

**MINUTES**  
**WAR MEMORIAL BOARD OF TRUSTEES**  
**RACIAL EQUITY COMMITTEE SPECIAL MEETING**

**Thursday, May 13, 2021**

The Special Committee on Racial Equity of the Board of Trustees of the War Memorial of San Francisco met remotely at 1:30 p.m. on Thursday, May 13, 2020, Chair Wright presiding.

ROLL CALL

Committee Members Present: Chair Wright, Trustee Levin, Trustee Lui, Trustee Wilsey  
President Thomas E. Horn, *Ex officio* and  
Vice President Charlotte M. Shultz, *Ex officio*

Non-Committee Member Present: Trustee Pelosi

Staff Present: John Caldon, Managing Director  
Jennifer Norris, Assistant Managing Director

Chair Wright stated that she is excited about being Chair of the Special Committee on Racial Equity and about the work the Committee is doing. She thanked Managing Director John Caldon, Assistant Managing Director Jennifer Norris, and War Memorial staff for the work they are doing and the support they have given her as Chair.

Chair Wright reported that there are three items on today's agenda for the meeting.

Chair Wright asked Jennifer Norris, Assistant Managing Director and Co-Facilitator of the Staff Racial Equity Team, to provide an update on staff's Racial Equity Action Plan.

Ms. Norris said that the Staff Committee on Racial Equity, which was formed in September 2020, continues to meet. The Staff Committee has representatives of all War Memorial divisions and represents a variety of ages, genders, years of service and sexualities.

Ms. Norris reported that War Memorial staff is working to address the more than 50 action items outlined in the War Memorial's Racial Equity Action Plan and is currently focused on establishing a robust equitable hiring and promotion policy, with a goal of attracting a more diverse group of people to apply for War Memorial positions.

Ms. Norris stated that other points in the Plan currently underway include redesigning the departmental website to be more accessible and developing a departmental Racial Equity Statement and revised Mission Statement.

Trustee Lui asked whether one of the goals is for the War Memorial and Performing Arts Center to attract smaller and more diverse groups of presenters and licensees to the Herbst Theatre and Wilsey Center. Ms. Norris stated that has always been a goal and more energy will be put into outreach to ensure success.

Chair Wright stated that at this Committee's inaugural meeting on December 7, 2020, Trustees decided to recommend that the War Memorial Board of Trustees begin receiving Racial Equity reports from stakeholders over the last three months Trustees have heard from the War Memorial's three resident companies. Chair Wright asked for input from the Committee regarding Trustees' impressions of these reports, including what has been learned and which types of licensees the Committee would like to hear from going forward.

Chair Wright said that she was impressed with the racial equity work of stakeholders and was particularly impressed with the presentation of the San Francisco Ballet's racial equity work. Trustee Levin said he was impressed at how fast stakeholders are moving with their racial equity initiatives. Ms. Norris asked if the Committee would like to continue to hear presentations from smaller licensees.

Trustee Pelosi stated Trustees should continue to receive reports. Vice President Shultz said she thinks continuing to receive reports would be useful.

Chair Wright stated that an important part of this Committee's work is to create a Racial Equity Statement to guide Trustee decisions and policy making. She noted that prior to this meeting, Committee members received a draft statement that she prepared in collaboration with War Memorial staff. Chair Wright read the following statement for the record:

"The San Francisco War Memorial and Performing Arts Center, a monument to the San Francisco veterans of foreign wars, the birthplace of the United Nations, was created for the enjoyment of all people.

The War Memorial Performing Arts Center, under our care, has a long history of supporting European art forms, oftentimes to the exclusion of other art forms, artists, arts organizations, and their patrons, in particular people of color. Having been entrusted with San Francisco's premiere performing arts venues, the War Memorial Board of Trustees understands our broader obligation to the San Francisco's performing arts communities. Trustees, and staff, will work to create an environment where people of all backgrounds participate in, and are enriched by, performances and presentations, in venues that they have dedicated themselves to preserving for generations to come.

The War Memorial Board of Trustees is fully committed to advancing racial equity through our policies and use of our venues. The effectiveness of our work will be evident by the expansion of the racial and ethnic diversity of the patrons, presenters, and workers under our roofs."

Chair Wright opened the floor for feedback from members of the Committee on this draft statement. Trustee Levin stated that it is a beautiful statement and that it covers the mission. Vice President Shultz thanked Chair Wright for the thought, interest, and care she has given to putting this statement together for Trustees and said she thinks it is a statement of which the War Memorial Board can be proud.

President Horn said he thinks the statement was well drafted. He asked Chair Wright if she expects this statement to be circulated now as a recommendation to be put on the agenda for a future meeting. Chair Wright confirmed President Horn's process suggestion.

Chair Wright said that the Special Committee on Racial Equity wanted a statement that would recognize the past and our history and acknowledge that the War Memorial has not done everything it should have regarding racial equity, but that Trustees are now committed to changing and moving forward.

Following discussion, and on motion of Trustee Levin, seconded by Trustee Wilsey, the following recommendation was unanimously adopted:

RECOMMENDED, To the Board of Trustees of the War Memorial of San Francisco that it review and approve the draft Racial Equity Statement as recommended by the Racial Equity Committee and War Memorial staff.

#### PUBLIC COMMENT

Chair Wright called for public comment on items within the jurisdiction of the Special Committee on Racial Equity of the Board of Trustees, but not on the agenda. There being none, Chair Wright closed public comment.

#### ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business before the Special Committee on Racial Equity, Chair Wright adjourned the meeting at 2:00 p.m.



Jennifer E. Norris  
Executive Secretary