

MEMORANDUM

October 4, 2018

TO: Members of the Task Force on Building Names and Institutional History
Susanna Blumenthal, William L. Prosser Professor of Law and Professor of History, UMTC,
Co-Chair
John Coleman, Dean, College of Liberal Arts, UMTC, Co-Chair
David Chang, Professor, History; Chair, American Indian Studies
Greg Donofrio, Associate Professor, Architecture; Director, Heritage Conservation
& Preservation Program, UMTC
Michael Gaudio, Professor, Art History, UMTC
Kat Hayes, Associate Professor, Anthropology; affiliated faculty, American Indian Studies and
Heritage Studies & Public History, UMTC
William Jones, Professor, History, UMTC
Malinda Lindquist, Associate Professor, History and African American & African Studies,
UMTC
Leslie Morris, Professor, German, Nordic, Slavic & Dutch; Director, Center for Jewish Studies,
UMTC
Madysen Turner, President, Student Unions & Activities Board of Governors, UMTC
Kelly Wallin, Council of Graduate Students representative to Student Senate Consultative
Committee, UMTC

FROM: Eric W. Kaler, President
Karen Hanson, Executive Vice President and Provost

RE: Task Force on Building Names and Institutional History

We write to request your service on a task force reviewing our policy on the naming of campus buildings. Before we outline our request, let us convey a bit of background.

As you undoubtedly know, many universities across the country are grappling with questions about naming campus buildings and venues after individuals who took actions or positions that perhaps then and certainly now are at odds with the institution's core values. Historical research on these issues at the University of Minnesota was presented in the exhibit "[A Campus Divided](#)," which was widely viewed last year. We began a conversation last year about how the University of Minnesota should respond to what we learned from the exhibit, and we charged a committee chaired by College of Liberal Arts Dean John Coleman to provide a framework for decision-making. The final report of the [President's and Provost's Advisory Committee on University History](#) (Coleman Report) outlines guiding principles and a process for evaluation and consideration of University name changes, including name removal or renaming. After receiving the committee report in May, we waited until students and faculty returned to campus to launch the next phase of this work.

The next phase will consist of two steps. The first step is to engage a small group of faculty members with expertise in historical interpretation (including the interrelations between history and memory) who can consider the ethical implications and aesthetic dimensions of contemplated uses of public spaces. These faculty members will be joined by students who can speak to the experiences of current students who live, engage and learn in these facilities. We ask your service now on this group, the “Task Force on Building Names and Institutional History.” Specifically, your charge is to:

- Recommend actions regarding the specific buildings mentioned in “A Campus Divided” (Coffman Memorial Union, Coffey Hall, Middlebrook Hall, and Nicholson Hall) and the [Minnesota Student Association proposal](#) to rename Coffman Memorial Union;
- Utilize tools including but not limited to the President’s website (email and online comment forms) to gather community feedback on the buildings in question; and
- Report back to us with your recommendations by November 15, 2018.

We ask you to work with Professor John Wright, African American & African Studies, and Professor Emerita Riv-Ellen Prell, American Studies, as advisors, and with University Archivist Erik Moore on related research queries. The perspectives you bring to these matters will inform the next step.

After we receive your recommendations, we will appoint an Advisory Committee to the President on University History, to include the membership of this task force and additional University community members from across the system. We will ask the new, permanent advisory committee, with additional representation from student leaders, select University Senate committees (e.g., All-U Honors; Equity, Access and Diversity; and Social Concerns), Office of Capital Planning, Office of the General Counsel, and all five campuses to continue these important conversations. The charge scope and timeline will be finalized later this fall, but in general we will ask the broader group to:

- Review and prioritize the recommendations of the May 2018 Coleman Report and the work of your Task Force;
- Work with the Crookston, Duluth, Morris, Rochester, and Twin Cities campuses to establish local consultative groups on campus history;
- Prioritize recommendations to amend existing or establish new administrative policy as referenced in the Coleman Report; and
- Recommend to the President any naming or renaming actions for his consideration and recommendation to the Board of Regents.

Please contact Deputy Chief of Staff Julie Reuvers (612-301-2137 or jreuvers@umn.edu) with any questions, and thank you for your service to the University community.

cc: Michelle Behr, chancellor, University of Minnesota Morris
Lendley Black, chancellor, University of Minnesota Duluth
Brian Burnett, senior vice president, Finance and Operations
Lori Carrell, chancellor, University of Minnesota Rochester
Vickie Courtney, director, University Senate Office and University Awards and Honors
Deb Cran, chief of staff, Office of the Executive Vice President and Provost
Mary Holz-Clause, chancellor, University of Minnesota Crookston
Julie Reuvers, deputy chief of staff, Office of the President; lead staff liaison to task force
Jon Steadland, chief of staff, Office of the President
Maggie Towle, interim vice provost for student affairs and dean of students
Kate Tyler, assistant to the provost, Office of the Executive Vice President and Provost