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December 13, 2014

CHANCELLOR'S OFFICE
ECU

Dear Chancellor Ballard:

The panel's vote to recommend changing the name of the Aycock Residence Hall is a noteworthy development. That it has taken place during your leadership is another plus for you as Chancellor of ECU. Overall, and despite some real difficulty, you have made some strident and remarkable efforts to move our institution toward the 21st century. As a member of the faculty for more than 25 years, I know something about the landscape and terrain of ECU, eastern North Carolina and the entire Tar Heel State. Your burden has not been easy and there is little evidence to indicate that your yoke will become lighter anytime in the foreseeable future. Still, I hope that you and other leaders in the academy will not wilt or grow weary while attempting to help us and future generations build a better state, nation and world than the one that we inherited.

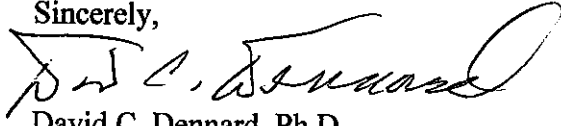
In the spirit of still attempting to turn new corners, therefore, I want to ask you to consider yet another possible new challenge. The idea that I have in mind in this instance is for you to give some serious thought to the possibility of placing the name "Laura Marie Leary Elliott" on the table as talks get underway about renaming Aycock Residence Hall. I believe that a definite step or push in this direction would "speak volumes" to our university's strategic effort to promote diversity and the "leadership" initiative, developmental steps that loom as invaluable cornerstones and progressive markers of our present and future at ECU.

Please forgive me if I have stepped beyond my immediate sphere of work and faculty tasks, but it has always been my belief that I should not refrain from sharing my thoughts with my leaders whenever appropriate and possible. For in the main, as you may well agree, faculty, staff and students in the academy may indeed be characterized loosely as "the boots on the ground." And all good leaders, regardless of how they may or may not respond, need the "intelligence" of what is happening and what thoughts are being kicked about by those individuals who live and work way down in the trenches of an organization.

Thank you for considering my thoughts here, and please accept, once again, my appreciation for your hard work and continued strong leadership at ECU.

Best to you and your family for a happy and wonderful holiday season.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "D. C. Dennard". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large, looping initial "D" and a long, sweeping underline.

David C. Dennard, Ph.D.

Associate Professor & Director, African and African
American Studies