

Report to President Carol Quillen from the Commission on Race and Slavery

The Charge Given to the Commission on Race and Slavery

In keeping with Davidson's commitment to the quest for truth, the Commission on Race and Slavery will assist the college community in building a comprehensive understanding of the college's own history, which is intertwined with the institution and legacies of slavery and the lives of enslaved persons.

The Commission will guide the development and launch of research projects and additional teaching and learning initiatives through which the Davidson community can investigate and acknowledge the college's history with slavery and race as well as its historical relationships with African American communities.

These initiatives will include (among others): teaching, research, scholarship, educational exhibitions, public events and other means of community engagement, college-created media content and permanent recognition of these aspects of our history.

An Approach

Davidson's Statement of Purpose expresses the college's calling as a student-focused institution of higher learning, grounded in faith in a God bound by no church or creed. The same faith tradition extends our loyalty to all of humanity. We honor the dignity and worth of every person. Dedicated to the quest for truth, we explore the past, present, and future with all the tools of the mind and spirit, focusing on studies that are liberating and life-affirming.

The quest for truth was foremost when the Davidson College Commission on Race and Slavery was created, because the search for truth at Davidson must include the study of our own history, one that is intertwined with the institution of slavery as well as with persistent ideas about white supremacy and race. The college is fortunate to hold a rich archive of material on this subject.

We need look no further than current headlines to affirm that our nation continues to struggle with systemic racism and white supremacy rooted, in part, in the history of enslavement. Nothing is to be gained—educationally, spiritually, or societally—by leaving this subject partially explored. Everything is to be gained for a fuller understanding.

Examining and acknowledging our own history are moral responsibilities—as individuals, as an institution, as a society. Our aim is to show how we are accountable in and to the present, how we can avoid repeating mistakes of the past, and how we can measure our progress moving forward.

Background on the Commission

The Commission's purpose was announced in fall 2017. Chair Anthony Foxx '93 accepted leadership of the Commission in December 2017, and Commission members were named in early 2018. The Commission comprised students, faculty, staff, trustees and alumni, and was designed to be representative. [Biographies of Commission members](#) may be found on the college's website.

The Commission on Race and Slavery met in April 2018, July 2018 (guest speaker: John Whittington Franklin, cultural historian and senior manager in the Office of External Affairs at the Smithsonian National Museum of African American History and Culture), October 2018 (guest speakers: DebbieLee Landi, college archivist, and Jessica Cottle, project archivist for Justice, Equality and Community archives) and by phone in November 2018. The Commission met in January 2019, April 2019 and by phone in June 2019 and November 2019. An interim report was shared with the Davidson College Board of Trustees in fall 2019. Spring 2020 was intended to be a time of campus engagement to receive feedback on preliminary recommendations; regrettably, the shortened semester allowed for only limited engagement with students and staff.

Through this document, the Commission seeks to frame conversations and inspire initiatives through which the college will do the work of truth-seeking, demonstrating accountability, and building a just campus community over the years and decades to come.

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Established Historical Facts About Davidson College

Davidson College has a rich archival collection, and we acknowledge there is much continuing work to be done using these resources. Below we share selected moments in Davidson's history relevant to the task at hand. Our intent is not to be comprehensive in these few pages. Rather, we seek to demonstrate, first, the college's engagement in systemic racism and, second, the presence and contributions of Black people at Davidson College since its founding. "First" are included to document the successful outcomes of persistent Black student, faculty, staff, and alumni activism and intellectual and professional accomplishment, and with acknowledgement of how recent many of these dates are and humility and remorse for that fact. This narrative draws from research conducted by the staff of the College Archives; Commission member and former college archivist Jan Blodgett and professor of history emeritus Ralph Levering in their book *One Town, Many Voices* (2012); *Always Part of the Fabric*, a video and text summary created by the archives staff in 2011; decades of student reporters for *The Davidsonian*; and Black students, faculty, staff, alumni, and community members who have shared and documented their experiences.

1835 Concord Presbytery authorized a committee chaired by Robert Hall Morrison, a slave owner, to raise funds for the establishment of a manual labor school. Farmers and merchants in central North Carolina and northern South Carolina, many of whom owned enslaved people, pledged \$30,900 in support of the establishment of the school. William Lee Davidson II, a member of Morrison's committee and owner of Beaver Dam, a 785-acre plantation, sold 469 acres of undeveloped land to the presbytery for the school, which was named to honor his father, General William Lee Davidson, who served in the Revolutionary War.

1835-36 Historical documents report "volunteer" laborers constructed the first seven buildings using 250,000 bricks made by enslaved people on a nearby plantation. These historical documents commonly obscure information we would like to know, such as whether these "volunteer" laborers were in fact enslaved. These laborers could have included skilled masons and carpenters.

1837 The first students arrived for classes. President Robert Hall Morrison, the two faculty, and the college's steward (business manager) owned enslaved people.

