



APRIL 17, 2015
AYCOCK AD HOC
COMMITTEE
REPORT

The University of North Carolina
Greensboro

Drs. Charles Bolton & Rod Wyatt
Co-Chairs

Background Information

At the September 4, 2014, meeting of the UNCG Board of Trustees, information was presented to the Board of Trustees' Educational Quality and Fiscal Affairs Committee regarding the statewide concern surrounding buildings named in honor of former Governor Charles B. Aycock. The committee requested that a university committee be established to review this matter and report its findings to the Board of Trustees' for their consideration at a future meeting.

On January 28, 2015, Chancellor Linda Brady established the Aycock Ad-Hoc Committee consisting of the following members:

Shannon Bennett	Associate Chief of Staff	Office of the Chancellor
Chuck Bolton	Professor	History
Miriam Bradley	Director of Development	University Advancement
Todd Davis	Associate General Counsel	Office of the General Counsel
George Dimock	Associate Professor	Faculty Senate
Christine Flood	Adjunct	Lecturer History
Michael Garrett	Chairman, Board of Directors	UNCG Alumni Association
Joseph Graham	President	Student Government Association
Mary Landers	Executive Director of the Alumni Association & Director of Alumni Engagement	Office of Alumni Engagement
Erin Lawrimore	University Archivist	Special Collections and University Archives
Constance McKoy	Associate Professor	School of Music, Theatre and Dance
Hoyte Phifer	Assistant Director of Facility Services	Staff Senate
Rod Wyatt	Chair, Chancellor's Advisory Committee on Equity, Diversity and Inclusive Excellence	Office of the Chancellor

At the January meeting, the committee selected Bolton and Wyatt as committee co-chairs.

Additionally, Chancellor Brady charged the committee with the following tasks:

- Exploring the historical connection between Charles B. Aycock and UNCG
- Monitoring the progress of other campuses considering renaming (ie. ECU, UNC-CH)

- Researching the process followed by institutions that have faced similar controversies
- Providing opportunities for engaging the campus community on the issue
- Making recommendations to the Board of Trustees regarding options

Since that initial meeting, the Aycock Ad-Hoc Committee has held seven meetings (February 12, February 26, March 5, March 19, April 2, April 9, and April 16). The committee also organized two public forums, both held on March 24. The committee created a website <aycock.uncg.edu> to provide information on the life, contributions to UNCG, and history of Charles B. Aycock, as well as the work of the committee. The website included a survey for people both within the UNCG community and beyond to provide feedback on the issue of what action UNCG should take—if any—regarding the use of the Aycock name on the campus.

The committee discussed and evaluated all information and feedback and prepared the attached report, which includes recommendations regarding options, for the information of the Board of Trustees. The report was submitted to Acting Chancellor and Provost and Executive Vice Chancellor Dr. Dana Dunn who will present it to the Board of Trustees.

History of Charles B. Aycock and his relationship to UNCG

A History subcommittee conducted research into the life of Charles B. Aycock and his relationship to UNCG. The subcommittee created a document that was posted on the website. The full text of this History Document is included in the Appendix.

Actions Taken by other North Carolina Institutions

On February 20, 2015, the East Carolina University (ECU) Board of Trustees announced their decision to remove the name of Charles B. Aycock from one of its campus residence halls. On that same day, an email was sent to Andrew Morehead, the Chair of the ECU Ad-Hoc Committee on the Naming of Aycock Residence Hall, by a member of the UNCG Ad-Hoc Committee, requesting information about the process employed by the ECU committee to solicit feedback and input from University constituents and the public regarding the issue.

In response to the email, Dr. Morehead indicated that the ECU Committee used two forms of feedback: (1) a website with information about Governor Aycock, including the facts generating the controversy about the naming of the residence hall, and (2) two campus forums that allowed audience members to address their concerns to the Board of Trustees and to the Committee. The website included a survey requesting feedback, and a link to the survey was emailed to all ECU students, faculty, staff, and the ECU alumni email lists.

