



COLLEGE OF CHARLESTON GUIDING PRINCIPLES FOR NAMING

(DEVELOPED AND ADOPTED BY THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES ON JANUARY 28, 2022)

In developing these guiding principles for naming, the Board of Trustees reviewed and considered similar work conducted by numerous colleges and universities (listed in the “resources” section), specifically their research and writings around the proper acknowledgment of an institution’s full history and their general philosophies of naming and commemoration.

PRINCIPLE OF HISTORICAL CONTEXT

We maintain our campus as a historical record and as a transformational site of learning and knowledge.

The College believes our campus is an extension of our classrooms and that lessons of the past can be studied in our landscape and better understood in the present. That understanding is the heart of the College’s core mission of preserving and increasing human knowledge, articulated so succinctly in our motto: “Wisdom Itself Is Liberty.”

The College of Charleston recognizes that some aspects of its past do not necessarily align with the institution’s current values, mission and vision. As one of the oldest institutions of higher learning in the country and the oldest in South Carolina, the College of Charleston engages with history – for the past has a very real impact on the present and the future. The study of history, understanding its effects on different populations – especially those previously excluded – and acknowledging the contributions and histories of all people are vital to the College of Charleston’s mission of educating the whole person in an effort to improve society.

Ongoing scholarship provides an opportunity for the College of Charleston to act in a thoughtful, constructive and restorative way. Scholarly consensus about principal legacies is a powerful measure in naming decisions. Principal legacies are typically the lasting effects that cause a person’s name to be remembered. In considering principal legacies, the Board of Trustees should consider how an individual’s viewpoints and actions align, or misalign, with the values of the College of Charleston and should, therefore, determine that principal legacy’s overall impact on campus.

Decisions about naming made today may be at issue in the future. Therefore, out of humility and appreciation for the past and present, the Board of Trustees and the campus

community should give the same respect to previous decision makers that they would like their decisions to be accorded in the future.

PRINCIPLE OF MISSION

We affirm, embrace and hold ourselves accountable to the College of Charleston core values.

The College of Charleston embraces its role as a training ground for citizens and future leaders.

As a public university on public land, we, the College of Charleston, believe in approaching our campus as a public space. Campus names and historical interpretative signage should reflect the institution's desire that all students, faculty and staff feel welcomed, valued and represented.

When the College of Charleston reviews its history, as it relates to naming and individuals who served or were connected to the institution, the Board of Trustees, after a careful review of scholarship and research conducted by College of Charleston faculty, staff, students and other scholars, will determine the principal legacy of a namesake and that principal legacy's overall impact on campus.

The College of Charleston encourages a culture of listening and empathy, which we believe is essential to a vibrant campus community and healthy democratic society.

PRINCIPLE OF VISION

We affirm our values through our actions.

Grounded in history and a liberal arts tradition, the College of Charleston must view history in context and with a longitudinal, future-oriented perspective that will serve the community beyond the particular moment. The College recognizes its moral responsibility to understand its past in order to live in the present and shape the future as a continually welcoming and inclusive institution.

The College of Charleston cannot undo the past or ignore it. Rather, the College should use it wisely in the landscape by looking for the best in people, respecting differences of opinion and learning important lessons, especially tolerance, to help move forward as one people.

PRINCIPLE FOR THE DUTY OF CARE

We strive to maintain a complete public historical record.

Under the duty of care, the Board of Trustees is responsible for preserving our institution's resources for future generations.

The process around naming a university building or place must be thoughtful and deliberate, as is fitting with the College of Charleston's longstanding liberal arts tradition. The Board of Trustees will use academic research to inform its decisions and actions.

The Board of Trustees supports the institution's efforts to tell a more complete story of the College's history, especially with the addition of historical interpretative signage, new naming opportunities and the publishing of more information (both physical and virtual) in order to better recognize the College's underrepresented populations.

RESOURCES

- Brown University (Naming or Renaming University Buildings, Spaces, Programs and Positions)
- College of Charleston Historical Review Taskforce
- Duke University (2017 Commission on Memory and History Report: Guiding Principles)
- George Washington University (Naming Task Force)
- Oklahoma State University (Consideration of Removing Names of Facilities)
- Rhodes College (Principles for the Process of Discernment Related to Contested Names)
- Stanford University (Principles and Procedures for Renaming Buildings and Other Features)
- University of Cincinnati (McMicken Working Group to the President)
- University of Michigan (President's Advisory Committee on University History)
- University of Minnesota (Task Force on Building Names and Institutional History)
- University of Virginia (President's Commission on the University in the Age of Segregation)
- William and Mary (Working Group on Principles for Naming and Renaming)
- Yale University (Committee to Establish Principles on Renaming)