

## Buildings and Landmarks Review: Findings and Recommendations November 20, 2020

### Introduction

At the direction of the President and Provost, this committee was charged with reviewing building names and landmarks at Minnesota State University, Mankato. Colleges and universities across the United States set out to rename buildings and remove monuments that fail to reflect the mission and values of the institution. These changes are usually a response to building names and monuments that diverge from ideas of diversity and inclusion. In the wake of the death of George Floyd, protesters called for the removal, relocation, or replacement of public monuments and statues representing constant reminders of state-sponsored symbols of institutional racism. Local governments and protesters acted by removing or replacing these symbols in response to the public outcry. This committee, therefore, proposed to assess and evaluate building names and monuments in accordance with Minnesota State University, Mankato's ideas and values of diversity and inclusion. These include understanding, accepting, and valuing differences between individuals, including differences among races, ethnicities, sexual orientations, genders, ages, and religions, and challenging prejudicial and discriminatory behaviors and policies. The committee consisted of an advisory team who developed guidelines for research, and a project team of skilled researchers who conducted historical research of persons whose names appear on buildings and landmarks at Minnesota State University, Mankato. The committee was charged with reporting its findings to the University President and Provost.

### I. Naming Practices at Minnesota State University, Mankato

Historically the University has named facilities in honor of people who have contributed to the betterment of the University. This includes long-serving faculty, staff and administrators, friends of the University, as well as philanthropic donors.<sup>1</sup>

There are two current sets of guidelines that Minnesota State University, Mankato follows in naming campus spaces: the Minnesota State Board of Trustees Board Policy and Procedures and the Minnesota State University Mankato Foundation Bylaws and Policies.

According to Minnesota State Board Policy [6.8 Naming Buildings, Sites and Common Areas](#), all campus building names must be approved by the Chancellor of the Minnesota State system. Board Procedure [6.8.1 Naming Buildings, Sites and Common Areas](#) outlines the System criteria for naming of campus spaces and outlines the consultation, review and approval process.

The Minnesota State University, Mankato Foundation Bylaws and Policies include the [Naming and Un-Naming Policy](#)<sup>2</sup> which outlines the local campus process.

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<sup>1</sup> There have been a few exceptions to this since the founding of the school. This description fits all current buildings on campus.

<sup>2</sup> Naming and Un-Naming Policy found on page 138 of the pdf.

## II. Recommended Principles, Research Questions, and Process

The Advisory Committee researched processes and procedures that other universities developed to conduct similar reviews. It offered three principles, a series of research questions, and a suggested process to guide the research committee in its work.

### Principles

1. The legacy of the building's namesake should be in alignment with the stated current [mission, vision, and values](#) of Minnesota State University, Mankato.
  - a. Mission: Minnesota State University, Mankato promotes learning through effective undergraduate and graduate teaching, scholarship, and research in service to the state, the region and the global community.
  - b. Vision: Minnesota State Mankato will be known as a university where people expect to go further than they thought possible by combining knowledge and the passion to achieve great things. Our foundation for this vision is our heritage of both dedicated teaching and the direct application of knowledge to improve a diverse community and world. We will achieve it by actively nurturing the passion within students, faculty and staff to push beyond possibility on the way to realizing dreams.
  - c. Values: Integrity and respect in the way we conduct ourselves; Diversity in who we are and what we do; Access to our programs and services that create opportunities for all to pursue their dreams; Responsibility to those we serve by providing an education that inspires solutions to society's challenges; and Excellence in our academic and non-academic pursuits.
2. The legacy of a building's namesake should be in alignment with the stated [diversity and inclusion goals](#) of Minnesota State University, Mankato.
  - a. Minnesota State Mankato is committed to promoting diversity and continues to move forward in implementing this strategic priority at all levels of the University. We have a responsibility to acknowledge and respect diversity, as it is an essential component of a quality educational environment. Diversity enhances the educational process as it enriches us personally and professionally, it fosters good citizenship, and develops strong communities that maximize the potential of its members. Diversity promotes economic prosperity as it prepares globally-oriented citizens who can compete successfully in an interconnected global economy and who can work effectively with persons of different backgrounds. At Minnesota State Mankato, we care about diversity because we want to foster an actively engaged and inclusive learning and working community based upon civility, trust, integrity, and respect. We care about diversity because each of us—students, staff, faculty, and administrators— need a safe and respectful place to learn and to work. The review will be conducted according to the guidelines of professional historical inquiry and research.

## Research Questions

These research questions are included to guide and inform the review of campus buildings and landmarks.<sup>3</sup>

1. What (if any) are the broader historical memories linked to the individual's public legacy/legacies? In other words, what (if any) is the predominant view/interpretation of the individual under review?
2. Why did the university choose to honor a given person or namesake?
3. Was the principal legacy of the individual under review contested by their contemporaries at the time?
4. To what extent do new findings and research support or contest the current public legacy?
5. To what extent does the inclusion of new research perspectives, perspectives from historically marginalized groups, and changing societal values influence our understanding of the public legacy attached to the individual in question?
6. Does sufficient evidence exist to demonstrate that the actions or viewpoints of the individual for whom a building, space, or place is named may be inconsistent with respecting the importance of all similarities and differences among human beings, or of fostering inclusiveness, understanding, acceptance and respect in a multicultural society?
7. Did the namesake's principal legacy impact local circumstances unique to the state, region, and/or location of the University?

## Process

At the direction of the Advisory Team, the Research Team did a preliminary review of all named campus buildings and the Abraham Lincoln statue to determine the individual's public legacies, place them in historical context and consider them against the current mission, vision, and diversity and inclusion values of the university.

