



Central Student Government

Assembly Resolution 11-048

Angell Name Removal


Resolution information

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Endorser(s)	Zaynab Elkolaly, Engineering Joseph Lobodzinski, LSA
Long title	A Declarative Resolution to Remove James B. Angell's Name from Angell Hall and the Angell Scholar Award.
Author Summary	This resolution calls on the Board of Regents to rename Angell Hall as well as the academic award bearing his name. In addition to the name change, we urge the Provost to create a semester long course on the racist foundations in which the University of Michigan was built upon, insist the the Board of Regents and President Schlissel make a public statement on the harm Angell has

Assembly information (to be completed by the Speaker)

Status	To be introduced.
Requirements	Reading in two separate meetings; simple majority vote; Presidential approval.
Committees	Communications

Attest



 Annie Mintun, LSA
 Speaker of the Assembly

Yes: 22

No: 1

Abstain: 1

Date: 16 November 2021

Presidential Approval

Nithya Arun
Nithya Arun, Public Health

November 30th, 2021
Date

Section 1.

Central Student Government finds and declares all of the following:

WHEREAS,

The University of Michigan is home to over 48,000 students and 6,200 faculty, representing a breadth of global identity and diversity; and

WHEREAS,

Under the leadership of President Schlissel in 2015, the University established the Office of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion,¹ appointed Robert Sellers to the newly created position of Chief Diversity Officer,² and developed 49 units campuswide to a community vision of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion; and

WHEREAS,;

President Schlissel declared last year that, “we all have a responsibility to advance justice, equality, peace and understanding. Our university community will never fully thrive without a constant shared commitment to these, our highest values.”;³and

WHEREAS,

Central Student Government (CSG) is fully committed to not only encouraging diversity, equity, and inclusion, but also advocating for policies that advance anti-racism efforts; and

WHEREAS,

James Burrill Angell, the third President of the University of Michigan as well as the namesake of Angell Hall and the James B. Angell Scholarship Award, led negotiation and ratification of the eponymous Angell Treaty of 1880; and

WHEREAS,

The Angell Treaty recognized the right of the United States to regulate, limit, or suspend the immigration of Chinese laborers, and laid the racist and exclusionist⁴ framework for the Chinese Exclusion Act; and⁵

WHEREAS,

Angell’s negotiation did not allow for the naturalization of Chinese immigrants, barring them from becoming accepted in America, deprived them of their ability to generate wealth, power, and status, and stripped them of the humanity that should inherently be endowed by every human being; and

WHEREAS,

Angell’s contributions to Chinese exclusion efforts also led to the passing of the Scott Act, which prohibited citizens, even those with lifetime American residency status⁶, from reentering the United States after visiting China. These exclusions would be continually renewed and expanded for decades to come; and

WHEREAS,

In addition to creating the Angell Treaty, James Burrill Angell also helped found the Order of Angell, formerly known as Michigamua; and

¹ <https://diversity.umich.edu/about/>

² <https://diversity.umich.edu/about/>

³ <https://president.umich.edu/news-communications/letters-to-the-community/the-appalling-pestilence-of-racism/>

⁴ <https://immigrationhistory.org/item/angell-treaty-of-1880/>

⁵ <https://immigrationhistory.org/item/angell-treaty-of-1880/>

⁶ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/James_Burrill_Angell

WHEREAS,

The Order of Angell was an exclusive society which not only limited its membership to elite white men but also appropriated Native American culture; and

WHEREAS,

Until its disbandment in 2021, the Order of Angell perpetuated the values of white supremacy, in direct contradiction to the values of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion which are now so explicitly pronounced at this institution; and

WHEREAS,

Providing an award bearing Angell's name is antithetical to encouraging exceptional students of all backgrounds to succeed at the University due to the implications of the Angell Treaty.

Section 2.

