



A DCI Deliberation Guide

Local Legacies of Slavery:

How do we understand and address the legacies of slavery at Davidson College and in the broader north Mecklenburg community?

Format for Deliberation

Before the Deliberation

- I. Read this document's Background, Shared Language, Expected Outcomes and Conversation Agreements section
 - A. If you encounter words or concepts that you are unfamiliar with or have questions about, refer to the Shared Language section starting on page 6 that provides some discussion and definitions of key terms related to gender and sexuality
- II. (Optional) Review the sources listed in the footnotes of this document

During the Deliberation

In today's D Team meeting we are going to follow a slightly different format than in previous sessions. We will move through five types of discourse (conversation, discussion, dialogue, debate, and deliberation), each of which will hopefully contribute to a productive and meaningful D Team experience and help us learn more about different ways to engage others on important and contentious topics.

- I. Conversation - 15 min.
 - A. Shared Language, Expected Outcomes, Conversation Agreements
- II. Discussion - 45 min.
 - A. Addressing the Intellectual Legacies
 - B. Addressing the Physical legacies
- III. Reflections - 15 min.

Background

On August 19th, 2020, Davidson College, through its Commission on Race and Slavery, publicized its [initial report](#) about the college's legacies of slavery. That same day, President Carol Quillen, speaking on behalf of the Board of Trustees, released [a formal apology video](#), acknowledging its role in perpetuating slavery and upholding systems of racism that continued after slavery was outlawed.¹ Along with the Commission's report and the College's apology,

¹ These materials can be found at <https://www.davidson.edu/about/commission-race-and-slavery>.



President Quillen announced several initial actions to create an equitable campus environment, commemorate and acknowledge these legacies, and to continue this work through research, teaching, and learning, both at Davidson College and in the surrounding communities.

While the college's actions were a necessary starting point, debate has emerged on how to proceed in addressing these complex legacies. Current students and alumni, as well as faculty, staff, and community members, have proposed various actions to continue the reconciliation process.² These histories are not an ending but rather a beginning, and understanding these legacies allows us to explore possible connections between past grievances and present institutional ones. Beyond such understanding, how should Davidson College reckon with its ties to the practices and institutions of slavery? How can the college recognize the legacies of these histories through changes surrounding its intellectual legacy as well as the physical legacy that remains?

This issue is complex, and involves many stakeholders whose viewpoints must be considered. Addressing these legacies will take time, and while today's discussion focuses on a few proposed solutions, we recognize that there are many more, some of which intersect with other important conversations.

² Note: We also want to recognize that Davidson College is not the first to begin the processes of reckoning and reconciliation. These efforts, since 2001, have been initiated at seventy colleges and universities (as of October 2020). To read more about the work other institutions are doing, please check out "[Higher Education's Reckoning with Slavery.](#)"



What Do Americans Think?

Wide racial and partisan gaps in views of impact of slavery on black Americans' position in society today

% of each group saying the legacy of slavery affects the position of black people in American society today ...

	A great deal	A fair amount	Not much	Not at all
All adults	31	32	19	16
White	26	32	22	19
Black	59	25	6	9
Hispanic	29	38	19	11
Asian*	33	35	17	15
Rep/Lean Rep	17	26	27	29
Dem/Lean Dem	43	36	13	7

*Asians were interviewed in English only.

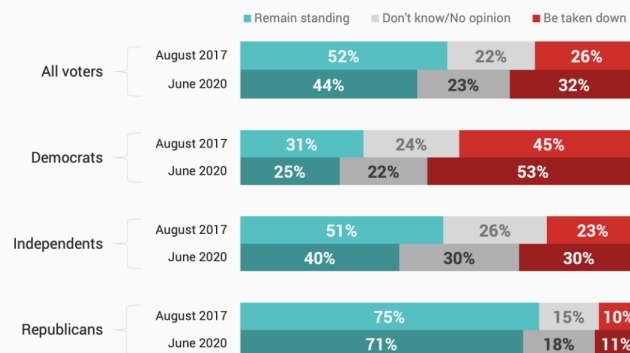
Note: Share of respondents who didn't offer an answer not shown. Whites, blacks and Asians include those who report being only one race and are non-Hispanic. Hispanics are of any race.

Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted Jan. 22-Feb. 5, 2019.

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

The Electorate Increasingly Backs Dismantling Statues of Confederate Leaders

Voters were asked whether statues of Confederate leaders should...



MORNING CONSULT • POLITICO

Polls conducted Aug. 17-19, 2017, and June 6-7, 2020, among roughly 1,990 registered voters each, with margins of error of +/-2%.

Conversation - Interchanging Thoughts to Engage (15 min.)

