
The Buck Stops Here

Plan to Tackle Systemic Racial Injustices at William & Mary



*At the College, slaves lived in the Wren Building (the kitchen), in the president's kitchen, and in "outbuildings in the North Yard, service buildings in the South Yard, near the Brafferton, and in buildings near the College garden in the West Yard." ***

** Excerpt from Terry L. Meyers' *A First Look at the Worst: Slavery and Race Relations at the College of William and Mary*.

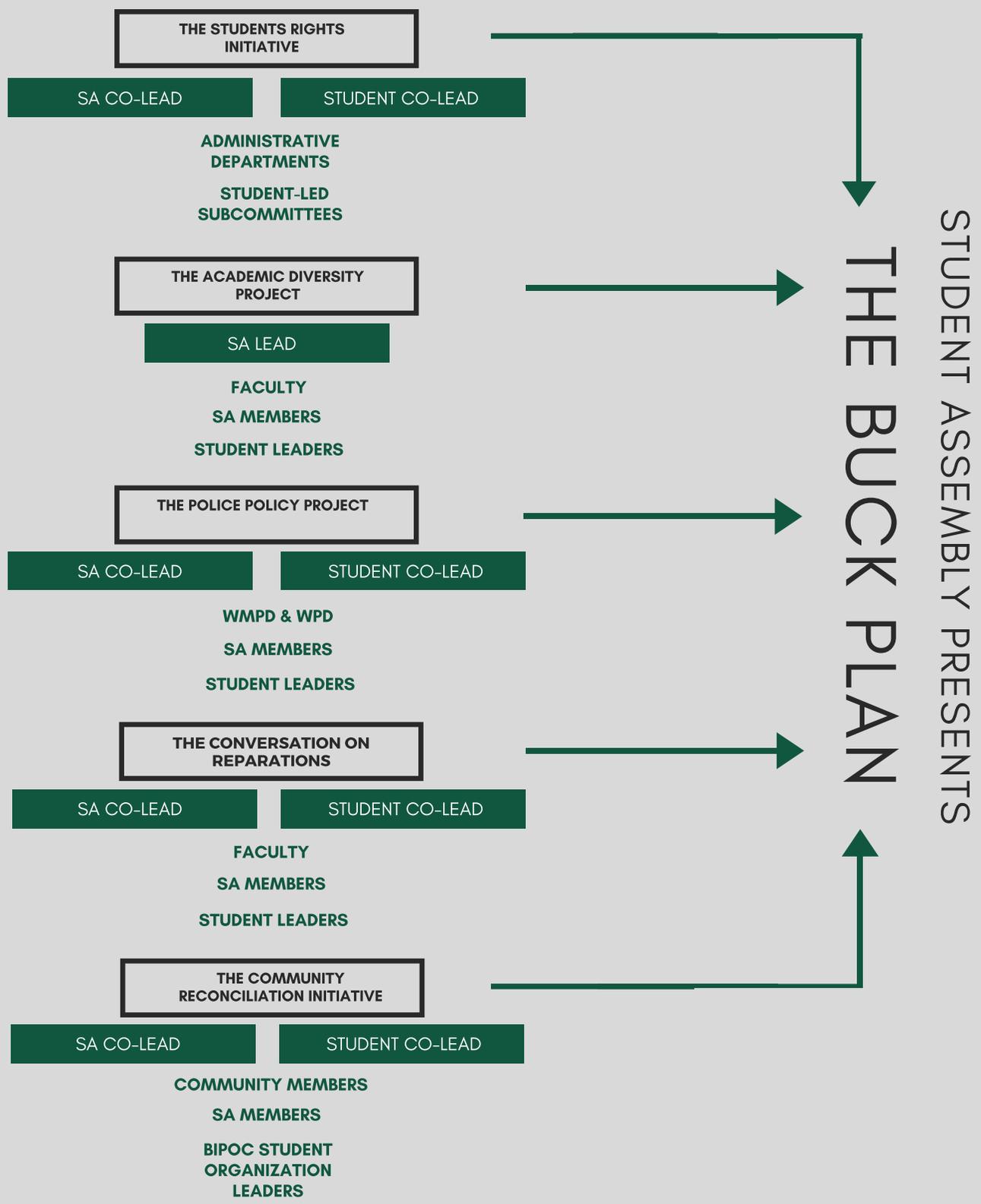
Dear William & Mary,

A lot of work has gone into this plan. Countless meetings with students, the Student Assembly, administration, faculty, and Williamsburg community members. Over the course of these past few months, we have seen the glaring, devastating consequences of institutional racism and confronted the deeply problematic past of our college. It is time for change – we owe it to those who face systemic racism on a daily basis in our campus community.

