

To: The Board of Trustees of Washington Lee University *via email*

From: The Board of Directors of The Generals Redoubt

Date: July 5, 2021

On behalf of The Generals Redoubt, an advocacy organization for Washington and Lee alumni, students, parents, allied faculty and friends of the University, we would like to thank the Board of Trustees for its efforts to navigate the complex name change decision carefully and deliberately. We agree that the decision to keep the name was the wisest choice. Unfortunately, the issue and name change decision is really a symptom of the fundamental problems that threaten the University's ongoing health and role as a leading and unique educational institution, and it is to those issues we believe the Board of Trustees must now turn.

It is clear that the University's core values are under attack. Our organization, which has approximately 9,700+ followers, receives dozens of emails and other communications every few weeks delineating examples of how honor, civility, diversity of thought and respect for one's fellow community members are now being threatened, ironically often in the name of diversity and inclusion. Violations of honor that comport to the current leftist beliefs remain uninvestigated, faculty are allowed to publicly engage in unprofessional and unethical behavior for which most students would be sanctioned or expelled, and a disturbing number of parents and students have written to express their fear of academic retribution by professors hostile to their political views or those of their children who attend the school.

Without honor, civility, and diversity and inclusion that are inclusive of diversity of thought, it really does not matter whose names are on the school's doors. In this case, no such school would be worthy of the names of either Washington or Lee or would such a school be the institution of higher learning they envisioned. Such a school would certainly not be worthy of the years of service and donations that generations of alumni have contributed to perpetuate the school's mission to educate and to develop honorable and civil citizens. Will Washington and Lee continue on a path that leads to the destruction of its culture to be replaced by one that is uncivil and therefore not honorable? Or will the school return to its traditional values while being *non in cautus futuri*? It is your duty to ensure the latter course. The name has been retained and now the school must return to its

principles while learning from its past. Those who do not embrace those principles or respect the name should be encouraged to separate from the institution.

While it is a lengthy story of how we have gotten here, there is no question that President Dudley has worked assiduously to change the culture of Washington and Lee to one reflecting more radical leftist values. The school needs intellectual, moral, and administrative leadership. It gets little, if any, from President Dudley that is consistent with its values and history.

The school is at a crossroads, and we believe that if the situation is not addressed immediately the damage to the school's intellectual and cultural foundations may accelerate for the following reasons:

1. The appointment of Chawne Kimber, as Dean of the College, is the latest and perhaps most striking example either of President Dudley's incompetence or his hostility to the school's values, or both. Kimber is known nationally as the F*ck Quilt Lady for quilting that and other profane words and posting them on social media. We would encourage you to look at her post on Instagram - <https://www.instagram.com/p/BTG5noCAeRE/> and to review her account @CauchyComplete. It evidences a shocking lack of judgment that should have disqualified her for any position at Washington and Lee. That President Dudley sought someone so unqualified for such a position is sheer incompetence. And if he did vet her and still offered the position knowing of such posts, then there can be no clearer example of how antithetical President Dudley's values are to the traditional culture of Washington and Lee. *Any* one of any race, *any* ethnicity, *any* gender/identity, *any* religion, or of *any* political persuasion who posts such questionable items should be asked to resign or be terminated. And whoever was responsible for that hire should bear the consequences as well. President Dudley hired her.

2. The Chicago Principles on Free Expression, adopted by the Board of Trustees in 2015 to demonstrate the University's commitment to freedom of speech and freedom of expression on campus, have clearly not been implemented or enforced. Diversity of thought is dead at Washington and Lee. This is discouraging to those of us who remember the school differently; to those of us whose children or grandchildren attended the school and/or now attend the school; or those who work there and do not agree with this culture or these politics. We have dozens and dozens, if not more, of students and parents, who have voiced their concern and outright fear of students expressing their opinions, political and otherwise, openly and without fear of retribution. Is this honorable? Is this

respectful of others? Is this civil discourse? Does this reflect an environment where people of all walks of life, ethnicities, genders/identities, political and religious beliefs and creeds can interact and learn from those with different views? Or does it differ from professors who, regardless of their personal views, can facilitate, challenge and expand their students' analytical reasoning skills and knowledge? Clearly not, but are not these the reasons one goes to college to begin with, particularly one as reputable as Washington and Lee? Apparently no longer, and the person most responsible for this drastic but cloaked change is President Dudley.