1. University archives staff worked to retrieve documents for the research team to review. This included the development of a research checklist to consistently review each individual against material available in the University Archives physical and digital collections along with publicly available information online. The review focused on the words and actions of the individual related to diversity and inclusion topics.

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<sup>3</sup> These research questions are informed by examples of policies and procedures from other institutions, specifically Yale University, University of California, Berkeley, and Oregon State University. Please see the bibliography for citations.

2. A rough biography of the individual was compiled to put their life and work in context and to understand their public legacy, past and present. This included why the building was named after them. Relevant items were scanned or linked in the research checklist and biography.
3. Two members of the Research Team reviewed the compiled files for each of the namesakes. Each namesake was then discussed at a Team meeting. The research questions were considered to determine if change should be recommended for any of the buildings and landmarks reviewed.
4. The Research Team was originally asked to also review the named outdoor spaces and campus landmarks, but time did not allow for this additional research. The Abraham Lincoln statue was included because it is known to be an issue for Indigenous students.

See the attached Research team report for a complete listing of buildings and landmarks reviewed and our identified concerns.

### III. Committee Recommendations

1. Recommended action on immediate findings from research committee.  
The Research Team researched and reviewed 23 buildings and identified no major concerns at this time. One landmark was reviewed, the Abraham Lincoln statue in the Centennial Student Union, and was identified as a major concern. Change is recommended. Please see the Research Team report for more details.
2. Recommendation for university policy development. The advisory team recommends that the President and Provost consider the need for a campus policy and process that would guide potential challenges to the suitability of a building or landmark name. Colleges and Universities around the country have developed such policies and processes in the past decade. We further recommend that any new naming on campus be aligned with the principles above.
3. Representation of people of color and their accomplishments should be the top priority for the naming of any new buildings that are not philanthropically funded. The committee also recommends that acknowledgement of these individuals could be done through the naming of signature rooms/locations on campus (i.e., CSU Ballroom and Armstrong Lecture Halls) and/or statues, monuments, etc. This will help us acknowledge the individuals in a timelier fashion while not having to wait years before a new building is constructed.
4. Recommend that remaining named outdoor spaces and landmarks be reviewed.

### IV. Committee Membership

Project Coordinator:

Daardi Mixon, University Archivist

Archival Team:

Jesse Brown, Graduate Student Intern  
Qendresa Isniqui, Graduate Assistant  
Adam Smith, Archives Technician

Research Team:

Rhonda Dass, Professor of American Indigenous Studies  
Chad McCutchen, Assistant Professor of History  
Kenneth Reid, Director of African American Affairs  
Gwen Westermann, Professor of English

Advisory Team:

Christopher Brown, Acting Dean of Arts and Humanities  
Christopher Corley, Interim Dean of Library and Learning  
Joniesha Hayes, Student Representative, Social Work, '22  
H. Matthew Loayza, Dean of Social and Behavioral Sciences  
Michelle Reinhardt, Director of Stewardship and Foundation Relations

## V. Selected Bibliography

### Examples from other Universities

Renaming policies and processes from more than fifteen universities around the United States were consulted on this project. The examples listed below were utilized extensively.

Oregon State University. “Architectural and Academic Unit Naming Policy.” Effective, October 26, 2017. [https://policy.oregonstate.edu/policy/UPSM/04-015\\_architectural\\_naming\\_policy](https://policy.oregonstate.edu/policy/UPSM/04-015_architectural_naming_policy).

Stanford University. “Principles and Procedures for Renaming Buildings and Other Features at Stanford University.” Accepted 2018. <https://campusnames.stanford.edu/>.

University of California, Berkeley. “Building Naming Review Committee.” Approved March 16, 2016. <https://chancellor.berkeley.edu/task-forces/building-name-review-committee>

University of Michigan. “Historical Name Reviews.” Approved, January 2017. <https://president.umich.edu/committees/presidents-advisory-committee-on-university-history/reviews-of-historical-names-in-and-on-university-buildings/>

University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. “UNC at Chapel Hill Board of Trustees’ Policy for the Consideration of the Removal of Names on University Buildings and Public Spaces.” Approved July 16, 2020. <https://bot.unc.edu/files/2020/07/Final-Policy-Adopted-7.16.2020.pdf>

University of Virginia. “Naming Policies for the University of Virginia.” Approved, October 12, 2018. <https://uvapolicy.virginia.edu/policy/EXT-004>

Yale University. “Committee to Establish Principles on Renaming.” Approved, December 2, 2016. <https://president.yale.edu/advisory-groups/presidents-committees/committee-establish-principles-renaming-0>.

#### Other Sources

Examples of other sources reviewed during this project are included here.

Meyerhofer, Kelly. “UW-Madison Students Call for Removal of Abraham Lincoln Statue on Bascom Hill.” *Wisconsin State Journal*, June 26, 2020. [https://madison.com/wsj/news/local/education/university/uw-madison-students-call-for-removal-of-abraham-lincoln-statue-on-bascom-hill/article\\_b12c83c9-38a1-5e68-9964-beabe4046d02.html](https://madison.com/wsj/news/local/education/university/uw-madison-students-call-for-removal-of-abraham-lincoln-statue-on-bascom-hill/article_b12c83c9-38a1-5e68-9964-beabe4046d02.html)

Stephens, Dustin. “A Monumental Reckoning.” *CBS News*, October 11, 2020. <https://www.cbsnews.com/news/a-monumental-reckoning/>