We will review the “Shared Language” and “Expected Outcomes and Conversation Agreements” sections together in order to orient today’s D Team toward the interchange of thoughts and information about some of the broader topics and issues that are relevant to today’s topic but will not be the main focus of our D Team meeting.

Shared Language (5 min)

Given the inhumane brutality associated with slavery, it is important that we pay attention to the language we use to describe it. Senior slavery scholars of color have offered the following suggestions regarding language we might use when discussing this difficult but important topic. They are offered as a “set of *suggestions* that raises questions and sensitivities rather than serving as a checklist that enforces any set of orthodoxies.” As Laura Adderley has said, all words we “know to talk about enslaved people of African descent in these Americas prove insufficient, both for the brutality against them, and for their remarkable overcoming.” The suggestions below can help us describe and analyze the complexities of slavery, and highlight the assumptions embedded in the language we have traditionally used to describe it.³

Language to Consider Adopting/Preferred Terms:

- Enslaved (Africans, people, mothers, workers, artisans, children, etc).
 - Using enslaved (as an adjective) rather than “slave” (as a noun) disaggregates the condition of being enslaved with the status of “being” a slave. People weren’t slaves; they were enslaved.
- Captive (Africans, fathers, families, workers, infants, etc). Note that this term nuances depending on geography vis-a-vis the slave trade, as Ana Lucia Araujo notes.
- Enslaver (rather than many of the terms below).
 - The term “master” transmits the aspirations and values of the enslaving class without naming the practices they engaged in.

Language to Consider Avoiding:

- Slave master (see above)
- Slave mistress and enslaved mistress (to name sexual violence/relations/conditions)
- Slave breeding/breeders (for forced reproduction)
- Slave concubine and enslaved concubine
- Slaveholder
- Slave owner
 - Alternatives: those who claimed people as property, those who held people in slavery, etc.
- Planter (when referring to enslavers)

Principles to Consider:

- Avoid using “runaway slave.”
 - Alternatives: “fugitives from slavery” or “self-liberated” or “self-emancipated” individuals.

³ P. Gabrielle Foreman, et al. “Writing about Slavery/Teaching About Slavery: This Might Help” community-sourced document, 10/31/20, <https://docs.google.com/document/d/1A4TEdDgYslX-hlKezLodMIM71My3KTN0zxRv0lQTOQs/mobilebasic>



- If you're talking about sexual violence, rape, assault and coercion under slavery, please name that violence rather than obscuring it by using terms such as "interracial sex" or "sexual intercourse."
- Please honor the humanity of the millions of people treated as chattel property by naming enslaved people whenever possible.
- North American nineteenth-century Black activists often were activists for decades after the Civil War. Calling them "abolitionists" reduces the scope and depth of their work which extended beyond slavery both in the antebellum period and beyond.
- Consider using not only the term "stolen labor," but also "stolen labor, knowledge and skills."
- No one was "born a slave"; instead people were born with "free" or "slave" status.

Expected Outcomes, Conversation Agreements, and Personal Stories (10 min)

Expected Outcomes of the Conversation

Given the complexity of this topic, we do not expect to come to any formal agreement or declaration in this conversation. Instead, our focus is on deepening our understanding of the interrelated issues related to the legacies of slavery and share our thoughts and feelings related to them. As scholars of slavery have stated, such understanding is foundational to effective and meaningful action responding to these legacies, and indeed action without such understanding is likely to be viewed as superficial, piecemeal, and ultimately harmful. As usual, we will be following up with resources for actions to take related to this important topic following the deliberation today.

Deliberative Dispositions

The DCI has identified several "deliberative dispositions" as critical to the success of deliberative enterprises. When participants adopt these dispositions, they are much more likely to feel their deliberations are meaningful, respectful, and productive. Several of the conversation agreements recommended below directly reflect these dispositions, which include a commitment to egalitarianism, open mindedness, empathy, charity, attentiveness, and anticipation, among others. A full list of these dispositions is available at <https://deliberativecitizenship.org/deliberative-dispositions/>.

Conversation Agreements

In entering into this discussion, to the best of our ability we all agree to:

1. Be authentic and respectful
2. Be an attentive and active listener
3. Be a purposeful and concise speaker

4. Approach fellow deliberators' stories, experiences, and arguments with curiosity, not hostility
5. Assume the best - and not the worst - about the intentions and values of others, and avoid snap judgements
6. Recognize that no one has all the answers, and bring intellectual humility by asking questions that you have and make space for others to do the same
7. Critique the idea you disagree with, not the person expressing it, and remember to practice empathy
8. Note areas of both agreement and disagreement
9. Respect the confidentiality of the discussion
10. Avoid speaking in absolutes (i.e. "All people think this," or "No educated people hold that view")

We know that this topic is one that is personal to many, and each person brings their own unique point of view and different levels of understanding. Please use this time to express any questions or concerns about the topic not specifically related to one of the themes under consideration in Part Two.

