

## REPORT

TO: Sabah Randhawa, President, Western Washington University

FROM: WWU Legacy Review Task Force

DATE: June 14, 2021

SUBJECT: Task Force Report and Recommendations

Dear President Randhawa,

Responding to your charge that the Task Force review the Western Libraries Heritage Resources Report to “decide if names of particular buildings warrant consideration for removal” and “to review the name associated with named colleges,” the Legacy Review Task Force (hereafter “Task Force”) offers this summary of our process and findings.

This process has attracted a great deal of attention, debate, and feedback to the Task Force from Western students, faculty, staff, and alumni, and unsolicited input from the general public as well. Several editorials were published about the Huxley name in particular by members of the WWU community in both campus and off campus publications (see Appendix). Many individuals have expressed strong views and concerns about the factors the Task Force is taking into consideration and their comparative weighting in reviewing names and potentially making recommendations for removal. As such, this report aspires to provide more than a simple summary of recommendations and conclusions, and instead provide a more thorough yet concise accounting of the context, principles, and reasoning that informed the process and the Task Force’s deliberations. We recognize that much of this context is of course known to you, but our hope that the report may serve as a stand-alone document that will be of service to the Board of Trustees, and to foster greater transparency and understanding of the process among the broader Western community, if and when this report is made available to the public.

### **Summary of Recommendations**

The following report offers recommendations to the Board on four named features: Huxley College of the Environment, Mathes Hall, Haggard Hall, and Viking Union. These features were evaluated through weighing factors prescribed in [our charge](#), including the harm caused by retaining the name and the potential harms of renaming. This report does not offer any review of the broader campus beyond the four named features listed above and this report should not foreclose further evaluations of other names and legacies at a future date. In answering our charge, we have been guided by the University’s commitment “to maintaining a welcoming and inclusive campus environment for all members of the Western community.”<sup>1</sup> Our recommendations are as follows:

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<sup>1</sup> [Western’s 2018 – 2025 Strategic Plan](#), see particularly the theme of [Advancing Inclusive Success](#).

First, the Task Force unanimously recommends that the Board of Trustees remove T.H. Huxley's name from the College the Environment. T.H. Huxley accomplished a great deal as a scholar during his lifetime. Unfortunately, his ethnological accomplishments were grounded in white supremacist values that dehumanize and harm many members of the Western community. The Task Force concluded that his legacy conflicts with the university's current mission.

Second, a very strong majority of the Task Force recommends the removal of Edward T. Mathes' name from Mathes Hall. The Task Force focused particularly on an examination of Mathes' scholarship around the history of racial and ethnic difference and found that this legacy conflicts with the University's mission. The prominence of his name in the lives of students through Mathes Hall compromises the inclusion of all members of the Western Community.

Third, a strong majority of the Task Force recommends removal of the name "Viking" from the Viking Union. The Task Force was concerned about the harm caused by asking all members of the Western community to identify with a figure that is potentially exclusive on the basis of both ethnicity and gender. Furthermore, the Task Force found names idolizing conquest as out of line with the university's contemporary values around honoring local Indigenous communities. Task Force members who did not recommend renaming in this report proposed the building name be evaluated alongside the mascot by a separate committee.

And finally, a majority of the Task Force recommends removal of William Wade Haggard's name from Haggard Hall. The Task Force weighed many relevant factors in the legacy of W.W. Haggard, who made significant contributions to the institution during his twenty-year term leading Western Washington College of Education. Focus fell upon a photograph of Haggard participating in an offensive skit about Indigenous people as well as on claims of practices of hiring discrimination. The majority decision on Haggard provoked stronger dissent by those who voted to retain than any other name.

Given the urgency of questions about name changes on our campus, the Task Force urges the Board of Trustees to expedite review of this report and establish a timeline for substantive action on these issues. The Task Force recognizes that there will be economic costs associated with de-naming and renaming and recommends procuring those funds promptly so that next steps can be completed in a timely manner.

## **Section 1: Introduction: Historical Context, Process, and Methodology**

### **1.1 Historical Context for the Legacy Review Process**

The genesis of the current Legacy Review process was [a letter of demands submitted by leaders of Western's Black Student Organizations](#) (BSO) on June 26, 2020. Among the 19 demands addressed to the WWU Administration and the Associated Students was the demand to:

**Rename Huxley College, and rename campus buildings to honor important figures in Black History.** Prioritize the renaming of Huxley College, and name the two new buildings after historical Black figures as well as re-evaluate [the names of] current buildings.

The current and larger context of racial injustice in national politics of spring 2020 and within the COVID-19 pandemic was emphasized in President Randhawa’s message on May 29, 2020, “[Racial Violence Has No Place in Our Communities](#)”:

In the midst of this pandemic, as we all struggle with loss and fear, we have seen the disproportionate impact of the virus on communities of color and been confronted with the painful evidence of inequity which persists all around us. In the last weeks we have also seen racist violence end the lives of Ahmaud Arbery, George Floyd, and Breonna Taylor, and threaten the life of Christian Cooper. The multiplication of threats which impact our African-American and Black colleagues, friends, students, and neighbors right now is a heavy burden. As President of Western Washington University, I urge every member of our community to consider the ways systems of oppression and violence harm us and others, and to find ways to support and uphold members of our community who are suffering right now.

Shortly after the BSO letter was received, [Western’s Accessibility, Diversity, Equity and Inclusion website](#) was updated with a timeline of commitments addressing many of the demands, including the creation of a process to “research existing campus building namesakes and appoint a legacy review committee for Huxley College of the Environment.” Over the summer of 2020, Western Libraries Heritage Resources prepared [a report on building names](#). The charge and proposed membership for the Legacy Review Task Force was developed during Fall Quarter 2020 and reviewed by the Board of Trustees at their December 11, 2020 meeting. After the membership was finalized at the end of January, the Task Force began meeting virtually starting in February, with additional asynchronous discussion between meetings and research based on questions raised during Task Force meetings.

It should be noted that while the University’s legacy review process has embraced a broader review of all named buildings and colleges, the specific BSO demand for the removal of the Huxley College name is based on discussion within the College of the Environment and among students of color across the institution that had been ongoing for years prior to the letter. Thus, with respect to the consideration of the Huxley name in particular, different members of the Western community have come to the conversation at different times, with different levels of information, and different senses of urgency.

## 1.2 Methodology and Process

In going about its work, the Task Force began with a review and discussion of similar legacy review processes and principles of de-naming at other institutions, including Stanford University, Yale

College, and Princeton University. To deepen its understanding of the relevant historical evidence the Task Force conducted its own research and commissioned several valuable sources of information. In addition to the original Heritage Resources Building naming report, the Task Force requested two additional reports from Western’s Heritage Resources which include extensive archival materials and references: [a report on the original and naming of Huxley College](#); and [a report providing further information about building namesakes William Wade Haggard, Edward T. Mathes, George W. Nash, and Paul D. Woodring](#) (see Appendix). To better understand the legacy of Thomas Henry Huxley in particular, the Task Force invited four scholars with expertise on Huxley and the intellectual history of his era to share their understandings of his legacy with respect to race. Those contributions, the Heritage Resources reports, and additional research are available on [the Resources and Research page of the Task Force website](#).

The Task Force sought the input of Western community members about the process through several avenues. First, the Task Force created [an online feedback form](#), open on the Task Force website from April 15 – May 21, 2021, which received approximately 50 responses. Second, the Task Force hosted a live Q&A about the process at the Huxley College Speaker Series on April 29, 2021, which had over 100 attendees and was promoted in partnership with the WWU Alumni Association. Finally, the Task Force met during one of its meetings with two students of the Black Student Coalition.

Our building-by-building approach was effective in allowing us to hone in on a more detailed level with selected cases, but some Task Force members additionally reflected on how this approach is not comprehensive in evaluating the broader question of whether our named built environment is inclusive to our diverse student body, faculty, staff, and community members when they step onto Western’s campus. While we noted the overall demographic imbalance favoring white men in the naming of institutional features, this report does not address the macro-scale level question of representation along lines of race, gender, disability, class, and sexuality across the whole ledger of names across Western’s built environment.