Dr. Morehead observed that few people read the materials provided online and that many people complained because they perceived that the survey actually represented a public vote on the issue. He indicated that, in hindsight, the committee would have developed a survey with specific questions that would focus on possible alternatives to the binary options of retaining or removing the name and that would include an area for comments.

In addition to his personal feedback, Dr. Morehead provided the UNCG Committee with 3 documents: (1) the initial report of the ECU Ad Hoc Committee; (2) a second, final report of the Committee after they were reconvened and given an expanded charge by the ECU Board of Trustees (the full text of this report is included in the Appendix); and (3) a copy of a document Dr. Morehead assembled with a selection of quotes from *The Life and Speeches of Charles Brantley Aycock*. The final report of the ECU Ad Hoc Committee included a recommendation that the name of Charles B. Aycock be removed from the residence hall. The recommendation was based upon the following findings:

- (1) Governor Aycock's Qualities and Actions were not in accordance with ECU's vision, mission, and core values.
- (2) Governor Aycock was not found to have had a University-wide influence, and that his contributions to the state are inextricably tied to his White Supremacy beliefs.
- (3) Governor Aycock's reputation had changed "substantially so that the continued use of that name may compromise the public trust, dishonor the University's standards, or otherwise be contrary to the best interest of the University."

The investigation of Duke University's action to change the name of a building named for Governor Aycock included a telephone interview with Richard Riddell, Vice President and University Secretary at Duke University, conducted on February 25, 2015, as well as information contained in Emma Baccellieri's report in *The Duke Chronicle*, titled "Aycock Renamed Following Student Leaders' Call for Action" (June 17, 2014). <http://www.dukechronicle.com/articles/2014/06/17/aycock-renamed-following-student-leaders-call-action#.VSPsgSyy7nE>

Freshman dormitory Aycock was renamed East Residence Hall, following years of protest over the building's namesake—former North Carolina governor Charles Aycock, a prominent figure in the white supremacy movement in the early 1900s. The change was agreed on by the Board of Trustees' executive committee in June 2014, six months after Duke Student Government (DSG) passed a resolution supporting the renaming of the dormitory. Representatives from DSG and the Black Student Alliance met with members of the administration to present a formal proposal for the name change.

"The building was named early in the twentieth century on one view of history, and that view of history no longer prevails," Duke University President Richard Brodhead said. "Given the circumstances, it seems a good time to change the name." East Residence Hall was the original name of the dormitory, which opened in 1911 when Duke University was still Trinity College. One year later, however, the Board of Trustees decided to change the name to Aycock to honor the former governor, who was in office from 1901-1905. Aycock had no clear ties to Trinity College, Brodhead noted—he was never a student or employee, and he did not ever donate to the institution. The decision to name the building after Aycock was touched upon only briefly in the minutes of the Board of Trustees' September 1912 meeting, and no explanation was given for the choice.

The name change was effective immediately. When the Class of 2018 received their housing assignments in June 2014, East Residence Hall was listed instead of Aycock for the first time in more than a century. To ensure that the change is an educational one, a plaque detailing the history of the name will be placed in the entryway of the dormitory. "We've given this careful thought. One argument is that history is history, and we can't change it by erasing," Brodhead said. "But I don't regard this as an erasure."

The resolution passed by DSG in January 2014 suggested that the building be renamed for Julian Abele, who designed much of West Campus and was one of the nation's most prominent black architects in the early 1900s. The University ultimately decided against Abele being the namesake for a building that he did not design.

The decisions to rename Aycock buildings at ECU and Duke have generated a great deal of media attention, representing a variety of perspectives on the decisions made to rename the buildings. A representative selection of the articles and opinion pieces from the media were included as part of UNCG's Aycock website, and those articles are included in the Appendix to this report.

Feedback Gathered by the Committee

The Aycock Ad-Hoc Committee gathered feedback through a survey on the website (a copy is included in the Appendix), and through two public forums held on March 24, 2015.

The committee received 1,034 responses to its online survey. In a few instances, there were duplicate responses, which were not removed. In addition, there was no measure to guarantee that respondents only replied once. Overall, however, the responses to the two main questions in the survey broke down as follows:

1-Considering the information provided on this website, do you believe that UNCG should remove Governor Aycock's name from Aycock Auditorium?

