

Elon Commemoration Committee
Meeting Minutes – October 3, 3:30-5:00 p.m., Alamance 101

I. Welcome

We welcomed Jewel Tillman, an undergraduate major in Political Science our final committee member.

II. Approval of Minutes from September 17

Approved.

III. Feedback after Announcement

The chair shared some of the responses he had received via commemoration@elon.edu after the announcement.

IV. Discussion of *Chronicle* Article, “How Colleges Confront Their Racist Pasts” (September 23, 2018)

Committee members commented on the range of ways in which other universities, some geographically proximate to Elon and/or peer institutions, have been tackling questions about their histories. Other schools are renaming buildings, adding information to tours, and engaging in community outreach, for instance.

V. Conceptual Goals

- A. As an initial step to identifying the work of the committee will be doing, we reviewed the range of activities identified in the charge.
- B. “Establish best practices” – We will identify an existing or articulate a new set of ethical practices surrounding history and memory at Elon (cf. the European Network for Remembrance and Solidarity).
- C. “Engage the broader community in important conversations” – We will decide how to facilitate conversations about the Long family, for instance, and about classified staff. In the process we will confront a host of subsidiary questions, including whether we will do the work directly, partner with others, or encourage appropriate parties to take initiative.
- D. “Inspire those with relevant training and expertise to uncover hidden stories” – Faculty and staff with relevant expertise are already volunteering information. How may we receive/curate this in a responsible way? What new research do we need to encourage?
- E. “Advise those seeking to tell a more democratic and rigorous version of our history” – How do we make ourselves available (and qualify ourselves in terms of institutional knowledge) to do this work? As a specific example of the kinds of challenges or opportunities which will surface (in addition to the “Before Elon” initiative), there is already a movement afoot to republish without discussion or editorial comment Durward Stokes’ *Elon College: Its History and Traditions*.
- F. “Share more broadly the excellent work students, faculty, and staff are already doing” – We need to discuss the mechanisms for doing this, at least some of which will be

digital. Given the certainty that our group will maintain a digital presence, how do we coordinate our work with that of other offices (esp. Communications), and what sort of material do we include?

- G. “Propose mechanisms for sustaining the work and/or solicit proposals for new initiatives” – There is plenty of latitude, in other words, for us to recommend practices not made explicit above that serve to help us “examine our institutional history in a transparent, participatory, and intellectually rigorous manner.”

VI. Racial Justice and Historical Memory

- A. We discussed the desirability of recommending that Elon join “Universities Studying Slavery” as a way of making sure the key work of addressing white privilege in Elon’s history. Committee members stressed:
1. The desirability of issuing recommendations in a systematic way and possibly consolidating this recommendation with other early moves.
 2. The need for more specific information about the process/requirements for joining USS.
- B. The chair will make a formal inquiry into the requirements for joining Universities Studying Slavery.

VII. Timeline

- A. A discussion of Universities Studying Slavery led naturally into a conversation about our timeline and when/how we should issue even preliminary recommendations. We set the tentative goal of having at least three recommendations ready by the end of the semester, *with the possible addition of a list of priorities as well*. These three would be:
1. A list of best practices for dissemination across the university;
 2. A recommendation to join USS;
 3. And a plan to solicit community feedback.
- B. Fall Schedule
1. We affirmed the tasks for the October 24 and November 7 meetings and left November 28 and December 5 a bit looser; they may change in response to our progress earlier in the semester.
 2. October 24 – Discussion of practices at peer institutions
 3. November 7 – Determine a set of guiding principles (i.e., set “best practices” / governing principles for our work) AND Discussion of strategies for soliciting community input
 4. November 28 – Education re: restorative/reparative justice AND Enumeration of specific tasks
 5. December 5 – Sort tasks into working groups for the spring and set spring goals/timeline.

VIII. Resources

- A. There is now a Moodle site, including the resources indicated above.
- B. Please upload your institutional research to Moodle *no later than October 10*.

Next Meeting: October 24 (3:30)