Personal Stake and Stories

We also understand that this issue is rooted in stories. Not everyone's perspective is present in our current conversation, and we should consider those stories that may not be represented today. That being said, we can still begin with your stories to start our deliberation and understand how this issue, directly or indirectly, impacts our experiences with Davidson College and in the broader Davidson community.

- How has this issue impacted you personally?
- How does your current position within our broader social and political context (i.e. your positionality) relate to this issue? For example, are you from the Davidson community (or the broader north Mecklenburg area) or have you moved here more recently?
- How do you feel this issue has impacted your friends and families, as well as the Davidson (and broader north Mecklenburg) community?
- Do you have any anxieties or concerns about any of the proposed solutions you've heard of? What concerns do you have about them?

Discussion - Considering the Intellectual and Physical Legacies of Enslavement (45 min.)

The purpose of this deliberation is to consider some of the ideas and implications for addressing campus and community legacies of enslavement under two thematic categories: the intellectual legacies and physical legacies of slavery. The ideas presented below are by no means comprehensive, but are meant to provide participants with a starting point for their deliberations.

Participants are encouraged not only to share their perspectives about the different ideas listed below, but also to consider ideas and perspectives that may not be explicitly mentioned. Additionally, participants are encouraged to approach the “Questions for Consideration” with curiosity, honesty and intellectual humility, recognizing that we all have knowledge gaps and a need for deeper learning.

I. Addressing the Intellectual Legacies (20 - 25 min.)

While there are many actions to consider, this section focuses on several options related to addressing the intellectual legacies of slavery through education. How should these histories be researched and understood by the Davidson College community (including alumni), residents of the broader north Mecklenburg area, and the general public? How should this research be shared with these respective groups?

1. Educate the Davidson College Community:

- Fund research projects (to be published at their conclusion) that work to complicate and unravel the narratives around Davidson role’s in the perpetuation of slavery through its resources.
- Create a series of teach-ins and training opportunities for faculty and staff to learn the history of the institution’s complicity in slavery, and demonstrate how this material can be used in various courses.
- Explore, through a committee or an equity audit (i.e. “an internal review of key policies and practices to identify those that fail to effectively serve underrepresented students”), the potential relationships between historical legacies of inequalities and present-day institutional practices.⁴

⁴ Bombardieri, Marcella. “Equity Audits: A Tool for Campus Improvement.” <https://www.americanprogress.org/issues/education-postsecondary/news/2019/04/03/465193/equity-audits-tool-campus-improvement/>.

2. *Educate the Broader Davidson Community:*

- Host a series of history-based community dialogues to inform the public about these histories and how to access relevant research projects.
- Engage community stakeholders by holding public deliberative forums to better understand the wishes and needs of those directly impacted by these legacies.

3. *Educate the General Public:*

- Revise the present tour guide to include information about the complicated history of Davidson (both the college and the town) for prospective students and the general public.
- Create an accessible, interactive site for individuals to better understand the history of Davidson College and the town of Davidson.

Questions for Consideration

Each of these options for addressing intellectual legacies through education may have trade-offs. Consider the following:

1. What downsides might there be to prioritizing research and education efforts that are designed to reach people who aren't aware of these legacies? What about the individuals who are already informed?
2. What organizing bodies (if any) will make decisions about these projects being funded? Should those decisions be made by the Davidson College administration, or should other stakeholders be included?
3. Might there be groups of people negatively impacted by these actions? If so, who? Are there individuals who might find these histories traumatizing?
4. For many of these options, access will be limited to those who are able to attend the educational programming. How do we address this limitation?
5. Some of these options (e.g. tour, interactive site) might reflect beliefs or opinions that conflict with those of some prospective students and families or current students, faculty, staff, and community members. Is such potential conflict worth the risk?
6. Should any of these activities be required in some way? What are the tradeoffs associated with doing so?
7. What perspectives are we missing?
8. Colleges and communities have limited resources to dedicate to different initiatives - how should they balance the costs of implementing some of these ideas with other important initiatives and programs (e.g. financial aid, student mentoring, etc.)?

II. Addressing the Physical Legacies (20 - 25 min.)

While the intellectual legacies of slavery still exist in the minds of many, the physical legacies are also present, and can exist in iconic Davidson College locations that students, faculty and staff interact with daily. How do we address these legacies without erasing the difficult histories of those people who often played fundamental roles in the establishment of the college?

