
President's Advisory Panel on University Namings and Recognitions
Town Hall

February 27, 2018

FSU Alumni Center, Grand Ballroom, 1030 West Tennessee Street

5:00 p.m. – 7:00 p.m.

Panel Attendees:

Members

Renisha Gibbs- Chair

Miguel Hernandez

Maxine Jones

Walter Moore

Norman Anderson

Janet Stoner

Robyn Jackson

Kyle Hill

Lane Forsman

Maxine Montgomery

Chris Pinango

Kyle Doney [via phone conference]

Support Staff

Elizabeth Hirst

Danni Staats

The meeting began at 5:05 p.m.

- Welcome

Renisha Gibbs, Panel Chair, called the meeting to order and noting that she hadn't yet received very many requests from the audience to make a comment, she asked the panel if they would be open to setting aside the 5 minute time limit for speakers, with the understating that it could be reinstated later in the meeting if need.

The panel agreed.

Ms. Gibbs thanked the panel for taking the time to come out and meet with the community on such an important topic. She stated that she appreciate their service to the panel, recognizing that they had all felt it was important to have different date, time and location options, to ensure that those interested in providing feedback could do so during a time that was most convenient for them.

Ms. Gibbs welcomed the audience to the first of five town hall meetings being hosted by the President's Advisory Panel on University Namings and Recognitions, and stated that while the majority of their time would be about hearing from the community, she wanted to first provide

some context, before opening the floor for the first speaker. She explained that her role was to serve as Chair of the panel, which was made up of a diverse group of students, staff, faculty and alumni. Ms. Gibbs then proceeded to make the additional statements as follows:

The charge before the panel is to listen, learn and, finally, make recommendations on policies concerning campus names, including buildings and statues. In order to get there, we are conscientiously and continually gathering facts and opinions to help us shape thoughtful ideas on how to best memorialize the university's historical and cultural past in a way that reflects our core values today.

Since the panel's first meeting in October, we've been educated on how other campuses are dealing with this same challenge. We've heard from archivists and legal experts to become better informed about relevant historical and legal facts. In addition, we've listened to passionate students and alumni who have shared their own research and sentiments about specific campus recognitions. As a result of the public input we've received so far, President Thrasher has asked us to initially focus on B.K. Roberts Hall, Francis Eppes Hall, and the Eppes statue.

The panel has been immersed in learning the details about these specific landmarks, and as such, we urge speakers today to help us broaden the conversation. More specifically, we'd like to hear your perspective in three significant areas:

- What impact have these landmarks had on you and/or others? What message do you and/or others think these landmarks are communicating?
- What role should university history play in our current day campus environment?
- What do you think should be done and why (i.e., suggestions for solutions)? Are there additional options besides removing and/or renaming?

In the interest of time, each speaker will be limited to 5 minutes. If you don't have the opportunity to speak today we encourage you to provide your input online. We are committed to ensuring the work we do is transparent, inclusive and respectful. You can find a link to the President's Advisory Panel website on FSU's homepage.

Ms. Gibbs concluded by thanking the attendees for being there and welcoming the first speaker to come forward.

- Public Comments

[Comment #1]

Name: Cea Moline

Affiliation: Student

Statement: I'm a Political Science Major here in my senior year and I'm with Students for a Democratic Society. I first want to quickly relay some facts about Francis Eppes, which came from the book *Antebellum Tallahassee* found in the FSU library; Eppes owned 91 slaves; supported the confederacy; operated a racist militia, and police; and he also censored the mail of Tallahassee to remove abolitionist sentiment from the mail. Although Eppes wasn't the person

