

From: The Building Name Review Committee  
To: Chancellor Carol Christ  
Re: Proposal to Remove the Name from Moses Hall

May 25, 2022

Dear Chancellor Christ:

The Building Name Review Committee has evaluated the proposal to remove the name of Bernard Moses from Moses Hall. The proposal was submitted by faculty, graduate students, and staff of the Department of Philosophy, with the support of Global, International, and Area Studies and of the Institute of Governmental Studies.

After studying the proposal, collecting more than 150 comments from our campus and alumni community, and carefully evaluating all information presented, our committee voted unanimously to recommend that the name be removed. We further recommend that the administration consider authorizing and providing a budget for a working group composed of faculty and students drawn from the units housed in the building to develop an appropriate restorative approach to reckoning with the legacy of Bernard Moses.

### **Building Name Review Committee Principles**

The legacy of a building's namesake should be in alignment with the values and mission of the university. The values of UC Berkeley are expressed in our Principles of Community. In deciding whether to remove a building name, we believe that the committee should be guided by two principles:

1. As stated in the Regents of the University of California Policy 4400: University of California Diversity Statement:

*[T]he University of California renews its commitment to the full realization of its historic promise to recognize and nurture merit, talent, and achievement by supporting diversity and equal opportunity in its education, services, and administration, as well as research and creative activity. The University particularly acknowledges the acute need to remove barriers to the recruitment, retention, and advancement of talented students, faculty, and staff from historically excluded populations who are currently underrepresented.*

We view as our intellectual and ethical responsibility the promotion of an inclusive, global perspective on the peoples and cultures of the world, particularly in light of scholarly traditions that may omit, ignore, or silence the perspectives of many groups, such as ethnic minorities; people from non-European nations; women; lesbian, gay and transgender people; and disabled people, among others.

2. Whether or not a building's name is removed, we believe it is historically and socially valuable

to retain a public record, perhaps in the form of a plaque in the building, that notes the building's history of naming and the deeds of its namesakes, including any positive contributions the namesake may have made to their discipline, the University, or the world beyond.

### **Building Name Review Process**

Per the process established by the Building Name Review Committee, the committee initiates a review once it receives a proposal. The proposal must make a strong, stand-alone case for why a building name should be removed.

Once a case goes forward, the review process includes wide-spread dissemination of the proposal via emails and posts on Berkeley websites, a comment period, the posting of comments, time for additional research or outreach (if needed), and finally a report with recommendations for the Chancellor about the proposal.

### **Moses Proposal**

The Department of Philosophy submitted the proposal to un-name Moses Hall on May 29, 2021. The proposal grew out of concerns by graduate students in the Department of Philosophy about racist ideas expressed in published works by Bernard Moses, the namesake of Moses Hall. After a brief email discussion of the issues between members of the faculty and graduate students in June 2020, it was decided that the Department's Equity Advisors and the Equity Task Force (ETF) would look into the process for requesting the un-naming of the building, and develop a way to examine the case for un-naming that is fair and open to various stake-holders. The first step was to invite faculty and graduate students in the department to read and write summaries of Moses' major works, with an eye to the question of whether there is anything that might be racist in the works. This was completed in February 2021. The second step was to invite any faculty, graduate students, or administrative staff who were interested to serve on the Moses Hall Name Review Committee (MHNRC) to review the summaries, discuss the findings, and decide whether proceeding with an un-naming proposal was warranted. The result of this discussion was unanimous agreement among committee members to proceed with a proposal to un-name Moses Hall. At that meeting a sub-committee, which was open to anyone on the MHNRC, was established to draft the proposal, and it was also agreed that the MHNRC would share its thinking about this situation with other members of the academic community who might have an interest in the issue.

Bernard Moses (1846-1931) attended the University of Michigan (B.A.) and the University of Heidelberg (Ph.D.). He began his teaching career at Albion College and came to the University of California in 1875 to teach social sciences. He was a member of the U.S. Philippine Commission from 1900-1902, and later participated in the Panamerican Scientific Congress in Santiago, Chile, and in the International Conference of American States in Buenos Aires. He was also appointed as a minister plenipotentiary on a special mission to Chile in 1910.

Moses was a prominent and influential faculty member at the University of California. He was appointed professor of history and political economy in 1875 just seven years after the founding of the university. He taught almost all of the economics, history, and jurisprudence courses over the next fifteen years, and he created and chaired the Department of History and Political Science in 1883. He was extremely influential in the development of the social sciences in a time of increased specialization and played an important role in the creation of the Department of Political Science in 1903. Later in his career, after his teaching duties in economics were relieved by the hiring of more faculty, Moses became a pre-eminent authority on the history of imperial Spain and Latin America. To his credit, he was a proponent of trying to understand “Hispanic” economic history from the perspective of Latin American peoples and states, and he traveled widely in Mexico and South America. Despite the relaxation of his teaching duties in economics, Moses continued to be an influential presence in the area of economics, even after the Department of Economics was separated in 1902. He retired in 1911.

The building in question was originally constructed by ASUC in 1931 and named Eshleman Hall. The Regents purchased the building in 1959 and renamed it after Moses. The Institute of Governmental Studies moved into the building in 1962, and the Department of Philosophy followed in the 1970s.

