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Concerning the Renaming of Douglas Hall

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Eastern Illinois University Faculty Senate Resolution Concerning The Renaming of Douglas Hall

Voted on and approved by the EIU Faculty Senate on October 3rd, 2017

WHEREAS, Eastern Illinois University is a public comprehensive university, and pledges in its mission statement that “the University community is committed to diversity and inclusion”.

WHEREAS, The historical importance of the Lincoln/Douglas Presidential Debates of 1858 is not in dispute.

WHEREAS, There is currently a nationwide dialogue concerning the removal of monuments and renaming of buildings we find that it is important we engage in our own conversation as a united campus community to determine, reassert, and define our values.

WHEREAS, Rigorous debate is important and central to the mission of a comprehensive university, and that it is, therefore, wholly appropriate to honor the principles of debate as well as the local import of the 1858 debates within our own community.

WHEREAS, Other institutions have recently had a thorough analysis of a wide variety of factors that should be considered when mulling the renaming of a campus building. We concur that “the bar should be set high” for renaming any building; however, there can also be compelling and clear reasons to do so.

WHEREAS, In 2010, Eastern Illinois University received an internal proposal on the topic of renaming Douglas Hall and that the Student Government voted against the measure at the time despite the objections of the Black Student Union, who objected to the fact that their voices were not heard in the dialogue.

WHEREAS, We have received a new and revised proposal on the same subject once again.

WHEREAS, Prospective and Current Students, as well as Alumni of EIU might misinterpret that in naming "Douglas Hall" as such, it was, and currently is the University's intent to honor Stephen A. Douglas and the principles for which he stood. We find that revising the name to read “Lincoln/Douglas Debate Hall” would be wholly appropriate, or we suggest that Lincoln and Douglas Halls be named as “Lincoln/Douglas Debate Hall East” and “Lincoln/Douglas Debate Hall West”.

WHEREAS, We recall that in 1951 it was the University's intent to honor the memory and importance of the 1858 debates.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Faculty Senate of Eastern Illinois University strongly recommends that President David Glassman in keeping with "Internal Governing Policy 148", staff and task the University Naming Committee to consider a revision to the names of Douglas Hall and Lincoln Hall to more specifically commemorate the 1858 debates for which the buildings were originally named in 1951. The Faculty Senate recommends the names be changed to "Lincoln/Douglas Debate Hall East" and "Lincoln/Douglas Debate Hall West". Furthermore, we ask President Glassman and the Naming Committee to utilize this opportunity to undertake the periodic (ten-year) review of facility names across the campus. We further recommend that the university initiate or revise the principles governing the Naming or Renaming of facilities on campus as has been done at other institutions (Yale, 2016). We further encourage that, as an educational institution, the university, through the President's Office, establish a Lecture Series where topics of import to the campus, the community, and the region are discussed, communicated, and advocated as necessary. We advocate that a variety of voices from throughout the campus community be heard in this process, and strongly recommend that a name change be considered.

Submitted Respectfully On Behalf of the EIU Faculty Senate,

Jemmie Robertson, EIU Faculty Senate Chair

Teshome Abebe, EIU Faculty Senate Faculty Forum Committee Chair

Attachment 1: Letter from the Yale Committee to Establish Principles on Renaming addressed to Yale President Salovey on November 21st, 2016

Attachment 2: Renewed Proposal to Rename Douglas Residence Hall from Professor Chris Hanlon to various EIU recipients dated August 17th, 2017

Attachment 3: Response to Proposal to Rename Douglas Hall signed by select members of the EIU History Department dated August 21st, 2017

Attachment 4: Statement to EIU Faculty Senate by Professor Chris Hanlon on September 5th, 2017

Attachment 5: Douglas Editorial Cartoon Appendix submitted September 6th, 2017