### 1.3 Format of the Report

The format of the report adheres closely to the prescription contained in [the Task Force charge](#) about assessing whether to recommend consideration of removing the name of a building or college. Specifically, that in deciding whether to recommend consideration of removing a building or college name, the Task Force should be guided by at least the following factors:

1. **The harm caused by retaining the name.** Does the behavior or legacy of the person for whom the feature is named compromise or conflict with the University’s mission, including both its commitment to intellectual integrity and its commitment to diversity and inclusion of all members of the Western community?
2. **The potential harms of renaming.** The names of certain University features may have a positive value for students, faculty, staff, or alumni, who may find renaming disrespectful of their views.
3. **Considering and weighing relevant factors.** Such factors include:

- a. The relation of the honoree to the University’s history.
- b. The behavior of the honoree in terms of creating a significant negative impact on the core mission of the University and its teaching and learning environment.
- c. Broader community identification with the feature.
- d. The strength and clarity of the historical evidence.
- e. Whether the harm [of retaining or removing a name] can be mitigated, and historical knowledge preserved by recognizing and addressing the individual’s wrongful behavior.

## **Section 2: Recommendations**

After reviewing and discussing the Western Libraries Heritage Resources reports, the Task Force singled out four named features for closer scrutiny: Huxley College of the Environment, Mathes Hall, Haggard Hall, and Viking Union. This report does not offer final judgement on other named locations or colleges and this report should not foreclose more thorough evaluations of other building names at a future date.

### **2.1 Recommendation Regarding Huxley College of the Environment**

The Task Force is unanimous in recommending that the Board of Trustees remove Huxley’s name from the College the Environment.

- 1. Does the behavior or legacy of the person for whom the feature is named compromise or conflict with the University’s mission, including both its commitment to intellectual integrity and its commitment to diversity and inclusion of all members of the Western community?**

[Western’s 2018 – 2025 Strategic Plan](#) recognizes [Advancing Inclusive Success](#) as one of its three main pillars, that is, increasing retention and persistence rates, and the total number of graduates, while eliminating achievement gaps from diverse and under-represented socio-economic backgrounds. Western has made a concerted effort over the past ten years to attract more students of color, both in recognition of the moral imperative to serve the diverse public of Washington State more equitably, as well as demographic shifts indicating that an increasingly large majority of high school graduates in the state and nationally will come from ethnically and racially diverse families. Advancing inclusive success, rather than simply providing more access to Western for diverse prospective students requires addressing the ways in which Western’s classrooms, curriculum, culture, operational systems, and built environment foster and increase a sense of belonging and inclusion, or work against it. In light of Western’s stated strategic goals and priorities with respect to attracting and graduating a more diverse student body, and the expressed preferences of students of color received by the Task Force about the harms they experience from the Huxley name being attached to one of the most prominent features of the institution—including the aforementioned letter from Black Student Organization leaders in June

2020 which initiated the Legacy Review process—we suggest that retaining the Huxley name would be in conflict with the institutional mission.

To better understand legacy of T.H. Huxley, the Task Force invited input from scholars beyond the Western Washington University community with expertise on T.H. Huxley and the intellectual history of the Victorian era in which he lived. The responses from the four responding scholars provided invaluable context and a spectrum of opinion on Huxley’s views with respect to race. The Task Force also reviewed academic materials on Huxley as well as Huxley’s writings themselves, though Huxley’s voluminous output made the scholars’ input all the more valuable.

The following is a summary of the historical considerations compelling to the Task Force in making its recommendation to remove the Huxley name from the college. We invite the readers to closely review [the Research and Resources section of the Task Force website](#), including the contributions of outside scholars.

While the historians’ assessments differed in multiple ways, their work pointed to three common themes: Huxley’s views about natural racial and gender inequalities, the role of these hierarchical views in the application of Darwin’s theory of evolution to humans, and the development of scientific racism more generally.<sup>2</sup>

Huxley’s views about racial hierarchy and his contribution to upholding those values manifested in his work from the essay, “Emancipation Black and White.” Scholar Sherrie Lyons stated:

In response to the end of the Civil War in the U.S. he wrote “Emancipation Black and White” (*Reader*, May 20, 1865). He claimed, “It may be quite true that some negroes are better than some white men; but no rational man, cognisant (*sic*) of the facts, believes that the average negro is the equal, still less the superior, of the average white man.” In addition, one of the reasons he thought slavery should be abolished was because “moral law dictates that no human should dominate another with out (*sic*) grievous damage to his own nature.” Furthermore, the “master will benefit by freedom, more than the freed-man.” An end to slavery would result in a double emancipation, hence the title of the essay. ... In fact, most abolitionists had similar views.<sup>3</sup>

Some argue that in the broader context of the essay, Huxley was uncommonly progressive in his attitudes towards Black people. This claim does not stand up to scrutiny of the historical context. British Parliament passed the Slavery Abolition Act in 1833, making abolition a basic principle of

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<sup>2</sup> The Task Force aims to not reproduce the harm done by statements of the individuals evaluated here by limiting the amount of offensive language, sentiment, images, and claims quoted in the body of this report. Some is included in the footnotes but otherwise readers can consult the primary sources we ourselves used to prepare this report hosted on the Legacy Review Task Force’s website or linked in the notes. See Patricia Hill Collins on an ethics of accountability *Black Feminist Thought: Knowledge, Consciousness, and the Politics of Empowerment* (Routledge, 2009), 284-285.

<sup>3</sup> [“Observations from Sherrie Lyons,”](#) 2021.

an empire that continued to perpetuate racial hierarchies and the exploitation of labor on the basis of race. Huxley was reacting to the abolition of slavery in the United States, which was accomplished by a two-thirds majority of Congress in January 1865.<sup>4</sup> This again demonstrates that opposition to slavery and belief in the basic humanity of people of African descent was not uncommon, exceptional, or, in the context of Huxley's many negative generalizations on the basis of race, laudable.

In Huxley's own words, nature already imposes oppression and inequality, and humanity need not add 'injustice' to that natural division. He elaborated in "Emancipation Black and White": "The duty of man is to see that not a grain is piled upon that load beyond what Nature imposed, that injustice is not added to inequality."<sup>5</sup> Huxley's views about a hierarchy of women and those who did not fit the ideal of "whiteness" reflect the values of the dominant culture of Victorian England, but to pretend that there was no opposition to these viewpoints within Huxley's context is to erase the long histories of Black British and British feminist organizing.<sup>6</sup> As a prominent scientist, Huxley contributed to upholding values that have made education less inclusive, and his words harm Black, Indigenous and other students of color at our institution, especially as coming from an individual given the honor of representing one of Western's Colleges. It is important to note that despite some people's efforts to contextualize the above essay, Huxley repeated the same sentiment about a "hierarchy of race" and about Black people elsewhere in his work.<sup>7</sup>

In terms of Huxley's legacy in relation to race as it was understood at the time of the college's naming, Task Force members voiced concerns that Huxley's grandson, the 1959-62 President of the British Eugenics Society, Julian Huxley, was invited in 1969 to speak at the dedication of the

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<sup>4</sup> See the [UK National Archives](#) for more on abolition in the British Empire and the [US National Archives](#) for more on the 13<sup>th</sup> Amendment.

<sup>5</sup> Thomas Henry Huxley, "Emancipation-Black and White," *Lay Sermons, Addresses and Reviews* (Cambridge University Press, 2009).

<sup>6</sup> See Kameron Virk, "The Black British History You May Not Know About," [BBC](#), June 9, 2020 and Clare Midgley "British Women, Women's Rights and Empire, 1790-1850," [Women's Rights and Human Rights](#) (2001).

<sup>7</sup> See for example Huxley's 1864 letter to his sister, which repeated the common abolitionist viewpoint that he wished to see this system ended "for the sake of the white man" (Efram Sera- Shriar, *Annals of Science*, "[Observing Human Difference: James Hunt, Thomas Huxley and Competing Disciplinary Strategies in the 1860s](#)," no. 70 (2013): 461-491). Violence against people of African descent and the exploitation of both their productive and reproductive labor is what makes chattel slavery so abhorrent, not the system's impact on its primary beneficiaries. Huxley made related comments in an 1864 lecture to the Royal College of Surgeons (Mrs. P.A. Taylor, Ladies London Emancipation Society, "[Professor Huxley on the Negro Question](#)," 1864). Because the abolition of slavery was complete in much of the world by the time Huxley made his comments, merely endorsing abolition cannot be seen as a progressive move, even in the context of Victorian England or the Reconstruction-era United States, but instead abolition was a moderate, mainstream position by the 1860s. For more on the persistence of white supremacy amongst those who opposed the enslavement of Black people, see Elise Lemire "[Miscegenation](#)": *Making Race in America* (University of Pennsylvania Press, 2002) and Tavia Nyong'o, *The Amalgamation Waltz: Race, Performance, and the Ruses of Memory* (University of Minnesota Press, 2009).