All college presidents through Drury Lacy (1855-1860) owned slaves, as did many faculty members. Those who did not own slaves often paid slave owners on nearby plantations for their services. In the homes of college presidents and faculty, enslaved people, particularly women, performed routine domestic labor and additional work associated with major events, such as commencement, when college leaders hosted trustees, dignitaries, and Presbyterian elders and ministers.

While Davidson College as a corporate entity did not own enslaved people, financial records of the college show that the college also paid area slave owners for the labor of their enslaved people as servants on the Davidson College campus. In addition to participating in building projects, enslaved people performed maintenance and domestic labor on campus and in the local businesses that supported student life, including boarding houses.

1855 Maxwell Chambers, a member of the building committee of Concord Presbytery, left \$260,000 to the college at the time of his death. Evidence suggests that Chambers, a planter and cotton trader from Salisbury, North Carolina, engaged in the slave trade. As a cotton trader, a significant part of his wealth came from the labor of enslaved people. In his will, Chambers freed some (48) enslaved people, providing them supplies and money for passage to Oberlin, Ohio.

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- 1861-65** Reflecting their social, political, and economic investment in the institution of slavery, faculty and students were generally pro-secession and supported the Confederacy. Former mathematics professor and chair D.H. Hill served in the Confederate Army. Along with his brothers-in-law Rufus Barringer and Thomas J. "Stonewall" Jackson (all three men married daughters of President Morrison), these three generals are the most prominent Confederates connected to Davidson College. Other students, faculty, and trustees supported the Confederate war effort, including as military chaplains, a role held by former president Drury Lacy, Jr. During the war and Reconstruction, the college largely remained open and struggled financially. The labor of enslaved people enabled the college to stay open during the war, and after the war, men who were formerly enslaved helped to repair and maintain campus buildings.
- 1876-1962** Following Reconstruction, the college engaged in racial discrimination and segregation consistent with local practices during the Jim Crow era. While some Black residents of local communities worked for the college in low-paying positions to maintain the buildings and grounds and provide domestic services, the college did not admit Black students or hire Black faculty. The documentary record demonstrates a consistent pattern of systemic racism. For example:
- The college restricted access to campus: "Only a select few... colored citizens will be allowed the privilege of coming on the campus this year." (1892)
 - Students staged mock lynchings memorialized in college annuals (1928).
 - As late as the 1960s, the college played "Dixie," the de facto anthem of the Confederacy and Lost Cause movement, at home football games.
- 1959** Decades of Black activism culminating in the Supreme Court mandate to integrate public schools prompted private institutions such as Davidson to examine their policies of racial exclusion. The college issued an official statement: "In view of the request of the Education Committee with reference to the matter of the admission of Negroes, the college authorities responsible for admitting students be advised that it is the judgment of a majority of the trustees that at this time the admission of Negroes is not in the best interest of the College, of the Church, of the Students, or of any Negroes who at this juncture would be admitted as students."
- Black employees of Davidson College, often members of families with ties to the institution across generations, remained present on campus as essential workers throughout the Jim Crow era. By employing Black workers for maintenance and service jobs while denying educational opportunities to Black students and faculty positions to Black scholars, the college perpetuated the racist hierarchy rooted in slavery era. In the summer of 1959, crosses were burned on campus, in response to the interaction of a white international student attending a workshop with a local Black resident.
- 1961** Reflecting changing views on race within the Presbyterian church measured against ongoing and widespread opposition to integration among Southern whites in general, Trustees vote to admit African (as opposed to American-born Black) students.
- 1962** Benoit (Ben) Nzengu '66, the son of a Presbyterian missionary from the Congo, enrolled, thus integrating Davidson College. When polled in 1961, only 53 percent of Davidson students supported integration, and many students, faculty, community members, and alumni remained opposed and complained to college president D. Grier Martin. While college officials touted his academic success to news media, Nzengu encountered hostility when challenging Jim Crow in the course of his everyday life as a student. Members of the Black community, particularly college employees, supported him and welcomed Nzengu into their homes for meals and fellowship.

