



WILLIAM & MARY

CHARTERED 1693

OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT

February 22, 2021

To: John Littel, *Rector*, Will Payne, *Vice Rector*, *Chair of DRB*
From: Katherine Rowe, *President*
Subject: Completion of the PNR Working Group's work and next steps

The Working Group on Principles of Naming and Renaming (PNR) has completed its final report. At roughly 50 pages, the report is comprehensive with respect to the group's charges. It is being prepared for posting on the Design Review Board (DRB) website, where it will live in an accessible format.

The Working Group's members brought deep expertise, long experience with William & Mary's historic campus, and sophistication with regards to the history of race and racism at this university. The Working Group's membership included perspectives from students (one current, two graduates from last year), alumni (several generations), staff, faculty, and administrators. As the thoroughness of this report attests, they put hundreds of hours together into their carefully considered recommendations.

I commend the Working Group for the comprehensiveness and integrity with which they approached engaging students, faculty, staff, alumni, and neighbors in discussion of important and difficult matters – racism and anti-racism, commemoration, belonging, discrimination, and more. Their report reflects principled analysis and deep compassion for the hopes and fears of many different parts of the broad William & Mary community. I am especially grateful that they adjusted their speed of work to assure time for additional student engagement last fall, including crucial voices from our BIPOC community – and then for continuing their efforts immediately after the winter break, when so many were exhausted by pandemic.

The report concludes with a summary of engagements by the PNR Working Group. Outreach with every constituency was systematic and the group read more than 1,000 communications with great care. The Working Group recognizes in any act of renaming an opportunity to adjust the university's course towards our values and aspirations – towards change that makes us more ourselves. Achieving that requires an ability to listen across great differences of experience and generation, across strongly conflicting perspectives, and they listened with care.

Consistent with the import of their work, they have moved forward with as much measured dispatch as I could have hoped for, especially during this difficult year, and they completed their work on schedule. As planned, W&M can take next steps and also continue to evolve how the university approaches naming and renaming, in a principled way.

Many of the actions recommended in the Working Group's report are underway and some have already been accomplished. I share the intense interest felt on campus and among alumni, in continued progress, and concur that clarity should be reached as soon as possible. I also feel it important that the new DRB process be implemented, consistent with the principled approach approved by the Board.

Therefore, I accept the recommendations of the PNR Working Group with some adjustments on priority of actions as noted below. First actions should be completed by the April 2021 Board meeting. Some recommendations in the PNR Working Group's report (e.g., prizes) are outside the scope of the PNR Working Group; we can, however, address them using the university's approved Principles for Naming and Renaming as a guide, as also noted below.

Like many universities across the country and in Virginia, William & Mary is engaged in a journey to reassess how we can more inclusively commemorate our past in the present. There is no single answer applicable to all spaces and buildings. Ours is a research-based process because we believe that as we move forward, we gain enormously from fuller stories and deeper understanding.

In that spirit, and following the PNR Working Group's guidance on "principal legacy in the present," I ask the DRB to advance the following next steps before the April Board meeting, to align naming and renaming.

1. In my assessment, sufficient work has been completed to rename Taliaferro Hall; this is a complex case where contextualization will also be valuable as part of renaming. For Cary Field, additional work remains that can be completed swiftly. For Morton Hall, additional work and consultation on campus should be completed. The DRB can pursue these steps before the April Board meeting in preparation for Board action.
2. The PNR Working Group provided a list of well-researched potential new names. From that list, I am prioritizing five. In advance of the April Board meeting, I ask that the DRB consider appropriate opportunities to honor Art Matsu '27, Hulon Willis, Sr. M.Ed. '56, John E. Boswell '69, John Lewis D.P.S. '03, and Katherine Johnson S.D. '18. Please consider significant locations for these eminent and cherished persons, including but not limited to recommendations about buildings to be renamed.
3. Recognizing that Tyler Hall is recommended for consideration by the PNR Working Group, and has been said to refer to any of three persons, I ask the DRB to determine to whom the name refers and suggest a path forward.

Completed actions as of February 2021 and other next steps

Consistent with your charge to me last June, I write here to summarize actions completed that continue to push us forward in eliminating barriers to inclusion. As I outline below, we have continued to move forward on transformations that we know will further create a more inclusive and an even higher-quality campus, in alignment with the principles the Board approved. And we will continue as per the next steps noted below – including actions I propose for February's meeting and for April's meeting.

✓ *Completed actions (or in completion this month) are indicated with a check mark*
◆ *Next steps are indicated with a green diamond*

- ✓ Last fall, the Board approved Principles for Naming and Renaming.
- ✓ The Board also stipulated building renaming and contextualization last fall. Those actions are underway or completed (as with Trinkle and Maury Halls).
- ✓ As recommended in the PNR Working Group report, I have designated a standing body – the DRB – to accept and review proposals for naming and renaming.
 - ✓ The DRB membership has been expanded, consistent with the recommendations of the PNR Working Group. That new membership is actively meeting.
- ✓ The Working Group has recommended Principles for Naming and Renaming
 - ✓ These are now adopted by the DRB.
- ✓ The DRB has formalized a process for any community member to submit proposals regarding building names, consistent with the principles adopted by the Board last fall.
 - ✓ That process will be presented to the Board's ABG Committee this week.
- ✓ The PNR Working Group has completed research on recommended new names for future commemoration.
 - ✓ These names have been delivered to the DRB for future recommendations to me.
 - ✓ A number of these names are already queued or in use for honorifics on campus, e.g., Engs, Jordan, Unnamed, Willis, Boswell. William & Mary does not limit the number of honorifics and these names remain appropriate for future potential uses.
- ✓ In addition, as recommended in the PNR Working Group's report, the Executive Leadership Team has created a process whereby other commemorative actions not in the Board's purview can be proposed. Review will be consistent with the principles approved by the Board, by Cabinet members in the respective arenas (prize names, program commemorations, etc.). Cabinet members will submit a recommendation to the president.
- ✓ Recommendations for further research to expedite DRB review of renaming or contextualization, which will be pursued as a first priority. (See above requests to the DRB.)

- ✓ In addition, the Working Group has completed key tasks that enable the following next steps:
 - ✓ Provided robust definitions of modes for contextualization to the DRB.
 - ✓ Fully completed research for contextualizing all university commemorations of Thomas Jefferson and James Monroe.
 - ◆ I have charged the Director of the Historic Campus, in consultation with the Lemon Project, to implement these recommendations for contextualization this spring.
 - ◆ Benjamin Ewell contextualization should be completed by the Director of the Historic Campus, in consultation with the Lemon Project, by August.
 - ◆ Research on other prioritized PNR Working Group recommendations for the DRB should be completed by August (delivery date pending an assessment of research capacity under pandemic)
 - ◆ As recommended in the PNR Working Group's report, other contextualization (statues and portraits) should follow through the year in the most expeditious sequence possible.