Office of the President
West Chester University | West Chester, Pennsylvania 19383 | 610-436-2471 | www.wcupa.edu

MEMORANDUM

To: Council of Trustees

From: Christopher Fiorentino, President West Chester University CF

Date: Thursday, August 31, 2023

Re: Recommendation for Action after receiving Schmucker Committee Final Report

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As you may recall, after my administration and subsequently you, as a Council of Trustees, were called upon to remove the Samuel Christian Schmucker Science Center namesake, I appointed a Namesake Committee (Committee) to study and provide a report that reaches a recommendation about whether to continue the Schmucker namesake. The Committee's conclusion is that the University should remove the Schmucker name from our Science Center. I have reviewed the Committee's work and conferred with my Cabinet. I too recommend that the Samuel Christian Schmucker Science Center have its namesake removed. This is now within your purview as a Council of Trustees and consistent with the University's Naming University Facilities and Programs Policy, which states:

> D. Termination of Naming Rights: The Council of Trustees may terminate naming rights (1) in the event of any default in payment of the gift, or (2) **if, in the Council's sole discretion, the naming, or a continuing association with the donor or other namesake of the facility or program, will adversely impact the reputation, image, mission, or integrity of the University**. (Emphasis added.)

Over the summer, as alluded to above, this Committee completed its work following WCU's pilot Procedure to review and Propose the Removal of a Namesake. The Committee undertook "an in-depth investigation including months' worth of interviews, research, and committee meetings." The Committee "endeavored to ensure a variety of perspectives were fairly heard. [It] heard from students, faculty, and staff. Community members submitted documents both solicited by the committee, as well as those volunteered. [The Committee] read the letters students submitted to *The Quad*. Committee members spent countless hours researching literature on the history and morality of eugenics."

The Committee noted that "[t]he surfacing of Samuel Christian Schmucker's legacy is a testament to the real world, collaborative, and impactful work being done between students and faculty at WCU. In the end, there is no conclusion to be drawn except that the name of the Schmucker building must be changed. The harm caused by Schmucker through his advocacy for a dangerous pseudo- science still reverberates on our campus today."

The Committee's recommendation is found in the attached report. However, for your edification, the Committee's rationale for its recommendation to remove Samuel Christian Schmucker's (SCS) name is as follows:

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1. Monuments, memorials, and namesakes, while of great historical importance, are not meant to *teach* history, but to *memorialize and represent the collective values of the community*.

2. The pseudo-science of eugenics is contrary to the values of WCU.

3. SCS advocated for eugenics and worked to advance support for the movement amongst the lay population in the WCU region and beyond.

4. SCS's positions on eugenics cannot be excused by the "man of his times" defense as his positions were considered extreme even in his own time.

5. Every member of the community who spoke to the committee or submitted statements, except for one, expressed their adamant wishes that SCS's name be removed.

6. And, finally, we feel compelled to respond to the sole defense offered for keeping SCS's name on the science complex. The committee has endeavored to attend to all perspectives in this important debate and wishes to make clear our due diligence in researching the arguments and evidentiary claims made in favor of SCS and eugenics and why we have roundly rejected them.

I concur with the Committee's finding that "WCU does not memorialize oppression in any form by memorializing the people who defined the contours of that oppression."

In conclusion, I would call your attention to a quote from the late John F. Kennedy as he accepted an honorary degree from Amherst College. He stated "[a] nation reveals itself not only by the men it produces but also by the men it honors, the men it remembers." Albeit President Kennedy's remarks from 1963 were in a different context, they are instructive for us today in this situation. Our mission here at WCU is to be a community of educators that develops graduates to succeed personally and professionally and contribute to the common good. At this University we produce individuals who contribute and make all of us better. Likewise, as an institution of higher education we should honor only those individuals who have come before us who do the same ---make us better. The people we remember must be worthy of that honor.

Therefore, I respectfully request that West Chester University's Council of Trustees remove the namesake from the Schmucker Science Center.

attachment

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Committee Final Report:

To: President Christopher Fiorentino

From: Namesake Committee
David Thomas, chair; Demetrius Isaac; Martha Donkor; Carolyn Evans; Matthew Holliday; Karen Mercy; Simon Ruchti

Cc: Vice President Zebulun Davenport

Date: June 12, 2023

Subject: Report on the findings of the Committee to Review the Samuel Christian Schmucker Science Center Namesake

Dear President Fiorentino,

We are writing as the committee assembled to review requests to rename the Samuel Christian Schmucker Science Center in light of recent revelations about his advocacy of eugenics. This report is the fulfillment of our charge as outlined in the Procedure to Review and Propose the Removal of a Namesake from a University Facility or Program.