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- 1963** A second Congolese student, Georges Nzongola-Ntalaja '67, enrolled. Unwelcome at local white churches, including the Presbyterian church on campus, Nzongola-Ntalaja successfully petitioned to meet the college's chapel requirement by attending a local Black church. His activism resulted in a change to the chapel policy for all students, who were subsequently allowed to attend the Christian church of their choice.
- 1964** Leslie Brown '69 and Wayne Crumwell '68, the first Black American students, enrolled at Davidson. As early as 1967, *The Davidsonian* published interviews in which three of the five Black students then attending the college explained the challenges they faced because of systemic racism. Interviewed for a student thesis in 1996, Crumwell recounted feeling used by the college, which he believed "had put some thought into integrating from the perspective of preparing the white students for the experience. But they took for granted the fact that black students would just be accepted in this environment." A lack of acceptance, experiences of overt hostility, and what we today call chronic microaggressions remained common among Black students who told their stories through *The Davidsonian* or documented them in other ways.
- 1966** Basketball recruit and later NBA star Charles "Charlie" Scott chose to attend the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, despite being recruited by coach Lefty Driesell, after a segregated café on Main St. refused Scott and Driesell service in the main dining area. Scott's rejection prompted college officials and coaches concerned with the competitiveness of Davidson's basketball program to address discrimination. While this became known as "the Coffee Cup incident," contemporary Black students emphasized that this was not an isolated event but representative of their normal experiences in town.
- Nzengu became the college's first Black graduate.
- 1967** To foster a sense of community and provide support in response to ongoing hostility on and off campus, Black students formed the Black Student Coalition (BSC). The BSC's stated purpose was "to establish and maintain a spirit of solidarity among the Black students of Davidson College," "to create a sense of awareness within the framework of Davidson College with regards to the contributions of Black students, and specifically the Black Student Coalition, to the 'total environment' of Davidson College," and "to serve as an active force ready and willing to support the Black citizens of the town of Davidson and to aid them in overcoming many of the problems which they now face." Since then, the BSC has been a consistent voice for the recruitment of Black students, the hiring of Black faculty and staff, and the inclusion of content on race in the curriculum. In 1967, the student body numbered 1,000, including seven Black students.
- 1968** White students and faculty, some of whom were participating in civil rights activism in Charlotte, organized a boycott of Johnson's Barbershop in Davidson. The successful Black-owned business had served Black students since 1963, but otherwise Ralph W. Johnson and the six Black barbers he employed cut only the hair of a white clientele at his Main St. barbershop during regular business hours. As Johnson later explained it, white townspeople, the majority of his customers, would not patronize his shop if he fully integrated. When Johnson refused service to two Black community members on April 2, students formed pickets in front of his business. For six days that overlapped with the assassination of Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., students and white and Black community members demonstrated in front of Johnson's business—students demanding its integration and white townspeople supporting Johnson's choice to limit his clientele mostly to them. On May 7, Johnson began cutting the hair of Black community members. A supporter of integration, Johnson recalled in his memoir that he felt set-up by white Davidson students, who had not discussed their concerns with him and one of whom was arrested for threats against him. As Johnson feared, his business never recovered mainly because white customers went elsewhere for haircuts. Johnson closed his shop in 1971.
- 1969** Mike Maloy '70, a star athlete recruited to play basketball, had been accepted by the Davidson chapter of Sigma Chi, becoming the first Black fraternity pledge on campus. Sigma Chi's national office refused to recognize his membership. In fall 1969, Davidson's Sigma Chi members voted to end their affiliation with the national organization.

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- 1972** Reflecting the persistent activism of students, the Office of Admission redefined a position to devote half-time to minority recruitment.
- John Wade became the first Black member of the coaching staff when hired as an assistant football coach.
- 1974** The college hired Charles Dockery, the first Black faculty member, into the French Department. He retired in 2002 and is now an Emeritus Professor, the first Black scholar to hold this distinction from Davidson College.
- Junior Wade became the first Black head coach at the college when he assumed leadership of the baseball program.
- 1976** Leonard Satterwhite joined the Admission team as the first full-time Black administrative staff member. He focused on minority recruitment.
- 1977** Denise Fanuiel '77 became the first Black alumna of the college and the first female student to be commissioned through the college's ROTC program.
- 1980** Responding to the recommendation of Black students and alumni, President Samuel Reid Spencer established the Committee on Minorities, consisting of students, coaches, faculty, and staff and charged with reducing the "segregational tendencies in the community."
- 1982** The college hired Assistant Dean of Students Paula Moore Miller, the first Black administrator in the division of Student Life.
- 1983** Thelma C. Davidson Adair, a prominent Presbyterian educator, scholar of early childhood education, and human rights activist joined the Board of Trustees, becoming its first Black member.
- 1984** Responding to the leadership of Black students, particularly junior Janet Stovall '85, President John Kuykendall established the Task Force on Racial/Ethnic Concerns "to take a critical look at the environment which the college provides for black students (and students of other racial/ethnic groups) and the experience which that environment affords them.)" The task force's findings and additional Black student research comprised the 77-page Project 87 report, a set of goals challenging Davidson to grow the number of Black students from 52 to 100, increase the number of Black professors from 1 to 10, hire a dean for Black students, and create five Black Studies classes by 1987. A report in 1989 documented both progress and gaps.
- 1986** In response to a Ku Klux Klan march on Main St., a coalition organized a counter-event for the campus and community on Patterson Court. Known as the "Solidarity Gathering," the success of the event in detracting attention from the KKK prompted the Student Government Association (SGA) to create a Solidarity Committee that, along with the BSC, organized additional antiracist programming.
- 1987** The Davidson Black Alumni Network first met at Homecoming.
- Under the leadership of the Rev. Brenda Howard Tapia, the first Black minister to serve as an assistant chaplain and a minority student counselor, the Love of Learning program offered educational opportunities for minority high school students and opportunities for Davidson students to mentor young learners. The program was designed to increase the number of minority students in the Charlotte area attending college. The program ended in 2005 and was replaced by the Freedom Schools program.
- 1991** Dr. William S. Hutchings II '78 became the first Black alumnus to serve as a Trustee.