The Buck Plan will source policy ideas from the student body, be organized by the Student Assembly, and deliver demands to the administration and those in power. All of our elected and appointed representatives understand that this might be our most important contribution to our school. We have incorporated five committees: The Conversation on Reparations, The Police Policy Project, The Academic Diversity Project, The Students Rights Initiative, and The Community Reconciliation Initiative, along with a robust, detailed plan for communication and outreach. All of these committees have taken into account diversity representation and are co-led by the Student Assembly and student leaders. Each committee's framework and goals have been derived from research, resource analysis, Student Assembly's Juneteenth Town Hall and student feedback, and internal planning meetings. In addition to our committees, we are dedicated to solving systemic disparities that could exist within our operations, such as with financial budgeting.

Our goal is to host organic conversations, translate them into real, tangible ideas for change, and implement them with the social, political, and financial capital that the Student Assembly possesses. We are working tirelessly to overcome any setbacks and limitations that the Student Assembly has faced in the past; by creating a rigid information organization system and a flexible membership structure, we are embarking on this journey to make things right. This is our humble attempt to improve race relations on campus and honor the black indigenous people of color who carried the burden of William & Mary's history.

Sincerely,
The 328th Session of the Student Assembly at William & Mary



POINTS OF CONTACT

- ANTHONY JOSEPH, STUDENT BODY PRESIDENT
- KYLE VASQUEZ, VICE PRESIDENT
- LONI WRIGHT, CHIEF OF STAFF
- MEGHANA BOOJALA, CHAIR OF THE SENATE

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The Conversation on Reparations (TCR)

In 1619 when the first enslaved people were forcibly taken from Africa, America profited from Black labor. For those 200 years, Black people were not compensated. Even after emancipation, laws and social practices ensured that Black people lived in a legal slavery, upheld by white supremacy and systemic racism. William & Mary is not absolved from this history. The campus where students enjoy the freedoms of movement, expression, and education is the very campus that was built by people who were given none of those things. While we cannot fix what the country has done to Black Americans, we can reconcile with our past as a university.

In the William & Mary community, the Commonwealth, and across the United States, reparations has always been a buzz word and a hard topic to discuss. Those against it often equate it with a check or handout, but to believe that a check is all that reparations entails could not be further from the truth. Reparations is active reconciliation and elevation of historically disenfranchised communities. At William & Mary, reparations might take shape in a number of ways, such as increased scholarship opportunities for BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, People of Color) students, increased representation in important decision-making groups, and increased access to much-needed economic, mental health, and entrepreneurial resources. Regardless of the form it takes, however, reparations should attempt to holistically elevate BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, People of Color) communities. It is in this spirit that the Student Assembly plans to engage in the discussion of reparations and how it pertains to our community.

This past spring, SA passed **The Ad-Hoc Reparations Committee Act**, sponsored by Senator William Wasson (J.D. '21), which charged SA with beginning the conversation on reparations at William & Mary. The bill acknowledged the subjugation and oppression of Black students and called on William & Mary to take steps to atone for its involvement in slavery, the Confederacy, and Jim Crow. Recognizing the great work already published by the Lemon Project and the Task Force on Race & Race Relations, the Student Assembly wants to honor that work by turning it into action.

Currently, the Reparations Committee is restructuring to broaden perspectives and feedback. The composition of the committee will be expanded to better incorporate the student body, specifically students of color. As the committee discussed the possible meanings of reparations for William & Mary, the members decided that this conversation demanded significantly more community engagement, which includes the greater William & Mary community and advocacy groups in the greater Williamsburg area. The case for reparations is a long journey, but absolutely necessary and important to our integrity as a university. We hope you will join us on this journey.

The Reparations Committee

The Reparations Committee will incorporate the following guidelines into the committee's organization.

