



**Recommendations from the Task Force on the History
of Clemson to the Board of Trustees**

**Submitted
February 5, 2016**

MEMBERS OF THE TASK FORCE

Members of the task force are as follows: Trustee David Wilkins, Chair; Trustee David Dukes; Trustee Louis Lynn; Trustee Bob Peeler; Trustee Kim Wilkerson; Chairman Smyth McKissick, ex-officio; and Trustee Allen Wood, ex-officio.

CHARGE OF THE TASK FORCE

The Board of Trustees (BOT) established a task force charged with the task of developing a set of recommendations on how to best tell the complete history of Clemson University for current and future generations. By working closely with the President and Administration, the task force engaged a diverse group of stakeholders for their feedback and ideas on this issue.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

The task force worked to develop a comprehensive set of actionable recommendations for telling Clemson's history in a way that is forthcoming, accurate and beneficial to the entire Clemson family. The process was guided by the following principles:

- Explore multiple viewpoints both internal and external to the University
- Maintain a dialogue that is open, honest and respectful
- Acknowledge all aspects of history
- Create meaningful recommendations grounded in research and evidence that result in actionable steps
- Have a lasting impact

THE PROCESS

In fall 2015, the task force on the history of Clemson, in conjunction with the President's office and the Administration, engaged in a multi-month process with students, faculty, staff and alumni to gather feedback. The process began with the launch of a dedicated website, where members of the Clemson family and community had an opportunity to submit their opinions and feedback. In addition to comments submitted through the website and through hard copy letters, members of the task force and Administration held a series of in-person meetings with key stakeholders. Through this process, the task force and the Administration began to better understand the priorities of those with a vested interest in the University and surrounding community. The recommendations developed and listed in this report reflect the counsel and consideration of those who participated.

MATERIALS PRESENTED AND REVIEWED

By launching a dedicated website in September 2015 as a central platform for gathering feedback, the task force gathered insights and recommendations from students, faculty, staff and alumni. The President's office notified the broader Clemson community of the website's

launch and purpose via email, provided instructions for submitting feedback either through the website or through other channels for those without access, and conducted office hours for those who wanted to offer feedback in person.

From the website's launch until it closed for comment in December 2015, 6,308 unique visitors came to the site, and 198 submissions were received.

In addition to soliciting comments via the website, members of the task force and the President's Chief of Staff also personally met with key individuals and organizations over a three-month period. These select stakeholders provided the collective feedback of their memberships, who represent more than 150,000 members of the Clemson family and community. Leaders from the following Clemson organizations and entities met members of the task force:

- Alumni Association
- Black Alumni Association
- Board of Visitors
- University Foundation
- Diversity Advisory Council
- Faculty Senate
- Graduate Student Body
- Staff Senate
- Undergraduate Student Body
- University's History Department
- University history experts

OVERVIEW

The recommendations stated herein provide a series of tactics to best achieve the goal of telling Clemson's complete history. These recommendations are based on the feedback, themes and ideas expressed by participating groups and individuals during this process. The following recommendations will require additional resources and funding to implement.

Throughout the process, the various stakeholders provided diverse feedback, but several recurring themes, ideas and recommendations emerged. Participants largely agreed that the historical narrative needs to be updated to tell the University's complete story. These recommendations reflect this general theme and can be undertaken concurrently with the updating of the narrative.

The Board's Resolution creating this task force made clear our challenge was telling the complete, though imperfect, story of this great University – and that includes the names of our historical campus buildings. It is worth noting that the South Carolina Heritage Act of 2000 clearly states that the authority to change the names of historical buildings rests solely with the South Carolina General Assembly. The Board is bound to comply with existing law and therefore

name changes were not considered. Keeping the names of our historical buildings intact ensures important, hard stories will continue to be told and their lessons learned. A building named Tillman Hall does not celebrate Tillman's views but serves as a reminder to all that Clemson's history is complex and of where we have come as a university and a nation.

The task force's recommendations are categorized by short-, medium- and long-term goals based on the estimated time of completion. While the Board of Trustees shall maintain right of final approval of all recommended projects, the Administration shall take the lead on and be responsible for the implementation of these recommendations.

These recommendations shall be the responsibility of the President of the University for full implementation. The President shall be allowed full discretion to create advisory committees and engage in consultation with interested parties to implement these recommendations but such implementation shall be the ultimate responsibility of the President with final approval for such implementation by the Board of Trustees.

The President shall keep the Board of Trustees informed as to the progress of the implementation of the recommendations on a periodic basis and at a minimum at each quarterly Board of Trustees meeting as directed by the Board.

OVERARCHING RECOMMENDATION: UPDATE CLEMSON'S HISTORICAL NARRATIVE

Clemson must tell its complete story. The narrative should include Clemson's racial history, tell the story of Thomas Green Clemson's will and the University's roots in agriculture, the transition from a military school to a civilian school, and the transition from an all-male University to a co-ed, ethnically and culturally diverse institution. An official and complete historical narrative will ensure that Clemson's complex and storied past is told consistently across various platforms and to diverse audiences.

The task force specifically tasks the President with the responsibility for crafting an official historical narrative by the Spring of 2017. The President will provide the Board of Trustees with (at a minimum) quarterly progress reports until the narrative is completed.

SHORT-TERM RECOMMENDATIONS

The charge of telling Clemson's complete history is an ongoing task, but certain recommendations are intended to be completed in the short-term (i.e., within six months). Those recommendations are as follows:

RECOMMENDATION: REVIEW & UPDATE BIOGRAPHIES OF FOUNDERS AND OTHER HISTORICAL FIGURES

The task force recommends continuing and expanding the work currently underway to update the biographies of Clemson's founders, including but not limited to: Thomas

Green Clemson, Anna Maria Calhoun Clemson, Benjamin Tillman, John C. Calhoun and Floride C. Calhoun. Additional historical figures, who will also require updated biographies, should be considered. Final approval of any such biographies is required by the Board of Trustees.