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- 1993** Anthony Foxx '93 was elected the first Black student body president.
- 1994** Faculty established the Ethnic Studies Concentration, the culmination of more than two decades of organizing led by Black students. The six-course concentration fostered the "interdisciplinary study of race and ethnicity in the United States of America, with an emphasis on African Americans, Asian Americans, Chicanos/Latinos and Native Americans" and enabled students to acquire "a deeper understanding of the legacy and nuance of racism in the United States, develop knowledge of existing and emerging minority U.S. populations, communicate effectively across cultural differences and learn to think critically about the contexts that shape and influence contemporary struggles of living and participating in a multicultural democracy."
- 1995** Professor Nancy Fairley, an anthropologist, became the first Black female scholar to earn tenure and promotion.
- The college established a pre-orientation program to support minority students (now STRIDE, Students Together Reaching for Individual Development and Growth in Education).
- 2000s** Black students established four National Pan-Hellenic Council organizations: Alpha Phi Alpha, Kappa Alpha Psi, Alpha Kappa Alpha, and Delta Sigma Theta. Shades of Brown Dance Troupe was founded in 2002.
- 2007** In response to Black student activism, the Counseling Center hired Brelonda Walker as minority outreach counselor/coordinator.
- 2010** The Multicultural House (now the Spencer-Weinstein Center for Community and Justice) opened on Patterson Court and has since served as a meeting place and organizational hub for antiracist work on campus.
- 2012** Faculty of Color Caucus was organized.
- 2013** The Multicultural Center office (now the Center for Diversity and Inclusion) opened in the Alvarez College Union and features *Chances Are*, a mural created by Ambrice Miller '09 which explores the evolution of diversity at Davidson.
- Kaneisha Gaston '13 was celebrated for being the first Black student with deep family ties to the town of Davidson to graduate from the college.
- 2014** Faculty established the Department of Africana Studies, whose curriculum reflects "the great ethnic, racial, and religious diversity within the category of 'blackness,' and explores the artistic, historical, literary, and theoretical expressions of the various African and African Diaspora cultures."
- Students along with some faculty and staff hold a "Die-In" protest during the town's annual Christmas in Davidson weekend to protest police brutality.
- 2017** President Carol Quillen announced the creation of the Commission on Race and Slavery.
- Faculty establish the new Justice, Equality and Community (JEC) requirement. Starting with the class of 2021, each student must take one course that satisfies the requirement. These courses address the manifestations of justice and equality in various communities, locales, nations or regions, and focus on methods and theories used to analyze, spotlight, or remedy instances of injustice and inequality.

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Activities

Scholarly and community engagement activities connected to our task have been abundant in the months since the Commission was formed. Some events were initiated or facilitated by the Commission, but many others were developed independently by faculty and academic programs, demonstrating the desire of this community to understand more about our racial history and to explore themes of justice and reconciliation through a variety of intellectual frameworks. We emphasize that this is a mere sampling to show the depth and breadth of activity on campus, and off, and to highlight the need for coordination across campus. See Appendix.

Accountability in the Present

As we come to understand our history more fully, we can better hold ourselves accountable to imperatives for justice and equity in the present. This requires a coherent, clear approach. The Commission recommends the college create an infrastructure of ongoing support and commitment. Enhancements to our structures, development of a framework for future efforts, and resources are necessary. Our campus community must take on this important work with intention.

The Commission offers preliminary recommendations to set Davidson on a constructive course:

Apology, recognition and commemoration.

In order to pursue the restorative justice principles of repairing harm, strengthening relationships, and rebuilding trust, Davidson College must formally acknowledge that it has benefitted from the institution of slavery and the stolen labor of enslaved persons and acknowledge its roles in supporting and perpetuating harms caused by the institution of slavery and its legacies, including systemic racism that continues to impact Black members of our community today. Such an acknowledgment is a necessary step to moving forward, for it is impossible to repair harm without a very clear statement that harm has been done. Accordingly, the Commission recommends the college issue an apology.

The Commission further suggests the college publicly recognize and commemorate the contributions of enslaved persons, in addition to the initiative undertaken by the Davidson College Art Galleries (see Appendix). Public acknowledgment could take a variety of forms. The Commission recommends the following as a beginning:

- A permanent marker, sign, or an additional piece of art in a visible location on campus to be included as a stop on campus tours.
- A feature in the *Davidson Journal* exploring our history.
- A permanent “landing space” on the college’s website, featuring our history, ongoing projects, and public engagements.

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Support for ongoing research, teaching, learning and programming.

First and foremost, the Commission recommends additional, comprehensive research about the founding of the college, its earliest leaders, and its initial wealthiest donors. The results of this research should be made public through the library archives and should also be made available online.