Our committee consists of students, staff, community members and faculty from three academic colleges, student affairs, and the alumni association. We met via Zoom weekly or biweekly beginning in March of 2023 and concluding with the submission of this report. We examined information from various campus constituents provided to us either by the administration or submitted directly to us by community members. We also conducted extensive research into the history and ethics of eugenics and Schmucker's role in advocating for the practice.

Based on this, we have concluded that Samuel Christian Schmucker [SCS] does not represent the values of West Chester University of Pennsylvania. We recommend his name be removed from our science complex.

The following six points summarize the rationale that led to our recommendation, with a detailed explanation of each point following the summary.

This report ends with a summary of artifacts used by the committee.

Summary of Rationale

1. Monuments, memorials, and namesakes, while of great historical importance, are not meant to *teach* history, but to *memorialize and represent the collective values of the community*.
2. The pseudo-science of eugenics is contrary to the values of WCU.
3. SCS advocated for eugenics and worked to advance support for the movement amongst the lay population in the WCU region and beyond.
4. SCS's positions on eugenics cannot be excused by the "man of his times" defense as his positions were considered extreme even in his own time.
5. Every member of the community who spoke to the committee or submitted statements, except for one, expressed their adamant wishes that SCS's name be removed.
6. And, finally, we feel compelled to respond to the sole defense offered for keeping SCS's name on the science complex. The committee has endeavored to attend to all perspectives in this important debate and wishes to make clear our due diligence in researching the arguments and evidentiary claims made in favor of SCS and eugenics and why we have roundly rejected them.

Explanation of Rationale

1: The Purpose of Monuments, Memorials, and Namesakes

Monuments, memorials, and namesakes serve a variety of purposes. In some cases, they simply aim to remember and honor a valued member of a community or to mark the significance of an event. While each has a generally distinct purpose, the overall aim is to honor an important memory. Memorialization helps to highlight people and moments in history that a community does not want to see fade from memory. These markers of the past, however, also serve to establish *how* we are to remember these things (Bruggeman). In this sense, namesakes do not so much preserve history but indicate an interpretation of it, and that interpretation is defined by those with the power to memorialize. The memorial establishes the narrative the memorializers wish to tell and may ignore the historical information that might threaten that narrative (John; Linenthal and Rose, 13; Loewen, 16-20; Marcus and Woodward). The learning of history happens, not from looking at the symbol (the monument or building name), but when one learns about the complexity of what has been memorialized (John; Marcus and Woodward). In the sense that people rarely seem prompted by the symbol to learn more about the memorialized (thus why many in the campus community were so shocked and offended to learn about SCS), it seems more accurate to suggest that memorialization serves more to symbolize our collective values than to act as a testament to accurate historical representation (John). We memorialize to assert what we think is important, publicly and without shame. We commemorate a person through a statue or a building name because that person has performed deeds that society thinks are good. That person, and by extension their symbol of

memorialization, in turn, stands as a symbol of our values to others. This namesake tells the rest of the world: This is the best of us. This is who we aim to be.

Of course, this leads us to an important question: who constitutes the "we," the "collective," whose values are being memorialized? In the case of the Samuel Christian Schmucker Science Center, we are referring, in one sense, to the students who petitioned for him to be the namesake. He was a beloved professor and remained so to his former students, it seems, long after his death. He informed and represented the values they associated with the school. So, like all forms of monuments, the namesake of our science center represents the values of SCS and the students he taught. They had been, from all accounts, profoundly influenced by his teaching. He had, as we will explain later, seen his teaching as his religious and moral calling. He worked to impart his values to his students. In the 1960s, when West Chester University memorialized him by putting his name on a science complex, the institution embraced SCS's values and, as memorialization is intended to do, they proclaimed his values as theirs, publicly and without shame. By maintaining SCS as the namesake of our science center, the university signals, loudly and without shame, that its values align with SCS, that he is the best of us and who we aim to be.