who started the practice of censoring the mail, it was continued under him, and done with more fervor. Mail coming in and out of Tallahassee was closely searched, and anything that was abolitionist or anti-slave owner or anything that would be considered Northern propaganda was removed. I think that this practice goes against what this entire University was built on, which is learning and sharing ideas. A person who is against these ideas should not be honored on this campus. We have talked about him owning slaves before, but, once again, it's unforgivable. I hear over and over that "Eppes was a man of his time", but he wasn't. In fact, he was a man behind the times, as slavery was already known to be bad in his time. The practice was outlawed all over the world, even in the United States it was going out of fashion, and it was known to be just awful. In addition, I don't think the University records available are firm enough with regards to the accreditation of Francis Eppes starting this University. As someone who has looked through the meeting notes for the beginning of this University, which have not been digitized, I would attest that there isn't enough archival work being done in this area to justify this recognition. I think that if you're going to say that this man did something, we need to have all the information available, and having spent a lot of time looking into [Eppes's] history, it's very clear to me that there isn't enough information readily available to discuss his accreditation with anything. In regards to B.K. Roberts Hall, it's my understanding that Roberts had made a ruling that defied U.S. Supreme Court. In my opinion, our Law School should not be named for someone who disobeyed the Supreme Court. When talking about Francis Eppes and BK Roberts, we are looking at people who at every turn have spat in the face of everything this University stands for, and who were just awful. However, I would like to extend this vision beyond just these names and statue, and ask that when we decide on a University naming practice or policy, we don't just extend it backwards into the past, but we set a precedent for the future. For example, if someone is found to be a rapist, which we know in today's world happens all the time, or if someone becomes disgraced in their industry, their name should be removed. I'd ask that the panel consider this when thinking about their recommendations. FSU's Career Center is named after [Albert J.] Dunlap and on the first line of his Wikipedia page, it says 'he's a disgraced business man', because he was found to have committed fraud. I think when you get disgraced from your industry for being a hack and a fraud you should be removed from FSU's naming list just because these people don't represent our University in the way we'd like to be represented. There are names being recognized on campus, because of a decision made many years ago. However, if the choice had been made today, no one would have considered recognizing these individuals. We've seen what is right and what is wrong, and the time has come to remove these names. We ask that [the panel] set up a policy in which not only are those names removed, but that also blocks names that don't align with our shared values in the Seminole Creed from getting put up in the future.

[Comment #2]

Name: Jordan Greer

Affiliation: Student

Statement: I'm a senior at Florida State University, majoring in Economics, with a double minor in Political Philosophy and Math. I also serve as President for the FSU chapter of the NAACP [The National Association for the Advancement of Colored People]. I want to make sure I'm a familiar face so I'll be at all these meetings and I'll be facilitating members to come out as well. I want to take this time to really talk about my experience at Florida State and about what these statues really mean. When I chose to come to Florida State, I was accepted to both Florida State

University [FSU] and Florida A & M University [FAMU]. What sold me on FSU wasn't the fact that they had big fancy buildings, or big fancy classrooms, or that there were resources available here that FAMU just doesn't have the capability of providing. I chose FSU, because when I looked around for people that looked like me, most of the representation that I found were groundskeepers, people that worked behind the food line, people that kept the University what it was and made it what it is today, and I wanted there to be more representation of people like me in the classrooms. Upon enrolling at FSU and getting involved, I saw that when the University prioritized black and brown people, it saw them through the avenues of first-generation college students or athletes. The way FSU saw them, they were promoting a stereotype that people of color either come from poverty or they come to work for the University, and I wanted my people to represent more than that at FSU. As I got involved in different things on campus, whether it be leading the campaign to keep guns off campus, or students for a sensible drug policy, it was always from a viewpoint of my people need to be spoken for in this institution, we need to be represented. Even moving up with the NAACP, my job now is to empower students of color to have their voices heard, and right now the only reminder, the only permanent lasting reminder of African-American or black presence on campus is the integration statue, which is a reminder that 'I'm allowed to go to this school in the first place'. The only reminder at this university that matter, is that I'm allowed to go here, and that's not the representation we want. We want substantive, progressive representation for our people. By having the only representations of us being those that support stereotypes of poverty or stereotypes of the black body being disposed of and used by the University, it's an imposed deficit thinking for every minority student on campus. I think we should be reversing that course and promoting minority figures on campus that are adding not only to the physical presence of the university, but to the academic and societal definition of what being a Seminole means. In addition, we go to a school on indigenous people's lands and use indigenous people's titles and names and yet we don't have a building named after indigenous peoples. I think we should be more representative of the student body which we try to represent every day. I'll be back, and will probably have a lot more to say, but thank you for hearing me out today."

[Comment #3]

Name: Brandon Smoot

Affiliation: Alumni

Statement: I'm a graduate of FSU Law, graduating in 2014, and I'm currently a local immigration attorney. Living here in Tallahassee, I've watched this issue develop, and I actually used to work as a teaching assistant with Sandy D'Alemberte. He's someone I consider a mentor in my life, and I think he's done a lot for this University and for the FSU College of Law. In reference to the first question of 'what impact have these landmarks had on me?', I went to law school for 3 years at BK Roberts Hall. I walked through those halls every day, went to class there, and got to know some really great people there. I guess B.K. Roberts does mean a lot to me, but it doesn't necessarily mean a lot to me because of that name. Transitioning to the next question, 'what do I think [the names] are communicating?' I think we would all agree that symbols have meaning, but I feel that they have the meaning we give to them. I'm from West Virginia and when I first came here, I didn't really know who B.K. Roberts was. Sandy D'Alemberte actually told me a lot about who Roberts was, and sort of his historical role here in Florida on the Florida Supreme Court. I also learned from Sandy about the Francis Eppes statue

