



The University of Vermont

Statement Regarding UVM and Eugenics

E. Thomas Sullivan, President

June 21, 2019

As we close this academic year, I wish to refer back to the Board of Trustees report of October 27, 2018, regarding the renaming of the Library to Howe Library in light of the history of the eugenic research in Vermont and UVM. As the Board of Trustee Advisory Committee reported, Native-American populations, including the Abenaki People, immigrants, women, and persons with disabilities were disproportionately affected.

Both the Advisory Committee and the Board of Trustees unanimously concluded that Guy W. Bailey's name should be removed from the University Library in light of conduct around eugenics. The Advisory Committee further recommended "that the University work to establish a lasting educational effort with respect to the history of eugenics, UVM's role in it, and its impact on populations in Vermont and beyond." (The Committee's full report may be found here: http://www.uvm.edu/trustees/other_com/renaming/meetings/RAC%20Report_10-27-18.pdf)

Within this context, I believe it is appropriate to state unequivocally that the Eugenics Survey of Vermont (1925-1936), supported by UVM on its campus, contributed to the stereotyping, persecution, and in some cases, state-sponsored sterilization of members of certain groups (Sanctioned by law in the State of Vermont in 1931). The destructive impacts of eugenics have been, through generations, a deeply painful experience.

The Advisory Committee to the Board included in its recommending report that the University look also to its Common Ground values, as noticed by the proponents of the removal resolution, especially the values of Justice and Responsibility. Accordingly, it is fitting that our institution express its deep and sincere remorse for support given to the eugenics survey and associated conduct in Vermont. We recognize and deeply regret this profoundly sad chapter in Vermont and UVM's history.

On behalf of the University of Vermont and in coordination with the President's Commission on Inclusive Excellence, I offer sincere apologies for the suffering that resulted from this unethical and regrettable part of our legacy.

Let us move forward, together, as an educational community to ensure that such a grave injustice never be repeated. By providing relevant, accessible educational initiatives going forward, we have an opportunity to better come to terms with the past and learn from these tragic lessons.