1031 responses received

No-498 responses, 48%
Yes-533 responses, 52%

2-Should UNCG acknowledge the controversy surrounding Governor Aycock?

1019 responses received

No-247 responses, 24%
Yes-770 responses, 76%

Since respondents to the survey were also asked their affiliation, the responses can be broken down by those categories. Some people selected more than one category, and those selecting multiple responses were counted in each constituency group.

The breakdown of responses by constituency is detailed below:

Administration

22 responses received, 2%

Question 1	Question 2
No-6, 27%	No-1, 4%
Yes-16, 72%	Yes-21, 94%
NA-0	NA-0

Alumni

614 responses received, 59%

Question 1	Question 2
No-338, 55%	No-178, 29%
Yes-274, 45%	Yes-425, 69%
NA-2	NA-11

Community Partner

13 responses received, 1%

Question 1	Question 2
No-8, 62%	No-2, 15%
Yes-5, 38%	Yes-11, 85%
NA-0	NA-0

Donor

115 responses received, 11%

Question 1	Question 2
No-75, 65%	No-31, 27%
Yes-40, 35%	Yes-83, 72%
NA-0	NA-2

Faculty

81 responses received, 8%

Question 1	Question 2
No-25, 31%	No-10, 12%
Yes-56, 69%	Yes-71, 88%
NA-0	NA-0

Friend

34 responses received, 3%

Question 1	Question 2
No-21, 62%	No-10, 29%
Yes-13, 38%	Yes-24, 71%
NA-0	NA-0

Parent

31 responses received, 3%

Question 1	Question 2
No-23, 74%	No-11, 35%
Yes-8, 26%	Yes-20, 65%
NA-0	NA-0

Staff

107 responses received, 10%

Question 1	Question 2
No-59, 55%	No-24, 22%
Yes-48, 45%	Yes-79, 74% ²
NA-0	NA-4

Student

270 responses received, 26%

Question 1	Question 2
No-78, 29%	No-39, 14%
Yes-192, 71%	Yes-230, 85%
NA-0	NA-1

Other

51 responses received, 5%

Question 1	Question 2
No-29, 57%	No-7, 14%
Yes-22, 43%	Yes-42, 82%
NA-0	NA-2

Many of the people who responded to the online survey included comments to explain their decisions.

Among those who answered “yes” to the question, “Considering the information provided on this website, do you believe that UNCG should remove Governor Aycock's name from Aycock Auditorium?” the following broad themes emerged (representative quotes follow each theme):

1. Aycock’s legacy no longer reflects UNCG’s status as the institution with the most diverse student body among historically white institutions in the UNC system.

“I believe UNCG should remove Governors Aycock name because of the history associated with him. Being that we are the most diverse campus in the UNC system this man beliefs and actions associated with the beliefs is harmful to our student population.”

“Our campus is embracing diversity and should not be proud of anything that supports or represents racism. By removing Governor Aycock name we will be one step closer to closing the gap of inequality on campus.”

"This issue is very complex; but for me, it comes down to one question: How do we, the current students, faculty, and staff of UNCG, want to be remembered?"

"History is always changing and we write it ourselves. Why would we want to be remembered as a university which remained locked in a static and domineering past without moving towards a more just future?"

2. Removing Governor Aycock’s name and renaming the building is an opportunity for UNCG to make a strong statement about racial equality and inclusiveness.

“We are a university who values diversity and should not honor someone so outspoken against honoring it.”

“I think UNCG should remove the Aycock name for the sake of UNCG's ultimate mission and legacy: the students. UNCG is not a memorial to the past for sentimentality; it is a living, breathing institution of learning for all. UNCG should offer a welcoming environment for people of all races, religions, ethnicities, etc.”

“As I look to the future and continuing to present work in our auditorium I am struggling with what it means—what I am supporting by presenting work and inviting artists from abroad into a venue named after Aycock.”

3. Given the decisions at ECU and Duke, UNCG should follow suit with the other North Carolina Schools and Colleges.

“With UNCG having the most minorities of the UNC system, it would be a disaster to continue to keep his name as someone who represents UNCG.”