College of the Environment.<sup>8</sup> This targeted invite that appears to not have been extended to other descendants of T.H. Huxley suggests that the racist pseudoscience of “better breeding” was seen as a legitimate aspect of Huxley’s legacy even after eugenics had been widely critiqued as unethical and potentially genocidal.

The second significant issue noted by our invited scholars involves Huxley’s contributions to the application of the theory of evolution to humans. Huxley was no stranger to the 19<sup>th</sup> century debate in evolutionary biology and anthropology regarding polygenism versus monogenism.<sup>9</sup> According to historian Nicolaas Rupke, Huxley’s scientific debate with Richard Owen in the 1860’s—a debate known as the “hippocampus controversy”—centered around Owen’s monogenist model versus Huxley’s polygenist model.<sup>10</sup> Namely, from this debate grew “Huxley’s Rule” or “Huxley’s Law” which claims there exists a greater difference among “the races of man” than that between “the lowest Man and the highest Ape.” In his research on this debate (his chapter on “Huxley’s Rule” shared with the Task Force), Nicolaas Rupke found that Huxley made racism an “essential component” of the Darwinian theory of human evolution:

Huxley’s most influential and best remembered work is *Evidence as to Man’s Place in Nature* (1863). The book went through many editions and translations. Darwin, in *On the Origin of Species* (1859), had not dealt with the highly contentious issue of the evolution of *Homo sapiens*, but Huxley showed youthful daring by tackling the issue. In the process, however, he made racism an essential component of the Darwinian theory of human evolution, interpreting races as reflecting different levels of evolutionary development, from taxonomically low (aboriginal ‘savages’) to high (white Europeans). More particularly, he formulated what became known as ‘Huxley’s Law’ or ‘Huxley’s Rule,’ which stated that the distance in biological, evolutionary development between the highest and lowest humans is greater than the distance between the lowest humans and the highest apes (chimpanzee, gorilla), thus degrading native peoples across the British Empire.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> Letter from WWSC President Charles J. Flora to Sir Julian Huxley, 1969 August 12 and Reply from Huxley to Flora, 1969 August 16. [University Archives](#). See also “Online resources about Julian Huxley and Eugenics” in the [Huxley Naming Report](#).

<sup>9</sup> The conversations of monogenism and polygenism and the related conversation about generalizations of race in the 19<sup>th</sup> century were widespread, with varieties of interpretations for monogenism versus polygenism worldwide. However, polygenism can best be defined as the disproven theory that humankind evolved from different origins (i.e., each race is a separate tree), and monogenism is the accepted theory that humankind evolved from the same origins (i.e., each race is on the same tree, coming from the same roots). For further reading about these discussions of racial “types” and polygenism/ monogenism of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and how it contributed to scientific racism, consult Herbert Odom, [“Generalizations on Race in 19<sup>th</sup> Century Physical Anthropology,”](#) *Isis*, Vol 58, no. 1, 4-18.

<sup>10</sup> [“Observations from Nicolaas Rupke,”](#) 2021. For further discussion of Huxley’s contributions to scientific racism as a result of his debate with Owen within the “hippocampus controversy,” see Michael Flannery, [“Plato Meets Polygeny: Louis Agassiz’s Defense of Southern Medicine and the Anglo-American Race Debate,”](#) *Journal of the Southern Association for the History of Medicine and Science*, Vol 2, no.1.

<sup>11</sup> [“Observations from Nicolaas Rupke.”](#) See also Rupke’s shared chapter of his book, *Johann Friedrich Blumenbach: Race and Natural History, 1750-1850*, [“The Origins of Scientific Racism and Huxley’s Rule”](#) (Routledge: 2018).



While Huxley's exact position within the two sides of the monogenism versus polygenism debate is still contested among many historians,<sup>12</sup> it is unambiguous that regardless of whatever stance Huxley truly aligned with, his rule about a hierarchy of races is an explicitly racist concept that eugenicists such as Ernst Haeckel commended.<sup>13</sup> As Patrick Brantlinger has documented, T.H. Huxley promoted the concept of distinct "primitive races" within the human species that he sought to prove were "self-extminating" and inferior. In deep contrast with the values of inclusion centered in the University's contemporary Mission, Huxley considered this a "lens of an ethical process."<sup>14</sup>

As an ethnologist during the Victorian era of the British Empire, aspects of Huxley's work built upon pre-existing beliefs about racial hierarchies and more scholarly anthropological evaluations of the racial "types" of humankind. In his essay, "On the Geographical Distributions of the Chief Modifications of Mankind," T.H. Huxley contributed to the classification of the world into four supercategories of races, with subcategories, based primarily on their physical attributes.<sup>15</sup> Genetic scientists have since disproved the notions of a "Black gene" or "White gene" and have disproven the idea that intragroup difference exceeds intergroup difference—establishing that race is a social, not biological, system.<sup>16</sup> We must recognize that modern conceptions of race have been constructed over the last several centuries, not over the substantially longer time frame in which speciation and other evolutionary processes occur, and that Huxley participated in this. Moving from context to particulars, "On the Geographical Distributions..." uses demeaning and occasionally inflammatory language to discuss Huxley's observations, especially in the sections about Black people and Indigenous people. Some Task Force members questioned how ethical and consensual Huxley's ethnological methodologies were and evaluated them as failing to meet the University's contemporary standards for academic integrity. Ultimately, T.H. Huxley contributed to the 19<sup>th</sup> century discussion of racial "types" in a way that maintained the racist assumptions and power structures of his time that the University avers it is working hard on dismantling today.

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<sup>12</sup> This disputed interpretation of Huxley as a monogenist versus polygenist is reflected in the input of the consulted Huxley scholars. Consult Appendix C to read the input from all four scholars. Reidy's conclusion about Huxley's placement within this debate contrasts with Rupke's conclusions in that Reidy states; "Huxley thought to conceive of different races as separate species, but he did view different races as having been molded by evolution through time. Thus, though he was a monogenist, his thoughts on race made room for polygenist arguments and those who would use supposedly innate differences between races in defense of slavery, against miscegenation, and ultimately, to undermine freedom for specific groups of people."

<sup>13</sup> Ernst Haeckel, "[Scientific Worthies: II – Thomas Henry Huxley](#)," *Nature Publication* (February 1874). For more information about Haeckel's race science and eugenics related beliefs, see footnote 9.

<sup>14</sup> Patrick Brantlinger, [Dark Vanishings: Discourse on the Extinction of Primitive Races, 1800-1930](#) (Cornell University Press, 2003) 164-188.

<sup>15</sup> TH Huxley, "[On the Geographical Distributions of the Chief Modifications of Mankind](#)," *The Journal of the Ethnological Society of London (1869-1870)* 2 no, 4 (1869-1870).

<sup>16</sup> Jonathan Jarry, "[Are You There, Race? It's Me, DNA](#)," *McGill Office for Science and Society*, 2019.

## 2. The relation of the honoree to the University's history.

For some Task Force members, the lack of any relationship between T.H. Huxley and the history of Western Washington University was a compelling factor in recommending de-naming of the College. More generally, for some members, a lack of a relationship between an honoree and the institution warrants a higher standard that should be applied to the alignment of the honoree's beliefs, behavior, and character with the values of the institution.

The Heritage Resources [report on the Origin and Naming of Huxley College](#) describes that the reason Huxley was chosen as the namesake of the College was ultimately due to his representing a certain set of intellectual virtues that a relatively small circle of faculty and administrators wanted the new college to represent as well: a fierce defense of the scientific worldview against religious orthodoxy; "intellectual fearlessness" in pursuit of the evidence; a desire to "yank science from its ivory tower and apply it to global crisis, to harness theory to purpose."<sup>17</sup> The Task Force appreciates those original intentions behind the name dedication and sees intellectual fearlessness in pursuit of the evidence and harnessing theory to purpose as leading us towards recommending the removal of Huxley's name from the college today.

