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The University of Texas at Austin

Task Force on Historical Representation of Statuary at UT Austin



REPORT TO PRESIDENT GREGORY L. FENVES

August 10, 2015



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Executive Summary

In June 2015, University of Texas at Austin President Gregory L. Fenves formed the Task Force on Historical Representation of Statuary and charged it with identifying and evaluating options for addressing the controversial statues that line the university's Main Mall, especially the statue of Jefferson Davis. The task force included students, faculty members, staff members, and alumni of the university and met six times.

In addition, the task force gathered input from the community through two public forums, an online submission form, emails, and phone calls. More than 3,100 individuals conveyed their opinion on the matter to the task force. Of those, 33% were in favor of relocating the statue of Jefferson, 27% were in favor of removing all statues from the mall, while 33% were in favor of leaving them in their current locations, and approximately 7% suggested other options or provided other comments. A range of sentiment was expressed, including that by a number of students, faculty, staff and alumni of color which discussed the pain, outrage, and sense of exclusion they felt as they passed the statues. Other individuals viewed the statues as symbols of their community and their heritage, believing they represent the rich history of Texas, the South and, the United States.

President Fenves gave the task force three specific charges. What follows are summaries of the task force's findings for each charge.

CHARGE 1: *Analyze the artistic, social, and political intent of the statuary on the Main Mall, with a particular focus on the statue of Jefferson Davis, as well as the historical context that they represent.*

Six of the seven statues lining the university's Main Mall (all but George Washington, who was added in the 1950s) are the result of a commission by George Littlefield, a Confederate veteran, regent, and the largest benefactor of the university's first 50 years. He believed that survivors of the Confederacy needed to preserve their history so that future generations would remember "these grand patriots who gave up their lives for the cause of liberty and self-government."

In 1916, Littlefield commissioned sculptor Pompeo Coppini to carry out his vision, which included a massive bronze arch, two pylons, and the six figures in question arranged together around a fountain. Though this specific configuration was never realized, Littlefield did succeed in surrounding the Main Mall with a cast of Southern men whom he admired, four of whom were Confederate leaders.

Moreover, the statues were commissioned during a period of resurgent white Southern nostalgia for the social order of the old South embodied by the Confederacy. This "neo-Confederate" or "Lost Cause" movement, during which numerous Confederate monuments were erected across the South, paralleled the rise of the Ku Klux Klan and an upswing in discrimination and violence against people of color.^{1, 2} Despite claims by sculptor Coppini that Littlefield's intent with his memorial to the Confederacy was to show a coming together of the two "nations" as soldiers departed

for Europe to fight World War I, the memorial was a celebration of a new Southern patriotism in which a neo-Confederate or Southern nationalist approach was posited as the basis of that national unity through principles of white supremacy. But even Coppini expressed misgivings, writing, “As time goes by, they will look to the Civil War as a blot on the pages of American history, and the Littlefield Memorial will be resented as keeping up the hatred between the Northern and Southern states.”³ Regardless, Coppini accepted numerous other commissions to memorialize Confederate leaders.⁴

Depicting figures from the Confederacy, 19th century Texas, a 20th century president, World War I archetypal soldiers, a goddess, and mythological sea creatures—all arrayed around a statue of George Washington that looks like part of the memorial but is not—the memorial’s complicated and subjective message has confounded many members of the university community from the time of its creation. President Woodrow Wilson was included despite his strenuous objection, saying “I must express my entire unwillingness to have my effigy mounted as is suggested in association with the proposed memorial. Moreover... I don’t fancy the partner [Davis] they offer me.”⁵ Littlefield died before the memorial’s completion, leaving campus architect Paul Cret to arrange the statues. Coppini later complained that Cret and the regents had “ruined” the memorial by dispersing the statues around the mall. Coppini once wrote, “After years of fighting, I was forced to accept the dismemberment of my original planned memorial, throwing to the four winds my conception and making of the various pieces of bronze just a senseless decoration of the campus.”

CHARGE 2: *Review the previous controversies over the Main Mall statues and factors that are similar and different today.*

The task force found that, while the statues have been controversial for various reasons since their creation, and while there were several references to them as racist during the 1960s, the sustained objection to them dates to roughly 1990, when racist incidents at the university’s annual Round-Up celebration caused students and activists to take aim at UT Austin’s campus iconography.

In 2003, partially in response to the vandalizing of the newly erected statue of Martin Luther King Jr., university president Larry Faulkner formed the Task Force on Racial Respect and Fairness. This task force took up the matter of the statues and recommended that the university, “Establish [another] ‘Task Force’ that works with existing student, Commission of 125, and other committees, to designate a more suitable location for the historical statues on the malls that are a reminder of our past, but should no longer be prominently positioned on our diverse landscape. More urgently, statues of Confederate leaders in prominent locations on campus convey exactly the wrong message to all persons, including those of color.” Faulkner recommended contextualizing the statues with plaques but deferred any action to the next president as his administration drew near its end.

President Bill Powers reviewed the findings of the Task Force on Racial Respect and Fairness and presented plaque designs to his Vice Presidents Council. Asserting that plaques simply would draw more attention to the statues, that council recommended no action and Powers concurred. When the issue again flared up in spring 2015 with the election of Student Government leaders whose platform included the removal of the Jefferson Davis statue,

Powers deferred any action to incoming President Gregory L. Fenves, who formed the Task Force on Historical Representation of Statuary at UT Austin.

CHARGE 3: *Develop an array of alternatives for the Main Mall statues, particularly the statue of Jefferson Davis, with special attention to artistic and historical factors considering the university's role as an educational and research institution. In providing alternatives, a discussion of the pros and cons for each alternative from the perspective of students, faculty, alumni, and other important campus constituencies will be particularly useful.*

The task force consulted on a great many options for the statues, combining its own thoughts with those compiled from public input and discussion with experts across campus. From among those many options, a handful of them emerged as viable, while the others, for a variety of reasons, had little support. What follows are guiding principles for considering existing statuary developed by the task force, followed by a summary of the options deemed viable with main arguments for and against each. There was broad consensus that doing nothing was not a viable option.

Guiding Principles for Treatment of Existing Statuary

Statues have layers of meaning: aesthetic, historical, aspirational, and educational. History is not innocent; it is the living foundation for the present. As a public university, UT Austin has special responsibilities to a diverse group of constituents. The university's approach to changing and replacing monuments on campus should be conservative but not uncritical. A good solution to the controversy over the Davis and other Confederate statues needs to incorporate and balance all of the following goals:

- Preserve the beauty and design integrity of the Main Mall
- Convey to students, faculty, staff, alumni, and visitors of all ethnic groups that this is a place that welcomes them
- Show respect for donor intent
- Show respect for the sentiments of all members of the UT Austin community, for fellow Texans, and for soldiers who have died in wars
- Preserve a full account of who we were and are, without glossing over the past
- Promote vigorous, educationally valuable reflection and debate
- Represent accurately our principles and aspirations as a university today

OPTION 1: *Leave the statues in place and add explanatory plaques.*

This would enhance the educational value of the six statues and give historical context, while allowing the institution to put philosophical distance between itself and what the figures stood for. However, it would draw more attention to the statues while not ending—and likely prolonging—the controversy. A significant portion of the

campus community views the statues' presence and placement as deeply offensive and unrepresentative of the university's mission and values. Maintaining the statues requires resources for ongoing maintenance, removal of graffiti and repair, if possible, from other forms of vandalism, and police presence in an effort to monitor the statues and reduce future vandalism. Eventually, the statues may be permanently damaged beyond repair.

Option 1 resembles a course of action that both President Faulkner and President Powers considered but did not adopt following the Report of the Task Force on Racial Respect and Fairness.