Some might argue that keeping the name does not say who we are, but who we were, and to change the name of a building is to erase history. We counter that the opposite is true. By changing the name, we are looking more carefully at history. Thanks to the rigorous work done by alumnus Aaron Stoyack and his professor, Dr. Brent Ruswick (History), we have come to know more about SCS and the history of WCU and 19th century American politics and science than we would have known otherwise. As Dr. Ruswick noted in his statement to the committee, "Far from canceling history, our students are recovering and creating history, and doing so in a manner that epitomizes our university's highest values. This ought to be a moment of pride and celebration for our students and the humanities education offered by our History Department" (Ruswick, Brief, 6). We wish to note, as well, that other history scholars, including those of the American History Association, have made similar points in response to other memorialization controversies (AHA Statement; Stroud and Henson; Marcus and Woodward). Our knowledge of history grows constantly, social values evolve, and our understanding of—and relationship to—our memorials must as well. This is what it means to *do* history.

Removing a statue or other form of memorialization does run the risk of inhibiting critical conversations about our histories and their often-hidden impacts on our lives today. As Alan Marcus and Walter Woodward write:

> Expired monuments are a lesson: They teach that people can be tragically wrong about something even when that belief once had widespread public support and official approval. Simultaneously, they show that radical, marginalized, or contrary voices can turn out to be right. Or they may be, like their opponents, creatures of a particular moment in time.

These are important questions to ask: Are there lessons we can learn from SCS by keeping his name on our science center and increasing our awareness of his historical moment? Was Schmucker tragically wrong, but with widespread public support and official approval? Was he a marginalized or contrary voice? Was he a creature of his time? But we would like to add more questions to consider: What impact does his name have on those who work and learn in his namesake building today, who walk by it daily, and who navigate our campus knowing they were a target of the values he taught on this campus? Can we remove SCS's name from the building, thereby no longer valorizing him, and still learn from this part of our history? We think we can. As Marcus and Woodward conclude: "Reinventing rather than simply removing monuments requires confronting the past, recognizing current conditions and planning for the future—all while embracing the reality that historical change is a complex, messy and malleable process."

The overarching question before this committee has been whether WCU still adheres to the values that led to the naming of our science center. Do we want to continue to shout the values of Samuel Christian Schmucker to the world as the best of us and who we aim to be? Or do we want to reinvent a monument on our campus so that it supports a different set of values without hiding from the lessons of our past?

2: Eugenics is Contrary to the Values of WCU

The eugenics movement grew out of an attempt to utilize Darwin's theory of evolution for "social betterment." Darwin told us, in part, that species evolve when they pass down, over many generations, biological traits that provide an advantage in survival – if you are a squirrel with an impressive ability to hang on to trees, you will live longer and have a greater chance at passing your traits onto your offspring. Your offspring will likely do the same. As a result, squirrels of today can leap from flimsy branch to flimsy branch and hold on tight. Or maybe you were a monkey that happened to be immune to a disease that wiped out most of your community. You survive and pass on that genetic advantage. As those without that advantage die off, those with it survive.

While Darwin was writing about plants and animals, and not humans, the people of his day quickly began to apply his theories to humans, and not just in terms of biology, but also in terms of social organization and advancement. Those who would lead the eugenics movement, such as Herbert Spencer and Francis Dalton, saw in what Darwin wrote a justification for white supremacy, for colonization, and the subjugation of women. White, Protestant, wealthy people weren't wealthy because they were lucky to be born into wealth; they were wealthy because they were genetically superior. Because they were the social elite, the position they held was heralded as proof of their genetic superiority. People like Spencer and Dalton, and SCS, saw in eugenics a justification for why people of their class and race were so well-compensated and lived such comfortable lives, while others struggled to survive through their constant toiling. Eugenics provided the industrialists, colonizers, white people, rich people, men, and those deemed intellectually and physically "normal," proof that they had a natural, inherent right to rule.

Perhaps, this is why social reformers seemed to ignore the requirement that, for Darwin's theory, evolutionary change would only happen after many generations. Instead, reformers began to fantasize about ways to speed up the process of evolution and ensure the positive advancement of our species. This led to the oft-quoted idea that only the strong will survive, that the most aggressive, virile, and physically strong or cunning will always dominate, "win the girl," and "spread his seed." Of course, this is not what Darwin meant with his theories. The monkey that survived the virus that killed off others was not necessarily stronger, or even smarter. The monkey just had that one trait.

