

September 21, 2017

John Coleman  
Dean, College of Liberal Arts  
University of Minnesota  
215 Johnston Hall  
Minneapolis, MN 55455

Dear John:

Thank you for agreeing to chair and assemble the “President's and Provost's Advisory Committee on University History,” which will help guide our community's thinking about the ways in which we shape and are shaped by the history of the University of Minnesota.

Combined, our five campuses have more than 1,000 buildings as well as statues and other symbols of historical figures. Each and every building has a specific name associated with it. These names often recognize and commemorate a particular individual, sponsor, or past event, with the names and the references ranging from the well-known to the obscure. In all cases, it is possible that the name was assigned without a thorough examination of the totality of the historical record and context of the individual or the event.

We ask your committee to continue our examination of the University's past, and guide our responses going forward. Specifically, we ask you to lead a system-wide conversation to:

- Examine the process by which buildings are named and statues or other symbols of historical figures are commissioned and dedicated on our campuses;
- Develop a rationale for a process that might involve a change or modification of a property name or a commemorative statue or symbol;
- Propose a process by which such a rationale could be implemented; and
- Forward recommendations to the two of us.

You are not charged with renaming any specific buildings. Rather, we seek your committee's guidance on any efforts that might arise to rename any structure, statue or historical symbol on our campuses. Your work will also inform and guide us in the naming of new structures.

We ask that you form your committee with significant representation from faculty with expertise in this area. In addition, we ask that you consult with the leadership of the Faculty Consultative Committee for faculty representatives from University Senate governance committees. Please make certain to include representation from each University campus, and do include the following individuals and representatives from these specific groups: University Historian; University Archivist; University Services; UMAA; and UMF. System-wide student representation is also crucial. Please be sure to include students from religious and ethnic groups historically underrepresented at the University.

We ask that you hold your first meeting as soon as you can and complete a first phase of work no later than February 2, 2018.

Should you have any questions, please contact Julie Christensen in the President's Office. Deb Cran and Joe Shultz in the Office of the Executive Vice President and Provost will serve as primary staff liaisons to your committee.

Sincerely,



Eric W. Kaler  
President



Karen Hanson  
Executive Vice President & Provost

EWK:jc

cc: Michelle Behr, chancellor, University of Minnesota Morris  
Mike Berthelsen, interim vice president, University Services  
Lendley Black, chancellor, University of Minnesota Duluth  
Lori Carrell, interim chancellor, University of Minnesota Rochester  
Julie Christensen, deputy chief of staff, Office of the President  
Deb Cran, chief of staff, Office of the Executive Vice President and Provost  
Mary Holz-Clause, chancellor, University of Minnesota Crookston  
Joseph Konstan, chair, Faculty Consultative Committee  
Lisa Lewis, president and CEO, University of Minnesota Alumni Association  
Kathryn Louis, chief of staff, Office of the Dean, College of Liberal Arts  
Erik Moore, university archivist  
Ann Pflaum, university historian  
Kathleen Schmidlkofer, president and CEO, University of Minnesota Foundation  
Joe Shultz, deputy chief of staff, Office of the President  
Jon Steadland, chief of staff, Office of the President  
Brian Steeves, executive director and corporate secretary, Board of Regents  
Maggie Towle, interim vice provost for student affairs and dean of students