OPTION 2: *Relocate the statue of Jefferson Davis, and the inscription to the west of the Littlefield Fountain, to the Briscoe Center for American History, the Blanton Museum, the Texas Memorial Museum, the Harry Ransom Center, the Littlefield home, or an exhibit elsewhere on campus.*

Relocating the statue of Jefferson Davis reflects Student Government's specific request and also addresses the Davis statue as the flashpoint of current and recent controversies, representing the figure that some find most offensive as the president of the Confederate States. However, relocation of the Davis statue alone would leave other statues of Confederate leaders in place, thus quite possibly leading to future protest and only prolonging the decades-long controversy.

In options 2 through 5, the task force supports the relocation of statuary to another location on campus. The statues, which have been a significant part of the university's history and are valuable on a variety of levels, despite and even because of their controversial nature, would remain in the university's possession.

The majority of the task force believes the Dolph Briscoe Center for American History, which has offered to take custody of the statues, presents the most natural solution for relocation. If the statue(s) were to move to the Briscoe Center for American of History, they would be in the care of the unit that is the repository of UT Austin history. Importantly, they would be within the purview of the unit that also contains George Littlefield's papers, Coppini's papers, and the third largest collection of resources on American slavery in the nation. Far from "white-washing" history, as some have accused the university of contemplating, the majority maintains that this would raise the statues' profile in scholarship, and put them—both the men and the statues—in full historical context.

There are some drawbacks related to the Briscoe Center however, in that it is primarily an archival center at the current time. Further concerns have been raised about the fact that it does not currently have adequate funding for exhibit space and that even when funds are raised, it is only offering to put the statues on rotating display in a single niche. Other options mentioned are not museums or centers dedicated to history but are dedicated to art, the humanities and natural and cultural sciences. The Littlefield home is currently used as office space, but there are grounds around the home and an adjacent parking lot which was suggested as an area where the statues could be placed. The ground floor of the Flawn Academic Center has been suggested as another possible site for an exhibit.

Regarding the inscription west of the Littlefield Fountain commemorating the memorial, if any of options 2 through 5 are pursued, then the inscription will be referring to something that no longer exists in its entirety. Moreover, some observers find this inscription even more offensive than the statues, and it would likely become a

focus of future protest even after the statues were relocated. The majority of the task force recommends removal of the inscription from public view in its current location as integral to options 2 through 5.

OPTION 3: *Relocate the statues of Jefferson Davis, Robert E. Lee, Albert Sidney Johnson, and John Reagan, and the inscription west of the Littlefield Fountain, to the Briscoe Center for American History, the Blanton Museum, the Texas Memorial Museum, the Harry Ransom Center, the Littlefield home, or an exhibit elsewhere on campus.*

This option would move the four statues that represent the Confederate leadership—Jefferson Davis, Robert E. Lee, Albert Sidney Johnston, and John Reagan—and the inscription to the west of the Littlefield Fountain to another location on campus. This addresses concerns about honoring Confederate leaders, though it also places new emphasis on the Wilson and Hogg statues that remain.

OPTION 4: *Relocate statues of Jefferson Davis, Robert E. Lee, Albert Sidney Johnston, and Woodrow Wilson, and the inscription to the west of the Littlefield Fountain, to the Briscoe Center for American History, the Blanton Museum, the Texas Memorial Museum, the Harry Ransom Center, the Littlefield home, or an exhibit elsewhere on campus.*

This option would relocate statues of three Confederate leaders (Davis, Lee, and Johnston) as well as President Woodrow Wilson. As discussed in the report, Wilson’s inclusion in the memorial was designed to demonstrate national unity following World War I that in fact rested upon a neo-Confederate Southern nationalist approach. In addition, Wilson himself objected to being included in the Coppini statuary. Unlike the other Confederate leaders depicted in the statuary, John Reagan went on to serve Texas in the United States Congress for many years following the end of the Civil War.

OPTION 5: *Relocate all six statues and the inscription to the west of the Littlefield Fountain, to the Briscoe Center for American History, the Blanton Museum, the Texas Memorial Museum, the Harry Ransom Center, the Littlefield home or an exhibit elsewhere on campus.*

An argument against relocating one or some but not all of the statues is that this act would dissociate the statues from one another when they were commissioned and installed as a single work of art. Some think that keeping the six together, even in their relocation, would show greater respect for what is a single work of art than would splitting them up yet again. And relocating some but not all would take a space that is currently symmetrical and uniform and introduce a variety of sculptural styles and vintages that some might see as a hodgepodge.

However, others think that the entire group of six is problematic for the very reason that they were all part of a whole that was motivated by a reactionary worldview.

The task force thanks the university community and the larger community for its input on these important questions.

END OF EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



Introduction

The six statues that line the Main Mall at the University of Texas at Austin, including four statues depicting leaders of the Confederacy, have been the subject of controversy since their placement in the 1930s. The statues depict:

- Jefferson Davis, President of the Confederate States
- James Stephen Hogg, 20th Governor of Texas
- Albert Sidney Johnston, General in the Texas, United States, and Confederate Armies
- Robert E. Lee, General in the Confederate Army, President of Washington College
- John H. Reagan, Postmaster General of the Confederacy
- Woodrow Wilson, 28th President of the United States

In the intervening decades, the statues have been vandalized, debated, protested by some, and defended by others. Multiple university presidents have considered whether to relocate, remove, or contextualize the statues. In spring 2015, newly elected Student Government leaders began to push for the removal of the statue of Davis. As the campus again renewed its debate on the presence of the statues, the Davis statue was vandalized three times between March and June 2015, along with the statues of Johnston and Lee in June 2015.

On June 17, 2015, a mass shooting took place at Emanuel African Methodist Episcopal Church in Charleston, South Carolina. Nine people were shot and killed. The 21-year-old shooter confessed to be attempting to start a race war, and photos quickly emerged of him displaying a variety of flags associated with white supremacy, including the Confederate battle flag. When observers noted that the same flag still flew at full mast over the South Carolina state capitol in the days immediately following the massacre, a nationwide movement ensued to rid public buildings of the flag. Within days, the governor of South Carolina advocated the flag's removal. After a well-publicized debate, the South Carolina legislature passed a bill to remove the flag. The governor signed the measure, and on July 10, the flag was removed from the Capitol grounds. This action, taking place at the epicenter of pro-Confederate sentiment, signaled a profound shift in the nation's tolerance for displays of Confederate pride.

As a result of student-led petition, repeated incidents of vandalism, and a changing national landscape with regards to Confederate iconography, UT Austin President Gregory L. Fenves formed the Task Force on Historical Representation of Statuary and charged it with identifying and evaluating options for dealing with controversial statues that line the university's Main Mall. President Fenves gave the task force three specific charges:

CHARGE 1: *Analyze the artistic, social, and political intent of the statuary on the Main Mall, with a particular focus on the statue of Jefferson Davis, as well as the historical context that they represent.*

CHARGE 2: Review the previous controversies over the Main Mall statues and factors that are similar and different today.

CHARGE 3: Develop an array of alternatives for the Main Mall statues, particularly the statue of Jefferson Davis, with special attention to artistic and historical factors considering the university’s role as an educational and research institution. In providing alternatives, a discussion of the pros and cons for each alternative from the perspective of students, faculty, alumni, and other important campus constituencies will be particularly useful.

In addition, the task force gathered input from the community through two public forums, an online submission form, emails, and phone calls. More than 3,100 individuals conveyed their opinion on the matter to the task force. Of those, 33% were in favor of relocating the statue of Jefferson, 27% were in favor of removing all statues from the mall, while 33% were in favor of leaving them in their current locations, and approximately 7% suggested other options or provided other comments. Widely varying sentiments and emotions were expressed, including a number of students, faculty, staff and alumni of color discussing the pain, outrage and sense of exclusion they felt as they passed the statues. Other individuals viewed the statues as symbols of their community and their heritage, believing they represent the rich history of Texas, the South and the United States.