By the late 19th century, people we today call "social Darwinists" were using Darwin's theories to explain and "reform" society. Society's problems, they increasingly argued, could only be solved by encouraging those with "good" biological traits/genes to have babies, while discouraging those with "bad" biological traits/genes from having babies (Paul, 229). On the one hand, there were those who advocated for what is known as positive eugenics—creating conditions that encourage those with the right genes to reproduce and to be able to do so safely and effectively. On the other hand, there were those who advocated for negative eugenics—preventing those with the wrong genes from reproducing. Examples of negative eugenics would have been educating "undesirable populations" to have no or fewer children or put obstacles in their paths for successful births, such as encouraging or mandating through government policies that certain populations of people use birth control (experimentation with birth control in Puerto Rico, loss of government services with pregnancies) (Stern, "Forced"). The more extreme forms of negative eugenics were forced sterilization, sex-segregated institutionalization, and sex-segregated work camps (Lombardo, 644-5).

To be clear, positive eugenics is not called positive because it is a good version of eugenics. It is called positive because it seeks to add births to the "good" gene pool. Negative eugenics is called negative because it seeks to reduce births from those in the "bad" gene pool. People who supported negative eugenics might very well have also supported positive eugenics. Those who supported positive eugenics were far less likely, it seems, to similarly support negative eugenics (more on this later). The danger of calling positive eugenics positive is, of course, that those who are not familiar with, or astute readers of, the literature on eugenics might think positive eugenics practices are inherently good things to support. Many of the practices supported by positive eugenics sound a lot like things that most people would support -- ensuring safe, healthy outcomes for pregnancies, quality post-natal care, access to healthy food and a safe environment, and information about raising healthy babies. But to be explicitly clear, positive eugenics is most assuredly *not* a good thing, the term/expression is very misleading.

At the heart of positive eugenics is the idea that only certain people should be having those safe, healthy pregnancy outcomes, and only certain babies should get the needed support to grow into healthy adults who might then have their own healthy children. The reason eugenicists advocate for those positive practices is to ensure that the "right" genes get passed on. This is made explicitly clear through the works of people like Margaret Sanger, who initially advocated for positive eugenics practices until she shifted to some of the cruelest of negative

practices —internment and forced sterilizations (Davis, A., 214). According to Diana Paul, as the eugenics movement began to inform public policy, the most extreme versions of negative eugenics practices took the form of forced gender segregation to remove any chance of pregnancy. That, however, became too expensive. “But by 1940 sterilization laws had been passed in 30 American states, three Canadian provinces, a Swiss canton, Germany, Estonia, all of the Scandinavian and most of the Eastern European countries, Cuba, Turkey, and Japan” (230). Paul goes on to explain that the most extreme versions of these took place in Germany in 1933, leading to the extermination of up to 200,000 physically and mentally disabled people, minor criminals, and other undesirables (230).

These numbers in Germany, of course, do not fully include the millions murdered through the Hitler’s anti-Semitic policies. It is important that we do not equate genocide with eugenics. Though the logic of eugenics is quite like that of genocide, they are not the same. It seems fair to say, however, that the logic that leads one to embrace eugenics—the superiority of some over others, the worthiness of some lives over others—can easily lead one to tolerate, if not embrace, genocide. Still, to equate the two practices runs the risk of missing the subtle dangers of eugenics. While we tend to think of eugenics in terms of forced sterilization and segregation, the practice can be far more subtle but no less dangerous. We also run the risk of thinking of eugenics as a “Nazi thing,” something evil people did but we no longer must worry about. At its height, however, eugenics was embraced by people across political and social ideologies—from *laissez-faire* capitalists to communists and socialists, war hawks to pacifists, from anti-racists and feminists to Nazi fascists (Paul, 224-226, 234). It grew in popularity as industrialization and colonialism began to rapidly alter the social landscapes in Europe and America. Eugenics was a great tool, it seemed to some, to address growing abject poverty, over-crowding in cities, racial and gender conflict, and overall social instability. Whether you were rich and powerful and afraid of losing power or a social reformer wanting to rescue the down and out from their own inadequacies, eugenics offered you a quick fix. There were just two big problems. Problem one – moral: eugenics is based on the idea that some people deserve to reproduce while others do not. Problem two – practical: eugenics is not grounded in science and would not work the way they imagined. The bad science behind eugenics, though, made it more, not less, dangerous. As Diane Paul has noted on this point: “[T]he social power of a theory has never depended on a detailed or correct understanding by its interpreters” (237).

