

# Board of Trustees Task Force on Naming Policy

## REPORT AND RECOMMENDATIONS

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Approved by the Board of Trustees on May 15, 2021

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## **SUMMARY**

Recognizing that at this moment of national reflection, it would be helpful to have a set of principles if it chooses to exercise its authority in naming or renaming buildings and spaces on campus, the Willamette University Board of Trustees authorized the creation of the Willamette University Task Force on Naming Policy.

The Board charged the Task Force with the following specific responsibilities:

1. Review existing policies on naming of buildings and other structures and spaces, ensuring that they are clear and transparent to all stakeholders, including donors.
2. Specify and document processes through which members of the Willamette community may raise issues of building/structure/space naming or renaming for the attention of the Board of Trustees.
3. Articulate principles that could be used in deciding to remove a historical name from a building/structure/space.
4. Articulate principles that could guide Willamette in decisions about how building/structure/space naming or renaming might be used to recognize key figures from Willamette's history, with particular focus on ensuring that the ensemble of campus names reflects the genuine diversity of Willamette's community.

The Task Force held virtual meetings on December 7, 2020, January 14, 2021, March 11, 2021, and April 28, 2021. A sub-committee was formed following the January 14 meeting and given the responsibility of drafting this final report.

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## FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

### CHARGE 1

Review existing policies on naming of buildings and other structures and spaces, ensuring that they are clear and transparent to all stakeholders, including donors.

#### **Findings:**

There is an existing Willamette University policy on naming a building/structure/space in recognition of a financial gift. The Task Force found it to be clear and transparent.

At the time the Task Force held its first meeting, there was no written policy for naming a building/structure/space for an individual in recognition of their accomplishments, rather than in recognition of a financial donation. The university has since drafted a policy that the Task Force found to be clear and transparent. The draft policy is attached as Addendum A.

### CHARGES 2, 3 and 4

Specify and document processes through which members of the Willamette community may raise issues of building/structure/space naming or renaming for the attention of the Board of Trustees;

Articulate principles that could be used in deciding to remove a historical name from a building/structure/space; and

Articulate principles that could guide Willamette in decisions about how building/structure/space naming or renaming might be used to recognize key figures from Willamette's history, with particular focus on ensuring that the ensemble of campus names reflects the genuine diversity of Willamette's community.

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## **Findings:**

The process through which members of the Willamette community may propose **naming** a building/structure/space are specified and documented in draft university policy previously mentioned and attached as Addendum A.

The current principles used in deciding to remove a name from a building/structure/space are too general and need to be closely connected to Willamette's history and mission.

The current ensemble of building/structure/space names on the Willamette campus does not reflect the genuine diversity of the Willamette community.

## **Recommendation:**

Based on the above findings, the Task Force recommends that the Board of Trustees approve a new statement of principles and processes for removing a name on a building/structure/space, and the possible renaming of that building/structure/space. This recommended new statement is attached as Addendum B.

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## REFLECTION AND FURTHER RECOMMENDATIONS

As an institution and community dedicated to advancing knowledge and fostering lives of achievement, contribution, and meaning, Willamette University recognizes the critical importance of history, culture and the dynamics of the human experience. We also recognize the importance of discourse, study, research, questioning and refining our understanding of history, culture and the dynamics of human experience. We are clear that there is a distinction in forms of voice and speech between discourse of “ideas” (books, speakers, the study of historical figures, etc.) where their presence and full opportunities for examination and discussion are part of intellectual freedom and the core learning mission of Willamette University and of “naming” (buildings, spaces, programs, etc.) which are expressions of the institution’s own voice and a proclamation of what it values, honors and stands for. The process of considering and possibly changing names is part of advancing discourse, recognizing the power of symbols and of the institution’s voice when it confers honors, in particular honors that imbue and define place and that can span generations.

Willamette University is not alone in examining and reviewing the process of naming and renaming buildings and spaces. In preparing our recommendations, the Task Force reviewed recent reports from Yale, Emory, Stanford, and several other institutions of higher education. Each institution has issues and complexities unique to their particular history.

Throughout our discussion, the Task Force was mindful of the fact that Willamette’s founding is fundamentally tied to the first colonial developments in the Willamette Valley, and that our campus is located on the historic lands of the Kalapuya, who today are represented by the Confederated Tribes of the Grand Ronde, and the Confederated Tribes of the Siletz Indians, and whose relationship to the land continues to this day. We also reflected on the fact that when Oregon entered the union in 1859—17 years after Willamette’s founding—it did so with a state constitution that specifically excluded Blacks from living in the state.

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The Task Force believes that understanding, acknowledging, and sharing the complete and honest history of our institution, state, and region is a mission to be embraced by the Willamette University and community.

Therefore, the Task Force recommends that the University establish a proactive process to review existing names of campus buildings and spaces in the context of the principles contained in Addendum B.

Finally, the Task Force recommends that to ensure transparency and community knowledge and ownership, this final report should be shared with the Willamette University community.

