

Project Gabriel- President's Special Commission on Slavery and Justice

Agenda

Date: February 23, 2023

Duration: 4:30 p.m. to 6 p.m.

Platform: Zoom

Attendees: Belgrave, Jodi Koste, Bill Martin, Ed Ayers, Rhonda Keyes Pleasants, Dr. Leonard Edloe, Dr. Nakeina Douglas-Glenn, Matt Conrad, Maya Joshson, Dr. Yvonne Brandon, Tobi Ojo, Dr. Clifton Peay, Sheryl Garland

Charge: Based on the findings of the December 17, 2022 report on Slavery and the Medical College of Virginia, this Commission is charged with recommending to the Administration and Board of Visitors of VCU specific ways in which the institution should:

- (i) memorialize all enslaved individuals who labored on MCV grounds and property; and*
- (ii) provide a tangible benefit such as a college scholarship or community-based economic development program for individuals or specific communities with a demonstrated historic connection to slavery.*

Discussion/Updates

- Approval of [Feb. 2 meeting minutes](#) (Chairs)
- Welcome of new members- Bill Martin, Maya Johnson (Chairs)
- Forum planning team update (Dr. Glenn, Matt)
 - (Dr. Glenn) Idea presented to use the world cafe model–facilitated conversation model; helps people get into the throws of conversations quickly
 - Use round tables; 10 or fewer people will gather for 10-20 minutes around a topic; within each table, a sub-theme leads the conversation
 - The host anchors conversation at the table, puts up guardrails, but encourages conversation flow
 - Scribe would take notes so future participants can see conversations
 - After 4-5 rounds, you begin to see common themes
 - Can be planned very quickly
 - Conversation can include three buckets–“I like, I wish, I wonder”
 - Questions to address–scholarships, investment program, graduate versus undergraduate, etc. (What do you like? What do you wish?...)
 - Leverage design-thinking strategies

- (M. Conrad) Forum is tentatively scheduled for March 21 at MLK
- (B. Martin)–Valentine volunteered to host sessions
- (Dr. Peay)–Questioned capacity, training
 - (Dr. Glenn) The only person who remains at the table is the anchor, and everyone else rotates
 - Capacity–upwards of 100 people, depends on how many people can fit in the room; commission can serve as table hosts
 - Training–Dr. Glenn has a one-pager that be used for training via Zoom
- (Dr. Belgrave)–Questioned goals, target
 - (M. Conrad) VCU has list of stakeholders
 - Goals/outcomes for events–make recommendations
 - 1. Provide information
 - 2. Generate feedback/reactions as to what people would want–Scholarships vs. economic benefit
 - 3. Provide opportunities for new ideas
 - We will want to be clear of goals (to inform, gain feedback, etc.)
- (Dr. Peay)–*How can we determine success?*
 - (Dr. Glenn)–Attendance; conversation analyzed from qualitative perspective; consistency in narrative; RSVP details; providing a space where people feel heard and contributed to the process
 - (Dr. Peay) *Could timing accommodate the model?*
 - (Dr. Glenn)–Despite the short window we have to plan, the event should have adequate attendance, as the planning team has a robust list of community connectors
 - (Dr. Belgrave) What is the anticipated attendance?
 - (Dr. Glenn) No less than 50 people at each event; have three themes; have done similar events with as small as 10-20 people total
 - (Dr. Peay) Geography for location
 - MLK–new building, ample parking, close proximity to MCV Campus
 - (Dr. Brandon)–MLK would be perfect; only issue is if we’re doing this model, would need to consider cafeteria;
 - (Jodi Koste) We used the gymnasium for EMSWP
 - (Dr. Brandon)–would need to ask for support with setup and check with school for permit on liability
- (T. Ojo) Considerations for the smaller logistics–to maintain order, can have volunteers for setup/cleanup/ushers; filter commission’s ideas;
 - Are we capping at 100 people?
 - (M. Conrad) Commission is not capping
 - (S. Garland) Community planning team can set up a time to walk through details for forums
- (Dr. Belgrave) Are we targeting VCU and the community together or not? Do we want three events to serve different purposes?

- Map out discussion items for forums
- Content-specific for event, identify facilitator
- How do we get the buy-in that we need—same event vs. different events, things the commission should consider
- (S. Garland) Further discussion around hosting a forum at VCU to ensure inclusivity
- (Dr. Ayers) People may be frustrated if we're not presenting everything; putting three options at one time may be beneficial
 - Can have conversations close in sequence; having one virtual is a great idea. If people know the lineup, it may be useful to have an overall plan in place when introducing the first one
 - What would be the reporting back?
- (Dr. Edloe) For previous engagements, they had roundtable discussions with no guardrails, but didn't use the world cafe model
 - (Dr. Peay) How did you handle summary?
 - (Dr. Edloe) A few people decide what the summary is; even though taping can be good, many don't want to be quoted; the summary is a general consensus/suggestions on next step, further conversations
- (Dr. Glenn) Scribes at the tables can type up the info. and craft an executive summary
 - (S. Garland) On work plan—Information would be put in the draft recommendations in early May and posted to the website with the idea that we would request additional feedback with community members to walk through recommendations and obtain additional feedback before final recommendations are presented to the Board in Sept.
- Presentation/Q&A with Jodi Koste
- Requests made for additional resources/speakers (Chairs)
 - Members advised to email projecgabriel@vcu.edu
 - (Dr. Ayers) Recommendation—Greg Kimball- Library of VA

Action

- Establish a meeting for those interested in hearing additional forum details

Next steps

- Set up a separate meeting for those interested in hearing/fleshing out forum details (Jonsette)
- Invite potential speakers to present at next commission meeting (Planning team)
- Circulate stakeholder list for feedback (Jonsette)

- Forum planning team to solidify additional details around upcoming forums (Planning Team)