THEREFORE it is, by the Students of the University of Michigan, through Central Student Government:

RESOLVED,

With the principle that the naming of a historical building memorializes its namesake, CSG calls for the renaming of Angell Hall as well as the academic award that holds Angell's name, based on the principles the University has previously used to determine when the name of a historical figure should be removed from a building (Appendix A);

AND IT IS FURTHER RESOLVED,

CSG calls on President Schlissel to assemble a committee to perform a holistic assessment on racist aspects of the foundations of the University, their continuing impacts today, and advise the University on ways to address this ongoing injustice; this committee would evaluate the namesakes of all buildings on campus, and promptly move to rename any such building if its namesake has acted in opposition to the values of anti-racism that we hold today;

AND IT IS FURTHER RESOLVED,

CSG calls on Provost Collins to develop a semester-long course administered by the University of Michigan discussing the racist foundations on which the University was built;

AND IT IS FURTHER RESOLVED,

That changing the names of buildings is largely performative and does not substitute for restorative and transformative justice for students of color who are currently affected by institutional and interpersonal racism, and CSG therefore urges the University of Michigan to overcome barriers in access to education by initiating and strengthening pipeline programs directed at Indigenous and Chinese students;

AND IT IS FURTHER RESOLVED,

CSG urges that a Native American Studies major be offered through the Native American Studies Department;

AND IT IS FURTHER RESOLVED,

CSG calls on the Board of Regents to establish, by rule, that a percentage of the endowment, negotiated at a later time, must be given as a merit scholarship to students of Chinese and Native American descent who demonstrate a passion for promoting anti-racism on campus through various means;

AND IT IS FURTHER RESOLVED,

CSG insists that the following administrators make a public statement regarding the harm James B. Angell has caused:

- The University of Michigan Board of Regents
- President Mark Schlissel

AND IT IS FINALLY RESOLVED,

That this resolution will be delivered to the Regents of The University of Michigan, President Mark Schlissel, Provost Susan Collins, and the Director of the Office of Financial Aid, Tammie Durham.

Appendix A:

- **The principle of pedagogy: As an institution of learning, U-M's naming process and outcome should always be an opportunity for learning - learning about the past, about path-breaking contributions by the faculty, about the distinguished lives of alumni, about extraordinary acts of generosity or important contributions to administrative leadership.**
 - James Burrill Angell was the longest serving President of the University of Michigan. While he made advancements at the university, he developed the Treaty of Angell which revoked the Burlingame Treaty of 1868 and allowed for the restriction of Chinese immigrants. Further, the Angell Treaty paved the way for the Chinese Exclusion Act which, for the most part, restricted all immigration from China. As an institution that values Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion we must contend with the consequences of the Angell Treaty. Furthermore, Angell helped form the Order of Angell which appropriated Native American practices while excluding them and other marginalized communities from participating in its early establishment.
- **The principle of interpretation: When a name is selected for a building or portion of a building, the obligation to explain and interpret that name does not end at the conclusion of the naming ceremony. Indeed, it is not only good stewardship on behalf of those after whom spaces are named but also an affirmative obligation of the pedagogical principle to continuously interpret - and if necessary reinterpret - the names and the stories behind the names of university facilities. In some cases, changing a name may be less important than providing an adequate interpretation of it.**
 - As stated, the naming of a building on campus does not stop at the end of the naming ceremony, rather it exists for the end of time, as interpretation is constant. It is an affirmative obligation of the pedagogical principle to reinterpret the name of Angell Hall, and its namesake James B. Angell. Providing a reinterpretation of the name Angell, does not do enough when the option for removal is on the table. Given, as stated, his extensive involvement in the establishment of the Chinese Exclusion Act, is enough to prove that reinterpretation of said name does not rid the building of the negative impact this act had on millions; the only option is removal, and renaming. We owe this to the thousands of students at the institution who are impacted by this name, due to its degrading, exclusive, and damaging connotation.
- **The principle of due diligence: In approaching a naming decision, the university owes it to itself and to succeeding generations to do substantial research into the name, and that this research should be focused on the public record.**
 - In doing basic research through Google, it can be easily found the connection between James B. Angell and Chinese exclusion efforts, as clearly outlined on the public record at the [Office of the Historian](#). There is a distinct difference between the information apparent of Angell's wrongdoings, and the information that has been selectively curated by the University to distribute, such as this [University Record article](#) from 2018 referring to Angell as "played a crucial role in negotiating two treaties with China" (Tobin). This lack of adequate information regarding Angell's true impact on Chinese-American relations displays a less-than-average job done by the University in doing substantial research on the name. A simple search of "umich james angell chinese exclusion act" surfaces a myriad of articles outlining Angell's involvement in this inherently racist plan.