The Commission recommends the college consider additional staffing to help guide this particular project and ongoing research. The needs are many: teaching, conducting additional research and mentoring student research in this area, coordinating with faculty from across the institution, working closely with the archives, and collaborating with the Justice, Equality and Community initiative.

Additional needs include facilitating regular communication to and between constituents and helping coordinate educational programming open to the campus and community. Other administrative tasks could include serving as a clear point of contact for inquiries from alumni, community members and organizations seeking to collaborate, and coordinating professional development opportunities—such as reading groups and lunch or dinner discussion meetings about current events—for faculty and staff.

We are encouraged by the appointment of **Dr. Hilary Green as the 2020-2021 Vann Professor of Ethics in Society**. Dr. Green is currently an associate professor at the University of Alabama where she undertook a project entitled “Hallowed Grounds,” which highlighted the role of enslaved people on the campus through tours and a website with primary documents, interviews and photographs. She brings a wealth of experience to Davidson.

The Commission is also encouraged by the presidential leadership grant awarded to President Carol Quillen by The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation in response to an invitation to launch or strengthen a critically significant academic program that built on her long-term aspirations for the college. Her proposal was “Stories Yet to Be Told: Race, Racism and Accountability on Campus.” The college received \$250,000 to support faculty- and student-initiated projects that transform key campus spaces into interactive sites for exploring the legacies of slavery, how ideas about race emerge and why racism persists. The gift can fund research, course development, exhibitions, digital resources and performances or events that engage our community in understanding our institutional and national history and creating and strengthening antiracist study and programming. The first grant award was made this spring to Commission member Dr. Rose Strelau to further develop the web-based tour created by students in her course: “Women and Gender in U.S. History to 1870,” during the fall 2019 semester. The web page is entitled ***Inclusive Histories of Davidson College***.

We celebrate these resources and recommend additional funding to support student and faculty research and public programming.

Create lasting infrastructure.

As the college continues to explore its archives and learn more about the contributions of enslaved persons, more questions are likely to be raised by members of the college community and by the descendants of the people who built and served at the institution. The Commission believes a framework, or structure and protocols, is necessary for addressing new revelations or evidence pertaining to the college’s history with respect to slavery. Such a framework should be developed collaboratively by students, faculty, leaders from the library, staff, and others from the college community.

The Commission recognizes it, as a volunteer body, was neither prepared nor trained for this responsibility and recommends now that the college establish a standing committee that can receive and route inquiries and requests and which is empowered to act, as a working group and/or as individual members. Such a standing committee should include students, faculty, and representatives from campus facilities and the library and archives. In addition, we recommend that the college hire a full-time and permanent faculty member or a staff member trained as a public historian or public archivist who is experienced working in the histories of slavery, Black communities, and racial justice. This person should participate on the standing committee, help oversee the work it recommends, and serve as a liaison to community organizations.

Further, to help ground and guide future research projects on this aspect of Davidson’s history, we recommend that faculty, scholars, and archive staff develop ethical as well as intellectual principles for research and scholarship in this area. This kind of orientation is critically important for student researchers who will be engaging with families who may be descendants of enslaved persons.

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Among the standing committee's first tasks would be the development of a framework for consideration and response when requests are made or revelations about the college's history warrant action, the development of communication protocols for soliciting, receiving, and considering other relevant inquiries and proposals, and the development of processes for sharing updates with the college and community.

To help illustrate the need for this framework, we share here two examples. A local family whose ancestors quarried the bricks used to build the college contacted the college. The family was connected with our Archives and eventually with faculty. After being routed several directions on campus, the idea of developing a research project was born. This project will enable the entire campus community to know more about the college's history, but we arrived at this opportunity serendipitously.

Additionally, since the formation of the Commission, the college has removed from Phi and Eu halls portraits of Confederate faculty, alumni, and trustees who fought to preserve slavery, understanding that these portraits needed additional context. Artwork by Kara Walker, an artist known for her explorations of race and slavery, has been installed in the Baxter-Davidson Room in Chambers Building, on a wall opposite portraits of Edward Lee Baxter Davidson, benefactor, and Adam Brevard Davidson, trustee. This only occurred due to the initiative and creativity of several campus partners.

Building on these examples, the Commission believes the standing committee should consider additional contextualization, removal of some artworks, and the installation of others. Building names should be thoroughly examined, as well. Specifically, calls for Chambers Building to be renamed were present during Commission events and in the Commission's own meetings. At public events and through social media, Commission members also heard concerns that the college not simply gloss over this part of its history; students, in particular, expressed concern that the removal of names from buildings could be misleading or even read as an attempt to erase a racist past if done without critical analysis and thoughtful, intentional planning.