We will unpack the scientific problems with eugenics below, but here we focus on the moral problems. Those who supported eugenics to prevent “race suicide” (primarily if not completely, white Protestant Anglo-Saxons), did so based on the idea that they, their ancestors, and their future progeny were superior to those who descended from “others”. Why were people from Africa made slaves? They were seen as genetically inferior. Why were indigenous peoples throughout the world systematically brutalized and exterminated? They were seen as genetically inferior. Why were poor people suffering from overcrowding, crime, poor sanitation, and more? They were seen as genetically inferior.

What was the proof that these groups were genetically inferior? If they weren’t inferior, they wouldn’t have found themselves subjected to slavery, genocide, poverty, and poor education. If

they weren't genetically inferior, then they would be as successful as the genetically superior. And how do the genetically superior know they are genetically superior? First, because they have the power, the money, the resources, and the knowledge. They didn't see their success as unearned economic inheritance; they believed their success was proof of genetic superiority. Second, because society is "better" where elites are and "worse" where the genetically inferior are, if we are to prevent society from sliding into the chaotic squaller of the inferior masses, then we must maintain the supremacy of the elites (Levine and Bashford, 7-8).

In other words, the people deciding whose genes were worthy of reproducing were the people who most benefited from defining their successes as not just the natural order of things but as good for society. Their presumption was that they must maintain a world where they continued to prosper, while the dangerously increasing masses of working poor, recently freed slaves, and new immigrants must be prohibited from dominating.

Even those who used eugenics as an egalitarian tool, a way of saving the poor and marginalized from their suffering, took a supremacist approach. If, they would argue, we could change the conditions of the poor and free them from the trappings of cyclical poverty, then they could contribute positively to the gene pool (Lombardo, 643-4). The egalitarians, thus, argued that controlling the birthrates of the poor would be good for the poor. More importantly, egalitarians argued that preventing certain members of society, poor or not, from reproducing at all would benefit everyone. Thus, anyone deemed to be an incurable criminal or to have an intellectual or inheritable physical disability needed to be prevented from having children and passing on those traits. Keeping them from having children was deemed to be doing them a favor, saving them from themselves (Stern, "Forced").

But sterilization efforts didn't stop there. According to the Michigan Institute for Healthcare Policy and Innovation's research on eugenics more than 60,000 people were sterilized in the US during the 20th century. As the nation began to desegregate, the number of Black women sterilized by the state rose. In the 1960s and '70s, "[m]ore than 100,000 Black, Latino, and Indigenous women were affected (Stern, "Forced"). In one sense, eugenics and the desire to create a better society by strategically manipulating genetics was used to justify white supremacy and ableism. In another sense, and perhaps more accurately, white supremacy and ableism were used to excuse a poor reading of evolutionary theory and genetics and to justify horrific crimes against those with less power.

Whether those advocating for eugenics—predominantly wealthy white people with significant power—had altruistic or bigoted intentions doesn't really matter. The assumptions undergirding their belief in eugenics were that they were superior to others. From that perspective, good intentions or not, one was functioning as a bigot and that bigotry led to profound harm. What's important to note is that often the funding for the forced sterilizations described above came from various efforts to help the poor, whether those be from wealthy industrialists or state and federal programs (Stern, "Sterilized"). As Philippa Levine and Alison Bashford explain in their introduction to *The Oxford Handbook of the History of Eugenics*: "Despite the popular link drawn constantly between eugenics and the Nazi regime, there was

probably as strong a connection between eugenics and the left, and to progressive reform politics" (13). People who started with good intentions took horrible turns in their "advocacy" efforts for the marginalized. Margaret Sanger, for example, started out wanting to empower women with reproductive knowledge, so they could avoid ever having to have an abortion or be overwhelmed with too many children (Sanger). By the end of her career, however, she was a vocal advocate for eugenics and helped promote what would become a century of state-sponsored, forced sterilizations (Davis, A., 211-215). Good intentions mean little when they are rooted in supremacist ideologies. This is particularly the case for eugenicists. They claimed to help the marginalized by limiting or eliminating the marginalized. What eugenicists really sought to do, however, was to limit or eliminate the perceived strain the marginalized were putting on the supposed superior members of society (SCS, *Meaning*, 264-6). This is *not* altruism.

