

Salem Academy and College Naming Conventions Policy

Policy Category: Administrative/Operational

Subject: Naming and renaming of places and spaces on campus

Policy Owner/Responsible Office: Office of the President

Related Procedures and Forms: None

Related Policies: None

Background

Salem Academy and College

Founded in 1772, Salem Academy and College is the oldest continuously operating educational institution for women and girls in America. The institution's mission statement is as follows:

Salem Academy and College is a diverse community dedicated to educating girls and women and empowering them to lead.

The following values guide Salem Academy and College's work:

- Transformative Learning (Academy)
- Comprehensive Wellness (Academy)
- Inclusive Community (Academy)
- Intellectual Curiosity (College)
- Intentional Community (College)
- Equity and Belonging (College)
- Innovative Spirit (College)
- Courageous Leadership (College)
- Honor and Integrity (College)

Policy Origins

In 2017, Salem Academy and College ("Salem") created a commission to begin work on discovering and understanding Salem's relationship with its history, particularly as it related to slavery. In 2019 the commission was renamed the *Anna Maria Samuel Project: Race, Remembrance, and Reconciliation* (AMS). The AMS's mission is to explore the diverse history of the institution in connection with the broader community and to make historic research relevant and visible through education in order to foster reconciliation. More detailed information about AMS and Salem's history can be found on Salem's website at

<https://www.salemacademyandcollege.org/ams>.

In spring of 2024, community members brought forth a petition to change the name of one of Salem's residence halls, based on the associations of the building's namesake with slavery. In considering this request, the Board of Trustees determined that Salem needed a policy to guide decisions on naming conventions in alignment with Salem's mission and values. This case illuminated a series of questions related to Salem's naming practices which the below policy aims to address. This policy was developed by a committee with representation from the Anna Maria Samuel Project, the Board of Trustees ("the Board"), and the office of Institutional Advancement, and approved by the Board of Trustees on September 24, 2024 date.¹

Scope

This document was created to provide policy, procedure, and guidance for decision-making with regard to the naming and renaming of buildings, spaces, gifts, funds, programs, and other designations presented to or by Salem Academy and College. This policy's scope specifically addresses the policy and procedure for the conferring of names, the removal and renaming of names, the rescinding of honorary designations, and the display or removal of portraits, memorials, and other gifts or items. Salem establishes this policy to assure that its practices reflect and support Salem's mission and values. As an institution that values an inclusive and intentional community, Salem understands that it must be open to the scrutiny of its long history. Salem is dedicated to educating and empowering girls and women to lead. Salem therefore strives to model a behavior that demonstrates thoughtful consideration with high standards of transformative learning, courageous leadership, inclusivity, honor, and integrity.

I. Conferring of a Name

Salem may choose to confer a name for a building, room, space, scholarship, faculty chair, or other designation for the following reasons:

1. Naming in recognition of a gift or sponsorship.
2. Naming in honor of an individual or entity.

Naming Opportunities

Salem may create naming opportunities within its facilities and programs. In general, naming opportunities are vetted and approved through the Office of Institutional Advancement and the Office of the President and the terms of the conferring of the name are governed by the applicable gift agreement or honor. Naming opportunities are conditional upon the terms of the associated gift agreement. All naming opportunities will be recognized for the duration of time specified in the gift agreement, or until the Board of Trustees deems an *Exceptional Removal of a Name* necessary, as described below.

¹ In preparing this policy, the committee extensively reviewed the policies of other institutions, as well as materials compiled by the *Universities Studying Slavery* consortium. The committee extends its gratitude to all institutions who have shared their work. This policy draws on examples from numerous other schools, with particular influence drawn from the policies set forth by Davidson College, Hollins University, and University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

II. Removal of a Name

Salem may remove a name from a physical space, program, fund or other named item in its sole discretion. The process for name removal for any of the four conditions below consists of administrative action by the Cabinet approved by the President. This can be done for any of the following reasons:

1. If the name was established for a set duration and that period has expired.
2. If the name was established from a pledge that was not paid in full by the Donor by the determined date in the gift agreement.
3. If the name is provided by a Donor, and the Donor requests the removal of said name.
4. If the name is not governed by a specific gift agreement.

Exceptional Removal of a Name Designation

If the name of a building, space, gift, fund, program, or other designation presented to or by Salem Academy and College impairs Salem's ability to fulfill its Mission and Values, then the process to be followed is determined in the *Exception Removal of a Name Designation* below.

The *Exceptional Removal of a Name Designation* process should only be instigated and reviewed in extraordinary circumstances. Exceptional removal of a name should not be taken lightly or in haste.

The petition for consideration and review must follow the process outlined below in "Process for Submitting and Reviewing a Written Request for *Exceptional Removal of a Name*," and all final decisions relating to the request will be made by Salem's Board of Trustees. The Board is guided by the principles outlined below. The fundamental question to be considered by the Board: Does the current name impede Salem's ability to fulfill its Mission and/or values? When this question is answered affirmatively for either or both, the *exceptional removal of a name* should be considered.

Process for Submitting and Reviewing a Written Request for *Exceptional Removal of a Name*

A request for the *Exceptional Removal of a Name* requires a written memorandum to the Office of the President (officeofthepresident@salem.edu). Requests must be submitted by a member of the Salem community (Salem Academy or College student, faculty, staff, alumnae, and current or former trustees) or the donor and/or their descendants. The written request must address and include all of the following:

- Name, location, and other relevant details of the building, site, program, or award for which a name change is requested.
- What specific course of action is requested (ie. what specific change is being requested)?
- What is the reason for removing the name?
- Does the name impede Salem's ability to live out its institutional Mission and/or Values? If so, explain how in detail.
- Provide a list of sources used to justify removing the name.

