

Tyree' Barnes  
11/21/14

### **Letter to The Board of Trustees**

First, I would like to say to Vice Chancellor Hardy, Chancellor Ballard, and to the Board of Trustees, "Thank you" - you heard our voices vicariously and were willing to take a moment out of your valuable time to listen to each and everyone of us directly. With time being our most valuable un-renewable resource, your presence here comes with unquestioned gratitude.

We are all here today, not only as students, parents, sisters and brothers, friends, alumni, and colleagues - but we are here, today as humanity - to look past our conflicting differences and to join together through our commonalities. Two of the most basic commonalities we share as humanity are our burning desire for social acceptance and our craving to be understood,

We as humans find value by our ability to benefit and better each other. Our capability to serve, whether it is family or strangers, plants a seed within each of us that later grows into what we call love. It is through this invisible, empathetic force that we are able to gather and unify.

When we as humans are able to join together in a unified front - we become an immovable force. However, the antagonist of empathy is apathy. When we are divided - when we are unable to feel one another - we easily fall victim to the perils of our minor differences.

I say with deep grief and concern for our University - it has, in many ways, become an apathetic environment.

We have lied to ourselves long enough and pretended that Mr. Charles B. Aycock's name on our campus is not a source of our differences.

For some, it may be difficult to empathize for our desire to change such a historical monument, which has thrived at East Carolina University for so many years. However, when I walk down College Hill - I am not reminded about the brilliance of East Carolina University, rather I am constantly reminded of the mental and physical degradation my ancestors faced just a little over a century ago. The physical wounds have healed, yes, but his name is proof - that the psychological wounds have not. Yes it is true, that Mr. Aycock has done many good things during his time on Earth. However, I fail to believe that anything that we deem Great may only be beneficial to one group of people.

You all have an opportunity to lead our campus and to be an example for our entire nation. This is not as simple as a name change - but rather a moment of learning from our distinguished leaders to over 28,000 students. This change tells the world that we, as a collective family here at East Carolina University, are growing out of our old beliefs and into new ones. This lets the world know that we are strong enough take a step forward, yet humble enough to know when one foot is lagging

behind. It tells the world that we recognize our wounds and we will stop at nothing until they are all healed.

**And most importantly, it tells the world, that birthing a new dream is often times uncomfortable...**