The task force, composed of students, faculty members, staff members, and alumni of the university, met six times. Members included:

- Dr. Gregory J. Vincent, Vice President for Diversity and Community Engagement (chair)
- Ms. Laura Beckworth, School of Law alumna; Chair of UT Austin Development Board
- Dr. Daina Ramey Berry, Associate Professor, Departments of History and African and African Diaspora Studies
- Mr. Hector de Leon, School of Law alumnus; past president of both the UT Law Alumni Association and the Texas Exes; 2010 Distinguished Alumnus
- Dr. Edmund “Ted” Gordon, Chair, Department of African and African Diaspora Studies
- Mr. Rohit Mandalapu, Vice President, Student Government; Senior, College of Liberal Arts
- Mr. Carlos Martinez, Associate Vice President for Governmental Relations
- Dr. Lorraine Pangle, Co-director, Thomas Jefferson Center for the Study of Core Texts and Ideas; Professor, Department of Government
- Mr. Xavier Rotnofsky, President, Student Government; Senior, College of Liberal Arts
- Dr. Frederick “Fritz” Steiner, Dean, School of Architecture
- Ms. Marisa Swanson, President, Social Work Council; Member, Senate of College Councils; Senior, School of Social Work and College of Liberal Arts
- Mr. Brian Wilkey, President, Graduate Student Assembly; Graduate Student, College of Natural Sciences

Faculty and staff resources to the task force included:

- Ms. Leslie Blair, Executive Director of Communications, Division of Diversity and Community Engagement
- Mr. David Carter, Chief, UT Police Department
- Dr. Steven Hoelscher, Chair, Department of American Studies
- Ms. Jessica Khalaf, Graduate Research Assistant, Division of Diversity and Community Engagement; Graduate Student, College of Education
- Dr. Sanford Levinson, Professor, School of Law and Department of Government
- Dr. Ryan A. Miller, Director, Office of Institutional Equity, Division of Diversity and Community Engagement; Chair, Campus Climate Response Team
- Dr. Soncia Reagins-Lilly, Senior Associate Vice President for Student Affairs and Dean of Students
- Mr. Avrel Seale, Senior Editor and Speechwriter, Office of the President
- Ms. Helen Wormington, Deputy to the Vice President, Division of Diversity and Community Engagement

END OF INTRODUCTION



Charge 1

Analyze the artistic, social, and political intent of the statuary on the Main Mall, with a particular focus on the statue of Jefferson Davis, as well as the historical context that they represent.

Overview & Origins: The Historical Context

Major George W. Littlefield, a banker, Confederate Army officer, rancher, and member of the University of Texas Board of Regents,⁶ was the primary contributor and visionary for the Main Mall statues. He believed that survivors of the Confederacy needed to preserve their history so that future generations would remember “these grand patriots who gave up their lives for the cause of liberty and self-government.”⁷ His original concept for the statues, outlined in his will on July 1, 1918, involved creating “a massive bronze arch over the south entrance to the campus.” He further added details about statuary placement under the large arch:

“On the top of the Arch I wish them to place a life size statue of Jefferson Davis, the President of the Southern Confederacy, to his right and below him I wish them to place a life size statue of General Robert E. Lee, Commander of the Army of Virginia, to the left of President Davis and below him and opposite the statue of General Lee, I wish them to place a life size statue of General Albert Sidney Johnston, Commander of the Army of Tennessee. Under General Lee I wish them to place a statue of John H. Reagan, Postmaster General of the Confederacy, and below the statue of General Johnston a statue of James S. Hogg, the peoples’ governor of Texas.”⁸

He also instructed specific inscriptions to accompany each statue.⁹ He added, “The arrangement given here is suggested to the committee as being the best; however, they are authorized to change it or the design suggested if they wish, giving prominence however to the statue of the men named above.”¹⁰ His will provided some flexibility in the artistic representation and placement. In his second codicil to his will two years later, he gave additional funds to support the proposed bronze arch and acknowledged the magnitude of such a project knowing that he might not live to see it to completion: “Should I die before this arch is completed,” he wrote in 1920, “it is my desire and I direct that the trustees shall proceed to carry out the said contract and this whether there are different persons acting as trustees or not.”¹¹ Littlefield died on November 10, 1920. He did not live to see the completion of “a massive bronze arch over the south end of campus.” However, he came of age and was an important figure in the early history of the university. Today his legacy extends beyond statues, fountains, and inscriptions to the archives, faculty, libraries, regents, and students; he is known as “the University of Texas’ largest single financial supporter in the first 50 years of the institution’s existence.”¹²

The idea of a “university of the first class” began on the eve of the Civil War. In 1858, the Senate passed a bill to establish the University of Texas modeled after the University of Virginia.¹³ At this time, Texas had already experienced independence and had recently accepted statehood (1845). However, nearly two-thirds of its residents were not pleased with the political tensions caused by slavery and states’ rights debates.¹⁴ As a result, Texas was the seventh state to secede from the Union on February 1, 1861. From the state’s declaration of secession, “maintaining and protecting the institution known as negro slavery—the servitude of the African to the white race within her limits—a relation that had existed from the first settlement of her wilderness by the white race, and which her people intended should exist in all future time” was an important issue.¹⁵ Texas secessionists believed their “geographical position” remained with the “slave-holding States of the Confederacy.”¹⁶

Following the Civil War and Reconstruction, the former Confederate states drafted new constitutions, and in Texas, the idea and vision of a university was once again beginning to materialize. The 1876 state constitution, for example, included legislative action to create the University of Texas at Austin on March 30, 1881. During the 1883-84 academic year, the university had eight professors, four assistants, and proctors for 221 students. While the state was establishing educational institutions, racial tension was increasing across Texas through legislation such as the Black Codes, which restricted the rights of African Americans and made way for Jim Crow segregation.¹⁷ Historian John Hope Franklin provides detailed evidence of the impact of these legal changes in the ninth edition of his textbook, *From Slavery to Freedom*.¹⁸ He visited UT Austin in January of 1964 and gave lectures on the racial climate that followed the Civil War.¹⁹ The Ku Klux Klan, founded in 1866, made its way to Texas as early as 1868 and expressed their views in the form of mob violence by lynching African Americans and Hispanics alike.²⁰ Texas ranked third behind Mississippi and Georgia for its number of lynchings.²¹ From 1885 to 1942, 468 Texans were lynched: 339 African Americans, 77 whites, 53 Hispanics, and one Native American.²² This is the climate in which the university took shape, and from 1883 until the summer of 1950, African American students were prohibited from attending the university.

Because the University of Texas was founded as an institution for the white citizens of Texans, Littlefield was operating in a familiar environment that he supported, fought for, and hoped to maintain. However, he faced opposition from people like George Washington Brackenridge, a businessman, philanthropist, and a member of the Board of Regents who sympathized with the Union and had his own vision for the university.²³ The two were known to be at odds on a host of issues.²⁴ With different loyalties, one of Littlefield’s ideas was to memorialize the Confederacy by creating sculptures, fountains, and statues of Confederate veterans. He also wanted “to see a history written of the United States with the plain facts concerning the South and her acts since the foundation of the Government, especially since 1860, . . . so that the children of the South may be truthfully taught and persons matured since 1860 may be given the opportunity to inform themselves correctly.”

