



UNIVERSITY OF
GEORGIA

Office of the President
Administration Building
220 South Jackson Street
Athens, Georgia 30602
TEL 706-542-1214 | FAX 706-542-0095
president@uga.edu
www.uga.edu

April 22, 2019

Dr. Alan T. Dorsey
Dean
Franklin College of Arts and Sciences
324 Old College
atdorsey@uga.edu

Dear Dean Dorsey:

Several individuals have shared with me the draft "Report of the Ad Hoc Committee on Baldwin Hall to the Franklin College Faculty Senate." Based on my preliminary review, I write to share some of my perspectives on the report. I request that you share this reply with the Franklin Senate at its meeting on April 23, 2019, and that it be included, in its entirety, if the document is approved.

At the outset, let me make clear how much I value and respect the rights of faculty to express their views on matters affecting the University, even when those views are critical or at odds with the University administration. As I have consistently stated, freedom of expression and academic freedom are at the core of our academic mission, and we are a stronger institution when faculty feel free to share their views on controversial topics.

That said, the University and its administration also have the responsibility to speak up when decisions of the University and the actions of its dedicated employees are subject to public criticism, particularly when the criticism is unjustified. It is in this vein that I express my disappointment in the unfair narrative that the ad hoc committee's report continues to promulgate three and a half years after the discovery of the remains at the Baldwin Hall construction site.

It is one thing to debate the propriety of steps taken by the University in good faith, based on guidance of the State Archaeologist's Office, in response to this unique and complex situation. But it is another thing to impugn the integrity and motives of dedicated employees based on an investigation filled with rumor and anonymous sources.

Particularly troubling are the report's unsubstantiated allegations that faculty members were subject to intimidation and censure. The report refers to these claims as "ubiquitous" (p. 27), but consistently fails to identify sources, and the report makes many of these claims without interviewing or seeking confirmation from those who are accused. Making incendiary allegations against individuals based on hearsay, without any attribution, and apparently without any attempt to interview them, is troubling from the standpoint of due process and fundamental fairness.

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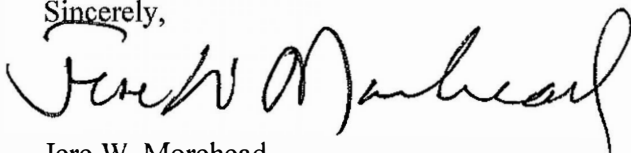
The report accuses the University of targeting and intimidation in its response to an article quoting a faculty member who publicly questioned the University's handling of this matter. Surely an objective report, purporting to analyze alleged mistreatment of a faculty member, would at least mention that in the same time period, this faculty member was awarded tenure, promoted to associate professor, and honored publicly by the University with an outstanding research award—hardly evidence of hostility or vindictiveness.

I am likewise saddened by the report's claim that the solemn memorial service, held at Oconee Hill Cemetery and presided over by a federal judge and local minister two years ago, "was itself a 'spectacle'" (p. 59). I can assure you that the members of the administration and the community leaders who planned and participated in the memorial service did so with reverence and sincerity. Moreover, 18 leaders of our campus and local community developed a memorial to further honor the individuals whose remains were discovered on the Baldwin Hall site. The granite monument that now stands in front of Baldwin Hall reads in part: "The University of Georgia recognizes the contributions of these and other enslaved individuals and honors their legacy." In my view, the numerous faculty, staff, state officials, and community leaders who spent countless hours earnestly seeking solutions to a challenging situation should be commended, not condemned. We can disagree over difficult decisions, but we should do so in a collegial manner.

As I said at the outset, I deeply respect the faculty's right to express their concerns, and there are undoubtedly strong differences of opinion on the University's handling of the remains discovered at Baldwin Hall. While we may disagree, it remains my fervent commitment for this institution to continue promoting diversity and inclusion for all of our faculty, staff, and students. In the coming year, we will rally donors to contribute to the naming of the College of Education in honor of Mary Frances Early, UGA's first African-American graduate; create even more need-based Georgia Commitment Scholarships to increase student access; support new community outreach programs such as the Georgia Promise program with the Clarke County School District; and enhance our efforts to recruit a diverse class of entering students.

I hope the faculty of the Franklin College of Arts and Sciences will join us in these important and constructive efforts.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jere W. Morehead". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, prominent "M".

Jere W. Morehead
President

cc: Dr. Libby Morris
Dr. David Lee
Mr. Ryan Nesbit
Dr. Michelle Cook
Ms. Gwynne Darden