Commission Overview

Name: Naming Principles Commission

Composition: 4 Members of the University Community, viz.:
Faculty member (selected by Senate)
Staff member (selected by USAC)
Student member (selected by student governments)
Alumnus/a member (selected by the URAA Board)
4 Trustees (one of whom serves as co-chair)
1 External member (who serves as co-chair)
A range of expert advisors (see below)

Note: 2 additional spots would be left open with the prospect of the Commission, at its discretion, inviting other members to serve if specific further expertise is desired.

Commission Roster
Kenneth S. Anderson, ’17, L’20, Alumni Representative
Jeff A. Brown, M.D., R’85, Trustee
Christy Coleman, Executive Director, Jamestown-Yorktown Foundation, Co-chair
Kimberly M. Edwards, Director of Technology Services, Law Library, USAC Representative
Jordyn Lofton, ’22, Student Representative
S. Georgia Nugent, Ph.D., Trustee
John A. Roush, Ph.D., Trustee, Co-chair
Julietta Singh, Ph.D., Faculty Representative
Wendell L. Taylor, L ’98, Trustee

Special Advisor
Edward L. Ayers, Ph.D., President Emeritus

External Advisors
Paul Goldberger, Joseph Urban Chair in Design and Architecture, The New School; Former Dean, Parsons School of Design, The New School; Former architecture critic for the New Yorker and the New York Times

Ted R. Grossnickle, Senior Consultant and Founder, Johnson, Grossnickle and Associates, Inc.; Board Chair, The Giving Institute
Tuajuanda Jordan, Ph.D., President, St. Mary’s College of Maryland
Ruth J. Simmons, Ph.D., President, Prairie View A&M University; President Emerita, Brown University, Smith College
Charge:
To formulate and recommend principles/criteria to determine the appropriateness at the University of Richmond of namings for individuals or entities. Specifically, the Commission will:

1) Develop clear and rigorous principles to provide consistent guidance for future decisions related to namings and across applications of names (e.g., buildings, professorships, programs, etc.). The principles should not be limited to specific cases or time periods and must be sufficiently broad and enduring to serve as a guide to the University into the future.

2) Consider recommendations that address: a) in what circumstances it is appropriate to consider the removal of or modification to names; b) in what circumstances it is appropriate to consider contextualization either of an existing/retained name or following the removal of a name; and c) a process by which requests may be made for consideration of de-naming/re-naming and by which the principles would be applied to specific cases.

3) Consider, with respect to honorific namings, guidelines relating to both existing and future namings. For example, should existing or future honorific namings be of a specific limited duration? If future opportunities for honorific namings exist, what criteria should be considered in identifying possible candidates for such namings?

In conducting its work, the Commission will:

1) Ensure a transparent and inclusive process, consulting extensively with members of the University community to gain an understanding of the range of perspectives to inform the Commission’s recommendations. In addition to reviewing and analyzing the results of a comprehensive survey of faculty, staff, students, alumni, and parents, the Commission will engage with specific groups as appropriate and hold open fora.

2) Engage, through advisors and other means, internal and external experts from relevant fields to inform the Commission’s thinking; this might include scholars in particular fields, as well as practitioners or certain senior University administrators.

3) Consider, but not rely wholly upon, the relevant experience of other institutions.

4) Engage the campus community in discussions of relevant considerations, including the experience of other institutions and the historical, cultural, social, ethical, and legal questions at the heart of un-naming and re-naming issues.

The Commission will work as expeditiously as possible while ensuring a thoughtful and thorough process and will submit its final recommendations in the spring semester of the 2021-2022 academic year. The Commission is encouraged to provide progress reports to the University community, including an interim update in December 2021. The Commission’s final report and recommendations will be made available to the University community.

The application of principles to specific naming questions is not encompassed in the Commission’s charge and will follow completion of the Commission’s work. The Commission has not been charged with reviewing or administering current policies and practices related to philanthropy (e.g., specific naming opportunities related to current or future fund-raising priorities).

The Commission’s responsibility is to recommend specific principles to President Hallock and the Board of Trustees. Ultimate approval authority for the recommended principles rests with the Board of Trustees.