Littlefield had multiple visions for the university. He wanted the University of Texas to become a great university with a high standard scholarship; he wanted it to become a center of study of American and especially Southern history. He also wanted students to honor in a solemn place those who had hitherto served and died in the nation’s wars, and he wanted a certain story about the South to be told. He had a clear vision to develop a narrative that allowed the

Confederate history to remain an important and emphasized part of UT Austin’s history. He accomplished this with the establishment of the Littlefield Fund, which contains one of the most extensive collections of Southern history in the United States.²⁵

In 1916, Littlefield commissioned the Italian-American sculptor Pompeo Coppini to carry out his vision of the memorial arch. Concrete plans were discussed in 1919, and a contract was signed between the two in 1920. Planning a memorial was not new for Littlefield who was a member of several Confederate Veterans’ associations and had participated in the elaboration of Confederate memorials in a number of locations including the south mall of the Texas Capital Building. Coppini was well known in Texas and nationally as an artist of such memorials. Working with campus architect Paul Cret, the Main Mall Littlefield Fountain was dedicated in 1933. According to Lawrence Speck and Richard L. Cleary in their history of architecture of the university, “Littlefield revised the theme of the memorial [to the Confederacy] to become a monument of reconciliation portraying World War I as the catalyst that inspired American to put aside differences lingering from the Civil War.”²⁶ Although Littlefield’s rationale for commemorating Davis, Johnston, and Reagan is linked to their service to the Confederacy, understanding the selection of Woodrow Wilson is equally important. Wilson’s election as president in 1912 led to a Democratic sweep of both houses. He was the first Southerner elected to the presidency since 1869 and known for overseeing the re-segregation of the federal government.²⁷ In short, the combination of a memorial to the Confederacy and to Wilson, WWI, and national unity should be read as the celebration of a new Southern patriotism in which a neo-Confederate Southern nationalist approach is posited as the basis of national unity through principles of white supremacy. This is reflected in the inscription to the west of the Littlefield Fountain:

“To the men and women of the Confederacy who fought with valor and suffered with fortitude that states’ rights be maintained and who, not dismayed by defeat nor discouraged by misrule, builded [sic] from the ruins of a devastating war a greater south. And to the men and women of the nation who gave of their possessions and of their lives that free government be made secure to the peoples of the earth this memorial is dedicated.”²⁸

Artistic Contribution and the Meaning of Statues

From an artistic perspective, the statues are free publicly accessible memorials open to consumption by everyone who passes by them. Viewers can either admire them for their size, shape, color, placement, and context, or criticize them for similar reasons. Statues and monuments, like buildings, are part of the history of a place, and as such have diverse value that ought to be considered and balanced in decisions about their retention or removal. At the most immediate level—the level at which they function for most of us most of the time—they are simply part of the landscape, contributing, together with old buildings and trees, to the venerable atmosphere of a campus, park, or city, even when few members of the community are aware of the individuals they represent. More seriously, they help to tell the story of a particular place, recording the choices of previous generations about who should be honored and why. When that honor is well placed, statues and monuments strengthen our own sense of connection with the past, nurturing

gratitude and reverence for worthy leaders and fallen heroes. When that honor is misplaced, statues can still serve an important function in preserving our memory of dark aspects of our history—often more unsavory, more closely entangled with people we respect, and less distant in time than we might otherwise be inclined to believe. All of these reasons suggest a presumption in favor of preserving the statues erected by earlier generations.

Especially on a university campus, however, and especially on its main quadrangle in front of the tower where the president has his office and where families gather each spring for commencement, statues also stand as an expression of our considered judgment as to the kind of human beings who are worthy of students' admiration and emulation. Each generation of faculty and university leaders has the responsibility to make certain that the overall message conveyed by its monuments, especially those on the main quadrangle, is a worthy reflection of its principles and of the kind of education we strive to provide.

Social Impact and Political Impact

The impact of these statues has changed and will continue to change over time. This has been the case on other occasions particularly in the 1990s after racial incidents at fraternities and in 2004 when President Larry R. Faulkner established a committee to examine race.²⁹ Known as the Task Force on Racial Respect and Fairness, this 15-member group of students, faculty, and staff worked for two years and made recommendations to President Faulkner. According to the UT News, President Faulkner believed that the statues had “no clear theme underlying the selection of individuals” and he offered a host of solutions to the racial climate on campus as well as the impact of the statues in an 18-page response to the task force report.³⁰ Our current consideration of these statues comes on the heels of the work done by Faulkner's task force as well as relevant contemporary events, notably June 17, 2015, when nine members of the Emmanuel AME Church in Charleston, South Carolina were murdered during Bible Study. As a result of this tragic event, Governor Nikki Haley signed a bill less than one month later (July 9, 2015) to remove the Confederate flag from the State Capitol in Columbia the following day. Additionally Wal-Mart, Sears, Amazon, and eBay stopped selling Confederate memorabilia.³¹

In Austin, there are streets, schools, and other public memorials, including one at the State Capitol, that commemorate the historical impact of individuals affiliated with the Confederacy. In 2010, the Texas Department of Motor Vehicles rejected a bid for Confederate license plates and the case went all the way to the Supreme Court. On June 18, 2015, the high court ruled that the Constitution does not prohibit the state of Texas to deny the issuance of a license plate exhibiting the Confederate flag.³² Likewise, in 2010, Simkins Hall was renamed Creekside Hall. The hall was originally named for William Stewart Simkins, a leader of the Ku Klux Klan.^{33, 34}

END OF SECTION: CHARGE ONE



Charge 2

Review the previous controversies over the Main Mall statues and factors that are similar and different today.

The Coppini statues that line the Main Mall have been controversial since their inception. The controversy surrounding their creation and placement has been covered in Charge 1. In this section, we catalogue the episodes of protest in the modern era. While this issue is best conceived as a single continuous controversy, with various constituencies largely repeating the same arguments over time, we have divided it into four major episodes that prompted a response from the university. For each, we briefly summarize the activity, the players, and the institutional response, and we conclude with a review of the factors that are similar and different today.

Outside of the four major episodes chronicled in this document, additional controversies, including protests and vandalism, have occurred periodically in the decades since the statues were erected. Indeed, vandals defaced one of the Coppini statues as early as 1940 when the Woodrow Wilson statue was “daubed with white paint” with the letters “UT” on his back.³⁵ Of course, vandalism without any discernible message does not necessarily constitute protest. That the particular group of six Coppini statues represented only one side of national reunification following the Civil War has also been questioned by university community members for decades. Dr. Otis Singletary, a history professor at the university during the 1950s (and assistant to the president in 1960-1961), considered the campus statuary and asked, “But where are the statues of Lincoln? I’ve never seen one in the South,” in *The Austin American* in 1961.³⁶ There is also evidence that student protest of the statues dates at least as early as February 1969, when the Afro-Americans for Black Liberation issued a list of 11 demands to the university president, including removal of “racist statues.”^{37, 38}

1989-1990

The modern controversy has been essentially continuous since 1989. In fall 1989, the Jefferson Davis statue was vandalized.³⁹ In April 1990, during the annual Round-Up celebration in which the main participants are fraternities and sororities, there were several hateful signs displayed by two fraternities that used racial slurs toward African Americans. A car used by Delta Tau Delta was painted with racial slurs,⁴⁰ while Phi Gamma Delta printed a T-shirt with a “Sambo” caricature of a black man.^{41, 42} These actions prompted African American student leaders to demand that the fraternities be punished.⁴³ Protests soon followed on the campus, with several student groups advocating for a multicultural curricular requirement as well as recruitment and retention of students and faculty of color.⁴⁴ In addition, protesters turned their gaze to the Main Mall statues. One student started a hunger strike in support of

removing the statues.^{45, 46} In 1991, Rep. Sam Hudson of Dallas introduced a bill in the Texas Legislature to have the statues removed, but it never made it out of subcommittee.^{47, 48, 49}

UT's Response

In response, the university suspended both fraternities for one year and sentenced them to 1,200 hours of community service each.⁵⁰ President William Cunningham addressed the student body, declaring that, “Acts of racial harassment will not be tolerated at The University of Texas at Austin,” a statement also printed in *The Daily Texan*.⁵¹ However, students heckled Cunningham, and he retreated into the Main Building before completing the speech.⁵² Cunningham said he would adopt the recommendations of the Ad Hoc Committee on Racial Harassment (convened prior to the spring 1990 controversy and chaired by then-dean of the School of Law, Mark Yudof), which included instituting a process for addressing racial discrimination, hiring a race relations counselor, and promoting multicultural education in the curriculum and on campus.⁵³ In addition, following the spring 1990 incidents, the university ceased recognizing Round-Up as an official event.⁵⁴ Cunningham told *The Daily Texan* he would not attempt to remove the Jefferson Davis statue, calling it “a mistake to rewrite history,” and pointing instead to the plans for a campus statue of Martin Luther King Jr.⁵⁵

2003-2004

In September 1989, students began advocating for a statue of Martin Luther King Jr. on the campus. After a decade of fundraising, false starts, and reboots, the statue was at last erected on the East Mall in September 1999. According to the Texas Alcalde, “Student misgivings about the Confederate statues factored heavily in the university’s commissioning of a statue of Martin Luther King Jr. to be erected in September.”⁵⁶ King became the first person of color depicted within UT Austin’s statuary.