- Leadership opportunities for the student body at-large and non-SA affiliates within the committee; How much time each task would take to complete
 - Limits on SA membership for increased student body influence within the committee;
 - Simple steps to request membership to increase accessibility for the student body at-large;
 - Incorporation of suggestions offered by previous works completed by the Lemon Project and the Task Force on Race & Race Relations;
 - Frequent use of surveys, small and large group meetings, and other ways to gather feedback from the student body;
 - Frequent updates regarding the status of the committee on SA media and communication forums;
 - Faculty Adviser(s) to aid with scholarly research and investigation.
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The Police Policy Project (3P)

The history of law enforcement and criminal justice in this country has always been one of double standards, repression, and criminalizing innocents. As communities across the country protest and speak out against injustice, students are one of the loudest groups amongst them. BIPOC William & Mary students, in particular, lead protests, organize their communities, and engage in the highest levels of activism, predominantly directed at police and criminal justice reform. Recognizing this movement for change, SA will tackle systemic injustices present within our community's law enforcement institutions. By using recently produced studies of community-police programs throughout cities in the United States[1], SA will collaborate with at-large students and the local community to change discriminatory police practices and behavior.

The inspiration behind this project stems from successful programs in Birmingham, Alabama and Stockton, California that changed police policies, improved police-community relations, and facilitated productive discussions between police departments and advocacy groups for BIPOC individuals. The SA 3P team will use these reports and other scholarly work to effectively create a community-driven structure that will annually look at police policies and how they affect student life, especially within William & Mary's BIPOC subcommunities. These reports can be found at the bottom of this page and will be linked at the end of the SA report.

The Police Policy Project team will also create a Student Advisory Group with the Williamsburg Police Department, the James City County Police Department and the William & Mary Police Department to review police policies related to any engagement with the community, specifically community members of color. The group will meet regularly with the departments and present a report of their suggested changes by the end of the academic year. The SA 3P team will further collaborate with the necessary parties to ensure that the Advisory Group will become a standing institution within the university and city's bureaucracy.

The Advisory Group's task will include, but will not be limited to, some of the following:

- Adjusting diversity and inclusion training, anti-racial profiling training, fair and impartial policing training, and any other trainings or guidelines for police to state and/or federal expectations;
 - Implementing positive community policing policies and ideas;
 - Advocating for body cameras;
 - Developing ideas for diverse police recruitment;
 - Establishing relationships with other police departments to collect data regarding interactions between students and officers;
 - Analyzing, adjusting, and/or creating small trainings that will tailor diversity and inclusion training to William & Mary and the surrounding Williamsburg community.
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Student Rights Initiative (SRI)

Student rights are foundational to student life and expression in a college town, for they ensure a feeling of safety, protection, and security for students on and off campus.

However, the relationship with the surrounding Williamsburg community can and has strained this relationship, leading to negative interactions and encounters with law enforcement as a result. For the past three years, student's rights at William & Mary have been a constant topic of debate due to the significant increase in displays of student and community activism and because of an increase in student-police interactions. Relationships between students and the Williamsburg community are strained, largely due the difference in living styles between students and community members that make it difficult to cohabitate. This imbalance causes many problems, but the greatest is perhaps the large number of interactions between police and students. Murmurings of negative police interactions, especially from BIPOC students, have plagued student life for a long time.

The Student Rights Initiative intends to help shape narratives between students and the Williamsburg community, local police, and William & Mary police. This project stems from initial interest by Senator Jahnvi Prabhala ('22) to create a student's rights card that intends to help shape interactions between students and the police.

SRI will build off of this effort by doing the research necessary to create accessible paths for students to learn about their rights and have that information easily available.

The SRI team will examine some of the following, and potentially more, over the course of the academic year:

- Differences in WMPD & WPD stop policies based on information collected by the 3P Team;
 - The rights that students have and how students can safely protect those rights when interacting with police or conduct council;
 - The differences in rights between student sub-communities (e.g. US citizens, exchange students, study abroad students, DACA recipients and Dreamers, etc.);
 - Ways to spread rights information through social media to the student body;
 - Creation of a rights card that students will be able to carry on their person;
 - Opportunities to integrate student's rights FAQs or other infographics on the campus (e.g. QR codes).
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The Academic Diversity Project (ADP)

Studies have consistently shown the value that all students, specifically minority students, gain from classes taught by diverse professors.