The Commission does believe that the college should rename the Chambers Building in such a way that our community collectively addresses the roots of white supremacy at Davidson and its ongoing manifestations. The selection of a new name should be a deliberate antiracist action that unifies us in our commitment to justice. The Commission is particularly supportive of the adoption of additional historical markers around campus, ongoing opportunities for faculty and students to pass resolutions or otherwise share their voices in regard to modifications to our built environment, and institutional support of community-driven best practices in public history and archiving. Because selecting a new name was not the Commission's charge, the new standing committee should be charged with coordinating and overseeing these activities from the outset and preparing recommendations for decision-makers.

Continued investment in transforming campus culture.

In accordance with its Statement of Purpose, the college must act to ensure the campus truly affirms the dignity of every individual who studies and works here. As the institution seeks to help students understand Davidson's complex history, and to do the same for faculty and staff while also providing ongoing training and professional development opportunities, campus leaders should make immediate commitments that could benefit and strengthen our community:

- Create and implement during Orientation a module on Davidson's history with respect to systemic racism and other forms of exclusion and discrimination.
- Support efforts to launch staff equity advisors and Human Resources offerings of diversity and antiracism trainings for all employees.

Co-curricular possibilities should also be considered. Commission members have discussed the potential of additional visits for students and faculty to the National Memorial for Peace and Justice in Montgomery, Alabama, and the National Museum of African American History and Culture in Washington, D.C. Academic departments, individual faculty, and administrative units such as the Center for Civic Engagement are among the many potential partners. The Commission is enthusiastic about such learning opportunities and endorses the resources needed for them.

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Understanding the community in which we live.

The implications of the college's connection to the institution of slavery do not end at the campus boundaries. The Commission recommends that campus leaders and others who seek to help, including student servant-leaders and faculty seeking to establish new community-based learning courses, commit to creating and sustaining a clear and permanent line of communication with Black residents of Davidson, Smithville, and other nearby communities as a channel for the college to learn about and be responsive to their needs. Respectful that the college cannot drive the agenda for Black communities and organizations, we recommend that we listen and respond with our material resources and earnest, honest professional and personal attention and engagement.

In creating programming, we recommend the prioritization of opportunities that bring campus and community together. In addition to intentionally welcoming the community for lectures and performances, the college can extend invitations to collaborate without expectation of acceptance or endorsement. For example, Davidson will host a Racial Equity Institute training through a collaboration with Unity in Community and funded by a Justice, Equality and Community grant. The pandemic interrupted plans to offer this training this summer, however through this program, employees and students from Davidson will participate in the training alongside community leaders and collaborators from the larger Davidson community. Such training would obviously be beneficial for our students, faculty and staff, and the opportunity to participate in training together, with community members, stands to have tremendous long-term impact.

Appendix Activities

Scholarship, teaching and learning

- Commission chair Anthony Foxx '93 and cultural historian John Whittington Franklin, Senior Manager in the Office of External Affairs at the Smithsonian Museum of African American History and Culture, made special arrangements for faculty in Africana Studies to tour the National Museum of African American History and Culture and meet with curatorial staff there in July 2018.
- *Color and Character: West Charlotte High and the American Struggle Over Educational Equality*, by Pamela Grundy, was the common reading for the first-year class that enrolled in fall 2018. The nonfiction book addresses directly the legacies of Jim Crow. Then-Dean of Faculty Wendy Raymond facilitated a panel discussion of the book during new student orientation. Panelists included Timisha Barnes-Jones '92, former principal of West Charlotte High School; Jonathan Shepherd-Smith '18, Commission member who taught at West Charlotte; Bethany Kirkpatrick '19; and Joseph Ewoodzie, faculty in sociology and Africana Studies.
- The Class of 2023 read *My Brother Moochie: Regaining Dignity in the Face of Crime, Poverty and Racism in the American South*, by Issac J. Bailey '95, who has served as the college's James K. Batten Professor of Communication Studies. The Class of 2024 will read *Just Mercy* by Bryan Stevenson.
- With a grant from the Justice, Equality and Community initiative, the Dean of Students Office organized a first-year class trip for the Class of 2022 to the Levine Museum of the New South. Students toured the museum's standing exhibition, *Cotton Fields to Skyscrapers: Reinventing Charlotte and the Carolina Piedmont in the New South*, as well as *K(no)w Justice, K(no)w Peace*, a rapid response exhibition installed after the police-involved shooting of Keith Lamont Scott. In addition to highlighting firsthand accounts of the protests that arose from Scott's death, *K(no)w Justice, K(no)w Peace* addressed housing inequality, school funding, police-involved shootings of people of color, and issues of wealth inequity and social stratification.
- Catawba College professor Gary Freeze presented "The Piedmont's Bronze Age Confederate Monuments: A Quasi Archeological Report" on September 11, 2018, at the invitation of Davidson's archeology studies program.
- For National Archives Month in October 2018, Archives and Special Collections welcomed Elizabeth Sickles '89, who presented "An Evening with Family, Faith, and Service: Davidson Alumni of the 1840s," which addressed relevant topics.
- The Commission, Archives and Library applied for a grant supporting a postdoctoral fellow in data curation for African American and Africana Studies through the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation. The grant application was not successful but may be revived in the future and adjusted to meet new priorities or ideas that may emerge.
- In January 2019, E.H. Little Library brought to campus Dr. Konstantinos Karatzas, who lectured on "Silent and Marginalized Voices: Race-related Scholarship and Archival Research" and the 1921 Tulsa race riots, among other topics.
- Africana Studies planned and hosted a conference titled "Slavery, Violence, and the Archive" February 22-23, 2019. The conference brought some of the best scholars, public historians, and intellectuals in the field of race and slavery to Davidson. The event enabled the Commission and community members to learn from the best practices of others who have done similar public history work.
 - Rutgers University professor Marisa J. Fuentes, author of *Dispossessed Lives: Enslaved Women, Violence, and the Archive*, (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2016), delivered the keynote address on February 23. In addition to Professor Fuentes's keynote, the conference included individual panels on Saturday morning and Friday evening. Both panels were comprised of scholars working at the cutting edge of Africana Studies, including professors from major research universities from across the country as well as independent scholars currently working at the National Museum of African American History and Culture. Current Africana Studies majors at Davidson College also presented creative work.