On Martin Luther King Jr. Day 2003, the MLK statue was egged.⁵⁷ Partially in response to the vandalism, in 2003 President Larry Faulkner formed the Task Force on Racial Respect and Fairness (chaired by Dr. Darlene Grant), and within the broad charges given to the task force, the Confederate statues again became the focus of campus conversations about racial sensitivity and campus iconography. Students spoke against the statues at town hall meetings in 2003.⁵⁸ (Therefore, in this case it was the university response to another crisis that turned the spotlight back on the Coppini statues; an institutional response was the cause and not the outcome.)

The task force met 25 times and made the following recommendation in its final report:

23. Establish [another] “Task Force” that works with existing student, Commission of 125, and other committees, to designate a more suitable location for the historical statues on the malls that are a reminder of our past, but should no longer be prominently positioned on our diverse landscape. More urgently, statues of Confederate leaders in prominent locations on campus convey exactly the wrong message to all persons, including those of color. The charge to that Task Force should be to: a. Investigate how to include other statues on the campus in a more integrated fashion. b. Develop a strategic plan for

future placement of statues on campus that works in conjunction with established committees on where to place the statues, e.g., César Chávez and Barbara Jordan.⁵⁹

UT's Response

Responding to the report on May 10, 2004, President Faulkner outlined five competing values to consider with regard to campus statuary: 1) creation of a hospitable environment, 2) understanding history in human terms, 3) the academic instinct to preserve the cultural record, 4) institutional continuity, and 5) respect for artistic creation.⁶⁰ Faulkner also suggested two possible courses of action regarding the task force recommendation:

The first step that I propose is to examine as thoroughly as possible the practicality of rearranging the statuary so as to allow Coppini's intention of symbolizing a reunited country to be realized more closely and to be fully explained in a nearby plaque. This is a question of history, art, and architecture, so the idea needs to be examined by a group of technically proficient people especially charged for the purpose.⁶¹

The second step is to provide histories on plaques beside each of our significant sculptures, whether on the South mall or elsewhere.

Since this time, some scholars have concluded that the "unification" theme was merely Coppini's "disingenuous" attempt to win approval for the project from the campus community when the memorial's true purpose, featuring all Southern men (including Wilson), was simply an undiluted salute to the South.⁶²

In 2005, President Faulkner made plans to place new signage near the Davis and Lee statues that were not carried out.⁶³ Dr. Charles Roeckle, then-deputy to the president, recalled: "President Faulkner considered the recommendation to form a special committee and we began to draw up a list of the possible categories of representation. But as we neared the end of the Faulkner administration, it no longer seemed appropriate to start this initiative only to turn it over to an incoming president. President Faulkner decided to leave the issue of the Main Mall statuary to the new president so that she or he could determine how to approach it."⁶⁴

In August 2004, the MLK statue was defaced again, this time with silver spray paint.⁶⁵

2006-2007

President Bill Powers began his administration in 2006 and faced calls to decide the future of the Confederate statues. In March 2007, Avrel Seale, then editor of *The Alcalde*, penned a lengthy editorial in favor of removing six of the seven Main Mall statues.⁶⁶ This was followed by many months of alumni letters to the editor both for and against removal as well as a *Texas Monthly* opinion piece by UT Austin professor and regular *Texas Monthly* contributor Don Graham in favor of removal but critical of Seale's suggestions for the statues' replacements.

UT's Response

Quoting from Roeckle, deputy to the president:

Early in President Powers' administration the issue resurfaced. We again considered the courses of action suggested by Dr. Faulkner.

In considering whether—or how—to form a committee, President Powers met with several African-American leaders from campus, including Dr. Ted Gordon, to talk about the statues and the options.

Plenty of options have been discussed over the years, including:

- a. Taking no action,
- b. Removing and storing the statues,
- c. Relocating the statues to another site on campus and placing them in the configuration originally designed by Coppini,
- d. Relocating them to an off-campus site for exhibition (e.g., to the Bullock museum), or
- e. Giving them away or selling them. (I once received a phone call from a person in Tennessee who was interested in acquiring them.)

The group that met with President Powers to discuss the statues commented to remove the statues would be to hide a history that, however uncomfortable, was a real part of the university's past. They suggested an alternative would be to add icons to the campus to counteract the presence of the so-called "Confederate statues."

Dr. [Ted] Gordon can share his perspective of that meeting, but President Powers' inference from the discussion was the best course of action was to leave the statues where they were and to pursue the alternative as we go forward. Having come to that conclusion, he decided not to appoint a committee.

In the years since, we have added statues of both Barbara Jordan and César Chávez, and named our newest dormitory in honor of Mrs. Almetris Duren, an African American who served as a mentor and on-campus mother to generations of African-American students at the university.

We did, however, pursue the idea of new signage to explain the statues, who they represented, and why they were located on our campus. I [Charles Roeckle] had signs designed and President Powers discussed samples with the Vice Presidents Council. However, feeling additional signs would only draw attention to statues, which were now largely ignored, the vice presidents recommended no action. President Powers accepted their recommendation.⁶⁸

Consistent with the university's approach to adding statues on campus that reflect the diversity of the institution and the state, two student initiatives led to statues of César Chávez⁶⁹ (unveiled in 2007) and Barbara Jordan⁷⁰ (unveiled in 2009) on the campus. This was one component on the university's "focus on the future" approach, which also included the creation of the Division of Diversity and Community Engagement, and the elevation of its leader, Dr. Gregory J. Vincent, to the vice presidential level.⁷¹ The university also engaged in a vigorous defense of its policy

that considers race as one factor in admissions in response to the Supreme Court case of *Fisher v. The University of Texas at Austin*. In addition, the university created two new academic departments: African and African Diaspora Studies (2010) and Mexican American and Latina/o Studies (2014).

2015

In spring 2015, a new slate of Student Government leaders took office and immediately fulfilled one of their campaign promises, which was to push for the removal of the statue of Jefferson Davis.⁷² Using the social media network Twitter, the campaign quickly spread beyond Student Government and gained support from the wider student body as well as community members. As President Bill Powers had less than two months remaining in office, he deferred the matter to the incoming president, Dr. Gregory L. Fenves, who began his term on June 3, 2015. As the campus again renewed its debate on the presence of the statues, the Davis statue was vandalized three times between March and June 2015, along with the statues of Albert Sidney Johnston and Robert E. Lee in June 2015.^{73, 74, 75}

UT's Response

President Gregory L. Fenves met with student leaders and subsequently formed the Task Force on the Historical Representation of Statuary.