The fact that Huxley was chosen as the College's namesake solely because of the values he represents opens the way to removing the name based on a re-assessment of Huxley's personal worthiness as a standard-bearer, and the evolution of the institution's values as a whole. Western's current strategic plan and values place an entirely new kind of urgency on addressing equity and inclusion throughout the institution. Indeed, it is the reason that the Legacy Review process has been initiated at all. It is hard to justify a choice to retain and contextualize Huxley's views in light of the institution's current mission and values and based on the fact that students of color have repeatedly identified the harm they experience from the name.<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> The archival material in the Huxley Naming Report suggests that the process of deciding upon the Huxley name was informal. According to administrative documentation, repeated invocations of the Huxley name by a small number of administrators in reference to the college made the christening of the new college a *fait accompli* by the time the proposal for the College of the Environment reached the Board of Trustees for approval in 1968. To see the earliest formal expression of "Huxley College" in administrative documentation, consult the Huxley College Naming Report (Academic Council Long-Range Planning subcommittee report on Huxley College: "Affiliated College of Environmental Studies, Report and Recommendations," January 10, 1968, University Archives). The Task Force noted that some records referred to the college as the "College of Environmental Studies/Sciences," while others acknowledged the unofficial title of "Huxley College" among administrators and faculty members.

<sup>18</sup> Public concerns were raised by two members of the WWU community regarding the origins of criticisms about Thomas Huxley's works. Specifically, two Op Eds (see Appendix E) were published that argued removal of the Huxley name from the college for the reason of Huxley's racist values would validate or otherwise give a victory to religious creationists who saw Huxley as an ideal target in order to discredit the theory of evolution. The flaw in these arguments is clear. First, they commit the so-called genetic fallacy, or fallacy of origination, by criticizing the source of an argument rather than the argument itself. In this case, the issue at stake concerns Huxley's views about race and the extent to which they are problematic; the question of who originally raised the point, or whether they hold other views that may be objectionable is irrelevant to the question of whether Huxley did in fact hold problematic views on race. The related, but distinct flaw in the editorials' argument is the assumption that anyone who reaches the conclusion that Huxley's views on race are problematic must have done so for the same reasons, and with the same intent, as creationists who first raised those concerns. But based on multiple vocal demographics of students

### 3. Broader community identification with the feature.

To consider broader community identification with Huxley's legacy, we begin with this quote from Washington State Poet Laureate, WWU alum, and member of the Lummi Nation, Rena Priest. Here, she reflects on how Huxley's claims about the inexhaustibility of fisheries has contributed to the decline of the salmon runs that are central to Coast Salish cultures:

As part of Huxley's legacy, in Bellingham, Washington, former home of the world's largest fish cannery, an Environmental Sciences College is named for him... nobody ever questions the name of the environmental college named for a man whose scientific opinion enabled the plundering of our oceans. If exploitation of resources is the result of science aimed at exploration, what does science aimed at sustainability look like?<sup>19</sup>

The Task Force recognizes in its charge the caution that "names of certain University features may have a positive value for students, faculty, staff, or alumni, who may find renaming disrespectful of their views." Huxley College has an international reputation for excellence and leadership in environmental education, and, having crossed its 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary, is not only a source of pride for its alumni but has established traditions of its own.

The Task Force was sensitive to this factor in making its recommendation and was deeply appreciative of the wide range of thoughtful feedback received from current students, faculty, staff, and alumni of the College, and from the broader Western community. A summary of that feedback follows.

[The Huxley College Advisory Board submitted a letter](#) to the Task Force noting that they were not of one mind on the question of removing the Huxley name from the College, recognizing concerns on both sides of the decision discussed above (see Appendix). Regardless of the outcome on the renaming question, the Advisory Board urged the College to use the opportunity to discuss the controversy about Huxley, and the College's "role in promoting environmental justice."

An editorial, "[Beyond a Name, Beyond an Individual,](#)" appeared in the Western Front on May 19, 2021 with 12 faculty authors and 9 additional faculty and staff signatories from within the college. It represents a reflection of the community's identification with the College in relation to the name.

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here at WWU, this is clearly not the case. On the contrary, it is entirely possible to examine the historical evidence and conclude that Huxley's beliefs on race are worthy of repudiation, not because they related to his promotion of evolution, but because they are genuinely offensive and degrading to people of color. People can think the Huxley name should be removed from the College for entirely different reasons. Finally, it should be well-known that demands to change the named built environment on college campuses has been one of many elements in institution-changing Black campus activism for more than a half century. Consult Martha Biondi, *The Black Revolution on Campus* (UC Press, 2014).

<sup>19</sup> Rena Priest, "Saving the Salish Sea Salmon," [Adventures NW Magazine](#), October 10, 2020.

Through the online feedback form and via email, the Task Force saw a variety of opinions surrounding the question of a Huxley renaming. A similar range of sentiment was expressed at the Huxley Speaker Series event the Task Force attended on April 29, 2021.

Many Task Force members recognized that the origins of our advisory committee stemmed from the list of demands of Black students of this campus. The Task Force invited the Black Student Coalition Specialists and the current AS Vice President of Sustainability to speak at the May 20 Task Force meeting, who focused the majority of their comments on their and their constituents' unambiguous desire for the name to be removed.

#### **4. The strength and clarity of the historical evidence.**

The historical evidence and how it bears on Huxley individually, and Western Washington University as a whole, has been discussed in applying the factors above. The historical evidence with regard to the content of Huxley's views and scholarship is extensive, though complex and nuanced. The historical record about the origins and naming of the College of the Environment, thanks to Heritage Resources, while containing some lacunae, is also quite extensive.

#### **5. Possibilities for mitigation of harms**

The Task Force received a significant amount of input on possible harm mitigation strategies (ways to offset the harms of retaining the name) from those who proposed to retain the Huxley name. One suggestion, advanced by scholar Sherrie Lyons, was that a more significant way to advance equity and inclusion in the College would be to redouble commitments to hiring more diverse faculty and staff, review curricula for opportunities to elevate the work of scientists of color and to identify forms of bias in science, and increase scholarships for students of color.

The Task Force endorses these suggestions, but rather, as worthy recommendations *in addition to* eliminating the name. To those who argue that the removal of the Huxley name is merely a performative act, the Task Force would respond that symbols and name dedications matter and that these additional commitments are no less essential to achieving the equity and inclusion vision of the College. It is worth noting that the College of the Environment [Diversity Committee](#) has already begun evaluating and implementing some of these important measures towards equity and inclusion in the college.

[A letter signed by 22 faculty and 4 staff](#) (see Appendix) suggested a year-long conversation about how to build an inclusive identity in the College, which would include but not be limited to discussions about the removal or retention of the name. As noted earlier in this section, the Task Force believes that removing the Huxley name from the College is only an important first step in a broader series of concrete actions that the College should take toward greater inclusion and equity; in this sense, it is very much in agreement with the suggestion of initiating a year-long, College-wide process on how to build a new identity. However, rather than using that time to discuss the possibility of name change, starting the process with the removal of the Huxley name would powerfully demonstrate the College's commitment to greater equity and

justice, and act as a springboard toward other conversations and institutional changes in the College.

Some people at Western mentioned their concerns of erasing history through renaming. The Task Force took into consideration the adage that “history is written by the victors” and that the voices of the oppressed have been historically marginalized within academia in general and the discipline of History in particular. The consensus of the Task Force is that name changes are not an erasure of history, but rather, a regular change that many institutions enact to better reflect modern values and progress that had happened since these names were applied to these features.<sup>20</sup>

The Task Force took into consideration the question of alumni and students’ attachment to the name of the College of the Environment. As the name of a college, the title may invoke positive memories for numerous students and alumni, while it also carries negative impacts for others. Ultimately, we recognize that the Huxley name is the title of a college and is itself not an identity. The demographics and values of the Huxley College of the Environment and Western Washington University’s community have changed since 1969, demanding a reassessment of the distance in between our institutional history, current conditions, and visions for the future. The Task Force hopes that a changed name will bring the institution more in line with our contemporary mission and “shared focus on academic excellence and inclusive achievement.”

