

Naming Principles Commission Final Recommendations
March 25, 2022
Naming Principles

1. Naming a building, professorship, program, or other entity is one of the highest and most visible honors the University can bestow. Those honored with a naming should uphold and advance the University's [mission, values](#), and aspirations. The University should undertake appropriate due diligence about a potential namesake prior to conferring the honor of naming to ensure that the namesake represents the University's values and a commitment to its educational mission.
2. The array of namings at the University should represent and reflect the diversity of the institution's full history and the community we are today.
3. The University, through its Board of Trustees, also reserves the right to remove names, subject to existing legal obligations associated with a name.
4. The University must have a clear and transparent process for its naming decisions and for consideration and resolution of questions relating to the removal of names ("de-naming"). The same principles/criteria should apply to all decisions relating to naming, de-naming, and re-naming, whether the object named is a building, space, professorship, scholarship fund, or other entity.
5. Reasons for which the University might confer a naming in honor of an individual or entity include the following:
 - a. To express the values of the institution;
 - b. To recognize especially meaningful contributions to the life of the University, including significant philanthropic support of an institutional priority to advance the University's excellence, or exemplary teaching, research, and scholarship;
 - c. To recognize major milestones in the University's development and progress;
 - d. To recognize excellence in a particular field especially germane to the University and the entity named.

The University may also choose to employ descriptive, conceptual, geographic, or otherwise generic names rather than names of individual persons or entities.

6. No building, program, professorship, or other entity at the University should be named for a person who directly engaged in the trafficking and/or enslavement of others or openly advocated for the enslavement of people.
7. Individuals may be disqualified from being honored with a naming at the University if they have been found to have engaged in significant wrongdoing or misconduct that constitutes a serious violation of the University's mission and values or is materially damaging to the University's reputation. Such significant wrongdoing or misconduct may include a significant and material role in the promotion of segregation, eugenics, or other

forms of discrimination based on protected class, as legally defined, or conviction of a felony. In considering questions of de-naming under this principle, the following should be considered:

- a. The specific evidence for and the nature, scope, and effects of the wrongdoing;
 - b. The overall life, contributions, and legacy of the namesake, including service to the University; the presumption against de-naming is weaker when an individual's repugnant or offensive behavior is a central part of his or her legacy;
 - c. Whether the namesake expressed regret and made restitution for the wrongdoing;
 - d. The social and political context in which the wrongdoing occurred, though that context alone does not necessarily justify an ongoing commitment by the University to retain a name;
 - e. The context in which the original naming occurred, the University's rationale for conferring the honor, and the degree to which the wrongdoing was known and considered at that time.
8. If the primary use of a named facility changes, or the facility undergoes renovation so extensive that it constitutes reconstruction, the University may rename the facility or space. If a named facility is demolished, the University is not obligated to transfer the name to another facility or entity.
9. The University's educational mission requires specific action to preserve the historical record when the institution engages the question of potential removal of a name (particularly in relation to Principles 6, 7, and 8 above):
- a. In instances in which a decision is made to remove a name for any reason, an explanation of the original name, the rationale for the original naming, and the reasons for its removal should be preserved and accessible. In all cases, this historical account should be full and objective, accurately communicating the namesake's life and principal legacy, including contributions to the University.
 - b. In instances in which a decision is made to retain a name, an account of the (reasonable) concerns that arose with respect to the name, the information considered, and the rationale for the decision to retain the name should likewise be preserved and accessible.
10. The University's Board of Trustees retains final authority for decisions about namings, de-namings, and re-namings at the University.

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Procedures for the Application of the Principles to Questions of Possible Name Removal

The Commission recommends that a standing institutional advisory committee be established to consider questions of name removal and to make a recommendation to the University's President and Board of Trustees, which has final authority for all decisions about removal of names.

Additional specific recommendations pertaining to the committee and procedures for considering removal of a name follow.

Name, Composition, and Charge of Committee

The committee should be given a name that appropriately reflects its work, such as the Name Review Advisory Committee. The committee should include representation from the University's students, faculty, staff, senior administration, alumni, and Trustees, who should bring to the committee's work a diversity of backgrounds and perspectives. The composition of the committee should be appropriately balanced, so that no constituent group holds disproportionate representation. Either through appointed members, *ex officio* members, or advisors, the committee should also include essential administrative and scholarly expertise. Committee members will be appointed by the University President for specific terms. The President will also appoint the Committee's Chair and establish the Chair's term. A formal charter and procedures for the committee should be developed by the President and Board of Trustees and shared with the University community.