and realized that he had played a key role in bringing that to campus. In terms of what those statues communicate, I think a lot of it is the meaning we give to it. I'm speaking of course as what some who have spoken before me, I guess, would call a white heterosexual male, but I don't necessarily think that if you just looked at the building, you would say it's named after B.K. Roberts. I don't even know if the name is still on there or not, but if it was, I don't think you would necessarily go and say 'gosh that just offends me so much.' Regarding the next question of 'What role should University history play in the current campus environment?' I think the broader question is what role should history play in general? If the goal here is to say 'well we know these individuals have done wrongs, and because of those wrongs, they need to be excised from our historical memory', I think that's an extremely dangerous idea. If you look at communist China, this is exactly what Mao Zedong did with Confucian statues, and there's laughter [from the audience], but that's exactly what happened. They went after statues of Confucius, who of course was a great teacher, and said that those statues had to go. While the argument could be made that neither Roberts nor Eppes are comparable to Confucius, it's still sort of a picking and choosing of what statues we choose to keep up and what statues we choose to take down. Where would that stop? The first speaker mentioned the fact that Eppes was a slave owner, but under that criteria, the Washington Monument would have to come down. Under that criteria, the monument to Thomas Jefferson in DC would have to come down. I also would make note, that the first speaker was from Students for a Democratic Society, and I think this issue already came up to a vote, and the student body was pretty clear that they didn't want it removed. I'm aware that this was brought up again by President Thrasher, because of the issues that happened in Charlottesville, but the issue with the statues in Charlottesville, and a lot of statues in other places, seem to be that they were erected in a time when people were trying to re-impose white supremacy. There was a time in this country, right after the Civil War, when reconstruction failed, and there are monuments of this complete failure. For example, there was a really terrible monument in Colfax, Louisiana where, during the reconstruction era, there was a huge massacre of African Americans who were trying to exercise their right to vote. Charles Lang wrote a great book on this called *The Colfax Massacre and the Portrayal of Reconstruction*, but a monument was erected in Louisiana to commemorate what is referred to as the Colfax Riot, which is absolutely terrible. I have no problem with that coming down, because that's a mis-statement of history, an ideological stain on a historical moment, but I think that's very different than the Eppes statue, and BK Roberts name on BK Roberts Hall. In trying to bring a little bit of legal history into this, the Supreme Court really betrayed reconstruction after the Civil War, and there were a lot of terrible cases in which they gutted the Privileges & Immunity Clause, making it very difficult for the US Government to enforce Civil Rights for African-Americans in the South. I don't know if there are any monuments to the Supreme Court justices that did that, but that would have to go down as a pretty ignominious moment in our history. I think we have to accept that things can't necessarily be as clear cut as we would like them to be in terms of this monument issue. As previously mentioned, I'd be completely for a monument like the one in Colfax, Louisiana, that completely distorts history, to be removed. However, I don't think that the Eppes Statue, which I believe was placed in the 90's, was about an imposition of white supremacy, or an imposition of that on the FSU student body or anyone else. In regards to B.K. Roberts, I do recognize that his decision was disturbing, but there have been other very disturbing Supreme Court opinions, some from the Supreme Court of Florida. If someone is doing their job and interpreting the law as they are appointed to do, does that justify the removal of their name from a building that's meant to teach students how to interpret the

law? In closing, I noted that another speaker mentioned Native Americans, and I think that's a really the big elephant in the room, that we're not here today talking about the one big statue I think everybody definitely sees if you've ever gone to an FSU Football game, which is the Chief Osceola statue.

I don't know why that wasn't included, but in my opinion, that would be definitely be one of the more offensive statues and names that are used. Considering the fact that Native Americans were brutally victimized through a terrible genocide, for the sole purpose of taking their land, I keep wondering why there isn't more of an uproar for that statue to be removed. I propose including that statue in the discussion, and as I said before, if one goes down, I'm for all of them coming down, but I don't think we could just remove one and not take down the others. Thank you for your time.