1. *Create New Physical Spaces:*
 - a. Create a memorial that more broadly recognizes the role of enslaved and free laborers that worked to help build Davidson College's campus. As an example, the [Unsung Founders Memorial](#) at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill was unveiled in 2005 to honor "people of color, bound and free, who helped build the Carolina that we cherish today." It stood, until 2018, next to "[Silent Sam](#)," a monument to Confederate soldiers.
 - b. Erect a monument that specifically acknowledges the enslaved laborers who worked on Davidson campus, many of whom worked at the college during their enslavement and as laborers and after slavery was outlawed.
2. *Adapt Present Physical Spaces:*
 - a. Rename public spaces, such as buildings, that are named after individuals who had a connection to slavery.
 - i. Example: The Chambers building, named after Maxwell Chambers, whose wealth, in large part, came from the labor of enslaved people, has been centered in the movement for renaming spaces for Davidson's campus.
 - b. Add interpretive materials to contextualize current building names with information about the individual's involvement with slavery and their impact on the lives of enslaved people, rather than renaming them.

Questions for Consideration

1. As the Commission mentions in their report, there are "concerns that the college not simply gloss over this part of its history; students, in particular, expressed concern that the removal of names from buildings could be misleading or even read as an attempt to erase a racist past." How do these concerns impact the options presented?
2. While some see memorials as more effectively reaching a broad audience than monuments, others believe they are not specific enough, particularly when they are built to counter Confederate/pro-slavery monuments. How can we simultaneously honor those who were essential to our college while also recognizing the broader context of the legacies of slavery?

3. Some argue that renaming buildings is merely a symbolic gesture that doesn't actually address the root consequences of inequality. Should the College seek a balance between some of the options presented above with other initiatives? If no, why not? If yes, what is the best combination?
4. What organizing bodies (if any) should make decisions about these projects being funded? Should those decisions be made by the Davidson College administration, or should other stakeholders be included?
5. What might be some downsides to implementing these ideas?
6. Colleges and communities have limited resources to dedicate to different initiatives - how should they balance the costs of implementing some of these ideas with other initiatives and programs?
7. What perspectives are we missing?

Reflections (15 min.)

Participants can address one or more of the items below.

- In one sentence, share what was most meaningful or valuable to you during this deliberation.
- Was there anything that was said or not said that you think should be addressed with the group?
- Can you identify any shared hopes or concerns this group discovered during the deliberation?
- What questions remain? What work do we still need to do?
- Did you hear something new in this deliberation?
- Is there a next step you would like to take based upon the deliberation you just had?
- Many of these actions will require different levels and combinations of time, financial resources, and broad institutional support. Do those factor into your priorities for change, and if so, how?



About This Guide

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The Deliberative Citizenship Initiative

The Deliberative Citizenship Initiative (DCI) is dedicated to the creation of opportunities for Davidson students, faculty, staff, alumni, and members of the wider community to productively engage with one another on difficult and contentious issues facing our community and society. The DCI regularly hosts facilitated deliberations on a wide range of topics as well as organizes training workshops for deliberation facilitators. To learn more about these opportunities, visit www.deliberativecitizenship.org.

DCI Deliberation Guides

The DCI has launched this series of Deliberation Guides as a foundation for such conversations. They provide both important background information on the topics in question and a specific framework for engaging with these topics. The Guides are designed to be informative without being overwhelming and structured without being inflexible. They cover a range of topics and come in a variety of formats but share several common elements, including opportunities to commit to a shared set of Conversation Agreements, learn about diverse perspectives, and reflect together on the conversation and its yield. The DCI encourages conversations based on these guides to be moderated by a trained facilitator. After each conversation, the DCI also suggests that its associated Pathway Guide be distributed to the conversation's participants.

DCI Pathways Guides

For every Deliberation Guide, the DCI has also developed an associated Pathways Guide, which outlines opportunities for action that participants can consider that are related to the covered topic. These Pathways Guides reinforce the DCI's commitment to an action orientation, a key deliberative disposition. While dialogue and deliberation are themselves important contributors to a healthy democracy, they become even more valuable when they lead to individual or collective action on the key issues facing society. Such action can come in a range of forms and should be broadly understood. It might involve developing a better understanding of a topic, connecting with relevant local or national organizations, generating new approaches to an issue. or deciding to support a particular policy.

If you make use of this guide in a deliberation, please provide attribution to the Deliberative Citizenship Initiative and email dcid@deliberativecitizenship.org to tell us about your event. To access more of our growing library of Deliberation Guides, Pathway Guides and other resources, visit www.deliberativecitizenship.org/readings-and-resources.



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