As West Chester University seeks to strengthen its mission and vision, we must ask ourselves, do the values of eugenics match the current values of our institution? Certainly, 100 years ago, there were those at WCU who believed that only certain people were worthy of a quality education. This is not, though, who we are today. We are building programs to counter the damage done by movements like eugenics: like the Dub-C Autism Program, Moonshot for Equity, The Society (formerly the Frederick Douglass Institute), the President's Commission on the Status of Women, The Center for Trans and Queer Advocacy, the Holocaust and Genocide Education Center, and so much more.

3: Samuel Christian Schmucker Advocated Eugenics

The West Chester campus community did not select Samuel Christian Schmucker as a namesake because of his advocacy for eugenics. Rather, students campaigned for him to receive that honor because of his impact on them as a teacher. He was beloved by his students. After reading his explanations of Darwin's theory of evolution, we can see why he was popular with students. He was humorous, charming, and made complex ideas clear and accessible. Yet, we find his ability to captivate his audiences troubling given his advocacy for eugenics directly and the seemingly fundamental role eugenics played in his scholarship and activism overall (Davis, E., 73-75). In other words, the reason he was honored as a namesake makes his legacy even more damaging to the WCU community.

SCS's writings on eugenics represent only a small portion of his scholarship. He was known, instead, as a kind of public intellectual who was adept at making complex scientific ideas accessible to lay audiences (Davis, E., 63). The impetus for his work was to bridge the divide between science and Christian theology, to convince the Christian faithful that science was not a threat to their faith but a benefit (67-69). His combined passions for Christianity and science, in particular Darwin's theory of evolution, led him, it seems, to embrace eugenics. "Schmucker believed eugenics was the best means by which humans could carry out God's desire to eliminate sinful behaviors—even sexual promiscuity, the exploitation of workers, and undemocratic systems of government" (74). He also believed the best way to "improve the

race" was through positive eugenics (Schmucker, 261) and, in some cases, negative eugenics. For SCS, negative eugenics was necessary in the case of "feeble-mindedness," a "taint from which society has the right and the duty of freeing itself, so far as in its power lies" (264). According to Edward Davis, "Teaching was indeed for Schmucker nothing other than the practical part of his religion of divine immanence" (70). "[R]eligion of divine immanence," refers to SCS's belief that evolution was God's tool for perfecting the human species, and eugenics was humanity's tool for doing God's work: ridding us of vice and imperfections, to the best of our ability.

His writing is mixed with testaments to a Christian God and the wonders of science. For SCS, one proves the validity of the other. In one passage from SCS's *Man's Life on Earth* (1925), he tells us: "We know enough of anatomy and physiology and paleontology to give a more definite account of how man was made from the dust of the earth" (285). He then goes on to argue that further advancements in scientific study will strengthen our understanding of the divine. While this is not out of the ordinary for scientists of his time, it is noteworthy that his thinking leads him to conclude that it is possible to someday perfect the human soul through science.

> Why not realize here the future path of evolution? Driven, by a Spirit that groans and travails through all creation, the kingdoms of the earth, both vegetable and animal, have steadily risen to higher and higher levels, without leaving unoccupied the lower ranks. Out of it all has risen a creature capable of recognizing the Power which has made and is making what he is and filled with a striving to work towards His likeness. Why should we doubt the continuance of the Power, which is the same yesterday, to-day, and forever? (285-286)

On its own, this passage might seem like nothing more than a devout, Christian scientist pushing back against those who would have said (and many at the time did) that science and Christianity were mutually exclusive. In its larger context, however, SCS is laying the foundation for a defense of not just science in a Christian world, but eugenics as the means to attain "divine immanence," the molding of humanity into the contemporary Christian vision of God's image.

Why does this matter? Especially considering so little of what Schmucker wrote was about eugenics? It matters to this committee and to West Chester University because even SCS's writings about science in general were shaped by his faith in science and evolution as a tool to bring humanity closer to God's perfection. In SCS's view, this would happen through strategic enhancement of the gene pool. Even if we could, as a community, overlook SCS's misguided belief that he had the right to determine God-like qualities and impose them on those he deemed too far from God, we should not overlook his approach to achieving this goal. SCS's approach was bigoted, scientifically unsound, and considered extreme, even by the standards of his day, and even by those who embraced positive eugenics.