[Comment #4]

Name: Dr. Ed Holifield

Affiliation: Other/ Citizen

Statement: I'd first like to thank the students at SDS because without them this wouldn't even be an issue. I'll also add that I think this should give pause to the leadership of FSU, in the sense that they should be asking themselves why they didn't raise the issue. Moving on, the comment card we were asked to complete if we wanted to speak had a place to specify whether or not you were affiliated with FSU. I guess in a technical sense I'm not affiliated with FSU, except for back in 1964, on the verge of graduating from thoroughly segregated FAMU high school, I had applied to FSU and was really surprised when they accepted me. Ultimately, I decided not to come, because I'd had enough of the segregation in Tallahassee and at the time, no black had ever graduated from FSU. Instead I went up to Pennsylvania to go to school, knowing that the first black person hadn't been admitted in to this school until 1963. [Dr. Holifield asked is anyone knew who that was and a panel member responded that it was Maxwell Courtney.] You should all know who Maxwell Courtney is, it should be a part of freshman orientation, and certainly a part of staff orientation. I shouldn't be able to ask a room full of people such as this 'who the hell was Maxwell Courtney' and only one person can tell me. Maxwell Courtney came here in 1963, after being told that blacks weren't intellectually sufficient to come to either the University of Florida or Florida State University. At the time, you had to pass something called the Florida 12th grade test, which was not designed to let people in, but to keep black people out. In my class, only 3 of us were able to pass this so called '12th grade test', me, Ronald Williams and Philip Havik, which allowed the three of us to come study at FSU. Philip Havik decided not to come. Ronald Williams did come and eventually got a degree in electrical engineering. Keep in mind, we were told all our lives that we weren't intellectually sufficient enough to come to a school like Florida State. As I said, I decided not to come, because I thought to myself, 'okay so they're going to let me in because I passed this bogus test, and there has never been a black student that graduated from Florida State at the time that I was coming in.' And I was thinking "no, not me, I'm leaving". What happened to Maxwell Courtney was a very interesting experience. After being told that blacks were so intellectually deficient, Maxwell Courtney graduated with a double major in mathematics and a social science, I forget which one, but he did it in three years. *[At this point in his comments, Dr. Holifield made an insulting and disrespectful remark that was directed at the previous speaker, Brandon Smoot, prompting Mr. Smoot to leave. The panel chair followed-up after the meeting to address the matter and made sure to outline her expectations for civility and respect at the start of all remaining Town Hall*

meetings.] The reason I'm going through this litany is to suggest that FSU owes the black community. We pay all those taxes, did all that work, and you all didn't let us in until 1963. FSU is playing catch-up and it still treats the black community with disdain. The last time I checked tenured faculty at FSU, a few years back, only 3.9%, of the tenured faculty were black and Hispanic faculty was 4%. Between 1995 and 2011 there was a 42% decline in black, undergraduate freshman enrollment. As far as I'm concerned, that's now, and you can't divorce this Eppes situation from what continues to happen at FSU now. The Black undergraduate male enrollment at FSU is 3% and that's an abomination. You can't talk about statues divorced from these realities, which you also have to deal with. In so far as the statues are concerned, I think it's an abomination that we're even having a discussion, because it points to the fact that black life in institutions such as this, really don't have any value, outside of D1 athletics. Suppose for example that Eppes had been not just anti-black, but anti-Semitic, in regard to our Jewish brothers and sisters. This wouldn't even be an issue; the statue would be gone. Instead of having a discussion everyone would be asking why the statue was even put up in the first place. Just pretend for a second that all black folks are Jewish folks, and then ask yourself, if would you be talking about whether or not the statue should come down, when in reality it would have never gone up in the first place. Thank you.

[Comment #5]

Name: Ansley Schoen

Affiliation: Student

Statement: Thank you for letting me come to speak to you today. I'm a senior here at Florida State, and ever since I was young I've loved studying history. Reading about history, that's what I loved to learn about and I also hope to apply that to my future career as well. However, I haven't always loved what I was learning about. I learned at a young age that this country is full of a lot of good, but also full of a lot of bad as well. I started doing a little research about this issue last year. I'm involved in our Student Government a little bit, and when I saw it come up, I wanted to be informed. I believe in being informed if I'm going to talk about an issue. However, I don't claim to know everything, which is why I am also here today to learn. Through my research, I learned that this statue was commissioned by Sandy D'Alemberte to honor one of FSU's founders in 2002 and it was placed at the beginning of the Legacy Walk on campus. I know the Legacy Walk is there to reflect on our school's history, who's come before us and also who will come after us. This is an important part of campus to me because my father also went here so I came as a legacy student to Florida State. I think that it is fitting that the founder of our university is placed at the front of Legacy Walk. Francis Eppes had petitioned to Congress and the Florida legislature and showed perseverance in establishing a higher education institution here in Tallahassee. The sculptor Edward Jonas thought really carefully about how he designed the statue and specifically placed the direction of the statue to face the city of Tallahassee, not the University, to represent the criticism that Eppes had faced when trying to establish the school in Tallahassee. I believe the statue is meant to honor this contribution and represent the good that Eppes did, but not glorify the bad he did, and I don't claim that we should glorify him for that. We have a lot of monuments and memorials in our nation's capital that honor the founders of this country. The founding fathers helped shape this democratic republic, which gives me the freedom to speak to you all today. However, they were a part of a dirty history as well, which we don't seek to glorify, but I don't think that anyone thinks the Washington Monument or Jefferson Memorial are meant to represent those parts of their history. You had asked about the impact that