## 2.2 Recommendation Regarding Mathes Hall

Seven members the Task Force voted to recommend the removal of Edward T. Mathes’ name from Mathes Hall. Two members of the Task Force voted to retain the name.

- 1. Does the behavior or legacy of the person for whom the feature is named compromise or conflict with the University’s mission, including both its commitment to intellectual integrity and its commitment to diversity and inclusion of all members of the Western community?**

Edward Mathes’ legacy conflicts with the University’s mission and the prominence of his name in the lives of students through Mathes Hall compromises the inclusion of all members of the Western Community. The Task Force focused particularly on Mathes’ scholarship around the history of racial and ethnic difference in relationship with contemporary values.

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<sup>20</sup> For contemporary examples see [“JMU leadership approves new names for three buildings on campus,”](#) February 19, 2021; [“Princeton to remove Woodrow Wilson’s name from policy school,”](#) June 28, 2020; and Deborah Horne, [“South Sound High School to be renamed for 94-year-old Tacoma educator,”](#) February 26, 2021. See also Nick Anderson, [“Uproar erupts at U. of Richmond over building names with ties to racism,”](#) March 26, 2021; Sarah Tomlinson, [“Indigenous Students Call on Community to Change Ryerson to ‘X University,’”](#) June 5, 2021. For information on a local change of a street name, see [“First Billy Frank Jr Street sign installed in Bellingham,”](#) November 15, 2015.

Mathes delivered a lecture in California in 1907 entitled “The Wandering Caucasian” that contains negative generalizations about non-Europeans while asserting a developmental teleology of racial progress towards whiteness.<sup>21</sup> This work fits within a broader paradigm of 19<sup>th</sup> century ethnology, which has faced significant critiques from more recent scholars in the Humanities and Social Sciences for its promotion of white supremacy and settler colonialism.<sup>22</sup> Mathes completed his dubious account of racial history with the assertion that “today we are facing a problem that has never before confronted the white man” in reference to people of Asian descent.<sup>23</sup>

Anti-Asian sentiment was particularly powerful on the West Coast of the United States in the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries.<sup>24</sup> In some ways, Mathes promoted these sentiments by asserting essential and discrete characteristics to large and diverse groups of people and by framing Asians as a “problem.” At the same time, Mathes’ reaction to anti-Asian violence in Bellingham the same year he delivered this speech reveals ambivalence about his role. On September 4, 1907 a mob of up to 500 white men attacked and drove from town Bellingham’s community of South Asian workers, mostly Sikhs, but labeled as Hindus by the local press.<sup>25</sup> There does not appear to be any evidence that Principal Mathes ever publicly condemned the riot.

At the same time, The Heritage Resources Report notes that the Vancouver newspaper *Free Hindustan* called Mathes “a good friend of India.” Mathes welcomed two students from South Asia, AK Modumdard and Nabi Ram Joshi, to campus in 1905 and 1907. Mathes later attributed a quote to “workmen in the shops” with whom he spoke after the riot about the South Asians at the school. “Let him stay at [sic] long as he is trying to educate himself and put himself on our level” reveals some hospitality but also a deep sense of white superiority. In 1925, Joshi wrote to the Normal School’s then-president to seek Mathes’ address and to explain that “since I have left your country in 1915 the government has made strict laws, making it almost impossible for my countrymen to enter your land.” These included the 1923 *United States v. Bhagat Singh Thind* Supreme Court decision and the Immigration Act of 1924, sponsored by Washington congressman Albert Johnson. It is important to note that the *Thind* decision hinged on the question “Are Hindus Caucasian?” and that Justice Sutherland, in issuing a decision that would

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<sup>21</sup> “The Wandering Caucasian” in *Sierra Educational News and Book Review* (vol. 3, no. 11), November 1907, [Heritage Resources](#).

<sup>22</sup> See Bruce Baum, *The Rise and Fall of the Caucasian Race: A Political History of Racial Identity* (NYU Press, 2006); Nell Irvin Painter “Why White People Are Called ‘Caucasian?’” from *Collective Degradation: Slavery and the Construction of Race* (Yale University, 2003); Joel Dinerstein, “The Pernicious Myth of a Caucasian Race,” *Los Angeles Time* (September 2019); and Carol Mukhopadhyay, “Getting Rid of the Word ‘Caucasian,’” from *Everyday Antiracism* (New Press, 2008).

<sup>23</sup> “The Wandering Caucasian.”

<sup>24</sup> See Stephanie Hinnershitz. “‘Western People Are Not All Angels’: Encountering Racism on the West Coast” in *Race, Religion, and Civil Rights: Asian Students on the West Coast, 1900-1968* (Rutgers University Press, 2015) and Krisofer Allerfeldt “Race and Restriction: Anti-Asian Immigration Pressures in the Pacific Northwest of America during the Progressive Era, 1885-1924,” *History*, (2003).

<sup>25</sup> See Paul Engelsberg “The 1907 Bellingham Riot and Anti-Asian Hostilities in the Pacific Northwest,” [Walden University Scholarworks](#) (2015); David Cahn “The 1907 Bellingham Riots in Historical Context,” [Seattle Labor and Civil Rights History Project](#) (2008); and “Bellingham Riot” [South Asian American Digital Archive](#).

render people from South Asia “aliens ineligible for citizenship” for several decades, concurred with Mathes’ assertion in “The Wandering Caucasian” that they were not, despite many ethnologists arguing otherwise.<sup>26</sup>

Furthermore, the Task Force saw Mathes’ 1916 lecture on “Mexico and Her Problems” as providing more detail into the centrality of race in his scholarship as well as further compromising Mathes’ legacy in relation to the University’s current mission. A promotional pamphlet explains that the lecture is, first, about “the type of man found in Mexico,” and second, about “the Indian problem.” The pamphlet also provides a comment commending the lecture for being “a fine study on the ‘Race Problem.’”<sup>27</sup> A newspaper report from when Mathes delivered this lecture in North Dakota indicated that he saw the both African and Indigenous ancestry as “problems” that inhere in “the nature of the people themselves” and their “stock.”<sup>28</sup> It must be noted that Mathes’ lecture was delivered in the context of the Mexican Revolution, the US military occupation of Veracruz, and US military interventions along the country’s border, but no reference to these events is made in the documentary record of the lecture.<sup>29</sup>

Finally, concerns and questions remain about Mathes’ activities following his departure from the role of principal. Mathes was Mayor of Bellingham for three years, starting in 1920.<sup>30</sup> Evidence of Ku Klux Klan activity in Bellingham first appears in 1921.<sup>31</sup> On July 4, 1923, members of the Ku Klux Klan burned a cross on the top of Sehome Hill in the arboretum that is today co-managed by Western Washington University. While some local men affiliated with the Catholic community attempted to counter these activities, there is no evidence Mathes ever made any statement against the Klan or ever sent authorities to curb their activities. This is in sharp contrast to local leaders like J.J. Donovan, who made many public statements against the Klan. Contemporary scholars acknowledge that, during the 1920s, Bellingham’s KKK was “The Strongest Chapter in WA.”<sup>32</sup>

Mathes, despite his high profile as an educational leader, also did not register public opposition to Washington Initiative 49, a 1924 referendum that would have banned private religious schools

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<sup>26</sup> [1925 letter from Joshi available via Western Today](#). The *United States v. Bhagat Singh* Third decision, which interestingly also cites Huxley, can be found [here](#). For more on the denial of citizenship to South Asians on the basis of racist scholarship, see Mae Ngai, “The Architecture of Race in American Immigration Law: A Reexamination of the Immigration Act of 1924,” *Journal of American History* (June 1999); Thomas Misco and Andrea Bennett-Kinne, “Citizenship Wanted, but Denied: The Racial Prerequisite Cases and Their Role in Institutionalizing Racism Against Asians,” *Social Studies* (May 2021)

<sup>27</sup> “Mexico and Her Problems” pamphlet [from Mathes Family papers – correspondence and publications, CPNWS Miscellaneous Manuscripts, CPNWS](#).

<sup>28</sup> *Weekly Times-Record*, Valley City, North Dakota, July 20, 1916. [Heritage Resources](#).

