

Committee on Elon History and Memory
Meeting Minutes, February 12, 2019 (12:30-2:00 p.m., Alamance 101)

- I. Approval of Minutes
- II. Winter Updates
- III. Yearbook Response
- IV. Tasks for Working Groups
- V. USS Meeting
- VI. Semester Goals

- I. Approval of Minutes from December 5 (*Attachment*)

Approved

- II. Winter Updates

- A. Universities Studying Slavery – The group is now up and running, co-chaired by Tyrone Jean and Charles Irons. Deferring substantial action until members attend the semi-annual conference in March.
- B. Academic/Curricular Initiatives
 - 1. Stephen Bloch-Schulman, AMS 210 (Critical Whiteness Studies)
 - 2. Charles Irons, COR 110 (Global Experience, focusing on History/Memory at Elon)
 - 3. Brandon Bell suggested a more systematic survey
- C. Local Partners – Jane Sellars (advocate for Alamance Co. Black History Museum) is most substantial contact thus far
- D. Additional Updates?

- III. Yearbook Response

- A. Review of the contents of the yearbooks
 - 1. We reviewed some of the contents of the yearbooks, including not only Blackface images but also photos of white students with Confederate Flags; white students dressing as Native Americans; openly sexist images; as well as some positive surprises, such as the GENTS.
 - 2. We were reminded of the importance of *context* in making sense of these images. A photo of sorority activity, rightly interpreted, actually revealed the unfair treatment black sororities received from white Greeks.
 - 3. There were other yearbook-related stories that cry out for greater treatment, such as when the staff refused to publish images of the first black homecoming queen. Black students burned yearbooks on the lawn, drawing national coverage from the likes of *Jet* magazine.
- B. Possible short-term responses?
 - 1. We expressed an openness to partnering with/supporting other short-term responses and were pleased that it did not seem necessary to launch a separate response. Charles Irons was instructed to contact Leigh-Anne Royster and Tyrone Jean following the meeting to confirm developing plans. Both confirmed plans for:
 - 2. AAASE Luncheon on Blackface (for faculty and staff)
 - 3. AMS 210 Open Class on Blackface (for students)
- C. Longer-term response

1. We discussed a possible long-term outreach strategy, namely enriching the programming for months dedicated to different demographics with specific Elon history-related content. An event on the yearbook burning (above), for instance, would definitely capture students' attention
2. Program could be broadened beyond Black History Month (February), to Asian/Pacific American Heritage Month (May), Hispanic Heritage Month (March, to feature first Latinx students and faculty), etc.

IV. Tasks for Working Groups

A. **Inventory**

The committee has already pulled together existing inventories (re: benches, building names, etc.) and requested additional data regarding the university's art collection from Ethan Moore. The challenge will be integrating and interpreting all of this data.

B. **Coordination and Advising**

The Coordination and Advising Sub-Committee is currently drafting diagrams of the various entry points members of the Elon Community may use to engage the in the work of history and memory as it relates to the institution. Forecasting out, the subcommittee is considering the resources internal and external to Elon that may be need to support the examination and collection of history and memory at Elon.

C. **Engagement**

This committee met for the first time subsequent to the meeting.

D. **Dissemination**

We discussed the need to put up resources on our website as a first step and reported on preliminary inquiries regarding staffing and other expenses for a more robust web presence.

E. **Curriculum**

V. USS Meeting

- A. March 14-16, conjointly with William and Mary's Lemon Project
- B. USS sending 4-6 people
- C. Limited funding to support EHM attendance as well, if there is interest

VI. Semester Goals (Broad)

- A. Coordination with other offices/initiatives (March Meeting)
- B. Outreach and/or survey (April Meeting)
- C. Agenda Setting for 2019-20 (May Meeting)