the statue has had on me, and personally I was excited to find out that a founder of our university has ties to founder of our country. Being a history nerd growing-up I thought it was pretty cool that he was Thomas Jefferson's grandson, however, I didn't think it was cool when I learned about the bad things he had done as well. Just as we shouldn't remove the Jefferson memorial, which honors Thomas Jefferson, who was a big believer in higher education, I don't think we should remove the Eppes statue either. Preserving history is important, not only to recognize the good contributions, but also to learn from the bad contributions. I don't believe there are many benefits to erasing history. Thank you for your time.

[Comment #6]

Name: Quantrevis Jones

Affiliation: Student

Statement: I'm a second year student at FSU, majoring in criminology. I am also the Vice President of the NAACP, an organization created on February 12th, 1909 to fight for the equality of its people. Over 100 years later, we're still here today fighting for issues such as the removal of a statue. I say it's very saddening, to see that happening. I would like to start with how it makes me feel and how it may make others feel on campus. This is a university that prides itself on the Seminole Creed, and two things that I would like to highlight are respect and diversity. When you take into account what Eppes did to my people, my ancestors, that's not respect, and that's not diversity. Growing up as an African-American male, it's tough. You can't expect anyone to understand where you come from if they've never been in your shoes. However, God gave me a voice, and a platform so that I can voice my opinion. By having statues around like this, I believe it's very disrespectful to not only me, but my ancestors that he owned and it's a disrespect to the University itself that likes to pride itself on things such as diversity. If this is a diverse university, why do we have a statue that doesn't symbolize this? To me a statue is a symbolism of a person, all that they've done, both the good and the bad. You have to take all of it into account when you display a symbol at a University such as this one, and looking at it, Eppes does not symbolize anything good to me. There are many people that aren't educated on the Eppes statue and what he did in the past, however, this shouldn't matter, because the statue shouldn't have ever been there in the first place. I definitely stand for the removal of the statue, in hopes that we can move forward because that's what we are trying to do. As I've said, I'm with the NAACP and I stand for it, we've been fighting for issues for over 100 years, even before this organization was created, and we still continue to fight for these issues. If this is a world that's trying to move towards equality for all people, then I believe removing the statue is what needs to be done. Thank you.

[Comment #7]

Name: Danni Vogt

Affiliation: Alumni

Statement: I am a three time graduate of FSU, graduating from Florida High in 1972, received an undergraduate degree in 1977 with an English degree, and a law school degree in 1984. I appreciate you having this open forum. I've appeared before the panel several times already and will try not to repeat what I've already said, but I think it's important to get as wide as possible input as you can, from both sides of this issue. When you only have opinions from side, I think it can lead to not as sound a decision. Briefly, I am here to support the renaming of B. K. Roberts Hall for two reasons. First, his opinions as a FL Supreme Court Justice in the 1950s supported

segregation and kept Virgil Hawkins out of the University of Florida Law School solely because of his race. Roberts's second problem was that he defied the US Supreme Court, not once, but twice, which is serious misconduct, and a violation of his oath to uphold the constitution. Robert's name being on the building didn't impact me at all when I started law school in 1981, but when I became aware of Roberts's past in 1982, the name became a trouble to me. I think most people are ignorant of this stuff, but it made me ashamed to attend classes there and has caused me mental distress since 1982. However, the distress motivates me to come here and urge the committee to do something about this. About 10% of my class had a shared experience, where they were also upset about this when they found out, and we would joke about coming at night and tearing down the sign. Everyone else was oblivious. Once people discover these aspects of Roberts's past, having his name on the building communicates that FSU doesn't care about minorities, that they don't want to have a culture that is accepting to all students, and that they don't want to take the time to examine whether having this recognition is appropriate in 2018. Whatever role history should take on campus is for the panel to decide, but I urge you to look at history in the perspective of now. At the time, owning slaves might not have been a big deal to most people, but they didn't ask the slaves, who wouldn't have agreed. The building was named for Roberts because of his support and efforts to start the law school. No one took into account what his past was when they made this decision. I think it's the committee's charge to put a 2018 perspective on this. Roberts should be recognized for his efforts, but having his name on the building is inappropriate. Maybe recognition on a plaque or a room somewhere, but having Roberts's name on the building is too illustrious considering his past. As mentioned to the panel before, I posted a petition on a website I started regarding this issue, and the responses overwhelmingly indicate that having Roberts' name on the building negatively impacts recruiting, and hurts fundraising.