<sup>29</sup> See Michael E. Neagle “A Bandit Worth Hunting: Pancho Villa and America’s War on Terror in Mexico, 1916-1917,” *Terrorism and Political Violence* (2019) and Robert Quirk, *An Affair of Honor: Woodrow Wilson and the Occupation of Veracruz* (W.W. Norton & Company, 1967).

<sup>30</sup> “Historical Listing of City Councils and Mayors,” [City of Bellingham](#).

<sup>31</sup> “Federal Departments Are Seeking Evidence of Law Breaking,” [Catholic Northwest Progress](#), September 23, 1921.

<sup>32</sup> Trevor Griffey, “The Strongest Chapter in WA: Bellingham’s KKK,” [Seattle Civil Rights and Labor History Project](#), 2007.

and was widely seen as a Klan-sponsored attack on those outside of a mainline Protestantism.<sup>33</sup> Instead, Mathes continued to participate actively in the Democratic Party of Washington, which had not yet undergone the New Deal-era realignment that would eventually lead the party towards an embrace of civil rights.<sup>34</sup> In 1924, Washington's delegation to the Democratic National Convention voted unanimously against adding a plank to condemn Klan violence.<sup>35</sup> Open Klan activities persisted in the area without public criticism from Mathes through at least 1929.<sup>36</sup>

## 2. The relation of the honoree to the University's history.

As the first Principal of New Whatcom State Normal School from 1899-1914, Mathes made significant contributions to the early years of the institution and its presence in the broader Bellingham community. After retiring from Western in 1914, Mathes operated a bookstore and theater, served (as stated above) as mayor of Bellingham, and lectured throughout the Northwest on contemporary subjects. He ran unsuccessfully for governor as a Democrat in the 1920 primary election.

As the [Heritage Resources Building Naming Report](#) notes, early in his tenure, Mathes also helped organize the Bellingham Bay Lecture Course, which brought an array of notable speakers reflecting a wide range of perspectives. These included progressive reformers like Jacob Riis and Emmaline Pankhurst as well as white supremacists and eugenicists like Benjamin Tillman and David Starr Jordan. It is worth noting that Tillman and Jordan have been the focus of recent building renaming efforts at Clemson, Stanford, and Indiana Universities.

Mathes also deserves credit for refusing to bow to anti-Black sentiment on campus that might have prevented Western's first African American student, Alma Clark Glass, from attending the school. Washington's 1889 Constitution states "It is the paramount duty of the state to make ample provision for the education of all children residing within its borders, without distinction or preference on account of race, color, caste, or sex."<sup>37</sup> Consequently, and as noted in the *Seattle Republican*, this was an act of enforcing existing policy rather than some kind of bold reversal, but significant, nonetheless. As the *Seattle Republican* wrote, "While Prof. Mathes but did his plain duty, nevertheless he did it so completely that" anyone "who wants to see all manner of man have a square deal, should feel everlastingly [sic] grateful."<sup>38</sup> Some members of the Task Force felt that in the historical moment, this was an especially laudable act of bravery by Mathes,

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<sup>33</sup> See the voluminous collection of documents for and against Initiative 49 hosted by the University of Washington [here](#). Also see the WA Secretary of State's [pamphlet on the initiative](#), for and against.

<sup>34</sup> Kenneth O'Reilly, "The Jim Crow Policies of Woodrow Wilson" (*Journal of Blacks in Higher Education*, 1997) and Merle Black, "The Transformation of the Southern Democratic Party," *Journal of Politics*, (2004).

<sup>35</sup> Trevor Griffey, "Citizen Klan: Electoral Politics and the KKK in WA," [Seattle Civil Rights and Labor History Project](#) and Rory McVeigh "Power Devaluation, the Ku Klux Klan, and the Democratic National Convention of 1924," [Sociological Forum](#) (March 2001).

<sup>36</sup> See Gabriel Simon Mayers, *The Ku Klux Klan in Bellingham* (Whatcom County Historical Society, 2001).

<sup>37</sup> Washington State Constitution, Article IX.

<sup>38</sup> "Colored Girl Causes Commotion" *The Seattle Republican*, February 2, 1906.



whereas others felt that it is Glass' persistence in the face of the numerous dangers she faced as a Black woman in an early 20<sup>th</sup> century Bellingham that should be recognized.

### **3. Broader community identification with the feature.**

While Huxley's name by far received the most feedback in the online form for public input, it is notable that Mathes' name was mentioned multiple times as being worthy of consideration for removal. The Task Force heard from a student who was particularly displeased at having been assigned to live in a building with Mathes' name on it. In general, it does not appear that there is a great deal of community identification with Mathes' name being attached to the Hall, or knowledge about Mathes' legacy in general. Given that Mathes left the institution over 100 years ago, there is little risk of any direct harm caused by renaming.

### **4. The strength and clarity of the historical evidence.**

There are no audio recordings or transcripts of Mathes' lectures and speeches, so the content must be triangulated from newspaper accounts and promotional materials. That being said, every source confirms the centrality of race dictating both value and success in both "The Wandering Caucasian" and "Mexico and Her Problems." The evidence of Mathes' exact relationship to white supremacist organizing in Whatcom County during the 1920s is not conclusive. What is conclusive is that he was prominent in a political party that advanced and defended racial segregation during this era and that he did not speak out against the open activities of the Klan on or near campus, in contrast to other local leaders like J.J. Donovan.<sup>39</sup>

### **5. Possibilities for mitigation of harms**

There is little that can be done to mitigate the harm caused by Mathes' words, actions, and inactions other than removing his name from Mathes Hall. Given that his name would remain prominent in institutional histories as a former president and given his well-documented role in local politics, the Task Force sees no risk of erasing Mathes' legacy by removing his name from this building. Any potential harm from removing the name is more than outweighed by the potential harm of retaining it.

## **2.3 Recommendation Regarding Haggard Hall**

Five members the Task Force voted to recommend the removal of William Wade Haggard's name from Haggard Hall. Four members of the Task Force voted to recommend retaining the name.

- 1. Does the behavior or legacy of the person for whom the feature is named compromise or conflict with the University's mission, including both its commitment to intellectual integrity and its commitment to diversity and inclusion of all members of the Western community?**

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<sup>39</sup> See, for example, "'The Catholic Citizen'-J.J. Donovan address on the Ku Klux Klan" (1924). Heritage Resources.

The Task Force weighed many relevant factors in the legacy of W.W. Haggard, who had a long and complex relationship with the institution he led for twenty years and the communities it serves.

First, a photograph of Haggard participating in an offensive representation of Indigenous people raised concern in the Task Force.<sup>40</sup> In the photograph, Haggard and two students are dressed in a historically inaccurate blend of elements associated with representations of North American Indigenous people as part of a homecoming skit. Scholars in Indigenous Studies and American Studies have documented at length the historical harms of these kinds of inaccurate caricatures of Indigenous people.<sup>41</sup> While critiques of Native mascots did not become widespread until a decade after Haggard's act, this does not reduce the harm these images did or continue to do. This action is disturbing, especially given no documented evidence of Haggard offering support or honoring the Coast Salish people during his presidency.

Second, concerns were raised by some Task Force members about Haggard's failure to speak out against the internment of Western's sole Japanese American student James Okubo and against anti-Japanese sentiment in contrast to, for example, the statements of UW President Lee Paul Sieg.<sup>42</sup> While some credit Haggard with "having led the institution through World War II," some Task Force assess this inaction as a significant failure of leadership.

Third, concerns were raised about the context around the hiring of Haggard in the wake of the politically motivated firing of President Charles Fisher, especially given Haggard's documented antagonism towards allowing certain political perspectives to be expressed on campus. In response to criticism of a campus talk by Eleanor Roosevelt, Haggard assured a local resident that "no one with communistic leanings is ever invited to appear on our campus."<sup>43</sup> Haggard was by

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<sup>40</sup> Photograph of Haggard participating in a student skit during Homecoming, 1953, originally published in the *Western Washington Collegian* on August 14, 1953. [University Archives](#).

<sup>41</sup> See, for example, Philip Deloria, *Playing Indian* (Yale University Press, 1999); Stephanie Fryberg "Unpacking the Mascot Debate," *Social Psychological and Personality Science* (March 2020); Erik Brady, "Redface, like Blackface, is a Sin of White Supremacy," *The Undefeated* (February, 2019); and Michael Friedman, *The Harmful Psychological Effects of the Washington Football Mascot* (Oneida Indian Nation, 2013).