“As other universities demonstrate an ability to remove the Aycock name from their buildings, it will be more difficult to justify UNCG's determination to keep it. ECU has come up with an effective solution by changing the name of their building to "Founders Hall" and then acknowledging Aycock and others inside the building.”

4. It is important to note that even within the “yes, please change the name” responses, there were many comments that spoke to the need to memorialize and commemorate the 90 + years of the Aycock name with some sort of plaque or permanent memorial installation in the building.

“I personally think the name should be removed, however I do not support deleting his legacy and contribution to the Aycock Auditorium. In a nutshell, a plaque should be placed in the Auditorium that states his contribution to the auditorium that includes the good, the bad, and the ugly.”

“Hire a historian with integrity to tell Governor Aycock's story and his relationship to UNCG.”

“Because ignorance can only be conquered by education, UNC-G should require that every single student pass a full semester of North Carolina history. As one of the most internally divided states in the Union, North Carolina was a microcosm of the nation, and once they understand the catastrophic consequences of the Civil War, perhaps they will understand the true significance of Governor Aycock's legacy of education. Although the past cannot be changed, the lessons of the past can have an impact on today's deeply polarized society.”

“The publicity of the controversy is an invitation to discussing how far we have to go in acknowledging and overcoming our blindness to the White Privilege history of our state--which is far from healed. If the controversy develops as collaborating to laud the positive contributions of both Aycock and a second honoree--rather than developing as a series of slaps--the University will be engaging in EDUCATION.”

“I agree with Dr. Timothy Tyson (<http://www.newsobserver.com/opinion/op-ed/article14060240.html>) that we should erect explanatory plaques in order to remember our past; however, I also believe that we write our own history through the choices we make today. I am a strong supporter of UNCG's rich culture of complexity,

understanding, appreciation, and diversity and I want my university to make decisions which promote that culture in its fullness."

Although any possible renaming is beyond the purview of this committee, several names were mentioned by "yes" respondents as possibilities if the Board of Trustees opts to change the name. Twenty-four mentions were given to change the building to the John R. Locke Auditorium to memorialize the renowned director of bands at UNCG; three suggestions to rename the building after the Greensboro Four; two for Ezekiel Robinson; two for former Governor James Hunt (referred to as the "true education" reform Governor); and one suggestion each for Murray Arndt, Lee Kinard, Fred Chappell, Jim Melvin, Charles McIver, Ella Baker, and Thomas H. Smith III. To be more generic, there was also a suggestion for the "Women's College Auditorium" and the "Spartan Auditorium," as well as two suggestions to name the Auditorium after a prominent woman of color.

Among those who answered "no" to the question, "Considering the information provided on this website, do you believe that UNCG should remove Governor Aycock's name from Aycock Auditorium?" The following broad themes emerged (representative comments and quotes follow each theme):

1. Honor the legacy of Aycock Auditorium separately from Governor Aycock.

Consider that the Auditorium has a significant place that embodies the performances and lectures and education that have occurred in that place. It is about the Auditorium itself and keeping a sense of history with it as a place, not about Aycock the man.

There is a history of the Auditorium being a part of many cultural events that are notable nationally and even internationally; we would lose a sense of continuity and identity.

"When we alumni of WC/UNCG think of Aycock, we remember mass meetings held there; we think about concerts arranged for the girls of 1965 by our Chancellor Otis Singletery; we think about the Grand Lady on the corner of Spring Garden and Tate that has been refurbished so beautifully; we think of concerts we have attended there through the years."

2. Renaming the Auditorium will not address the problems of racism.

White-washing history will leave us worse off as a society.

"If the name is removed, we lose the opportunity to tell the story. We learn about ourselves by tackling the difficult conversations."

"Leaving the name will allow us to learn how we have evolved as a society and to learn about past wrongs so that we can progress. If the name were changed and a plaque was put up, people would eventually cease calling it 'Aycock Auditorium' and we would lose the chance to understand Aycock as a sign of his times and therefore miss the opportunity to engage in important discussion of our history."