Factors Similar and Different Today

The arguments supporting and opposing the statues of Confederate leaders on the university campus have largely remained intact through several decades of controversy. Supporters have advocated leaving the statues as they are or adding additional signage that would convey the historical context of the leaders and their actions. Those opposed to the statues have argued that the statues glorify, rather than simply recognize, the history of the Confederacy and that the statues negatively affect campus climate, serving as a reminder of both slavery and the university's exclusion of African American students that lasted until the 1950s. Those opposed to the statues have suggested placing them in a museum to be studied as part of the historical record and mentioned the names of possible alternatives to the current individuals reflected in the statuary. While these competing arguments have remained similar for many years, the university has had the opportunity to evaluate the outcome of leaving the statues untouched. As evidenced by the formation of this task force, the controversy has not abated. In fact, the national landscape related to Confederate symbols and imagery has shifted considerably in the intervening years and in 2015 in particular, when the mass shooting in Charleston, South Carolina, took place on June 17. The 21-year-old shooter confessed to be attempting to start a race war, and photos quickly emerged of him displaying a variety of flags associated with white supremacy, including the Confederate battle flag. When observers noted that the same flag still flew at full mast over the South Carolina state capitol in the days immediately following the massacre, a nationwide movement ensued to rid public buildings of the flag. Within days, the governor of South Carolina advocated the flag's removal. After a well-publicized debate, the South Carolina legislature passed a bill to remove the flag. The governor signed the measure,

and on July 10 the flag was removed from the Capitol grounds. This action, taking place at the epicenter of pro-Confederate sentiment, signaled a profound shift in the nation’s tolerance for displays of Confederate pride.

This movement widened to include statuary of Confederate heroes. Senator Mitch McConnell called for the removal of a statue of Jefferson Davis from the rotunda of the Kentucky state capitol. A redesign of the Mississippi state flag that would remove the Confederate motif is being advocated by Republicans in that state.

While the current movement for the removal of the Main Mall statues preceded June 17, 2015, the Charleston massacre greatly intensified national scrutiny of public spaces that glorify the Confederacy. Institutional leadership nationwide now was being measured by responsiveness to the Charleston massacre and subsequent calls for action. In 2008, historian Alexander Mendoza asserted that The University of Texas at Austin had “the largest homage to the Confederacy of any major public institution in America.”⁷⁶ Though how this is measured is debatable, it is—in the aggregate—certainly among the largest.

Another factor that differs from earlier episodes is the profound effect of social media. No longer do students or any others need to paint posters and go in person to the campus to protest the statues; they can register their disapproval simply by retweeting a post on their phone. This phenomenon carries the protest both more quickly (indeed instantaneously) and more broadly throughout the campus community and around the world.

The effort to create “balance” among campus icons has failed to end calls for the statues’ removal. The erecting of five statues of people of color in the past 16 years—Martin Luther King Jr. (1999), César Chávez (2007), and Barbara Jordan (2009) on the core campus and Heisman winners Earl Campbell (2006) and Ricky Williams (2012) at DKR-Texas Memorial Stadium—while welcomed by proponents of diversity among our icons, did not put an end to protests over the presence of Confederate statues. Nor did the naming of UT’s newest residence hall for Almetris Duren and renaming the Geography Building the Gordon-White Building in honor of two African American couples calm the statue controversy. Far from satisfying discontent students and activists, the erecting of the King, Chávez, and Jordan statues might have only illustrated to students that they indeed have the power to change the iconography on the campus when they set their minds to doing so.

Also, in 2010, a campaign to rename Simkins Hall was successful.⁷⁷ The dormitory had been named for William Simkins, a UT Austin faculty member and former Grand Dragon of the Ku Klux Klan in Florida, the year after the Supreme Court decided *Brown v. the Board of Education of Topeka, Kansas*. This episode showed that campus leaders indeed could be swayed on decades-old memorials when the case against those memorials was strong enough.

END OF SECTION: CHARGE TWO



Charge 3

Develop an array of alternatives for the Main Mall statues, particularly the statue of Jefferson Davis, with special attention to artistic and historical factors considering the university's role as an educational and research institution. In providing alternatives, a discussion of the pros and cons for each alternative from the perspective of students, faculty, alumni, and other important campus constituencies will be particularly useful.

While researching the history and the context of the Charges 1 and 2, the task force has discussed multiple alternatives for President Fenves to consider, pursuant to Charge 3. The alternatives varied in their scope and potential impact. Each was discussed in detail, with the task force considering many aspects that might make an alternative more or less viable. It set forth several guiding principles by which to evaluate the myriad alternatives presented here. It examined the value and context of each statue individually, especially that of Jefferson Davis, as well the importance of the statues as a set. It also attempted to present a forward-thinking framework around the alternatives presented.

The guiding principles and framework, presented in more detail below, are the result of the research, discussion, and feedback concerning the Main Mall statuary. It takes into account respect for donor intent, the feelings of the public, the viability of options, and most importantly, the values of our university.

Guiding Principles for Treatment of Existing Statuary

Statues have layers of meaning: aesthetic, historical, aspirational, and educational. History is not innocent; it is the living foundation for the present. As a public university, UT Austin has special responsibilities to a diverse group of constituents. The university's approach to changing and replacing monuments on campus should be conservative but not uncritical. A good solution to the controversy over the Davis and other Confederate statues needs to incorporate and balance all of the following goals:

- Preserve the beauty and design integrity of the Main Mall
- Convey to students, faculty, staff, alumni, and visitors of all ethnic groups that this is a place that welcomes them
- Show respect for donor intent
- Show respect for the sentiments of all members of the UT Austin community, for fellow Texans, and for soldiers who have died in wars

- Preserve a full account of who we were and are, without glossing over the past
- Promote vigorous, educationally valuable reflection and debate
- Represent accurately our principles and aspirations as a university today

Statuary Options

The task force consulted on many options for the statues, combining its own thoughts with those compiled from public input and discussion with experts across campus. From among those many options, a handful of them emerged as viable, while the others, for a variety of reasons, had little support. What follows is a summary of the options deemed viable with main arguments for and against each. The task force was unanimous in the belief that doing nothing was not a viable option.

Regarding Options 2 through 5, the task force heard and discussed ideas that would have relocated the statues to a variety of places on and off campus. It is important that the statues, which are valuable on a variety of levels and by their controversial nature have been a significant part of the university's history, remain in the university's possession.

Suggested on-campus locations include the Briscoe Center for American History, the Blanton Museum, the Harry Ransom Center, the Texas Memorial Museum, the Littlefield home, and the ground floor of the Flawn Academic Center. Suggestions also included a number of others, including relocation of the statues to an outdoor garden elsewhere on campus, placing individual statues in buildings around campus in a manner similar to the display of the Terra Cotta soldier on the first floor of the Flawn Academic Center, or to the East Mall in a plan that would have repurposed them in another outdoor installation near the statue of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. These ideas met with less favor, either because they did not deal with the root issue of the controversy, or because they conflicted with campus plans.

A majority of the task force agreed the Dolph Briscoe Center for American History was a natural choice for relocation of one or more statues for a number of reasons. The Briscoe Center could place the statues in appropriate historical and educational contexts, rather than leaving the statues decontextualized but holding a prominent place of honor on campus. If a statue or statues were to be moved to the Briscoe Center for American History, they would be in the care of the unit that is the repository for UT Austin history. Importantly, they would be within the purview of the unit that also contains George Littlefield's papers, Coppini's papers, and the third largest collection of resources on American slavery in the nation. Far from "whitewashing" history, as some have accused the university of contemplating, the majority maintains that moving a statue or statues to the Briscoe Center would raise their profile in scholarship, and put them—both the men and the statue—in full historical context—while at the same time lowering their place of honor on the campus.

There are drawbacks related to the Briscoe Center however, in that it is primarily an archival center at the current time. The Briscoe Center has offered to take custody of the statues for display pending adequate funding for exhibit space, for which it has been raising money for several years. According to Dr. Don Carleton, executive director, the statues would be displayed on a rotating basis but in a permanent niche. Carleton further assured the group, that the statues not on display would be available for scholarship and viewing by appointment.