- **The principle of commitment: In general, the university community makes a significant commitment to an individual or a family when it names a space after a person. This applies both to spaces named for donors and for others. In some cases involving donors, this naming is regulated by a binding legal agreement.**
 - No binding legal documents have been found.
- **The principle of revision: The exciting and important thing about the study of history is that both the materials for and the understanding of the past are constantly changing. At a research university, historical scholars must lead the way in producing these new historical discoveries and interpretations. If these new understandings, from time to time, produce controversy over space names, that is not an unnatural thing.**
 - James B. Angell's actions contributed heavily to the 1882 Chinese Exclusion Act, preventing Asian-American immigration into the United States for approximately a decade. Controversy regarding building names is natural, up until—and not including—the point of promoting figures who represent harassment and discrimination towards a group on the basis of their ethnicity. U-M students understand the dangerous precedent that glorifying, editing, or changing delineations of history can have on our understanding of it. We also recognize, however, the clear line between this notion and promoting problematic figures from U-M's past. When there are as many qualified and reputable candidates as there are for this name change, there is no excuse for retaining a namesake built off of the idea that simply disengaging with economic roots of the opium war is an achievement on par with the ones Michigan's Leaders and Best make today (or that this negates Angell's vile contributions to Asian-American exclusionism). As such, the University should take action to rectify Angell Hall's name and align with its own principles for renaming its buildings.
- **The principle of historical and institutional context: It is easy to blame those in the past for lacking the knowledge, wisdom and values that we seem to possess. An institution of knowledge must leave room for an essential truth: The search for new knowledge through research is messy.**
 - Determining whether or not James B. Angell simply lacked foresight on the harms of the Angell Treaty or deliberately crafted a pathway to Chinese exclusion is indeed messy. The language of Angell's Treaty describes Chinese laborers as a threat to the interest of the United States. At the same time he wrote the treaty, Angell wrote to Secretary of State William M. Evarts that "The absolute and formal prohibition of the laborers would be diametrically opposed to all our national traditions and would call down the censure of a very large portion, if not a majority of our most intelligent and high-minded citizens." It is clear that Angell used contradictory language about the necessity of Chinese laborers within the economy of the United States. This demonstrates that the search for new knowledge is indeed complicated, but in this instance, we must examine intent alongside impact. Considering that Angell both encouraged restrictions on Chinese migration while contradictingly saying exclusion would be harmful to US interest, Angell demonstrates that he had the knowledge at the time on the harms of Chinese exclusion yet enabled racist legislation that further limited Chinese migration.
- **The principle of consistency: There have been more than 16,000 faculty members in the history of the university; many more staff members, 14 presidents. Why some are honored with space names and others are not is a major question about our past. Space names also tend to reflect the early composition of the university: an all-male student body until 1870 and an overwhelmingly male faculty until the mid-20th century.**

- If space names are considered fixed, then the opportunities for commemorating important figures from the university's history will become few and far between. If the university has any hope for reflecting the diversity of the student body and alumni it must search for opportunities to rename existing spaces to bring attention to the contributions of women and non-white students, staff, and faculty of the university. Because of this, we would argue that Angell Hall meets the requirements for renaming. James B Angell was a historically problematic figure, due to his involvement with renegotiating the United States' ability to restrict Chinese immigration which paved the way for the Chinese Exclusion Act. If the building were to be renamed, the university could represent more of the diversity of their alumni. And if the named spaces are to never change, the practice of honoring alumni and faculty is nearing an end.
- **The principle of contemporary effect: Honorifics given at one time can have significantly different effects on community members at another and these, too, are worthy of consideration.**
 - James B Angell authored the Angell Treaty in 1880 to limit the number of Chinese laborers immigrating to the United States from China. This treaty laid the groundwork for the Chinese Exclusion Act in 1882, prohibiting all Chinese laborers from immigrating to the United States. Today, the University of Michigan prides itself on being a diverse and inclusive campus with many students, faculty, and staff hailing from Chinese descent. A building that most students, if not all, must use throughout their college career should not be named after someone who would not have wanted these students to attend this university. The name of this building is a constant reminder to members of this community of a history of exclusion and that there are still many people who will continue to view them as outsiders.