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The conference was broadly advertised and was open to all faculty, students, staff, and community members. Nearly 130 people attended in person, and the conference was livestreamed.

- Invited panelists and scholars included Edda L. Fields-Black, from Carnegie Mellon University; John W. Franklin, from the National Museum of African American History and Culture; Hilary N. Green, from the University of Alabama; Neil Roberts, from Williams College; and Edlie Wong, from University of Maryland.
- Postdoctoral Fellow and Visiting Assistant Professor of Africana Studies Nneke Dennie taught “Women and Slavery in the Black Atlantic” in spring 2019, conducting research with students on historical contributions of enslaved persons at Davidson.
- In spring 2019, Davidson College students, faculty and staff traveled to Montgomery, Alabama, to visit the Legacy Museum and the National Memorial for Peace and Justice. The 70 students and educators made the trip as part of the “Memory Studies” course, which brings together five courses taught by faculty in different disciplines around the various phenomena of collective memory. They met with Davidson alumni who work for the Equal Justice Initiative (EJI), the organization behind the museum and memorial. Students in the Humanities program took a similar trip to Montgomery over winter break 2020.
- Two films researched, developed and filmed by sections of Dr. John Wertheimer’s HIS 454, “Filming Southern History” class were screened on campus in spring 2019.
 - The first, “Remembering Willie Earle,” is a student-produced documentary that explores South Carolina’s last recorded lynching, which occurred in 1947. Dr. Wertheimer arranged a program that included the student filmmakers; a visiting historian who published the definitive history of the Willie Earle lynching; and Acquillious Jackson, the film’s 89-year-old point-of-view character, who was a childhood friend of Willie Earle, the lynching victim.
 - In May 2019, Dr. Wertheimer arranged a campus screening of another student-produced documentary that uses Charleston’s 2018 apology for its role in the slave trade as a window into a discussion of the history and historical memory of slavery.

Community engagement

This section highlights work of the Commission to engage local communities as well as the efforts of individual faculty, staff and administrative units to offer aligned programming.

- *Universities Studying Slavery.* Since the inception of the Commission on Race and Slavery, Davidson College has been a member of the Universities Studying Slavery Consortium and has offered funding to Commission members to attend its conferences.
- *On the Table Charlotte.* Several Commission members participated in the On the Table Charlotte dialogue held at the Ada Jenkins Center in October 2018. The theme of the dialogue was “The Legacy of Slavery and Its Continued Impact.” The Center for Civic Engagement has cohosted for three years with several community organizations, including Unity in the Community, North Meck Communities United and the Ada Jenkins Center.
- *Board of Visitors.* The Davidson College Board of Visitors is a dedicated group of Davidson alumni, parents, and friends who give their time and resources to support the college. By staying informed on college priorities and programs, Visitors serve as advisors to the Board of Trustees and other college leaders, and as champions for Davidson. In February 2019, two Commission representatives participated in a panel to introduce the Commission to the Board of Visitors. The panel included Rev. Richard Boyce ’77, Tim Saintsing ’98, and Africana Studies Chair Devyn Benson and was moderated by Byron P. McCrae, vice president for student life and dean of students.

