

Council of Graduate Students

Michigan State University

Resolution: 22-FS-17

Title: A resolution to increase donor accountability at Michigan State University

Introduced by: The Council of Graduate Students (COGS)

Supported by: The 2022-2023 COGS Executive Board

THE COUNCIL OF GRADUATE STUDENTS OF MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY ENACTS:

WHEREAS, it is widely understood that universities use building names, plaques, statues, ceremonies, trophies, etc., to commemorate and glorify the words and actions of donors or figureheads, thereby setting an example of what they deem admirable behavior for their future student body, faculty, and leaders;

WHEREAS, Michigan State University has removed the names of people from buildings when faced with widespread public outrage and news coverage [1];

WHEREAS, Michigan State University has publicly denounced racism directed towards Michigan State University athletes [2];

RECOGNIZING, that the Michigan State University Asian Pacific American Student Organization (APASO) has called for the removal of Larry Gaynor's name from the Broad Business College Gaynor Entrepreneurship Lab due to racist remarks he made directly towards Vietnamese people in 2020, but that their requests have not been honored [3];

RECOGNIZING, that the North American Indigenous Student Organization (NAISO) has called for the renaming of Morrill Plaza because it honors Rep. Justin Morrill, whose legislation unjustly stole 10.7 million acres of Indigenous land and converted it into college endowments in 1862, but that their requests have not been honored [4] [5];

RECOGNIZING, that the morals of society change, meaning that certain awards and recognitions presented to donors or figureheads need to be reevaluated as time passes [6];

RECOGNIZING, that MSU does not include a donor accountability clause in their gift acceptance policy such as:

"The university's practice is to publicly recognize donors. However, if after careful consideration, the university determines that such recognition is not in the best interests of the university, the university may end such recognition."

...thereby making it possible to honor individuals whose morals are unaligned with the moral values that MSU seeks to teach its students [7] [8];

RECOGNIZING, that other educational institutions have implemented donor accountability policies, including:

- **University of Michigan** – Standard Practice Guide – Gift Acceptance – Guidelines, sections H, I, K, L, M, O, and P [8];
- **Carnegie Mellon University** – University Policies – Administrative and Governance – Gift Acceptance, Counting, and Reporting Policy – Gift Acceptance, sections A.7, A.8, and C [9];
- **Harvard University** – Gift Policy Guide – Recognition of Donors [10].

BE IT RESOLVED, That the Council of Graduate Students calls for Michigan State University to increase donor accountability policies to prevent the glorification of individuals or organizations that do not align with the university's values.

INTRODUCED ON: December 7, 2022

VOTE TOTALS:

33 FOR

0 AGAINST

3 ABSTAIN



Recording Secretary



President

[1] Crowley, J. "Michigan State University Renames Building That Bears Name of Alleged Ku Klux Klan Member." *Newsweek*, 12 Sept. 2020. <https://www.newsweek.com/michigan-state-university-changes-name-building-after-kkk-member-1531501>

[2] Sergent, K. "Michigan State hockey player alleges opponent used racial slur." *UpNorthLive*, 22 Nov. 2022. <https://upnorthlive.com/news/local/michigan-state-university-ohio-state-racial-slur-hockey-spartans-jagger-joshua-msu-game-nhl>

[3] Zhou, A. "APASO Rep. Pushes bills for renaming campus lab to support Vietnamese community." *The State News*, 22 Sept. 2022. <https://statenews.com/article/2022/09/apaso-rep-pushes-bills-for-renaming-of-campus-lab-to-support-vietnamese-community>

[4] Lee, R. and Ahtone, T. "Land-grab universities: expropriated Indigenous land is the foundation of the land-grant university system." *High Country News*, 30 Mar. 2020. <https://www.hcn.org/issues/52.4/indigenous-affairs-education-land-grab-universities>

[5] Nass, L. "MSU gets an eviction notice: NAISO marches on Indigenous People's Day for institutional awareness." *The State News*, 11 Oct. 2022. <https://statenews.com/article/2022/10/msu-gets-an-eviction-notice-naiso-marches-on-indigenous-peoples-day-for-institutional-awareness>

[6] Johnson, M. "MSU's James Madison College to consider dropping president's name to 'combat racism'." *Lansing State Journal*, 14 Jul. 2020. <https://www.lansingstatejournal.com/story/news/2020/07/14/msus-james-madison-college-consider-dropping-presidents-name/5434030002/>

[7] "SECTION 315: Sponsored projects, fee-for-service, and gifts." *MSU Office of the Controller*, Apr. 2020. <http://ctrl.msu.edu/combp/mbp315EBS.aspx>

[8] "U-M standard practice guide: gift acceptance." *U. of Michigan*, Feb. 2021. <https://spg.umich.edu/policy/602.02>

[9] "Gift acceptance, counting, and reporting policy." *Carnegie Mellon U.*, 18 Aug. 2016. <https://www.cmu.edu/policies/administrative-and-governance/gift-acceptance.html>

[10] "Gift policy guide." *Harvard U.*, May 2020. https://alumni.harvard.edu/sites/default/files/page/files/Gift_Policy_Guide_Overview.pdf