“History is important. History we may not agree with still existed and keeping the Aycock name allows the University to educate future generations about Aycock--his contributions as well as his stances that we no longer are comfortable with.”

3. Renaming the Auditorium would discount all that the "education governor" did that was positive for education.

Do the societal standards of the past minimize Governor Aycock's contributions to public education? We are better off now because of the strides he made for North Carolina.

“I do not share the views of segregation and white supremacy that Governor Aycock held, but I also recognize his numerous efforts and accomplishments regarding education, education for all races. I believe keeping Governor Aycock’s name as it is on the Auditorium will both recognize him for his accomplishments and will serve as an opportunity for us all to be cognizant of how our actions both good and bad can affect a society.”

“Governor Aycock's devotion to public education vastly enhanced the lives of the citizens of North Carolina. Although his beliefs about race are certainly not those of individuals today, it is unfair to apply the lens of the present to an extremely troubled time in the state's past. Removing Governor Aycock's name is a repudiation not only of his flaws, but also of his contributions, which enabled access to education and led to the more enlightened views of today.”

4. Starting down the path of re-naming doesn't make sense and is a slippery slope.

It costs money to rename; many things, not just the name on the building, would have to be changed.

“Where will it stop? I do not support changing names of buildings that have been dedicated in a prior period to suit our needs for the current period. There will always be challenges to how one believed a hundred years or so ago to how we believe today and how will our ancestors view our beliefs in another 100 years?”

“If we start renaming all the parks, buildings, lakes, etc. because of an ‘attitude’ of the time, we will have to remove the first 10 US American Presidents who were all slave holders, from our history books.”

“If we as a society are going to question the name of every building based on our 20/20 hindsight, then we will be renaming every facility named after a human. Every politician alive, especially during periods of great social change made questionable decisions based on the information and standards of the day. All of our founding fathers have dark shadows.”

5. No human being is perfect. Gov. Aycock was a product of his times. The building was named for him in 1927.

“If we start down the path of taking out of context the views which were held by historical figures, we are forced to erase history.”

Renaming the Auditorium will prevent us from being able to learn from our past, because it will be gone if we take away all names of people who did great things but also not-so-great things.

“I think this should be used as a ‘teachable moment.’ Governor Aycock was a man with flaws and prejudices, who also did wonderful things for this university. Most importantly, he must be viewed in historical context.”

“Aycock held opinions incredibly common to the majority of state leaders at the time, and I'm certain McIver and countless other people with naming honors on campus held the same/similar views and acted on them in their personal and professional lives.”

Other important notes from the “no” feedback:

- Re-naming the Auditorium is not in line with the University's naming policy. This was not necessarily a broad theme, but we feel it is important to mention here, although the naming policy also allows for very broad discretion by the Board of Trustees. These respondents often quoted the last part of the naming policy: "Namings should not be altered simply because later observers would have made different judgments."
- A good number of responses mentioned that this entire issue was unworthy of even the time spent to date and detracts from UNCG's primary mission.
- Several descendants of Governor Aycock also offered feedback to the committee, both at the public forums and through the website. All were in favor of retaining the Aycock name.
- Some people suggested that while the Aycock name should not be removed, another name should be added to the building to counterbalance and recognize the changed situation. One suggestion was to add the name of a UNCG-related person of color, even if that person was also not perfect.

Whether they responded “yes” or “no” to question 1 of the survey, the vast majority (76 percent) of all respondents believed that UNCG should take action to acknowledge the controversy surrounding Governor Aycock. Many believed that there should be, at the Auditorium, a display or plaque or "several kiosks" about Aycock's life, career, and views, as well as the illustrious history of the Auditorium itself. Others believed that UNCG should organize a series of public programs about the Aycock controversy. Examples suggested included public lectures or panel discussions by

historians and others, First Friday events, Undoing Racism workshops, and Library displays.

Committee recommendations regarding options

The members of the Aycock Ad-Hoc Committee were divided as to whether the Aycock name should be removed or retained (this division mirrors the opinions expressed in the feedback gathered by the committee). The Committee does agree unanimously that no matter whether the name is retained or removed, action should be taken by installing permanent exhibits, plaques, and/or an art installation, along with educational programs and dialogue, to explore this complicated history. Due to the public awareness that has been generated by the committee's work, the committee suggests that a statement about the recommendation and further next steps should be made as soon as possible.