The Office of the President will initially review the request using the five criteria listed above. If a request is not complete, or if a request does not come from a member of the Salem Community, or if a request fails to set forth a sufficient basis for concluding that the existing name impedes Salem's ability to live out its institutional Mission and/or Values, as determined in the sole discretion of the President or her designee, then the request will not be considered. The Office of the President will communicate any decision rejecting a request to the person who submitted the request, and that person will have an opportunity to resubmit a request that fixes the earlier deficiencies, if desired.

If the Office of the President determines that the request meets these criteria and warrants further consideration, they will forward the request to the Executive Committee of the Board of Trustees for review at the next regularly scheduled meeting of the Board. Given the importance of the review, the Board may request additional information, advice of outside counsel, feedback from the Salem community, or other input before making a final decision. While the Board will act with all due haste, it is unlikely that a final decision about a request would be made at the same meeting at which the request is presented for review, and the Board does not have a specific deadline for making its decision.

The Board of Trustees will use the following principles to guide the consideration of a request for exceptional removal of a name:

- Who is the namesake and what was the namesake's principal legacy?
- What course of action is being recommended by the petitioner?
- What is the building's/object's/program's/fund's function?
- What was the namesake's relationship with the institution?
- How did the original naming decision come about and is there a gift agreement or other contract impacting the analysis?
- How will Salem preserve the historical record and educate its community?
- Is there potential harm in removing the name?
- Is there potential harm in keeping the name?
- Is there a fiduciary impact based on the decision on the name?
- And most importantly, does the name impede Salem's ability to live out its institutional Mission and/or values?

If the removal of the name is approved by the Board, then the Board will instruct the President to proceed with the renaming process described in the following section. If the removal of the

name is not approved by the Board, the Board will provide a concise summary of its analysis and decision. In either case, the Office of the President will communicate the Board's decision back to the person who submitted the request and to the broader Salem community, as appropriate.

Once the Board of Trustees has made a final decision on a specific renaming request, it will not entertain additional requests for exceptional removal of a name designation for the same physical space, program, fund, or other item unless the new request also demonstrates materially changed circumstances or newly discovered facts.

III. Renaming

If the Board determines that a name designation should be removed from a physical space, program, fund, or other item as a result of the exceptional removal of a name designation process, then the Board reserves the right to make a final decision for the new name. If deemed appropriate, the Board may defer the decision about the new name to a later date. The Board may instruct the President to establish a campus committee, or engage an existing campus committee or entity, to assist in generating names for consideration or may choose a name directly itself. The Board and/or its designated committee may solicit feedback from the Salem community on a proposed new name.

For all other renaming decisions (e.g. donor request, pledge not fulfilled, period expired, etc.) the President shall select the new name in consultation with the President's Cabinet. If deemed appropriate, the President may also defer the decision to a later date and/or engage with the Salem community on a proposed new name.

IV. Honorary Designations

In addition to naming designations, Salem may choose to honor an individual who has provided exemplary, meritorious, or philanthropic support or service to the institution, or to society generally, with an honorific designation. Honorific designations include, but are not limited to: conferring an honorary degree(s), induction into the Athletics Hall of Fame, or receiving an alumnae award.

In extraordinary circumstances, the Board may rescind an honorary designation if the honoree engages in conduct that impedes Salem's ability to live out its Mission and/or values, such that the honoree no longer meets the criteria for the honorary designation. In making its determination, the Board will follow the same process outlined in the section of this policy for *Exceptional Removal of a Name* and apply those principles to the specific criteria for the honorary designation.

V. Portraits, Memorials, and Gifts for Display

Salem owns and on occasion displays portraits of individuals who have made significant contributions to Salem, including former Salem presidents. Portraits hung on campus are not on permanent display. In making the determination of which portraits to display on campus, the President's Office will consider the relevance of the individual's contributions to the history, traditions, and values of the institution. The President's Office determines where portraits should be hung, and from time to time may move portraits to alternate sites or place portraits in storage. The President may approve the donation of a portrait to another nonprofit entity (for example, a museum or another educational institution) or to descendants of the subject of the portrait. This policy applies to historical portraits. Temporary exhibitions curated by students, faculty, and/or staff are not within the scope of this policy.

Salem also owns and displays memorials and gifts of individuals or groups who have made significant contributions to Salem and/or represent a part of Salem's history. As with portraits, the President's Office determines which memorials or gifts on display should be placed on the campus, may move or store memorials or gifts on display, and may approve the donation of a memorial or gift on display.

In extraordinary circumstances, the President may be asked by a member of the Salem community to remove a portrait, memorial, or gift on display if the image or object violates Salem's mission and values or the individual(s) depicted or the donor(s) referenced engaged in conduct that impedes Salem's ability to live out its mission and/or values. In making the determination, the President will follow the same analysis outlined in the section of this policy for *Exceptional Removal of a Name* and apply those principles in determining whether or not to remove a portrait, memorial, or gift on display.

For historical accuracy of the institution, this policy does not apply to objects held in Salem's archives (e.g. yearbooks, scrapbooks, ephemera, etc.).

VI. Special Circumstances and Exceptions

Exceptions to this naming policy may be made under special circumstances. Exceptions shall be approved by the President (except for those sections where this policy requires Board approval, in which case the Board must approve any exception).

VII. Policy Revision

Revisions to this policy may be proposed by the President or their designee. All changes to this policy must be approved by the Board of Trustees.