[Comment #8]

Name: Daena Senatus

Affiliation: Student

Statement: I'm a second year FSU student studying Biological Science and, minoring in Psychology. I also serve as the fundraising chair for the NAACP here at FSU. Anything having to do with the equality and justice for colored people really does hit home for me and I apologize if I become emotional. For those who want to keep the [Eppes] statue, and suggest that we make an effort to show the good and bad parts of his history, I ask you to consider that the black population at FSU is only 8.1% today, and to think about what will happen to that number over the years if you tell the whole story of Eppes. There will be no diversity at that point if orientation leaders are instructed to share that information on tours. We are all aware of the genocide of Jewish, disabled and homosexual people that occurred during the Nazi era, but nobody thinks that it's appropriate to pay homage to that disgrace. Why do we find it ok to keep someone who took lives of innocent black people and dehumanized them, as a symbol on campus? What does that say about Florida State? Last semester, the university didn't hesitate to suspend a fraternity when one of their pledges died, regardless of the immense fundraising contributions the chapter had made to Dance Marathon or the other great things they had done for the university in the past. Why is it so hard to get rid of a statue that represents a man who has brutalized the lives of black people and done so little to contribute to the founding of this school? Please think about what this says about our school.

[Comment #9]

Name: Aaron Ellis

Affiliation: Student/Staff

Statement: I'm a PhD student in Theatre Studies and I attained my masters in religion here as well. My father and my grandmother also went to FSU, so I have a lot of feelings about the University, a lot of connections to the University, and I'm very pleased to be here before you. Thank you for allowing this platform and providing this time to hear testimony about these important issues. I have really so many feelings about this issue, but I'll start with my own experiences here on campus. I didn't know until very recently who Eppes was and immediately when I found out, I thought how awful for all of those who came before who didn't know either. How awful for all those people that I saw posing with that statue, putting their hat on his head, or putting their arm around him to take a funny picture and share it with their friends. How awful for all the African-Americans on campus who never knew, who just walked by it every day and then had to come to terms with the realization that they were walking by a slave holder. It's hard for me to imagine, because I come into this situation with what we call 'white privilege', where even though I think it's awful that my University supports this history by placing the statue there, that it somehow doesn't have the same effect on me as it does others. While I think that we should certainly hear testimony from other people who also benefit from white privilege, it would be important I think for you to more heavily weigh the testimony of those who don't have the privilege to be able to just put it out of their minds and walk by it like it doesn't have anything to do with them. Right now is a particularly important time to be having this discussion, because there's a broader conversation about these issues happening around the nation, and it would be a mistake to think that 'oh well just because Dunlap isn't included in this discussion, or just because the Chief Osceola statue isn't included in this discussion, that that somehow justifies not doing anything about it'. Up until this point we couldn't really blame Florida State as an institution for not having done anything about these statues all these years, because we didn't really have a conversation about it, but now that's just no longer the case. A case has been made publicly that these symbols have an adverse effect on members of our community, and that they celebrate a history that's entirely untoward, and is a disgrace on the very name of the United States of America. At this moment in history, to say that we will allow this statue to remain, and the name to remain on the building, is to firmly plant Florida State University's power, resources, image, and prestige on the worst side of American history. I think that if we do that, then we will be enabling and virtually condoning the continued violence that people of color face in this country, and I don't want to have any part of that. My father doesn't want to have any part of that, and neither does my grandmother. In regards to the question of what to do, I think it's been said a few times that we can't erase history, and I don't think anybody here is suggesting that we do erase history. I think the question is what as an institution, what as a community do we want to celebrate about our history, and we certainly don't want to celebrate our University's entanglement with slavery. We need to think about how we go about distancing ourselves from that past which is so thoroughly a part of our past that we can't totally hide from it, we can't erase it. What do we do? I think that keeping the statue intact and putting it some place where there can be an intentional curation, or an exhibition of the University's untoward involvement with slavery and its history would be a fantastic step, and we have people on campus in the College of Fine Arts that do amazing things with curation. We could certainly hold our history up to public scrutiny and keep it around and use our own resources as a way to share our own troubled negotiation with that history, but at this point just simply turning a blind eye and hoping

everything will just not matter, it's a fundamentally unacceptable approach in this day and age. In terms of the role university history has on campus today, I think that it's absolutely imperative that when students come into the university, they're made aware of the history of the University, made aware of the entanglements that the University and its patrons have had with slavery, and with Jim Crow era policies and practice. I think that this is a really important point in FSU's trajectory, to not really dwell on whether or not these statues should be removed because I think it's clear that in our day and age with our stated commitments to diversity and to forward thinking policies and practices, they should definitely be removed from their places of honor. I think to not do that would be fundamentally hypocritical as an institution, and it would also implicate all students coming through our halls as part and parcel to that hypocrisy. Now is a really great time to start formulating ideas about how do we own an unfortunate history moving forward, realizing that it's wrong and realizing that together we have to come to terms with it, because if we do nothing, then we will just be further repressing the violence from our past, the violence that still surrounds us, and the issue won't go away. Thank You.