Still, William & Mary only started the process of standardizing faculty diversity recently. William & Mary only started this process fifty years ago, including a class within the course catalog titled “The Negro in the United States since 1861”. The Africana Studies Department, formerly known as the Black Studies Program, did not exist until 1997. The scholarly works and propositions of the Lemon Project and the Task Force on Race & Race Relations, though brilliant works, are also relatively young.[2] It will take until 2028 for these efforts to be as old as most efforts at William & Mary currently are.

However, the relative newness of academic diversity does not diminish its importance nor its necessity. In January of 2020, Secretary of Academic Affairs Clara Waterman ('20) and Undersecretary Raman Khanna ('21) submitted a memo to the Provost's office advocating for the standardization of diversity and inclusion across departments. Under the leadership of the Vita-Thomas administration, the memo produced research demonstrating the necessity for student representation at all levels of the department, investment in diverse research opportunities, and implicit bias training for those involved in hiring.

Most importantly, their research confirmed that William & Mary must change hiring structures, departmental organization, and curriculum to promote diversity in all facets of the educational process. This is an opportunity for the William & Mary community to improve upon the concept of a liberal arts education through implementing diverse perspectives as a staple in every classroom. William & Mary's academic history—writings of pro-slavery and confederate professors; possible slave experimentation; and the ownership of slaves by the university, faculty, administrators, and students—demands that its entire academic structure should have a reconciled approach.

To assure these changes, SA establishes the Academic Diversity Project and creates a team to coordinate diversity and inclusion efforts in all of academic departments. The ADP team will collaborate with members of the student body and faculty to develop suggestions for structural changes to William & Mary academia. As aforementioned, the ADP team will base their work according to the suggestions outlined in the **“Memorandum for Recruiting Faculty of Diverse Backgrounds”**.

The Academic Diversity Project (ADP)

The ADP team will work on the following:

- A Diversity and Inclusion statement from candidates for hire;
 - Implicit bias training for new and current faculty;
 - The creation of a Diverse Faculty Network to allow diverse faculty to share advice and build strong relationships to one another throughout the institution;
 - New procedures for hiring boards to include student representation;
 - Campaigns oriented towards faculty promoting diversity and inclusion within their classrooms or office spaces;
 - Curriculums that are diversified amongst departments;
 - Required courses that will focus on William & Mary's racist history;
 - Continuous retainment of faculty of diverse backgrounds.
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The Community Reconciliation Initiative (CRI)

Every region across the country has a troubling history of police and community brutality against BIPOC.

The entire nation is founded on land pillaged from the indigenous tribes that lived here. In the early 1900s, many successful Black communities across the country were terrorized by Jim Crow. On May 21, 1921, a white mob—police and community alike—lynched, pillaged, and destroyed a thriving African American community in the Greenwood District of Tulsa: Black Wall Street.[3] It was not until 1924 that American Indians were finally granted citizenship in their own land, only after the nation denied them opportunities to engage in American life and forced them to remain on their reservations.

Shortly thereafter, William & Mary—residing on stolen land and forcing Christianity on natives—and the Williamsburg Holding Corporation (WHC) began to collaborate to slowly push out the successful BIPOC population in Williamsburg to restore the colonial city. As the City and William & Mary expanded, they pushed out BIPOC business and residential developments, as they were considered low value replaceable districts by the WHC, because BIPOC people lived there. [4] As William & Mary's walls went up, the Black community was left on the outside.

The Community Reconciliation Initiatives Project will focus on rectifying the past transgressions of the university and the City of Williamsburg. Based on the research done by the TCR, 3P, CRI, and ADP teams, the CRI team will create events and opportunities focused on supporting the BIPOC community in Williamsburg and at William & Mary. These efforts will concentrate on building relationships amongst the various BIPOC organizations and groups within the area (i.e. York-James City-Williamsburg NAACP, Hulton Willis Alumni Association, and First Baptist Church) establish designated spaces for these communities, and produce meaningful dialogue towards community reconciliation. This mission is the most community driven project of the five and will instruct the CRI team to play a supporting role to BIPOC organizations at William & Mary.