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- *Campus survey.* On February 25, 2019, the President's Office sent a message to campus with updates from Byron P. McCrae concerning the work of the Commission. The message also invited faculty and staff to complete a short survey. Approximately 100 people responded; nearly one-third responded that they were not knowledgeable about Davidson College's relationship with slavery and more than 90 percent believe it is important for the college to study this history. The results from this initial pilot study could be analyzed for additional insights and ideas for future research.
- *Campus visit of scholar and Commission member Bill Andrews.* William L. Andrews '68, who served as E. Maynard Adams Professor of English at the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, and author of *Slavery and Class in the American South: A Generation of Slave Narrative Testimony, 1840-1865* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2019), visited campus February 27 and February 28, 2019. Dr. Andrews spoke on February 27 at the Ada Jenkins Center at an event hosted by Unity in Community. His February 28 presentation, "Slavery and Class in the American South," was held on campus and attracted members of the campus and local communities.
- *Campus visit from Furman University.* Representatives from Furman's Seeking Abraham project visited Davidson College on March 1, 2019, for a working lunch. Seeking Abraham is the name for Furman's task force on slavery and justice. George Shields, Furman's Provost, and Michael Jennings, Furman's Chief Diversity Officer, provided an overview of the initiative and answered questions from the senior leadership team, the Commission on Race and Slavery, and several students.
- *McMillen Lecture.* On Thursday, April 25, 2019, Karen Cox, historian at UNC Charlotte and author of *Dixie's Daughters*, gave the annual Sally G. McMillen Lecture at Davidson College in Gender & Sexuality Studies, entitled "Confederate Monuments, Neo-Confederates, and Why History Matters."
- *Alumni Chapter Events.* On April 29, 2019, former Dean of Faculty and Johnston Professor of Economics Clark Ross spoke at a Raleigh alumni chapter event on President Woodrow Wilson, who attended Davidson College for the 1873-1874 academic year. The lecture and discussion covered President Wilson's legacy as it traditionally has been studied—his major domestic reforms and his impact on foreign policy and international affairs—and his legacy related to race issues, which is a growing area of focus and study.
- *Levine Museum of the New South.* The Davidson College Commission on Race and Slavery sponsored the museum's *Legacy of Lynching* exhibition developed and sponsored by the Equal Justice Initiative, which ran April-July 2019. On May 30, 2019, Davidson faculty, staff, students and Commission members attended an associated lecture by Bryan Stevenson, director of the EJI. Additionally, a staff member from the Center for Civic Engagement participated in a trip organized by the Levine Museum for community leaders to visit the National Memorial for Peace and Justice in September 2018.
- *Community Presentation.* On May 4, 2019, Dr. Nneka Dennie, visiting assistant professor of Africana Studies, spoke at the Ada Jenkins Center as part of Unity in Community's quarterly meeting on "Creating the Other: Women, Race and Slavery in the Atlantic World." Additionally, Byron P. McCrae has been an active member of Unity in Community's education committee.
- *Smithville CommUNITY Coalition.* A student intern advised by the Center for Civic Engagement worked with the Smithville CommUNITY Coalition during the summer of 2019 to conduct research on various family trees and property heirs in Smithville. Many of the titles are not clear because many records for African Americans in North Carolina were not kept accurately before 1960. This prevents families from having access to resources. To ascertain property owners, the student intern used sources such as family and church Bibles to add to or correct what is in the public record. The Center for Civic Engagement reached out to faculty in Africana Studies and to the archives and instructional design teams to consider opportunities for additional engagement and support, including other community-based learning courses that could respond to needs identified by the Smithville CommUNITY Coalition. The project was incorporated into the Africana Studies Department's senior capstone course. In addition, students and faculty involved with the Data Cats program helped build out a database to archive this important history.
- *Civil Rights Attorney James E. Ferguson campus visit.* In September 2019, Mr. Ferguson engaged students and community members in a conversation around *The New Jim Crow: Mass Incarceration in the Age of Colorblindness* by Michelle Alexander. He later delivered a speech entitled "From Civil Rights to Social Justice - Same Struggle, Different Day?"
- *Art Commission.* The Davidson College Galleries received funding from the college's Justice, Equality and Community Grant to bring artist Bethany Collins to campus in November 2019 as a Public Humanities Practitioner in Residence. The Galleries have

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commissioned her to create a new work of art specifically for Davidson College. When Collins arrived on campus, students helped her access documents, letters, and other materials they found particularly useful. She spent about a week on campus reviewing the materials, meeting with various classes, and interviewing archivists, faculty, staff, students, and members of the community to learn more about the college's past as well as the current work of the Commission on Race and Slavery. After her week on campus, Collins returned to her studio in Chicago and developed a proposal for a two-dimensional work specifically for Davidson College. This work will serve to remind us of our past while also allowing us to imagine the kind of place we want to be.

- *Just Mercy book party.* More than 100 copies of Bryan Stevenson's book *Just Mercy* were distributed to students on Reading Day (December 2019), thanks to Commission member Bry Reed '20's inspiring suggestion. Reed also arranged some programming for the book party as an opportunity to invite students' feedback on the Commission's preliminary recommendations.
- Bryan Stevenson, director of the Equal Justice Initiative, was the college's Reynolds Lecturer in late January. The lecture was moved to Belk Arena and made free and open to the public, with more than 3,000 attendees.
- Taylor Branch, Pulitzer Prize-winning author known for his landmark narrative history of the civil rights era, *America in the King Years*, was slated to be the keynote speaker for the Symposium on Reformed Christianity and Social Ethics on March 11, which was cancelled due to COVID-19.