<sup>42</sup> "The Exigencies of War – The UW Administration and Student Relocation," [UW Special Collections](#). For more on James Okubo, see the [Western Libraries exhibit on him](#), including the October 5, 1945 issue of the *Collegian* with both Haggard's welcome to new students and a news story about Okubo earning a Silver Star in France on the cover. Okubo did not return to WWU as a student, but was awarded an honorary degree in [2019](#). For more on opposition to Japanese internment and post-internment statements of welcome, see Robert Shaffer "Opposition to Internment: Defending Japanese American Rights During World War II" *The Historian* (Spring, 1999); Cheryl Greenberg "Black and Jewish Response to Japanese Internment," *Journal of American Ethnic History* (Winter, 1995); and Jennifer Speidel, "After Internment: Seattle's Debate Over Japanese Americans' Right to Return Home," *Seattle Civil Rights and Labor History Project*.

<sup>43</sup> For a fuller accounting of Fischer's firing, see Ron Judd [The Liberal Arts on Trial: Charles H. Fisher and Red-Scare Politics at Western Washington College of Education, 1933-39](#) (University of Nebraska at Kearney Press, 2016). Haggard: "You may be assured that no one with communistic leanings is ever invited to appear on our campus." G. Harrison to W.W. Haggard January 9, 1956, and Haggard's reply from January 12, 1956, [University Archives](#).

no means responsible for the anti-communist rhetoric that motivated the board who hired him, but he bears at least some responsibility for the suppression of left-wing political perspectives on campus throughout his tenure.<sup>44</sup>

Fourth, some Task Force members viewed comments in oral histories about Haggard as suggesting prejudice based on age, gender, and religion that may have been legal at the time but are inconsistent with the University's current values. Two separate oral history interviews included in the Heritage Resources report indicated that Haggard discriminated against a woman he judged to be too old for the job and, perhaps more systematically, against Catholics.<sup>45</sup>

## 2. The relation of the honoree to the University's history.

William Haggard served as Western's president from 1939-1959, the longest tenure of any president. During that time, the institution grew in student enrollment, buildings, and land holdings. The school also awarded its first master's degrees in education during his time in office. In addition to his service to Western, Haggard served for a time as president of the National High School Principals Association and the American Association of Junior Colleges. He was also chairman of the accrediting committee for the American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education. Haggard was also an avid scholar of Abraham Lincoln and delivered numerous public lectures on Lincoln's career.<sup>46</sup>

In assessing institutional history and what credit and responsibility to attribute to that history, it is worth noting that it is not always clear what specific credit Haggard should receive for institutional developments during his tenure, just as the level of his responsibility in relation to negative developments on and off campus during his tenure is debatable.

The institutional history during his tenure was characterized at once by a growth in land holdings and student body but was absent important markers of equity and inclusion. Task Force members note that while there is no direct evidence of Haggard refusing to hire someone on the basis of race, oral histories testify to hiring discrimination around other categories and there were no Black faculty at WWU while he was President. There is no evidence Haggard attempted to prevent the Western Washington College of Education from becoming Western

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<sup>44</sup> For example, see the May 1957 removal by Bellingham Police of a communist flag hung outside of the library or the 1965 visit by communist news editor James Jackson, referred to as "the first official test of Western's year-old open speaker policy." *WWU Collegian* May 3, 1957, and *WWU Collegian*. May 14, 1965.

<sup>45</sup> "We had Leslie Vinyl, who did a reasonably good job, but Doctor Haggard wouldn't hire her because she was over forty. He said 'no, to be in physical education, you have to be a young person.' So, he just wouldn't hire her." Margaret Aitken (Chair of the combined women's and men's Physical Education Department from 1972 on, Chair of the Women's Department from 1963), July 8, 1996, WWU Centennial Oral History Project, [CPNWS](#). "When I first came to Bellingham to be interviewed for the position, we talked at least for an hour... In the course of that, however, he worked around to a subject that later would have figured very importantly in the hiring of personnel. But, I began to realize that he was trying to determine whether or not I was a Catholic. When finally I assured him that I had been married in a Congregational Church in New Zealand, and was not a Catholic, he then started discussing salary." Howard Critchfield (Professor Emeritus of Geography), April 13, 1993, WWU Centennial Oral History Project, [CPNWS](#).

<sup>46</sup> See Heritage Resources Report on Building Names.

Washington State College and then Western Washington University, but the fact remains that these significant institutional transformations occurred in the decades following his two decades of leadership in which the institution underwent no such transformation.<sup>47</sup>

### **3. Broader community identification with the feature.**

While the Task Force did not receive any comments about Haggard through the online feedback form, the centrality of Haggard Hall's location on Red Square, housing part of the library as well as many classrooms and offices makes it a very prominent feature of campus.<sup>48</sup> This means that those harmed by the name must face this feature regularly in ways that can compound the harm.

### **4. The strength and clarity of the historical evidence.**

The records documenting President Haggard's 20-year tenure as president are voluminous, covering a wide range of administrative responsibilities. This evidence does not always clearly indicate causation or responsibility, but allows for a detailed rendering of many events and developments across his time at the university.

There is no evidence currently available of Haggard offering material or symbolic support for the communities harmed through his actions and inactions. Subsequent revelations of such evidence might require reconsideration of how to balance these harms against any positive accomplishments, but neither Heritage Resources or the Task Force's research revealed any remorse or redress around issues of negative stereotypes about Indigenous people, Japanese internment, hiring discrimination, or other concerns.

### **5. Possibilities for mitigation of harms**

There are few possibilities for mitigating the harm caused by the retention of Haggard's name. The centrality of the feature is one barrier to mitigating harm and it would be difficult to contextualize his behavior without further publicizing the harmful image at the heart of the Task Force's concern.

## **2.4 Recommendation Regarding Viking Union**

Six Task Force members voted to recommend the removal of the name 'Viking' from the Viking Union. The three members who voted against recommending removal of the name believe that

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<sup>47</sup> Information about the history of the institution's leaders can be found [here](#). During Haggard's twenty-year tenure, the institution remained Western Washington College of Education. Western became a State College two years after Haggard's retirement and a university sixteen years after that according to an [institutional history](#). On the same page of the May 22, 1959 issue of the *Collegian* reporting on Haggard's retirement party is the first mention of the hiring of Eunice Lee (later Faber), the first Black faculty member at Western. Western adopted the cluster college concept by May of 1966 according to [Western Reports](#) and the [Long Range Plan for WWSC](#).

<sup>48</sup> "Haggard Hall" [WWU Campus Buildings map](#).

the building name should be reviewed by a separate Task Force in concert with the wider use of the Viking mascot.

- 1. Does the behavior or legacy of the person for whom the feature is named compromise or conflict with the University’s mission, including both its commitment to intellectual integrity and its commitment to diversity and inclusion of all members of the Western community?**

The Viking Union is named after Western’s mascot, which dates to 1923.<sup>49</sup> The Task Force recognizes that the Viking as Western’s mascot has been a topic of conversation and some controversy in recent years. In 2015, the first Black woman to be the WWU Associated Students President faced racist and misogynistic threats for contemplating initiating a discussion about changing the mascot.<sup>50</sup> Western’s Viking mascot was originally selected, in part, due to its connection to Scandinavian communities who were prominent in Bellingham’s demographics at the time. At the least, this regional and ethnic particularity limits the inclusiveness of the icon for an institution that is aspiring to increased diversity. Further, some Task Force members reflected on the ways in which the icon’s symbolic relationship to histories of conquest make it especially harmful to celebrate on Coast Salish land occupied by the US military during the 1850s. Finally, some members of the Task Force were especially concerned about the fact that, in recent decades, Vikings have been romanticized by white supremacist groups as icons of conquest.<sup>51</sup> Such concerns seemed particularly timely given recent activities by white supremacists on WWU’s campus.<sup>52</sup>

In the case of the Viking Union, a substantial portion of our deliberations focused on what would be the right procedural path given the connection between the building name and the school mascot. Ultimately, there was a difference of opinion on whether making a recommendation about the name of the Viking Union was a part of our charge. A majority of Task Force voted to

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<sup>49</sup> “Vikings” was chosen for three reasons: 1) it means “fjord-men” and Puget Sound is one of the world’s largest fjords; 2) Vikings were associated with the far north, and Western is the northernmost university in the United States outside of Alaska; and 3) the name was “considered capable of being adapted to various circumstances and is easily remembered” (*Weekly Messenger*, Nov. 16, 1923).