[Comment #10]

Name: Tyler Crown

Affiliation: Student

Statement: I'm a senior here at FSU, majoring in Political Science with a minor in Urban Studies. I'm also the President of Students for Justice in Palestine and the Political Action Chair for the FSU Chapter of NAACP. I wanted to echo some of the sentiments expressed by previous speakers and answer the first two questions the panel asked us to consider. In regards to the impact these monuments are having, I think it's clear that these monuments are a function of the history that we chose to celebrate, the history we chose to prioritize, and a representation of the figures in history which the university sees itself. The student body and university community don't have a choice, but to look at what the university chooses to prioritize in the historical figures that they honor. In previous arguments, we've heard a concern about expunging our historical record and excising these historical figures from our history, but I want to remind the panel that these efforts to remove the statue would have been quite impossible without a detailed and honest history of these figures. For example, without dutiful research about Francis Eppes, we would not be here right now. The suggestion calling for the removal of the statue and the renaming of these buildings is by no means to white wash history. History has been our greatest asset in this debate and I think to characterize our position as an anti-historical one is malicious. I also want to address that I don't think it's clear that we require monuments of this kind to read and write our history. Between the time that the Eppes statue was commissioned and the time that it was unveiled, which I believe was in 2002, the Governor of Florida at the time, Jeb Bush, repealed Affirmative Action, after which point black enrollment at FSU fell into free fall, and if I'm not mistaken it's still decreasing. In any case, the black population at FSU is currently at 8.1%, which we heard mentioned earlier. Concerning B. K. Roberts, I also wanted to address something I heard earlier, where someone said it was appropriate to have his name on the building, because through his actions, career, and reputation, he taught student there how to interpret the law with integrity, but I find that suspect given his record in the FL Supreme Court, which we've also heard about earlier today. I think it's clear that the proper thing to do is to put these parts of our history where they belong. We should maintain the history, because it's important for our understanding of ourselves and our place in history, but the names and statue should be removed.

[Comment #11]

Name: Ken Plummer

Affiliation: Alumni

Statement: I'm a graduate of FSU. I hold two degrees from this university, an undergraduate degree in Accounting from the School of Business, and an EDS degree from the College of Education. When I arrived here in this city and on the FSU campus in 1972, as a transfer student from Morehouse College in Atlanta, Georgia, which could not be more the opposite of what my experience was here at FSU, I had no knowledge of the history of FSU. I knew that it existed and that it was one of the state's largest colleges, but I needed to be back in the State of Florida for the sake of tuition costs. My family was not a wealthy, I was on financial aid trying to work and borrow my way through college. I had no idea of the history behind the statues, monuments, names on the buildings, and all other such representations on campus, however, just my presence on this campus gave me a feeling that none of this, the whole existence of this place, none of it was designed or created with me or anyone who looks like me in mind. I was keenly made aware of that when I arrived. The statues that I passed everyday on my way back and forth from classes, it was a forgone conclusion for me that they represented nothing positive, welcoming, or nurturing to me. Even without knowing the specifics of their history that seemed evident and indisputable to me. In regards to the question of impact, I didn't know the history, but what I was feeling as I walked past them, and being among them on campus was powerful enough. However, I had to overcome that feeling, because I needed to get a college degree. I was the oldest of six siblings and the first in my family to go to college. Along with my siblings, a whole community back at home in Ft. Lauderdale, FL, was depending on me and hanging everyone hope and dream on me being the first one to get a college degree. As such, I had to move beyond those kinds of symbols and put on the back burner what they might otherwise be suggesting to me. After finishing my bachelor's degree, I taught in Broward County for numerous years, until I eventually became a School District administrator. However, since I left here with a degree in Accounting, once I had made the transition from business to teaching, I decided to go back for further education, specifically in education. When I returned to FSU years later to study for my doctorate, I once again had to look beyond the symbols and representation of them, because I was on a greater mission. Ultimately, I attained my master's degree and not my doctorate, due to problems with my and my family's health. In all of my efforts to attain the two degrees that I have, I left here with them not ever feeling like a proud FSU alumni. I never felt like I was ever embraced and totally welcomed, and included in what FSU was all about. I never had that good and fuzzy feelings, because none of those monuments that we have been discussing or the names on the buildings seemed to have a resonance with me, for me, or about me. There was nothing in those representations that struck a chord within me to make me feel proud about being here. I was incredibly proud and appreciative of the opportunity to be here, by virtue of law. I was also proud that I was able to successfully complete the requirements necessary to attain those degrees, but it wasn't about being be proud to be an FSU graduate. FSU didn't have a culture or an environment, or didn't seem to have a real commitment to having me here in the first place. I just happened to arrive here and take advantage of the course work and the opportunity to complete it, but there was no great sense of pride associated with my being an FSU student. I think a university, an institution of higher learning, an institution of preparing future minds for our world, has a critical role in terms of not just educating, but embracing those who attend the university. The university has a critical role in making every student, every faculty member, and

