

Hollins Working Group on Slavery and Its Contemporary Legacies

Minutes for Meeting September 21, 2021

Present: Jeri Suarez, Maryke Barber, Syreeta Combs-Cannaday, Courtney Chenette, Bill Krause, Ashleigh Breske, Karen Callaway, China Moore, Jon Bohland.

Next Meeting: we will send a poll to determine our meeting day/time in October.

Current co-chairs: Rebecca Rosen has resigned, Jeri and Maryke are staying on. Future co-chairs: let us know if you are interested in helping lead the group.

Member list update, new members: Maryke is updating the list, please let her know if there are changes.

Re new members, we have a variety of opinions on accepting staff and faculty requests to join. Some do not wish more staff or faculty to join until we have more student members, so as not to drown out student voices in the group. Others wish to accept new members to ensure new ideas and perspectives, especially from people of color.

Suggestions were made to invite students: sending direct emails to students who have attended in the past; staff inviting student employees, and faculty inviting their students.

Update from the summer: Listening sessions ended in April, the report was submitted to the President in May. The report was released alongside the President's Report on Inclusion in August.

Jeri & Maryke met with the President to finalize structure and goals for the Campus Spaces task force. Also over the summer Ashleigh, Syreeta, Bill and Maryke interviewed colleagues at institutions where buildings have been renamed. Information from these conversations will be shared with the task force: lessons learned, etc.

WG goals for 21-22: our group has a labor deficit: our all-volunteer members and co-chairs simply cannot do all of the work the community expects. We are also limited by our lack of funds, which leaves us unable to take on projects that would require hiring an experienced researcher. To avoid unkept promises and member burnout, the co-chairs have recommended two goals for the Working Group this year, to President Hinton and our group:

1 - Support the Reconciliation: Campus Spaces Task Force.

Some of us are members of the task force, others are helping with specific tasks (example: Chris is doing research, Heather has offered communications assistance) President Hinton has sent invitations, which have been accepted. Jeri and Maryke are also co-chairing this group and will keep the WG updated. The goals are:

- Work from established best practices to determine criteria for evaluating existing campus space names;
- Apply those criteria to make a recommendation regarding Tayloe Gymnasium to the Board of Trustees and to President Hinton.

2 - Support the Green Ridge Church Cemetery project.

Bill reported that the Black Family Land Trust has not responded to messages asking for help in locating local legal assistance. Maryke will try to help track down persons connected to BFLT. Jon will explore possible connections to colleagues in Richmond who are working on similar projects.

There is a longer list of projects the group could work on and we hope to address these as we have capacity, hopefully with the completion of (or significant progress on) the above.

Archives access: Maryke reported that the library is down two staff positions, both of which have been approved for rehiring. Once a Digital Pedagogy Librarian has been hired, a search for our new Archivist and Special Collections Librarian will be next.

Scholarship: it appears (more information may be needed) that the scholarship for descendants of enslaved persons at Hollins has never been used. Jeri and Karen will work on talking points and a plan to present the scholarship to the members of Hollins First Baptist Church, in the hope that they can help spread the word.

Updating the community: we will continue to try to spread the word about WG projects and the history behind them. Leading EDJ Day will be in October. China urged communication with students; she and Jeri will investigate setting up listening circles. Table-sitting in Moody may be another way to get the word out.

Next meetings: Tuesdays at lunchtime may no longer be feasible for some: we will do a Doodle poll.