4: Samuel Christian Schmucker's Eugenics Were Extreme for His Time

In this section, the committee seeks to address the defense that SCS was simply a man of his time and should not be judged by contemporary standards around eugenics. If it were true that, in SCS's time, eugenics was a widely accepted position that was not well challenged on moral or intellectual grounds, then it would be unfair to expect SCS to have thought other than he did. We have found, however, that while eugenics was popular with many people across many demographics and political ideologies, there were also many vocal detractors of the theory and movement. As Alison Bashford and Philippa Levine explain: "Though we tend to think that eugenics became an object of criticism only in the 1970s, it had attracted opponents and critics from the moment of its emergence. The history of eugenics is by no means a linear shift from unqualified support to unqualified resistance" (19). More importantly, however, many who supported eugenics on some level would have found SCS's positions morally and intellectually dangerous. And most importantly, there were many people who outright opposed eugenics on moral and intellectual grounds.

Three key communities saw SCS's thinking as extreme or flawed in his time: members of the scientific community, many in the community of people who supported eugenics, and the communities of people who were the targets of eugenics. While the latter two groups tended to oppose SCS's approach to eugenics on moral grounds, many in the scientific community rejected eugenics on scientific (and sometimes moral) grounds.

Based on the committee's research and interviews with experts at WCU, eugenics is roundly rejected as legitimate science today. Of the experts the committee interviewed in the field of science, all referred to eugenics as a "pseudo-science," a misapplication of evolutionary theory, and/or scientifically unsound. While some scholars in the humanities and social sciences questioned attaching the label "legitimate" to science, as such a claim is contingent on historical context, all but one agreed that eugenics has been roundly rejected as sound science today. What matters most to the question at hand—whether SCS was simply a "man of his time"— the experts we spoke with and whose opinions we read all agreed that even in the context of the early 1900s, many scientists were rejecting the legitimacy of eugenics (Allen).

By the 1900s, many scientists were opposing eugenics not just on moral grounds but on scientific ones. A study by Garland E. Allen demonstrates the scientific community was offering a thorough critique of eugenics on wide-ranging grounds. Experts in the fields of genetics accused eugenicists of sloppy research (316, 320-2); biased data collection that manipulated information to get the desired results (315); overly simplistic genetic models (317, 319); vague definitions of things like feebleminded, criminality, intelligence, and sanity (316); and an underestimation of the impact of environmental factors on human behavior and health (317). Beyond these concerns was one key problem: eugenics wouldn't work as solutions to social problems, and certainly not as quickly or efficiently as was being touted by eugenicists. In other words, eugenicists advocated committing atrocities for a project that would not work and which geneticists were already concluding would not work (315, 324).

In other words, SCS's eugenics advocacy was based on poor scientific understanding and defended with research that was sloppy at best and unethical at worst.

To be fair to SCS, much, though certainly not all, of the scientific criticism of eugenics began while SCS was writing *The Meaning of Evolution* (1913). Still, SCS continued to advocate for eugenics after the scientific problems with eugenics became clear. *Man's Life on Earth* was published in 1925. *Heredity and Parenthood* was written in 1929. SCS continued to lecture on this topic into the 1930s. It is possible that SCS saw the criticisms of eugenics but rejected the conclusions —it is highly unlikely he was not aware of them, but possible. He was not, after all, a geneticist, nor did he claim to be. It is possible that SCS was aware of the problems with eugenics but felt the goal of genetic purity was worth the risk of implementing what had been deemed bad science by experts.

He did seem to be aware of a critical problem at the heart of eugenics—the speed with which eugenicists believed they could manipulate genetic evolution. In *The Meaning of Evolution*, SCS describes the process of evolution as taking place over millennia. This suggests he is aware that the eugenicists' plan for evolutionary manipulation playing out over a generation or two would be impossible (245, 262), even though, as we will see later, he made claims that it could work. Nonetheless, while it is clear eugenics had been effectively discredited by the scientific community, it is not so clear that SCS understood that refutation.