3. President Dudley's Commission on Institutional History and Community has been more about erasing Lee than contextualizing him. The school has literally closed the doors on Lee in his self-named chapel and done its best to hide Lee. Why? The University now needs to find a creative way to embrace Lee, for whom the school is better known than Washington. Yet the individual in charge will not allow that to happen. In fact, President Dudley has approved the removal of Lee's name from Lee Chapel, a National Historic Landmark, the removal of Lee's and Washington's images from the University's diplomas, and discontinued Founders Day celebrated on Lee's birthday. President Dudley now seeks to rid all vestiges of Lee from the campus. He does not have the credibility or gravitas to continue to lead the University.

4. President Dudley has expanded the faculty's disproportionate role in the administration of the University. The faculty's zeal in bringing ideological indoctrination to the classroom, while placing pressure on students to join leftist political campus activism violates the principles of a noteworthy liberal arts education.

5. President Dudley's administration has trampled on the legal rights of its students and has incurred costly, avoidable legal expenses and settlements following embarrassing federal and state litigation.

6. President Dudley is ill suited for his position and not the competent leader a university of such distinction as ours merits and demands. His grasp of issues in front of distinguished alumni has been unimpressive. He has claimed ignorance of any lack of implementation of the Chicago Principles on Free Expression in such conversations, bringing either his incompetence or candor into question. His administrative hires have appeared to be more ideological than competence based, (with F-Quilt Chawne Kimber being the most egregious example). His stewardship of the University through the COVID-19 crisis was

inconsistently punitive. The best president for Washington and Lee University must be a strong and decisive leader who will focus on the educational mission and leverage our history, traditions, and values for the enrichment of all students.

7. President Dudley has orchestrated these events that have split the University community. He is incapable of repairing the damage to the University and bringing the community back together again.

8. Please see the more exhaustive list attached, which details the errors and deliberate actions by President Dudley that we find completely antithetical to the University's mission to provide a balanced academic program and welcoming environment, so that Washington and Lee students may aspire to reason, dignity and tolerance as they enter the adult world.

IN CLOSING:

We applaud the Trustees decision to retain the name. You have saved the name; it's now time to do the harder work to save the school. That work would be to bring to a halt and, indeed, reverse the massive plans announced on June 4, 2021 to remake the University. The Board should take steps to reverse the following: (a) obliteration of the legacy of the University's namesakes; (b) Critical Race Theory implied by the hiring of Dean Kimber, the opposite of Martin Luther King's teachings about character trumping color; and (c) dismantling Greek Life as its antidote for the Identitarian based re-segregation of the campus culture, and the neglect of ideological diversity and free expression as critical tools in building a truly inclusive and vital campus community.

The role of faculty should be sharply reduced. Faculty should be viewed as employees who teach and not be administrators. The administration should include the views of students, parents and alumni in the selection process of the next President and key administrative hires. The overall goal should be to restore the University to its historical values, traditions and culture, none of which are served by capitulating to the authoritarian demands of the Woke Mob.

THEREFORE,

The Board of Directors of The Generals Redoubt has lost confidence in the competency, capability and performance of the President of the University.

The Generals Redoubt does not believe that the President of the University can effectively manage the operations and affairs of the University or competently advance the educational, operational or community interests of the University.

The Generals Redoubt will not support the University in its present course of action until these concerns are addressed.

The Generals Redoubt will encourage its members, donors, sizeable body of supporters and followers (@ 9,700+) and the University community in general to evaluate carefully whether they should make Annual Fund commitments or support future capital campaign funding plans of the University, pending resolution of the outstanding issues underlying the lack of confidence in University leadership expressed above.

We thank the Board of Trustees for your service to Washington and Lee University.

Submitted on behalf of the Board of Directors of The Generals Redoubt.

Respectfully,

Thomas P. Rideout

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President

Chronology Detail List

**Chronology of President Dudley's Actions to
Undermine Washington and Lee's Liberal Arts Educational Culture**

January, 2017- President Dudley takes office

Spring, 2017- Admissions tours of the interior of Lee Chapel are halted and later restored.

Late summer, 2017- Tragic events occur in Charlottesville

Spring, 2017 forward- Members of the English department issue a statement talking about "safe spaces", "white supremacy", and Robert E. Lee's "problematic" connection to the university. Other on line posts by faculty in 2017-2018 present a grim picture of Lee and of the situation at the University. It is apparent that the faculty are the main drivers of a "revisionist" history of Lee and of Washington and Lee.

Fall, 2017- President Dudley calls for a Commission on Institutional History and Community to be formed at Washington and Lee and picks the members of this Commission. This, despite the fact that events at the University of Virginia and in Charlottesville have nothing to do with Washington and Lee. President Dudley does not provide the Commission a set of working parameters and allows them a completely open field. The Commission, in essence, is a solution in search of a non-existent problem. Several of the members of the Commission seem determined to find problems that they can decry and root out of the University.