anyone else who comes here to feel welcome, to feel proud to be here, and there should be symbols, and representations for everyone who is here, so that we can all feel proud of being here. At all universities, but especially, here in the state capital, we should all have symbols and names on buildings that we can identify with, that we can relate to and feel proud that they are someone like me. Being in the capital, FSU should represent the best of everything that Florida is about. In regards to a solution, I do think some of these symbols should be removed, because I grew-up under the adage, “when you learn better, you do better.” We’ve learned better, and now we at this university, need to do better about the representations of it. They shouldn’t necessarily be destroyed, as we perhaps have an opportunity for a teachable moment, but they should be put in a place where they can be properly curated, where history is not rewritten, but properly told.

[Comment #12]

Name: Cassandra D. Jenkins

Affiliation: Alumni

Statement: I’m a three term alumnus of FSU, I received two bachelor’s degrees and a master’s degree. In addition, I’ve served on several Boards, Commissions, and Task Forces here within the university, including the FSU Alumni Association, FSU National Seminole Boosters, and FSU Black Alumni Association. Thank you for giving me the opportunity to speak before this distinguished group today. In terms of the question regarding the impact these landmarks have had on me or others, they help us understand and put in perspective that this university, which I’m a proud graduate of, was started by those that were steeped in slavery, segregation, and to a certain degree Jim Crowism and then we have moved forward now. They are communicating that our history is steeped in things that we consider negative now, including parts of our FSU history that we might want to move forward from. History should always be a part of our current campus, because if we don’t understand history and from where we’ve come, we are destined to possibly make the same mistakes and do things we don’t need to do in the future. History is important to everything we do, and in helping us understand who we are, where we are, where we need to move forward. Our history does and should play a role on today’s campus, but we should use this an opportunity for a teaching moment. More specifically, as a way for our students, faculty, staff, and community at large to better understand all aspects of our history and put it into perspective in terms of what we need to do moving forward in order to raise ourselves to be better than what we are now. With regards to what should be done, in some situations I would like to see the names and possibly some of the statues removed, because as we move forward, we need to think about the message we want to communicate. They shouldn’t be destroyed, but instead moved and preserved as a part of history, because they are. Putting them in a museum gives us an opportunity to provide appropriate historical context and allow people to learn about FSU from the beginning up until now. I don’t think that destroying these landmarks will remove those negative parts of our history from who we are, or help us learn anything. However, while there’s nothing to be gained from their destruction, putting them into context, and helping to explain the role they played and the fact that there were some negative condonations associated with these individuals could provide an opportunity to learn. We should consider removing them, but at a minimum we should provide context, because if we remove them now for their role in slavery, segregation and Jim Crowism, what’s to say that in the future, somebody might consider the Integration Statue negative and want to remove it as well. If we start removing things, because they are seen as negative, we might start a bad precedent for the future. We also need to set a policy as a university in terms of how we would address this in the

future and set criteria that would determine whether something should be kept, destroyed, or moved and provided historical context. As we try to do certain things to improve who we are and how we represent who we are now, we need to remember there are always unintended consequences, and while we might think we are doing good now, a few years down the road, there might be an unintended negative impact on the people we are trying to serve. We need to keep this in mind as we move forward.

Ms. Gibbs thanked all of the speakers for their comments, and indicating that she hadn't received any other comment cards from audience members requesting to speak, she proceed to open the floor to make sure no one else wanted to address the panel.

[No additional comments]

- Adjourn

Ms. Gibbs thanked the panel members for coming and indicated that she looked forward to seeing them on Thursday, at the next two town hall sessions, then adjourned the meeting.

The meeting ended at 6:41p.m.