The other options—Blanton, Ransom Center, and Texas Memorial Museum—are dedicated to art, the humanities, or natural and cultural sciences—not American history as the Briscoe Center is. The Littlefield home is currently used as office space, but has grounds surrounding the home and an adjacent parking lot that have been suggested as a location possibility. A drawback to an outdoor location is the continued threat of physical damage to the statues. Regarding the Flawn Academic Center, there were concerns related to the prominence of that location. It is a popular, high-traffic area for students of all ethnicities to meet and to study.

With regard to options 2 through 5, there was also discussion around what should go in the place of the statues. It was suggested that perhaps a plaque noting a statue's former presence was suitable. Additionally, it was suggested for statues that remain on the Main Mall, a plaque with a clear statement of why the university is keeping the statue, despite our unqualified rejection of slavery and racism, be placed near the statue.

Options 2 through 5 also include relocating the inscription west of the Littlefield Fountain which also has been controversial throughout the years, paying homage to the Confederacy and to Southern patriotism which was on the rise at the time Littlefield commissioned the fountain and statues.

If the inscription were to remain, a suggestion was made that as a counterpoint, another plaque or inscription be placed near the fountain which made clear the university's principles and values.

OPTION 1: *Leave the statues in place and add explanatory plaques.*

Arguments for Option 1

- Continues to at least partially honor donor intent
- Recognizes statues as part of the cultural landscape of the campus
- Plaques add to educational value of statues and give historical context, while allowing the institution to put philosophical distance between itself and what the figures stood for
- Acknowledges that the university is aware of controversial nature of the statues and places philosophical distance between UT Austin and honorees
- Uses the controversy and the persistence of historic symbols as a pedagogical tool
- Would continue to remind the university of the work that is left to be done at the institutional level to increase diversity
- Responds in a systematic way to the problematic character that pervades the entire design of the Main Mall, including all six statues and the fountain as interpreted by its inscription
- Least expensive option
- Pleases those in favor of continuing to honor individuals depicted

Arguments against Option 1

- A significant portion of the campus community views the statues' presence and placement as deeply offensive and unrepresentative of the university's mission and values; Confederate statues negatively affect campus climate, minority recruitment, faculty recruitment, and national image

- The statues attract a nuisance in form of vandalism, and therefore maintaining the statues requires resources for ongoing maintenance, removal graffiti, and police presence in an effort to monitor the statues and reduce future vandalism; eventually, the statues may be permanently damaged beyond repair
- Plaques draw more attention to statues while not ending—and likely prolonging—the controversy
- Difficult to provide contextualizing statements that are strong enough to counteract the powerful message sent by bronze statues on high pedestals on our Main Mall, while not so strong or intemperate as to be simply inflammatory; resembles a course of action that both President Faulkner and President Powers considered but did not adopt following the Report of the Task Force on Racial Respect and Fairness
- Could be perceived as passive, lacking leadership
- Issue will eventually be revisited again by another task force
- May turn into an exercise in “airing our dirty laundry” in what is inescapably the most prominent part of campus—the place where graduation is held; this would be rather like engaging in vigorous self-criticism on the university’s home page

OPTION 2: *Relocate the statue of Jefferson Davis, and the inscription to the west of the Littlefield Fountain, to the Briscoe Center for American History, the Blanton Museum, the Texas Memorial Museum, the Harry Ransom Center, the Littlefield home, or an exhibit elsewhere on campus.*

Arguments for Option 2

- Relocates the statue that is the recent flashpoint for controversy and, to many, the most offensive figure of the set of statues
- Less resource-intensive than relocating multiple statues
- Creates a more welcoming environment for all students, faculty, staff, and visitors
- A museum exhibit is the proper place to provide full, objective, balanced historical commentary
- The statue, which is valuable on a variety of levels and by its controversial nature has been a significant part of the university’s history, would remain in the university’s possession
- Relocation to the Briscoe Center for American History would make the statue part of the UT Austin history collection and part of the center that houses Littlefield’s papers, Coppini’s papers, and the nation’s third largest collection of resources on American slavery
- By placing statues in an indoor exhibit, we mitigate the chance of them being damaged and remove a security nuisance from the Main Mall; UT’s police chief reports that in the past decade, Main Mall statues have been defaced 11 times, five of those incidents occurring during the past year
- Far from “whitewashing history,” as some have accused the university of contemplating, relocation to the Briscoe Center would raise the statue’s profile in scholarship and put it in full historical context, at the same time lowering its place of honor on the campus
- By taking the statue off of the pedestal, we would treat it as an object not for veneration but for reflection
- Relocation to the Briscoe Center, the Blanton or the Harry Ransom Center would allow the statue to be studied and understood for its artistic value

- Placing the statue within a proper exhibit such as the Briscoe Center acknowledges that Littlefield’s intent was never fulfilled in the first place, but we preserve and keep the statue as part of our history as a state and as a university
- Removing the inscription at the Littlefield Fountain would address what some consider to be the most offensive component of the memorial, lending the authority of the university to one interpretation of the South and the Civil War that is neither morally neutral nor historically accurate
- If options 2 through 5 are pursued, then the inscription will be referring to something that no longer exists in its entirety
- Some observers find the inscription even more offensive than the statues, and it might become a focus of future protest even after the statues were relocated; the task force regards relocation of the inscription as integral to options 2 through 5
- The Littlefield Fountain would be restored to its proper function as strictly a tribute to the fallen soldiers of World War I

Arguments against Option 2

- Removal of Davis leaves three other statues depicting leaders of the Confederacy in place
- Removing some but not all would take a space that is currently symmetrical and uniform and introduce a variety of sculptural styles and vintages that some might see as a hodgepodge
- Discussion may well focus on the remaining statues depicting leaders of the Confederacy, thus prolonging the controversy and resulting in the need to convene future groups to consider the future of the remaining statuary
- Piecemeal solution
- Bare spaces on the pedestal would look odd (unless replaced with a new figure or otherwise removed/altered)
- Would require resources and the construction of exhibit space
- Could be perceived as radical, historical purge and bowing to political correctness
- Removing the inscription at the Littlefield Fountain would temporarily call attention to it for a majority of public that is unaware

OPTION 3: *Relocate the statues of Jefferson Davis, Robert E. Lee, Albert Sidney Johnston, and John Reagan, and the inscription to the west of Littlefield Fountain, to the Briscoe Center for American History, the Blanton Museum, the Texas Memorial Museum, the Harry Ransom Center, the Littlefield home, or an exhibit elsewhere on campus.*

Arguments for Option 3

- Precludes future objections about honoring Confederacy, as all the Confederate-related statuary would be relocated
- *See also, Arguments for Option 2*

Arguments against Option 3

- Places new emphasis on Wilson and Hogg statues that remain on the Main Mall
- If we relocate Reagan, a Texan, do we put a target on any building or other space that honors a Texan who also was a Confederate veteran? Such a criterion would include much of UT Austin’s founding generation, such as Oran Roberts, Ashbel Smith, and Littlefield himself
- See also, *Arguments against Option 2*

OPTION 4: *Relocate the statues of Jefferson Davis, Robert E. Lee, Albert Sidney Johnston, and Woodrow Wilson, and the inscription to the west of Littlefield Fountain, to the Briscoe Center for American History, the Blanton Museum, the Texas Memorial Museum, the Harry Ransom Center, the Littlefield home, or an exhibit elsewhere on campus.*

Arguments for Option 4

- Wilson’s inclusion in the memorial was designed to demonstrate national unity following World War I that in fact rested upon a neo-Confederate Southern nationalist approach
- Wilson himself objected to being included in the Coppini statuary
- Unlike the other Confederate leaders depicted in the statuary, John Reagan went on to serve Texas in the United States Congress for many years following the end of the Civil War; he also “urged his fellow Texans to cooperate with the federal government, renounce secession, and allow freed slaves to vote”
- See also, *Arguments for Option 2*