Some members of the committee believe that the Aycock name should be removed. The reasons to remove the name include the following:

1. Honoring Governor Aycock by maintaining his name on Aycock Auditorium is to collude with a past history of murderous white supremacy, racist bigotry, and systemic social injustice.
2. Governor Aycock was not just a believer in white supremacy but was an architect of the White Supremacy Campaign that incited white citizens to participate in electoral fraud and the murder of black citizens.
3. Keeping the Aycock name on a prominent campus building does not foster the environment of inclusive excellence and diversity UNCG currently strives to create. Maintaining the name harms the effort to build a welcoming environment for UNCG's diverse community.
4. Keeping the name sends a signal to the descendants of those who were negatively impacted physically, socially, and financially by Governor Aycock's words and actions that their struggle was in vain and that their lives do not matter.
5. Aycock did not have a significant influence on the development or success of UNCG. There are also some questions about exactly how close Aycock was to UNCG's first president, Charles McIver.
6. A majority of the current students at UNCG, as expressed through the opinions offered in the survey and through their representative on the committee, favor removing the name.

Even if the name is removed, the committee recommends that some actions be taken to explain the name change and the controversy surrounding Governor Aycock and his legacy.

Other members of the committee believe that the Aycock name should remain on the Auditorium. The reasons to retain the name include the following:

1. Removing the name does nothing to address or ameliorate the racial injustices of the past.
2. The Aycock name does not reflect any current position of UNCG; rather, it reflects the ideas held by those who made the original naming decision in the 1920s.
3. Removing the name is an effort to rewrite or whitewash history.
4. Retaining the name actually provides more opportunities to learn about and engage in dialogue about UNCG's past, including the fact that at one time UNCG decided to honor a man whose values are at odds with those of the UNCG community today.
5. Removing historical names from buildings is a slippery slope. Should other building names be changed on campus—such as Curry and Foust—or nationwide—such as Washington and Jefferson—because these individuals are complicit in the sins of slavery and white supremacy?

Next Steps

As stated before, no one on the committee believes the name should be retained or removed without any further action. The committee recommends that something significant be created or added to the Auditorium space that will keep the discussion of the complex Aycock legacy in the foreground for UNCG students and the varied constituencies that use and access the Aycock Auditorium. The goal would be to provide full disclosure regarding Governor Aycock and his career and to acknowledge the controversial and difficult history surrounding his life and legacy. Through such additions, a constructive campus and community dialogue could continue, we could reflect on the mistakes of the past, and we could endeavor to use those mistakes as a guideline to approach our future in a strongly inclusive and respectful way.

Whatever is added should also represent the perspectives of those who were negatively impacted by Governor Aycock's political agenda as well as chronicle the history of the Auditorium itself as a significant cultural and community presence which has hosted many important events, visitors and conversations since its construction in 1927. These additions could physically and conceptually enhance the Aycock Auditorium in such a way as to preserve its name while redressing a history of white supremacy associated with the building's namesake.

Such additions could take many (or multiple) forms, including:

- Placing an additional name on the building;
- Erecting plaques explaining the history surrounding Governor Aycock, the original naming decision, and the controversy
- Creating a comprehensive permanent exhibit in the lobby of the Auditorium that would address not only Aycock's history and legacy but also the history of the Auditorium in the broadest sense;
- Commissioning a permanent, multi-faceted fine-arts installation that recognizes, challenges, complicates and contextualizes the history of Charles B. Aycock and Aycock Auditorium.

One suggestion is to establish a campus-wide committee charged with exploring and deciding on such multi-faceted additions that recognize, challenge, complicate, and contextualize the history of Aycock Auditorium as a building named for Charles B. Aycock, a man both revered for his contributions to public education and condemned as a leading architect and instigator of white supremacy in the Jim Crow era.

Included in the Appendix materials of this report is a recommendation to establish an Aycock Auditorium Arts and History Committee.