The Community Reconciliation Initiative (CRI) Team

In collaboration with BIPOC student organizations, the CRI team will look at some, but not limited to, the following:

- Mentorship opportunities between student-community BIPOC organizations;
 - Conversations on community reconciliation between BIPOC organizations, the police, and other sub-communities of Williamsburg;
 - Engagement of BIPOC alumni in collaboration with the Hulon Willis African American Alumni Association;
 - Exploration of entrepreneurship opportunities for BIPOC-owned business in collaboration with William & Mary and the City of Williamsburg;
 - Revisit conversations regarding Colonial Williamsburg's reenactment and contextualization of BIPOC history.
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Projects in Preliminary Development

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**Equitable Treatment
for W&M Staff**

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**Working Group on
Naming and
Renaming at William
& Mary (PNR)**

3

**SA Budget Process
Review**

4

**Racial Justice &
Social Reform
Speaker Series**

Equitable Treatment for W&M Staff

Since our charter, the staff (formerly slaves and indentured servants) have been the lifeblood of William & Mary. They cook the food, they clean the buildings, and they take care of all of the operational problems on campus that most members of the community would not even think about. In short, our campus would not operate without them.

In the past several weeks, the Student Assembly has heard concerns regarding the treatment of BIPOC staff on campus. Staff contributions to William & Mary are unparalleled, as they are integral to all facets of student life on campus. Since their work truly makes the student experience, and William & Mary should continue to work towards affording them care and treatment that truly acknowledges their sacrifices.

Goals/Objectives

President Anthony Joseph, in conjunction with other SA members, will work on some, but not limited to, the following:

- Collaborating with Staff Assembly and various other organizations to determine a plan to advocate for staff needs;
 - Advocating increased staff representation in important decision-making bodies that directly affect their work;
 - Working with Staff Assembly and administrative departments to determine a way for employees to effectively address discrimination claims, particularly towards students;
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Working Group on Naming and Renaming at William & Mary (PNR)

A working group of administrators, alumni, students, faculty and staff has been established to develop principles on the naming and renaming of buildings, spaces and structures at William & Mary. Rector John E. Littel P '22, on behalf of the Board of Visitors, charged President Katherine A. Rowe with establishing the working group. The Board, the university's governing body, holds ultimate responsibility for the campus landscape, including building names. The working group, which will be advisory to the president, will be chaired by Warren W. Buck III M.S. '70, Ph.D. '76, D.Sc. '13. Buck stepped down from the Board of Visitors June 30 and will serve W&M in a new volunteer role as special advisor to the president for equity in the 21st century.

PNR Goals/Objectives

The working group's charge from President Rowe includes the following actions:

- The group will codify principles for a) naming and renaming buildings, spaces or structures and b) developing commemorative/explanatory markers throughout campus. Rowe has asked the group to prepare a preliminary outline of such principles in a report to the president, in advance of the August Board of Visitors retreat.
- The university took action in 2015 to remove the most visible manifestations and iconography of the Confederacy from campus, including a Confederate plaque that hung in the hallway of the Wren Building and two emblems on the College Mace carried at William & Mary's signature events. By early August, the working group will review any others and recommend actions to address, rename or contextualize them.
- Based on research by the Lemon Project and in consultation with our historically linked Indigenous communities, the working group will prepare a prioritized list of appropriate new names for any buildings the Board may wish to name as they come online for consideration.
- The working group will conduct a comprehensive landscape review to identify additional structures that may be perceived as barriers to a welcoming and inclusive environment. A final report is due to the president by the February 2021 Board meeting.

Note: This is not an SA-led initiative, but President Anthony Joseph sits on the working group to convey student opinion. Any feedback regarding the working group and its charge can be emailed to him or submitted on the working group's page on the W&M website.

SA Budget Process Review

Over the past several years, SA has received a lot of feedback and concerns regarding the annual budgeting process and the Executive Appropriations Committee. While SA has made recent progress to ensure equity in the budgeting process for all organizations, multicultural organizations still have many issues regarding the process. This year the Finance Department and Senate Finance Committee will take a deep dive into the budgeting process to determine areas for improvement.

