

Proposal to establish a:
Commission on Race, Slavery, and Civil Rights at The University of Alabama
University of Alabama Faculty Senate
October 16, 2018

We the members of the Faculty Senate at The University of Alabama propose that the University establish a formal commission to investigate the history of race, slavery, and civil rights on our campus, to publicize and to share the results, and to make recommendations for a comprehensive and responsible plan for curating, teaching, and promoting sustained dialogue on the history of The University of Alabama.

The purpose of this commission would be to share the rich and diverse history of UA from its slave past to its continued trajectory toward becoming a more diverse and inclusive campus since the first African American students enrolled. The commission will build on previous efforts that resulted in the Little Round House/Guard House historical marker, slavery apology marker, Hood-Malone Plaza, and the recent Autherine Lucy Foster historical marker. The intent is to encourage sustainability and continued engagement through:

- Exploring the role of slavery and its legacy at The University of Alabama;
- Promoting scholarly research using manuscript collections, conferences, and symposia;
- Creating the necessary infrastructure for institutionalizing alternative campus tours (guided and self-guided);
- Updating current campus tours to include more accurate and inclusive historical information about the university;
- Examining the commemorative landscape for potential additional markers and signage that will better represent university history;
- Creating permanent museum displays, library displays, and digital exhibitions on slavery and civil rights at The University;
- Making recommendation for the undergraduate curriculum and/or orientation programs (BAMA Bound) regarding possible inclusion of the University history;
- Creating strategic co-curricular activities for students;
- Coordinating with other community groups and institutions doing similar work; and
- Securing federal, state, and private funding for supporting proposed efforts.

The work of the proposed commission will be ongoing and transparent. The collaborative efforts will ensure that all campus stakeholders – students, prospective students, faculty, staff, alumni, and visitors – can learn about Alabama’s history and engage in valuable conversations with empathy and respect. Moreover, the work will not belong to one individual or entity but will create the necessary institutional infrastructure for sustainability. It will fulfill several of the recommendations entailed in the October 2017 Diversity Mapping Project report.

Possible Task Force Members:

- Faculty currently engaged with researching campus history (individuals have choice to participate or not)

- Faculty Senate representatives
- UA Museums and Libraries representatives
- Black Faculty and Staff Association representatives
- Vice President and Associate Provost for Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion
- Division of Student Life

Passed unanimously, with one abstention, by the University of Alabama Faculty Senate on October 16, 2018.