RECOMMENDATION: CREATE AND PLACE MARKERS / PLAQUES

The task force recommends creating and updating place markers and plaques across Clemson’s campus to bring the school’s history to life. Markers and plaques should be created for important and historical locations, such as, but not limited to: Fort Hill, Fort Hill Slave Quarters, Tillman Hall and Gantt Circle, etc. These markers will help convey the full stories of the individuals who helped build and define Clemson and will add significance and context to the names of buildings on campus. Final approval of such plaques and markers is required by the Board of Trustees.

RECOMMENDATION: BETTER SIGNAGE FOR GANTT CIRCLE

The task force recommends that the University erect better, more prominent signage for Gantt Circle that provides appropriate historical context about Harvey Gantt and why the circle bears his name.

RECOMMENDATION: BETTER SIGNAGE FOR HISTORICAL BUILDINGS ON CAMPUS

The task force recommends that the University erect more prominent signage of each historical building, including but not limited to, the original name of the building and the history relating to its current name.

RECOMMENDATION: CREATE SOCIAL MEDIA ACCOUNTS TO SHARE FACTS AND INFORMATION ON THE HISTORY OF CLEMSON

In order to ensure Clemson’s official narrative reaches multiple and diverse audiences, the task force recommends creating social media accounts specific to sharing historical facts and the University’s story. The creation of these channels is also an opportunity to engage, involve and enlist the help of current students, particularly members of student government, members of the history department and Clemson’s communications team.

MEDIUM-TERM RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations are intended to be completed in the second six months of the project’s first year. Some are dependent on the updated historical narrative. These recommendations require additional time to complete and will benefit from the short-term recommendations being implemented.

RECOMMENDATION: CREATE WEBPAGE ON THE UNIVERSITY'S WEBSITE DEDICATED TO HISTORY OF CLEMSON UNIVERSITY

Participants noted that information on Clemson's history exists, but is not always readily accessible. Therefore, the task force recommends creating a highly visible webpage on the University's website, where audiences can find information on Clemson's history through text, videos and a virtual historical tour. All content will mirror the University's updated historical narrative. The university's web services department, along with the history department, university history experts and students interested in website development through Clemson's creative inquiry should be involved in the creation of this website.

RECOMMENDATION: ESTABLISH A CLEMSON HISTORY WEEK ON CAMPUS

Nearly all participants surveyed were proud of Clemson's history. They also agreed on the important role of Clemson's alumni network, suggesting that former students be engaged to tell the school's story. Considering both these sentiments, the task force recommends establishing a history week on campus to bring back alumni, commemorate Clemson's history and celebrate its future.

This effort should involve Clemson's Alumni Association, Board of Visitors, members of the history department and interested students. The President shall work with these groups to identify a week and coordinate the logistics.

RECOMMENDATION: DEDICATE A MONUMENT/STATUE TO PROMINENT HISTORICAL FIGURES

Erecting statues of important historical figures is another way to honor and preserve Clemson's history and commemorate important milestones in Clemson's history that should be considered. The President will create a committee led by members of the history department as well as the university archivist to study the feasibility of such new historical monuments. Final approval of any such monument or statue is required by the Board of Trustees.

LONG-TERM RECOMMENDATIONS

The following longer-term recommendations are designed to be completed within 12 to 18 months.

RECOMMENDATION: ESTABLISH A CENTER/MUSEUM ON CAMPUS DEDICATED TO THE HISTORY AND CULTURE OF CLEMSON

The task force recommends consideration of a center or museum solely dedicated to Clemson's complete history, where artifacts can be housed and the updated historical

narrative can be told. This center will not only educate and engage the Clemson family, but the larger community. The task force charges the Administration with examining the feasibility of developing a new center or museum either in an existing or new space.

RECOMMENDATION: INTRODUCE CLEMSON HISTORY COURSE

Of the individuals surveyed, alumni and faculty were generally better versed on Clemson's history than its students. To improve current students' understanding and interest in Clemson's past, the task force recommends developing an elective course in the history department that focuses on Clemson's complete history and updated historical narrative. The task force recommends the University develop the syllabus for the course and identify ways to ensure maximum participation.

RECOMMENDATION: CREATE CAMPUS HISTORICAL TOURS

Clemson's history is unique and has played a significant role in America's history. Therefore, the task force charges the Administration with creating a historical tour on campus not only for prospective and current students, but for the broader Clemson community. By highlighting historical events, buildings and monuments, the tour will impart the story of Clemson's past and its role in the history of the South. The task force recommends that the Administration engage members from the History department, Board of Visitors and interested students in this effort.

CONCLUSION

While this report and these recommendations mark the formal completion of the task force's work, we want to make it clear that this work represents the beginning, not the end, of the telling of the complete history of Clemson University.

History holds for us many lessons and one of them is that every great institution is built by imperfect craftsmen. And so it is with Clemson University. Our beginnings reflect both a soaring vision and tragic flaws. In short, it is the history of us, unchangeable, and worth the telling.

The task force is dedicated to telling Clemson's complete history. This effort supports the broader initiatives and ongoing work being driven by President Clements and the Administration to create a more diverse and inclusive campus.

The task force would like to thank all the individuals who took the time to provide feedback and voice their opinions in this important undertaking, as well as those who have been tasked with implementing these recommendations. Together, the complete history of Clemson University will be told for current and future generations to come.