

**Summary of the
Work of the Ad Hoc Renaming Committee
Charged with Reviewing a Request to Rename the Garthwait Leadership Center
May 2019**

In February 2019, a student brought forth a picture from the 1980 Gettysburg College yearbook of then student Bob Garthwait, who was portraying a German soldier wearing a swastika armband. Shortly thereafter, a formal request was made to senior administrators recommending that a process of renaming the Garthwait Leadership Center (GLC) be undertaken. That letter was supported by other conversations suggesting the need to consider renaming the GLC. Decision-making authority for the renaming of significant College programs and buildings rests with the Board of Trustees, and these concerns were elevated to that group. Subsequently, the Board appointed an Advisory Group consisting of faculty, administrators, students, and trustees to develop a policy and process to handle renaming requests.

On May 3, 2019, the Gettysburg College Board of Trustees adopted a "[Policy for Renaming Principles and Process](#)." After the Board Chair and the Chair of the Audit, Compliance, and Risk Committee determined that the request to investigate the renaming of the GLC was credible, the Executive Committee appointed an ad hoc Renaming Committee to investigate and make a recommendation to the Executive Committee regarding the disposition of the renaming request. The ad hoc committee included Trustees Rich Scheff '77, Joan Schweizer '76, and Charlie Scott '77. Flora Darpino '83, a member of the Advisory Group that created the renaming policy, served as a peer reviewer of their report.

The ad hoc committee carefully followed the newly adopted process. They reviewed a wide array of relevant materials, including documentation about the fraternity party at which the photograph was taken and about the *Hogan's Heroes* TV show; emails that came to the Board of Trustees and President following dissemination of the Garthwait photo and his resignation as a Trustee; articles and opinion pieces in *The Gettysburgian*, as well as other media outlets; related social media postings; and the March 1 town hall video. They also interviewed and received emails from individuals from groups who were potentially most affected (faculty, staff, students, and alumni, including Hillel members, GLC staff and student leadership members, Judaic Studies faculty, and members of the 1980 AXP Fraternity).

Renaming Recommendation

The ad committee concluded that the 1980 yearbook photo of Mr. Garthwait was taken at a fraternity party that incorporated a theme of *Hogan's Heroes*, which was a popular television show that lampooned WWII German soldiers. Although the swastika is a symbol of hate, the ad hoc committee could find no evidence of intent to convey hate toward any group in this particular context. Moreover, the committee found no evidence that Mr. Garthwait harbors anti-Semitic views or that he intended his photograph to be taken as an expression of sympathy for Nazi causes.

Additionally, the renaming policy requires consideration of Mr. Garthwait's larger patterns of behavior and personal values. The ad hoc committee concluded that the controversial yearbook photograph is not reflective of the way Mr. Garthwait has led his life.

As a result of the information collected and reviewed, the ad hoc committee recommended ***that the name of the Garthwait Leadership Center (GLC) be retained.***

Additional Considerations Put Forward by the Ad Hoc Committee

The ad hoc committee observed that the College community would benefit from continued meaningful dialogue with under-represented voices in the community. These conversations should lead to a better community-wide understanding of the challenges these individuals face, as well as the actions required to address those challenges.

In addition, the ad hoc committee encouraged the Board and the Administration to provide support for Jewish students; to work to remediate any damage done to the GLC's reputation; to restore goodwill with those constituents who were disappointed with the way in which this matter was handled; and to communicate a final decision in a way that will mitigate additional stress for the Garthwait family and the Gettysburg campus community.