



UNIVERSITY OF
GEORGIA

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November 7, 2019

Dr. Jennifer L. Rice
Department of Geography
University of Georgia
GG Building, 210 Field Street
Room 204
Athens, Georgia 30602

Dear Dr. Rice:

I am in receipt of your letter dated October 23, 2019, pertaining to the Franklin Senate's passage of three resolutions related to Baldwin Hall. This is a matter that some members of the Franklin College clearly feel passionate about; as your letter notes, the Franklin Senate has devoted an enormous amount of discussion and deliberation to these issues for more than two years. While I deeply respect the faculty's right to express their opinions, it is clear that we have strong differences of opinion on the University's handling of the remains discovered at Baldwin Hall.

More than six years have now passed since the University System of Georgia Board of Regents authorized the expansion of Baldwin Hall. Five years have gone by since the project was funded by the General Assembly of the State of Georgia. Four years have passed since the outside contractor, Allstate Construction, inadvertently discovered the first human remains on the site. More than two years have passed since the remains were reinterred and respectfully remembered in a solemn ceremony at Oconee Hill Cemetery, and it will have been one year, as of November 16, since the granite monument to those buried at Baldwin Hall was dedicated in front of the building. As I noted in my comments at the dedication, those of us present were drawn together "by a deep sense of respect for these individuals and by a strong sense of duty to commemorate the lives they lived."

To the University's knowledge, no one from the University or community—not even the Franklin College faculty whose offices in Baldwin Hall were directly above the construction site—came forward with any warnings prior to the beginning of construction. That would have been an optimal time for discussion with faculty experts, but none contacted the University administration. Similarly, it would have been beneficial if the Office of University Architects for Facilities Planning had conducted ground-penetrating radar tests outside the fence line of the Old Athens Cemetery prior to breaking ground, but that did not happen.

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We all see more clearly when looking back in hindsight. However, I am confident that at every stage of the process in regard to Baldwin Hall, University administrators acted with integrity and in good faith. They made decisions based on the available information at the time, in keeping with the guidance of the State Archaeologist's Office and in close consultation with the University System of Georgia Board of Regents, under whose purview the stewardship of UGA facilities and real estate belongs.

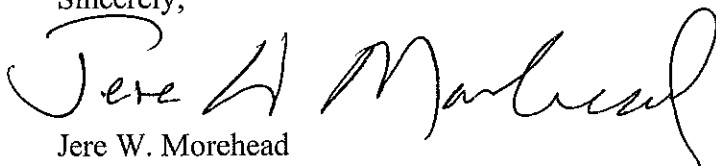
The University has learned from this experience, which has informed the significant actions we have taken as we have moved forward. I commissioned a new Historic Preservation Master Plan, developed by the Office of University Architects, which now requires archaeological review prior to the start of construction on any campus site. I have personally convened meetings with community leaders in education and workforce development to promote further engagement in the local community. At present, we have more than 50 partnerships with the Clarke County School District, including the Georgia Promise program which developed as a direct result of those conversations.

In addition, in Spring 2017, following consultation with several community leaders, Vice President for Research David Lee authorized the continuation of further DNA analysis by an ancient DNA expert and professional colleague selected by Dr. Laurie Reitsema, Dr. Deborah Bolnick, now with the University of Connecticut. Such meticulous research takes time, as I am sure the members of the Franklin Senate understand. Dr. Bolnick's research is ongoing and, when completed, may lead to additional constructive conversations.

Most recently, on October 31, Dr. Lee awarded a grant to a 22-member team comprised primarily of Franklin College professors—some of whom are members of the Franklin Senate—to research and publish a scholarly account of the history of slavery at UGA from the time of its founding to the beginning of the Civil War. This report is scheduled to be completed by June 2021, and it is being funded by up to \$100,000 in private discretionary funds that I have authorized.

These are substantive and constructive actions, and they reflect my strong commitment to continue promoting diversity and inclusion for all of our faculty, staff and students. I respectfully request that you share this response at the upcoming meeting of the Franklin Senate on November 19.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jere W. Morehead". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Jere W. Morehead
President

cc: Alan T. Dorsey