Arguments against Option 4

- This configuration would leave a Confederate leader (Reagan) on the mall while removing an elected president of the United States (Wilson), a move that may cause continued controversy and protest
- See also, *Arguments against Option 2*

OPTION 5: *Relocate all six statues, and the inscription to the west of Littlefield Fountain, to the Briscoe Center for American History, the Blanton Museum, the Texas Memorial Museum, the Harry Ransom Center, the Littlefield home, or an exhibit elsewhere on campus.*

Arguments for Option 5

- The statues were created as a set and would be treated as a group; Littlefield intended the statues to reinforce white Southern heritage, which included white supremacy and Jim Crow in the early 20th century
- Treats the statues together as part of an original artistic vision never realized per Littlefield’s intent
- Has potential of maintaining artistic balance/symmetry, depending on future development of the spaces they occupy
- From an artistic perspective, some believe that keeping the six together, even in their removal, would show greater respect for what is a single work of art than would splitting them up again
- See also, *Arguments for Option 2*

Arguments against Option 5

- Some think that moving the entire group of six is problematic for the very reason that they were all part of a whole that was motivated by a reactionary world view, and by keeping these statues together, we are honoring that view
- Wilson and Hogg were not Confederates; Wilson was president of the United States who played an important role in World War I and the creation of the League of Nations, while Hogg played significant roles in the history of Texas and the university; the sculptor, Pompeo Coppini, intended the group of statues as a coming together of the South and the North in World War I
- The bare spaces on the pedestals would look odd (unless replaced with new figures or otherwise removed/altered)
- *See also, Arguments against Option 2*

For any statue relocated, options include:

- Replace it with another statue
- Note its absence in a plaque on the history of the Main Mall statuary
- Leave pedestal bare
- Use pedestal for art that is more consistent with Texas and representative of the university
- Remove pedestal

For any statue or inscription not removed, options include:

- Add commentary in place (e.g., explanatory plaque) to provide historical context
- Create balance by construction of more statuary elsewhere

The Future of Statuary: Guiding Principles for New Monuments

Though this does not fall within the task force's explicit charge, the group felt that it might be helpful to offer a few guiding principles for future statuary on the UT Austin campus.

In choosing individuals to honor with new statues, the university should look for women and men of impressive character who also meet more than one of the following criteria:

- Outstanding achievements in the arts, sciences, or public life
- A major contribution to the well-being of the university, the broader community, or humanity
- A special and positive connection with the university, the state of Texas, or the nation
- An established importance in history

The first criterion calls attention to the possibility of erecting statues to some of the great scholars who have taught here, or other intellectuals or authors with a close connection to UT Austin, in recognition of the fact that we are first and foremost an institution dedicated to learning. A number of faculty members have expressed concern about the absence of such individuals in the university's statuary.

The last criterion is an acknowledgement that principles guiding the creation of monuments, like those guiding their retention or removal, should be generally conservative. It takes time for the character of any individual to be fully assessed and for the lasting importance of a legacy to be confirmed by history. Earlier generations' failure to follow this principle on our campus has left us with statuary on the Main Mall that is problematic in a variety of ways. Celebrated figures of our own day, like otherwise obscure donors, are perhaps better honored by lectures, symposia, or scholarships than by permanent memorials.

If, however, we wanted to use statues to continue to convey history, then there is a broader and richer story we could tell. One way to interpret the historical representation of the statues on campus is to think of them as public memorials. Placing individual and collective monuments in the proper historical context should ideally allow for public consumption and interpretation. Rather than offering one side of this history, we could present a complete portrait of slavery, the Civil War era, and the early 20th century.

Perhaps we should balance the history by telling multiple sides of the story from a variety of perspectives. On the eve of the Civil War, two-thirds of Texans supported secession and one third, including Governors Elisha Pease (1853-57 and 1867-69) and Sam Houston (1859-61) did not. Houston was removed from office for refusing to take the oath of loyalty to the Confederacy.⁷⁸ However, Pease and Houston were not alone. By 1860, "just 20,000 white males owned slaves," out of 600,000 according to columnist Richard Parker. "Of these," he continued, "half owned fewer than three." A small percentage "...owned more than 200.... But this handful owned much of the wealth . . . [and] were responsible for nine out of 10 cotton bales bound for export."⁷⁹ Where is the history of those who desired to have a unified country in opposition of slavery? Why not also represent the views of the other 580,000 people?

George Littlefield came from a family that was considered a moderate to large slaveholding family because it enslaved from 30 to 80 people. However, on June 19, 1865, the family matriarch read General Granger's Order and "bid slavery farewell."⁸⁰ From that day forward, June 19 has been celebrated as "Juneteenth" to mark the end of slavery for those in Texas including those owned by the Littlefields. Sharing the stories of enslaved people, Native Americans, Mexican Americans, and other groups and individuals who made their mark on UT Austin's history allows for a more inclusive vision of campus statuary.

Aside from serving as the president of the Confederacy, Jefferson Davis was a large slaveholder in Mississippi owning more than 70 to 100 slaves. He did not initially believe in secession but supported states' rights and the idea that individuals could own property, including human property.⁸¹ If we are to tell the history of the Confederacy why not tell that of those who they enslaved such as Davis' slave who served as a spy for the Union Army?⁸²

Beyond Statues

As we acknowledge contributions of those with Confederate ties, we should also strive to tell the complete history of Texas and the South. Doing so would enable tangible outcomes for "teachable moments" like this current one. Identifying specific areas, as President Faulkner's committee did in 2004, has proven effective. President Faulkner and Presi-

dent Powers made strides by creating and supporting the Division of Diversity and Community Engagement as well as the culture and diversity course requirements that are part of the core curriculum. Likewise, the establishment of two new departments: African and African Diaspora Studies and Mexican American and Latino/a Studies are historic, and the first departments of their kind in Southern universities. Such actions emphasize UT Austin as a leader on diversity initiatives among universities in the South. We suggest UT Austin continue the tradition through scholarship, archival research projects that make materials available to offer balanced perspectives, as well as renew the commitment to scholarship in 19th and early 20th century topics in the multiple departments that address history.

Rather than maintaining a one-sided interpretation of the past, UT Austin should take its cues from the various groups of students who attend this university and who want to “change the world.” In the current environment, the black undergraduate population remains under 5%, the black graduate population under 3%, and the black faculty population under 4% in a state that is 12% African American. The Confederate statues, therefore, are not only symbols of a now largely controversial neo-Confederate past; they are also powerful symbols of how that past continues to structure the present.

Conclusion

The task force wishes to thank the University of Texas at Austin community and the wider community in Austin and across Texas for its input on this important matter.

This group recognizes that, although significant, the issue of UT Austin’s Confederate statues is but one piece of a larger puzzle that the university must continue working to solve, and not a panacea or final resolution. The actions of the university over the past several decades represent real and significant progress. The creation of the Division of Diversity and Community Engagement; strategic recruitment efforts of UT’s Outreach Centers and branch admissions offices; myriad programs that support minority students; the creation of departments and tenure-track faculty positions in black and Latino studies; thematic faculty recruitment; thematic graduate student recruitment; and the vigorous defense of UT’s admissions policies in the courts including the Supreme Court—all speak to UT Austin’s institutional commitment to diversity, both for its own sake and for the way it augments the education of all students.

From his first day in office, President Fenves has expressed his resolve to continue along this path of progress. In his first message to the UT Austin community, he wrote, “We continue to recognize the benefits that all our students receive when they are part of a truly diverse student body and seek to provide opportunities to Texans of all backgrounds.” And on his first day in office, he met with community leaders in East Austin. The task force thanks him for this early display of commitment, which includes his formation of this task force itself, and encourages him to continue showing bold leadership on all fronts in our ongoing challenge to diversify the University of Texas at Austin student body, faculty, and staff.

END OF SECTION: CHARGE THREE



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