Procedure to Request Consideration of Name Removal

Any member of the University community (students, faculty, staff, alumni) may make a formal request to the committee for consideration of removal of a name for reasons consistent with the established principles. The request should be submitted to the Secretary to the Board of Trustees and should include the name and affiliation of the person or group making the request; the naming that is the focus of the request; sufficient specific explanation of the nature of the concern; reference to sources from which the information about/evidence for the concern is drawn; and the applicability of the principles to the specific case.

The Secretary will forward all completed formal requests for consideration of removal of a name to the President and the Board of Trustees for information, and to the committee for consideration. The committee, in consultation with the President, will determine within 30 days if a request warrants action (i.e., study of the name and circumstances and a recommendation to the Board about whether the name should be removed). If needed, the committee may request additional information from the individual or group that submitted the request ("Requestor") prior to making a determination about whether the request merits action. If multiple requests pertaining to the same name(s) are received, the committee may consolidate those requests.

The committee's determination about whether the request will be accepted for action, and the rationale for that determination, will be communicated to the President; the Board of Trustees; the Requestor; the namesake or his or her heir (if identifiable); any affected University administrative unit or academic department and Dean. To facilitate transparency, appropriate information about requests to the committee will be made available to the University community (see "Records" below).

Committee Procedures for Evaluating and Making a Recommendation with Respect to Potential Removal of a Name

The committee's work will be guided by the principles established to inform decisions about naming, removal of names, and re-naming.

The committee will work as expeditiously as possible and should normally be expected to forward its recommendations to the President and Board within one calendar year of a request being made. If multiple matters are before the committee in any given year, the committee will determine and communicate to the University community the sequence and timeframe in which the matters will be addressed.

In deliberating and formulating a recommendation about whether a name should be removed, the committee should initiate and consider appropriate research, as well as the expert opinions of relevant scholars in the University community or others with important relevant knowledge in the matter, including knowledge of the namesake's actions or the original circumstances of the naming. The namesake or his or her heir will also be given the opportunity to provide information for the committee's consideration.

The committee will receive necessary resources to support its work. The committee will also seek from the relevant University offices an opinion about any legal or contractual obligations or considerations relevant to the potential removal of a specific name. The committee may also solicit additional information from the Requestor or any University office. As the committee formulates its recommendation, it should also consider the relevant precedents of its previous decisions.

The committee should provide periodic public updates on its progress and invite the perspectives of members of the University community as part of its deliberations.

The committee will prepare and forward to the Board a full report, including its recommendation, rationale (with explicit reference to the application of the relevant principles and the strength of the evidence), and summary of information considered, including a summary of comments received from members of the University community and any opinion provided by the University's administration about any legal or contractual obligations or considerations relevant to the potential removal of the specific name. The committee may elect to recommend removal of a name, retention of a name, or some other remedy. A two-thirds affirmative vote of the committee should be required for the

committee to advance a recommendation of name removal to the Board of Trustees. If the committee's recommendation is not supported by a unanimous vote of the committee, the report should include reasons for the minority view. The report and recommendations will be made available to the University community.

Procedures for Board Consideration of Committee Recommendations

Upon receiving a recommendation from the committee, the Board will consider and act on that recommendation as expeditiously as possible. The Board will ordinarily consider the recommendation at its next regular meeting, provided that the report and recommendation are received at least 30 days prior to that meeting. The Board may, in its discretion, request additional information from the committee prior to making a decision. The Board may accept, reject, or modify the committee's recommendation. The Board's decision in all cases is final, absent the discovery of significant additional information or changes in circumstances that could alter the committee's original recommendation or the Board's decision.

The Board will communicate its decision on the committee's recommendation within one week of the meeting at which the matter is considered. The decision will be communicated to: the committee, the namesake or heir, the affected department/programs, and the University community.

The President or his/her designee will be responsible for carrying out the decision, including the removal of the name; assignment of a temporary name and/or initiation of the process to select a new name; and, in the case of buildings, creation of permanent educational information (e.g., plaque, webpage) about the building's previous namesake and the decision to remove the name. In cases in which a name is retained, the creation of such permanent educational information may also be appropriate.

Records

The Secretary's Office should maintain a website making available the policies and procedures for consideration of name removal and the committee's charge and membership. The website should also record requests for consideration of removing names that have been brought to the committee and their status; the committee's reports and recommendations to the Board; and a record of the Board's final decisions, the rationale for those decisions, and related communications to the University community. The original documentation of the committee's work will be maintained by the Secretary, who may deposit the records in the University archives.