**TASK FORCE MEMBERS:**

Kerry Tymchuk '81 JD '84, Life Trustee / Task Force Chair

Gil Carrasco, Professor of Law

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Ramona Halcomb, Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indians

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Colleen Kawahara, Chief of Staff to the President / Task Force Staff

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Claire Matthews-Lingen '21, ASWU President

Shelby Radcliffe, VP for Advancement

Willie Richardson, Oregon Black Pioneers

East Steelman '22, Native Indigenous Student Union

Colby Takeda '11, Trustee

Karen Wood, University Chaplain / EDI Coordinator

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## **ADDENDUM A**

### **Honorific Naming Guidelines for Buildings and Spaces -**

#### **INTRODUCTION:**

An honorific naming is a naming not supported by a gift. The naming of a facility or program that honors a person in the absence of a gift shall remain a rare method of recognizing individuals and the standards for such will be demanding to protect the university's ability to continue to attract gifts to support its programs. Proposals for an honorific naming without associated gifts will not be considered for spaces or entities that have been previously identified as gift naming opportunities in fundraising plans.

#### **PURPOSE:**

The Honorific Naming Policy for Buildings and Spaces establishes the criteria for honorific naming of spaces and programs to maintain equitable practices across campus. This policy is in addition to the Naming Guidelines (Addendum A) established by the university's Advancement Division regarding naming of endowments and physical spaces to honor the distinguished contributions of donors to Willamette University. This policy will be consistent with industry standards and best practices that follow all ethical guidelines and applicable laws and statutes.

This policy applies equally to all university departments, faculties and facilities.

#### **Qualifications:**

1. Honorific naming of buildings and spaces are to recognize a person/family/group who have attained achievements of extraordinary and lasting distinction.

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2. The honoree must exhibit an image and demonstrate integrity consistent with the values and mission of the university.
  3. A proposed honoree shall have achieved distinction in one or more of the following ways:
    - a. Be a person/family/group or organization who bears a special relationship with Willamette University, and
    - b. Represents historical significance to the university or community and who helps tell the story of the university.
    - c. While serving the university in an academic capacity, the person/family/group has demonstrated high scholarly distinction and has earned a national or international reputation;
    - d. While serving the university in an important administrative capacity, the person/family/group has rendered distinguished service which warrants recognition of the individual's exceptional contributions to the welfare of the university;
    - e. An alumnae/alumnus who has contributed in truly exceptional ways to the welfare of the institution or achieved such unique distinction as to warrant recognition.
    - f. In general, academic and administrative units should not propose honorific naming as a way to recognize the contributions of past or present employees, volunteers, or alumni. The university is fortunate to have many such contributors and is not able to honor them all with namings.
  2. When a person/family/group has served the university in an academic or important administrative capacity, or has served the community, state, or nation in an elected



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or appointed position, a proposal may be made for naming in honor of the individual on the earlier of the following:

- a. Five years after retirement or separation from the university or from elected or appointed office; or
  - b. Five years after the person's death, if the person had not yet retired or otherwise separated from the university.
3. When an individual has contributed in truly exceptional ways to the welfare of the institution or achieved such unique distinction as to warrant recognition, a proposal may be made for naming in honor of the individual on the earlier of the following:
- a. Five years after retirement or discontinuation of activity in area of distinction; or
  - b. Five years after the person's death.
4. Although significant philanthropy made over a donor's lifetime may constitute a valid rationale for an honorific naming, honorific naming should not be used to circumvent the requirements of gift-related Naming Guidelines.

### **Honorific Naming Proposal and Process Guidelines**

1. Only assets which do not present an opportunity for philanthropic naming in the opinion of the Advancement Division will be eligible for honorific naming.
2. Any request for honorific naming shall describe how the proposed honoree satisfies the criteria noted in the Qualifications section above.
3. Proposals for all honorific naming opportunities must be submitted in writing to the Chief of Staff to the President, who shall review the proposal in consultation with the Provost, Chief Operating Officer and Vice President for Advancement or their respective designees, and other offices as appropriate.

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4. The Chief of Staff to the President shall then forward a recommendation, positive or negative, on that proposal to the President for consideration.
  5. The Board of Trustees Executive Committee, upon presentation of the proposal and recommendation by the President, will consider the recommendation and shall then make its own recommendations to the Board of Trustees. The Executive Committee may affirm, reject, or modify the recommendation of the president.
  6. The Board of Trustees shall consider the recommendations of the Executive Committee and take action with respect to the request.
  7. The action of the Board shall be the final action of the university.

It is university policy to maintain building names and specific space names within buildings and on campus for the life of those structures. While University buildings and spaces are designed to last for generations, over time they will require significant renovation and eventual replacement. Should a building or space require significant renovation or replacement, the original honoree will be considered in future or existing alternative spaces. In cases where this is not possible, the university reserves the right to rename the building/space while continuing to acknowledge the original honoree in an appropriate way.

While gift-related naming opportunities include any appropriate signage, this is not the case for honorific naming opportunities. Any costs for signage must be allocated by the university as part of the approval process in coordination between the President, Chief Operating Officer, and the Executive Committee of the Board of Trustees. Fundraising efforts shall not be initiated to cover the cost of honorific naming opportunities.

