always wondered about, for instance, “The Aviator” statue.

On motion, the committee approved the following resolution and recommended it for full Board approval:

SUPPORT FOR NAMING AND MEMORIALS COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION ON CONTEXTUALIZATION OF UNIVERSITY STATUES AND MEMORIALS

WHEREAS, President Ryan’s charge to the Naming and Memorials Committee included, in part, studying the question of contextualizing the statues on Grounds; and

WHEREAS, in its report to President Ryan (the Committee Report), the Naming and Memorials Committee concluded that digital contextualization of the University’s statues and memorials will “help visitors and residents alike [to] make new connections and perceive the history of UVA, and of the U.S., with greater capaciousness, nuance, and complexity;” and

WHEREAS, the Committee Report recognizes that the “plan and pattern” of Thomas Jefferson’s Academical Village was intended “to be eloquent of the historical ideas and the civic values he sought to champion in the new university” and so we should continue to find ways to use the built environment “to challenge us to think and learn;” and

WHEREAS, the Committee Report recommends creating a digital historical stratigraphy that does not support a particular perspective but “afford[s] a balanced and fulsome experience, enabling all who visit our Grounds to develop their own informed perspective;” and

WHEREAS, the Committee Report recommends that the President commission a working group to convene professional historians, students, local residents, and alumni with relevant expertise, to work collaboratively to design and produce “a dynamic and evolving history of the Grounds open to new historiographical trends and the insights of new archival research” with full recognition that this method of delivering content can and will change and evolve with advances in research and scholarship; and

WHEREAS, President Ryan has asked the Board of Visitors for its support of the recommendations of the Naming and Memorials Committee;

RESOLVED, the Board of Visitors supports the Naming and Memorials Committee recommendation to commission a working group to engage individuals with relevant expertise to create a digitally- enabled narrative, beginning with the statues on Grounds, that presents a balanced and fulsome history of the subject of each statue, as well as the sculptor, and the historical context around its commission and placement on the University’s Grounds; and

RESOLVED FURTHER, any digital narrative contextualizing statues or memorials on Grounds shall be provided to the Rector at least 30 days in advance of publication.

The Chair adjourned the meeting at 4:39 p.m.

SGH:ddr

These minutes have been posted to the University of Virginia’s Board of Visitors website: <http://bov.virginia.edu/committees/182>