

Commonwealth of Virginia

Commission to Study Slavery and Subsequent De Jure and De Facto Racial and Economic Discrimination Against African Americans

March 29, 2023, 1:00 p.m.
Virginia Museum of History and Culture
Education Resource Center

Members present: Delegate Delores McQuinn (Chair), Senator Mamie Locke (Vice-Chair, virtual), Dr. Ed Ayers, Dr. Jody Allen, Dr. Andrea Douglas, Dr. Cassandra Newby-Alexander, Mr. Xavier Richardson (virtual to start, arrived in-person at 2:01 p.m.).

Call to Order

Commission Chair Delegate McQuinn called the meeting to order at 1:15 p.m. with the members in the room; however, this was not enough to hold a quorum. The Chair asked each Commission to introduce themselves and any members of the public in attendance. Following, the Chair offered opening remarks in which she thanked the Commissioners for their contributions to the final report.

Approval of the Agenda and Previous Meeting Minutes

At 1:17 p.m. Senator Locke joined the meeting electronically, thus confirming a quorum. Delegate McQuinn asked for a motion to adopt the agenda and the October 19, 2022, meeting minutes, which was so moved by Dr. Newby-Alexander and seconded by Dr. Ayers. With no contention, the Commissioners unanimously voted to approve the agenda and previous meeting minutes. Mr. Xavier Richardson joined the meeting electronically at 1:19 p.m.

Chair's report

The Chair announced that the 2022 Annual Report was submitted to the Legislative Information System on January 10, 2022, and reviewed all Commission activities included in that report. Dr. Newby-Alexander asked if the Commission website was susceptible to being removed by future administrations. On behalf of the Library of Virginia, Dr. Kimball offered to follow up with the State Librarian for more information.

Following this, Dr. Ayers began discussing a public presentation of the Commission's findings. Chair Delegate McQuinn expressed her interest in a public meeting before the final report.

Project Manager's report

Ms. Luster demonstrated an overview of the Commission's website. Dr. Newby-Alexander requested that a Resources tab and a search bar be added to the website. Ms. Luster then presented an annotated bibliography as an update on research conducted toward supporting the Commissioner's final recommendations. The Commissioners proceeded into a discussion addressing the scope and content of the final report and recommendations.

Subcommittees & Final Report

The Chair proceeded to hear any updates regarding their assigned Subcommittee work from Commissioners. The Chair outlined that the subcommittees need to provide one to two recommendations in the final report. Dr. Newby-Alexander recommended that the final report include a bibliography organized into funding-based subcategories. The Commissioners continued discussing the final report that included subject matter expertise and personal reflection. The Commissioners concluded this conversation by confirming a desire to develop a historical document that addresses systematic inequalities.

Mr. Xavier Richardson physically joined the meeting at 2:01 p.m. Following his arrival, Mr. Richardson shared his work with providing stipend to HBCU students in Teacher Education programs as an example of a recommendation that could be in the final report.

The Chair asked each subcommittee to self-select a point person and meet at least once before the next Commission meeting. The Chair then assigned the Project Manager to attend each subcommittee meeting to record notes and aggregate the information on behalf of the full Commission. Dr. Ayers asked the Project Manager to send emails to prompt each subcommittee to meet.

Discussion and Updates from Commissioners

The Chair invited each member of the Commission to share relevant updates. Dr. Newby-Alexander shared resources related to the African American History Education Commission's work and asked that this information be considered for the Commission to Study Slavery's website. Mr. Xavier Richardson shared an update on the Health Assessment being conducted at Mary Washington Hospital and its inclusion of equity as a metric. Dr. Douglas shared updates on the "Mapping Charlottesville" and "Mapping Albemarle County" projects conducted by The Jefferson School. Dr. Allen shared an update from The Lemon Project's 13th Annual Symposium. Dr. Ayers shared an update on the equity work conducted at Virginia Commonwealth University's MCV Campus. Dr. Kimball shared updates related to the newly revamped Virginia Untold database on behalf of the Library of Virginia.

Following these updates, the Commissioners engaged in a brief discussion regarding how institutions in higher education were engaging in these topics. Mr. Richardson expressed interest in how the Commission can share this work with institutions without vast funding. Dr. Allen recommended connecting with the Universities Studying Slavery Consortium. Dr. Ayers expressed interest in associating the Commission's work with forthcoming upcoming 2026 commemorations. Dr. Newby-Alexander expressed interest in working with museums and historical markers.

Public Comment

The Chair invited any interested members of the public to share with the Commission. Three members of the public shared their appreciation for the work of the Commission. Additionally, each shared personal remarks about their experiences living in Virginia and lineage to ancestors enslaved in Virginia. Each member expressed their opinion that any efforts of repair should be

lineage-based. The first commentator noted that direct-cash payments should not be monitored and that a direct ancestor noted "Black" on the 1870 U.S. Census should be a qualification. The second public commentator noted that the solution should be systematic because the problem is systematic, and other groups were not required to prove financial acumen. The third public commentator shared their veteran status and that a relative in their family had fought in every war in American history. They also uplifted their work in the "Sold Down River" project.

Following the Public Comment section, the Chair made a few closing remarks noting that the next Commission meeting is scheduled for May 10, 2023.

The Chair then asked for a motion to adjourn the meeting, which was so moved by Dr. Ayers and seconded by Dr. Allen. The meeting adjourned at 3:01 p.m.