At the core of the case for un-naming Moses Hall is Moses' expression of racist, white supremacist views in various published works. There is a great deal of evidence of his acceptance of a view that today is called “classical racialism” or “racial essentialism.” This view comprises two distinct ideas. The first is that races are differentiated from one another by inheritable physical, intellectual, aesthetic, and moral characteristics. The second idea is that the white race is superior to the other races with respect to these characteristics. In some places Moses can be read as suggesting that race is socio-cultural, or socio-historical, rather than biological. However, there are several places in which it seems clear that Moses is talking about traits had in virtue of biology or “blood.” In any case, even if his considered view is that race is socio-historical, rather than a matter of blood, when combined with the second idea just described—the idea that the white race is superior—the result is still a racist and white supremacist perspective. Importantly, Moses' white supremacist views are not incidental to his work. Rather, they are central to his views about history, society, and politics. They are reflected in his academic writings about colonized people, both in the Americas and elsewhere in the world, and in his discussion of Black ex-slaves and their descendants in the U.S. They are also central to a “problem” that he discusses in several works: how white people ought to relate to non-white people, and how to ensure that their interaction does not impede the progression of Western civilization. It is hard to disentangle the various problematic ideas in Moses' works.

### **Our Committee's Outreach and Deliberations**

On May 29, 2021, the Building Name Review Committee received the proposal to un-name Moses Hall. On February 8, 2022, a campus-wide announcement informed the UC Berkeley community that the proposal was posted on our website and that comments on the proposal

were encouraged. In total, 154 responses were collected through our website's feedback form. 66% of the collected responses were in favor of the proposal to remove the name, and 34% of the collected responses opposed the proposal.

Numerous commenters expressed their concerns over Moses' racist views, support for white supremacy, and the harm caused to students of color. The following comments illustrate the prevailing sentiments of the community:

“UC Berkeley cannot claim to stand for students of color if it continues to recognize and glorify racist people, and as an extension their racist values, such as Moses.”

“Unnaming Moses Hall is a gesture of goodwill to indicate the future of Berkeley is anti-racist. It's unconscionable to allow harm to be done to members of our community by honoring white supremacists on our campus.”

“Based on the evaluation of Bernard Moses' legacy in the [proposal], his racist views regarding the essential characteristics of races and the superiority of the white race seem to have played an important role in his historiography of Latin America and the United States.”

The dissenting comments primarily expressed the principle that buildings should not be un-named in general, as doing so strikes from the record a component of our history that, while not consistent with our values, the campus should be able to admit and learn from.

Overall, the proposal and the public comments reveal significant support for un-naming Moses Hall, stressing that the name is an obstacle to creating a sense of belonging for all Berkeley students, faculty, and staff.

The Building Name Review Committee met on March 14, 2022 to discuss the Moses proposal. Our committee discussed the proposal and the arguments in favor of and opposed to removing the Moses name from the building. In addition, we felt that further community outreach was needed, particularly to the alumni community. After gathering further comments, the committee met on May 10, 2022 to finalize deliberations on the proposal. Present were David Schaffer, Dacher Keltner, Alex Mabanta, Waldo Martin, Fabrizio Mejia, Sydney Roberts, Chaka Tellem, Terak Zohdi; *ex officio* committee member Nancy McKinney; and staff member Timothy Green. James Ford provided comments ahead of time to be shared at the meeting. We reviewed additional arguments that were made by the commenters, as well as considered how our principles and processes were aligned with the Moses proposal. During our deliberations, every member of the committee expressed an opinion.

## **Recommendations**

At the conclusion of our deliberations, the Building Name Review Committee voted unanimously to recommend that the name be removed from Moses Hall. Additionally, Bernard Moses' name should be removed from the adjacent parking lot and any other campus features carrying the Moses name. Furthermore, we recommend the campus investigate removal of the Moses name from programmatic uses, such as the Bernard Moses Memorial Lecture.

Un-naming cannot be understood as a transformative practice absent substantive consultation with parties most directly affected. Campus should recognize and learn from the reality that its past values have not always been consistent with its present ones, and we recommend both that the Moses un-naming proposal remain on our committee's website. We also recommend as described above that a budget be provided for a working group composed of faculty, staff, and students to develop an appropriate restorative approach to reckon with the legacy of Bernard Moses, particularly in regards to communities of color, in the United States, Latin America, and the Philippines. The working group, which should be drawn from the units housed in the building as well as include others with relevant area expertise, may consider the development of murals, exhibits, and/or other university-sponsored programs. We would encourage this working group, ideally established prior to the end of the Fall semester of 2022, to offer their vision to lead the campus through the conclusion of this process.

Chancellor Christ, we thank you for your support for our committee and its important work. We look forward to your response to our recommendations, which we believe will help UC Berkeley acknowledge its past while becoming more inclusive and supportive of our community's present and future.

Sincerely,

James Ford, Chief of Staff, Academic Planning

Dacher Keltner, Professor, Psychology

Alex Mabanta, GA Legislative Affairs Director, Jurisprudence and Social Policy/ Berkeley Law

Waldo Martin, Professor, History

Fabrizio Mejia, Assistant Vice Chancellor, Equity and Inclusion

Sydney Roberts, ASUC President's Chief of Staff, Political Science & African American Studies

David Schaffer, Professor, Chemical and Biomolecular Engineering (Chair)

Jiazhen Tan, Graduate Assembly, Mathematics

Chaka Tellem, ASUC President, Political Economy

Tarek Zohdi, Professor, Mechanical Engineering (DECC representative)

David Robinson, Chief Campus Counsel (*ex officio*)

Nancy McKinney, Associate Vice Chancellor, UDAR (*ex officio*)

Timothy Green, Academic Planning (staff)