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## ADDENDUM B

### Principles and Process for Removing, Changing and/or Adding Interpretative Features of Existing Named Spaces, Buildings and Programs, Scholarships and other honors

#### Recommendation

The following statement of principles and process should be adopted by the Board of Trustees

- A. Willamette University is a mission and motto driven institution. Named spaces, buildings, programs, scholarships and other honors should help to educate and recognize an individual, group, or organization who has made contributions that advance the mission and motto and who exemplify the values of Willamette University.
- B. As all honorific names at Willamette University are statements of our values and are a form of voice that indicates what we value, what we stand for and whom we see as exemplifying our mission, motto and values, all honorific names are covered by this set of principles. The same standard must be applied regardless of the specific building, the size of the program, etc. No named honor is too small or too large to not be governed by these principles.
- C. Names of buildings and spaces should represent Willamette's broad and complex history. As history is complex and contextualized differently in each era based upon changing cultural expectations, new learning and other community changes, the action to change or remove a name as well as the action of new naming requires intentionality, careful consideration and a clear review of the proposed change against the criteria outlined in section E.

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- D. If a member of the Willamette community wishes to contest an existing name of a building/structure/space/program, etc., they must submit a request in writing to the Office of the President. (See Renaming Process below)
- E. When an existing name is contested or a new name is proposed the following questions should be considered that serve as the criteria for naming decisions:
1. For a naming honor a person/family/group needs to have acted in alignment with the university's mission, motto and values.
  2. For a naming honor a person/family/group cannot have promoted slavery, genocide, exclusion, removal or discrimination based upon race, ethnicity, tribal affiliation, religion, gender identity, sexual orientation, national origin, disability, age, or immigration status.
  3. If a person/family/group was involved in or promoted the actions, behaviors and positions described in 2, then for consideration of a naming honor they need to have taken redemptive action sufficient to demonstrate real change including, but not limited to, repudiation and public apology for actions or positions that caused harm, restorative actions and advocacy for change and redress of the actions/positions that led to the contesting of the naming honor of this person/family/group.
  4. For a naming honor, after 1 – 3 above are considered in aggregate, there needs to be an affirmative determination that association with this person/family/group is something for which the university will be proud, and that this association will create an equitable and welcoming environment for all members of the Willamette community.
  5. Given that as of 2021, the ensemble of campus names does not truly reflect the genuine diversity of the Willamette community, special

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consideration should be given to names that help to remedy this situation.

F. When a determination has been made based upon the criteria in E. that a name should be changed, consideration shall be given to a spectrum of options including but not limited to:

1. Removal of the Name with the building/structure/space remaining unnamed\*;
2. Removal of the Name with the building/structure/space remaining unnamed until a Renaming Committee appointed by the Executive Committee of the Board of Trustees identifies appropriate individuals whose contributions and legacy are in keeping with the values and mission of the university\*;
3. Retaining the Name and Adding Additional Name(s) that tell a fuller story\*
4. Retaining the Name and adding a marker, display or exhibit sharing the context and full story of the person/family/group's actions of concern and contributions

\*For each of these options there should be consideration of also including a marker, display or exhibit sharing the context of why the change has been made sharing the context and full story.

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## Renaming Process

1. If a member of the Willamette community wishes to contest an existing name of a building/structure/space, they must submit a request in writing to the Office of the President. The request must describe:
  - a. the specific behavior(s) or course(s) of conduct by the person after whom a building or feature is named that violate the university's mission, values and core principles as well as criteria outlined in section E;
  - b. the sources of the evidence of that behavior;
  - c. the nature, depth, and extent of the harm that the continued use of the name may inflict on the university's integrity, mission, and communities; and
  - d. how renaming comports with the principles described in this document.
2. The Office of the President will conduct a review of the proposal, which will include engaging with impacted constituent groups on campus and beyond as appropriate / necessary.
  - a. If, after the review, the Office of the President determines the concern is not credible, it will communicate its findings and rationale to the community member(s) who submitted the request and the community members who were consulted.
  - b. If, after the review, the Office of the President determines that the concern is credible and has been raised in good faith, they will refer the proposal to the University Council for review and discussion. Members of the University Council will seek feedback on the proposal from their respective constituencies. If the University Council recommends that the proposal is worthy or further consideration, the proposal will be referred to the Board of Trustees.
3. Upon receiving the report from the University Council, the Board of Trustees Chair shall appoint an ad hoc Naming Consideration Committee, which will

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include the Chair of the Audit, Compliance, and Risk Committee, other trustees, and may include non-trustees at the discretion of the Chair, to make a recommendation to the Executive Committee regarding the disposition of the concern. The ad hoc Naming Consideration Committee shall investigate and apply the Renaming Principles to the information gathered from the community input and the factual and historical examination in developing its recommendation.

4. The ad hoc Naming Consideration Committee shall transmit its finding and recommendations to the Executive Committee who shall then make its own recommendation to the Board of Trustees for final decision.
5. The Board of Trustees shall consider the recommendations of the Executive Committee and act with respect to the request. The decision of the Board, including its rationale in accordance with the Renaming Principles, will be communicated to the community member(s) submitting the request and to the University Council.
6. The action of the Board shall be the final action of the university.