Goals/Objectives

The Student Assembly's financial entities will work on some, but not limited to, the following:

- Reviewing budget data from the past several years to use as indicators for policy review;
 - Reviewing policies that seem to most affect multicultural organizations based on the data that is collected;
 - Establishing relationships with all multicultural organizations to help walk them through the budgeting process and other sources of funding through the Student Assembly.
-

Racial Justice & Social Reform Speaker Series

After the vicious murders of Breonna Taylor, Ahmaud Arbery, Sean Reed, George Floyd, Tony McDade and countless other Black Americans, cities around the country and even the world called for reform in American police operations. Many Americans protested, raising their voices against the injustice that Black Americans faced in their normal lives. In an effort to educate the W&M community and beyond, the Student Assembly, in conjunction with the Student Bar Association and the office of the Provost, offer a Speaker Series on Racial Justice & Social Reform. The intent of this series is to create a safe space to educate the community on the world Black Americans face every day, how we can better that world, and how we can all maintain our health and safety in this extraordinary time of change.

The Speaker Series has many events planned for the summer, but will not stop there. During the academic year, the Series will continue to hold at least one session every month. You can find out more, view past sessions, and/or submit your thoughts on the [Speaker Series website](#).

In Closing,

As we endure this pandemic, we witness the raw power of the long-preserved systems of white supremacy in the United States. These are not isolated events, they are all connected to the systems of oppression that this country has gleefully preserved. Change needs to happen systematically for actual tangible progress. **Black lives matter today, should have mattered yesterday, and need to matter all the time.** The uprising and protests across the country today do so because of systemic injustices that have plagued our society for centuries, and they refuse to endure them longer. In this spirit, we must respond and act within our sphere of influence to challenge these prejudiced systems. William & Mary must lead this charge. Our plans are focused on finding ways to enact durable systemic change. Your suggestions have added crucial thoughts to their design. What we hope to accomplish with you this year are foundational changes that will allow future SAs and student bodies to continue to improve. Diversity and Inclusion is not just an injection or infusion, but something that requires constant practice. Our active engagement is the only way this works.

You are essential to this mission. We cannot do this without you and welcome your support, your feedback, and your advice. Nothing here is written in stone and will change through your suggestions. We understand that for some of you these plans may not be holistic enough and we value your input and ideas. Feel free to send us or your representatives an **email**, fill out the feedback form on our **website**, or make a comment during a Senate meeting. We consider these plans as foundational because we hope that future sessions of SA will improve upon them and broaden the scope, and we hope that you will be there to hold future sessions accountable.

These efforts can be organized by us, but only effective if the entire community is driven by these ideals. William & Mary is a predominantly white institution that has slavery and the confederacy embedded into the bedrocks of its very existence and, as such, we have an obligation to do this hard work. We owe it to all the Black, Indigenous, People of Color of the past and present that have suffered in some way at our university—which also involves the explicit and implicit attitudes and actions of its students.

We have to recognize our responsibility too. Allyship demands acknowledging hard truths and a willingness to put in the work necessary to become better. We can no longer settle with being allies, we must actively seek out and destroy bigotry, oppression, and injustice. We know William & Mary will rise to the challenge.

Continue to push this university, continue to push us. We are working hard to correct injustices both within William & Mary and the Student Assembly so that we can live to the mission of our organization: to serve our fellow students. Drive this community to live up to its Values: Belonging, Curiosity, Excellence, Flourishing, Integrity, Respect, and Service. This is a litmus test. This is a holistic effort. Let's harness our fear and anger to create closer communal ties to one another. As the inheritors of this world, we owe it to the future and to ourselves to dig in deep and rise to the occasion. This is a moment in history that requires analytical thought, resolute resilience, resolute and endless compassion--all things that we are known for and make us who we are as a community.

Yours,
AJ, Kyle, and Loni

Endnotes

[1] Jannetta, Jesse, Sino Esthappan, Jocelyn Fontaine, Mathew Lynch, Nancy La Vigne, "Learning to Build Police-Community Trust", Urban Institute, Kuhn, Sam, and Stephen Lurie. 2018. *Reconciliation between Police and Communities: Case Studies and Lessons Learned*. New York: John Jay College.

[2]

<https://www.wm.edu/sites/lemonproject/researchandresources/historicalline/index.php>

[3] Clark, Alexis, "Tulsa's 'Black Wall Street' Flourished as a Self-Contained Hub in Early 1900s", *History*, <https://www.history.com/news/black-wall-street-tulsa-race-massacre> (accessed July 13, 2020).

[4] Meredith, Zach, "Urban Renewal in the Colonial Capital: Contextualizing the Williamsburg Redevelopment & Housing Authority" (2019). Undergraduate Honors Theses. Paper 1428. <https://scholarworks.wm.edu/honorstheses/1428>.