<sup>50</sup> See “Vikings No More? Survey to Be Created to Question Western Mascot,” [Western Front](#), November 19, 2015; “Students Say WWU’s Response to Racist Threats Not Enough” [Seattle Times](#), November 25, 2015; “A Debate Over a Mascot Sparks a Racially Charged Threat and Another College Cancels Classes,” [Washington Post](#), November 24, 2015; and “Black Student Criticizes WWU for not Taking Threats Seriously,” [Bellingham Herald](#), November 25, 2015.

<sup>51</sup> See, for example, ArLuther Lee “Protestor in Viking Headdress ID’s as Trump supporter, not Antifa” [Atlanta Journal-Constitution](#), January 7, 2021; Geoff McMaster “White supremacists are misappropriating Norse mythology, says expert” [University of Alberta Folio](#), July 30, 2020; David Perry, “White Supremacists Love Vikings but they’ve got their history all wrong” [Washington Post](#) May 31, 2017; Steve Goldstein “Why White Supremacist Groups Have Adopted Viking Imagery,” [KJZZ](#) January 27, 2021; and Dorothy Kim “White Supremacists Have Weaponized an Imaginary Viking Past,” [Time](#), April 15, 2019.

<sup>52</sup> See, for example, “White supremacist group posters found on WWU campus,” [Bellingham Herald](#), October 1, 2019; “White Supremacist Posters Found on Campus,” [Western Today](#), June 2020; and “For the second time, a cryptic manuscript with strange symbols, drawing and swastikas was dropped off at Viking Union,” [Western Front](#), April 3, 2021.

recommend renaming the Viking Union in this report, seeing the harm in retaining the name as outweighing any impact it might have on the broader discussion about the mascot, and seeing a renaming as actually give a broader evaluation of the mascot more integrity by rendering this potential tangent moot. Those that voted against making a recommendation to rename the Viking Union saw the name of the Viking Union as too strongly tied into the broader question of the Viking mascot for us to address at this time. In their view, the question of the Viking Union exceeds the scope of our charge. In their view, removing the name from the building might give people a false sense that the mascot had already been reviewed and addressed.

Despite these differing opinions on procedure The Task Force was unanimous in agreeing that the building name and mascot should be addressed and evaluated in some manner.

### **1. The relation of the honoree to the University's history.**

See above.

### **2. Broader community identification with the feature.**

Viking Union is a central feature of campus, focused on the student experience. It is home to the Multicultural Center (including the Ethnic Student Center), Associated Students offices, LGBTQ+ Western offices, the Campus Bookstore, a dining hall, the campus food court, several, multi-purpose rooms, and other resources. Colloquially, the building is known both as 'Vee-yoo' and 'the union,' an unconventional shorthand when compared to other buildings that tend to be known more so by the proper name attached to them (e.g. 'Haggard' for 'Haggard Hall'). It's unclear whether this is an incidental shorthand or due to attempts by community members to avoid the term 'Viking.'

While the Viking mascot itself is a key aspect of Western's brand, identification with it varies across the community. The logo is particularly significant for those involved in intercollegiate athletics but has less appeal amongst the broader campus community. Unlike many gender-neutral mascots, WWU's Viking is stylized as a man in a way that neither reflects the reality of Viking society nor the many accomplishments of women, who have been educated and educating at Western since its founding.

### **3. The strength and clarity of the historical evidence.**

The Task Force is aware of but has not dedicated time to evaluating debates within the history of actual Vikings, including issues of gender as well as slavery, with a focus on the mascot and logo as it has existed at Western and in living memory.<sup>53</sup> That there are, in the contemporary juncture, significant representational issues connected to the icon is unambiguous.

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<sup>53</sup> See, for example, Neil Price "The Little-Known Role of Slavery in Viking Society," [Smithsonian Magazine](#), August 25, 2020; Sarah Pruiett, "What We Know About Vikings and Slaves," [History](#), June 27, 2019; and Sami Raninen

#### 4. Possibilities for mitigation of harms

In considering possible harms of removing the name: First, no individual namesakes are at risk of being disrespected by removing the word “Viking” from the Student Union. Second, the centrality of the feature on campus including that it is the site of the Ethnic Students Center is one barrier to options to mitigate the harm caused by the retention of the iconography.

Debates over mascots have generated a great deal of attention locally and nationally in recent years, but the Task Force does not consider that debate to have fully run its course here. Those members who voted to recommend removing the word “Viking” from the Union building do not see this move as disrupting this debate, but rather as removing a constraint on it by allowing a conversation about the mascot to emerge without having to address the related but distinct issue of the building name. The Task Force also notes that the overwhelming direction of these mascot debates across the country in recent decades has been towards changing older mascots regarded as potentially exclusionary and the creation of exciting new icons with which the whole community can identify.

#### ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The work of the Legacy Review Task Force would not have been possible without the support and contributions of several individuals. First, the contributions of historians and scholars Sherrie Lyons, Paul White, Michael Reidy, and Nicolaas Rupke provided invaluable historical perspective, insight, and expertise to the process. Second, Western Libraries’ Heritage Resources contributed three outstanding and timely reports about how Western’s buildings and colleges came to be named, combining access to extensive archival resources with helpful synthesis. Elizabeth Joffrion, Tony Kurz, Michael Taylor, Ruth Steele, and Roz Koester deserve special recognition. Any errors in describing these histories are the Task Force’s alone.

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“Queer Vikings? Transgression of gender and same-sex encounters in the Late Iron Age and early medieval Scandinavia,” [Queerscope Articles](#) (2008).

## **LEGACY REVIEW TASK FORCE MEMBERS**

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## APPENDICES

### APPENDIX A:

- [LEGACY REVIEW TASK FORCE CHARGE](#)
- [LEGACY REVIEW TASK FORCE WEBSITE](#)

### APPENDIX B: HERITAGE RESOURCES BUILDING AND COLLEGE REPORTS

- [Report on the Origin of Building Names at WWU \(September 2020\)](#)
- [Huxley College Naming Report \(March 10, 2021\)](#)
- [Supplementary Report – Haggard, Mathes, Nash, Woodring \(March 31, 2021\)](#)

### APPENDIX C: OBSERVATIONS BY SCHOLARS AND BIOGRAPHERS ON T.H. HUXLEY

- [Observations from Paul S. White](#), Affiliated Scholar, Department of History and Philosophy of Science, Research Associate, Darwin Correspondence Project, University of Cambridge, author of *Thomas Huxley: Making the 'Man of Science'*.
- [Observations from Sherrie Lyons](#), Assistant Professor, Empire State College SUNY, author of *Thomas Henry Huxley: Evolution of a Scientist*.
- [Observations from Michael Reidy](#), Professor of History, Montana State University-Bozeman, co-general editor of the ongoing *Correspondence of John Tyndall* (a close associate of Huxley) and co-editor of a volume on Tyndall entitled *The Age of Scientific Naturalism*.
- [Observations from Nicolaas Rupke](#), Johnson Professor of History, Washington and Lee University, co-editor of *Johann Friedrich Blumenbach, Race and Natural History, 1750 - 1850*.

### APPENDIX D: FEEDBACK RECEIVED FROM THE COMMUNITY

- [LETTER OF THE HUXLEY COLLEGE ADVISORY BOARD \(May 12, 2021\)](#)
- [MAY 21 LETTER FROM HUXLEY FACULTY AND STAFF](#)

### APPENDIX E: RELEVANT MEDIA & EDITORIALS

- WESTERN FRONT EDITORIAL [“Students, faculty work toward Huxley name change”](#)
- SEATTLE TIMES EDITORIAL [“Reconsider cancel-culture target at WWU”](#)
- PLANET MAGAZINE EDITORIAL [“Standing Up to Anti-Evolutionism”](#)
- WESTERN FRONT EDITORIAL [“Beyond a name, beyond the individual”](#)