Spring, 2018- Banning of children's book on Lee's horse, Traveller, from the shelves of the Lee Chapel bookstore and the University bookstore. The request for this action comes from a faculty member. The book is ultimately restored to the bookshelves.

June, 2018- The Report of the Commission contains several recommendations opposed by a significant number of alumni. One of the recommendations that caused particular consternation is that "The name of the University should not be changed **at this time.**" This opens the door for a discussion of possibly changing the name. There are also several questionable historical assertions in the report. (See response to History Commission by Neely Young and Rex Wooldridge available by contacting TGR).

Fall, 2018- Based on the recommendations of the History Commission, the Board changes the name of Robinson Hall to Chavis Hall. TGR responds that in honoring one prominent figure in the Washington and Lee's history, the University had dishonored another, perhaps more significant, figure.

October, 2018- Neely Young meets personally with President Dudley to discuss his concerns and those of many other alums that there is a developing crisis at Washington and Lee and that steps be taken to "right the ship." President Dudley is polite but essentially says nothing, not even acknowledging that problems are occurring. This establishes a pattern of communication between President Dudley and concerned alums (who would soon gather together in a newly formed group, The Generals Redoubt) whereby we point out issues which need to be addressed and he ignores them or brushes them off.

June 30, 2019- Annual fund giving declines from previous year for the first time in history. This is a clear indication of growing alumni concern and of President Dudley's ineffectiveness as a fund raiser.

November, 2019- Law School students request that they be given the option of removing portraits of George Washington and Robert E. Lee from their diplomas.

Spring, 2020- Board of Trustees denies the option of removing portraits of Washington and Lee from diplomas and reiterates its position that the name of the University will not be changed. President Dudley appears to take no part in this issue or any other controversial issue, always stating that it is someone else's responsibility.

June 30, 2020- Annual fund giving declines again. There is also a decline in the number of participants.

Late summer, 2020- Board announces decision to reconsider the naming of the University.

Late summer, 2020- In the midst of widespread political unrest in the country, a Washington and Lee professor announces that he will be teaching a course entitled "How to Overthrow the State." TGR contacts President Dudley suggesting that the title of the course is unnecessarily provocative and reflects poor judgement. President Dudley sends a tepid response to TGR and refuses to take any action.

Fall; 2020- A plaque honoring Robert E. Lee is removed from the wall of Lee Chapel Terrace. TGR discovers this was done with the knowledge and support of the administration. TGR contacts President Dudley who disavows any responsibility for the removal of the plaque and refuses to take any action. (copies of correspondence available by contacting TGR).

School year, 2020-2021- There are numerous problems with the enforcement of COVID-19 regulations. Several students and parents see the rules as discriminatory and unfair. They contact the administration and President Dudley, who, once again, does nothing. (parent letters on this subject available by contacting TGR).

School year, 2020-2021- TGR makes continuous efforts to present a more balanced view of Robert E. Lee and his legacy at an official, on-campus event, whether via zoom or some other medium. President Dudley and the administration either ignore or rebuff such efforts. They do nothing to promote true freedom of speech and ideological diversity on campus but instead allow the faculty to push a particular, one sided, political agenda. TGR contends that there really is no free speech if only one point of view, primarily that of the faculty, is allowed to be presented. (correspondence with Tom Jennings available by contacting TGR).

Spring, 2021- Numerous examples of dishonorable behavior by faculty and students presented to President Dudley, first by a student, then by other alums and TGR. Both the student and TGR plead with President Dudley to issue a statement condemning such behavior, calling for an end to it and stating that future actions of this type will be dealt with severely. In his comments to the student, President Dudley basically states, "This is not his responsibility." When TGR reiterates the need for President Dudley to issue such a statement, he does not even bother to respond to TGR.

Spring, 2021- Hiring of controversial new Dean of the College allowed and, presumably, approved by President Dudley. It appears that the search committee and President Dudley either did not do their homework on this candidate or did do their homework and proceeded with this appointment any way.

June 30, 2021- We anticipate that there will be a drop in annual giving for the 3rd straight year and that this year's decline will be the most precipitous yet.

We do not refer here to the numerous cases in which students and professors have behaved in an uncivil manner towards others. Nor do we refer to the power which professors have over the grades which students receive or how they are treated, generally, by their professors. This has had a chilling effect on true free speech at the University whereby many parents and students do not feel that they can express how they really feel about issues. President Dudley has failed to even recognize that such a problem exists.

President Dudley has refused to take responsibility for developments at the university and has not exercised effective leadership.