What is clear to the committee, however, is that SCS understood the moral, or at least the social, concerns with his proposals. In *The Meaning of Evolution*, SCS demonstrates an awareness that his readers, and society in general, would need to be persuaded to ignore their conscience to embrace the program of eugenics. For example, he goes to some length to convince readers on the merits of forced internment for the "feeble-minded":

> There is one taint from which society has the right and the duty of freeing itself, so far as in its power lies. This is the taint of feeble-mindedness. Of all the calamities that can befall a human being, feeble-mindedness is, perhaps, the worst. […] Nothing is more clear to the investigator of this subject than that the one overwhelming cause for feeble-mindedness is feeble-mindedness in the parentage. (264-5)

As an aside, the evidence SCS provides for his argument was the contemporaneously debunked study of the Kallikak and Jukes families (Allen, 315). Though, SCS may have been unaware of those critiques, or perhaps didn't accept them, at the time he wrote this book. Still, his effort to justify his proposal of mass incarceration demonstrates his awareness that his ideas would not sit well with his readers. He wrote:

> Against the fouling of the stream at its source, society must protect itself. Legislators revolt at the somewhat inhuman but certainly safe method of surgically preventing the possibility of the feeble-minded becoming parents. It would be more creditable and just as effective if society would take upon itself the tremendously expensive task of caring for all its feeble-minded in institutions during their entire life. The cost would be large for a generation, but would rapidly diminish and eventually become small. It certainly

> would be the humane way. These people in good institutions are by no means unhappy. (266)

He goes on to suggest: "Nothing could be better for them than to till the soil, care for the cattle, tend the chickens, and, in this way provide very largely the materials on which they are fed" (267).

In other words: legislators get upset about the *perfectly safe practice of forced sterilization*, but maybe we can convince them to spend a lot of money on forced labor camps instead. In the end, the high costs and the denial of people's freedoms will be worth it because "the level of humanity will be distinctly raised. No other one feature in the program of eugenics seems more absolutely hopeful than this" (267).

The committee wishes here to be explicit about some of the many problems with the above quotes. First, forced sterilization was in no way perfectly safe (Sutton). Second, SCS had so dehumanized those with intellectual differences that he did not even bother to address the emotional impact this would have on them. Third, he says that the cost would be "large for a generation, but would rapidly diminish and eventually become small." It would be scientifically impossible to alter the gene pool within a generation. The only way SCS could believe this would work is if he believed all or most "feeble-mindedness" was inherited directly from a parent. This was widely known to be untrue. Fourth, SCS proposed the lifetime incarceration of people in what amounts to labor camps. Even if one could argue that this would somehow be better for those with intellectual differences than life outside of an institution, we cannot ignore that SCS's goal in their incarceration is for the benefit of those he deems genetically worthy, not for those he wants to incarcerate.

Though SCS had a particular focus on people with physical and intellectual differences, they were not his only targets for genetic purification. He also took time to justify the forced sterilization of criminals, which, though perfectly safe according to SCS, should only be done in the extreme cases where it could be proved they were genetically and incurably criminal (267). Though he didn't seem to reject the idea of interracial marriage outright, he argued in *Man's Life on Earth* (1925) that genetic "hybrids" always lead to an inferior result and are thus of questionable, practical worth to society (267-8). It is also in *Man's Life on Earth* in which he devotes chapters at length to the genetic superiority of Europeans, and Western Europeans in particular (250-268).

He also advocated positive eugenics through promoting certain marriages but stopped short of advocating state approval for marriages based on genetic fitness. Instead, he proposed training young people to desire physically, intellectually, and spiritually superior partners, so no legal force would be required (*Meaning of Evolution*, 263-4). He devoted a book to this topic in *Heredity and Parenthood* (1929). Here, he also took time to defend eugenics from conflation with forced sterilization (VI).

The third group of people in SCS's time who would have rejected his proposals were certainly the people who were the target of those proposals. Too often, we forget to ask how those deemed unfit would feel about eugenics. It is clear from our research into SCS that he saw little, or perhaps no, need to consider eugenics from the point of view of the "feeble-minded" or the criminal from whom "nothing but criminality can be expected" (SCS, *Meaning*, 267). It feels safe to say that they would have resisted SCS and eugenics, but their self-advocacy would have had no meaning to those who were debating their humanity.

What the above makes clear to this committee is that SCS was not simply aware that his ideas were unpopular with some, it makes clear to us that SCS was aware of the moral problems in his day with his advocacy of eugenics. The claim that he was simply a "man of his time" holds no validity with this committee if many of the "men of his time" discredited his claims. That SCS was seemingly aware of this and took steps to counter criticisms further shows that he had ample opportunity to reconsider ideas that even he acknowledged were extreme. What is more disturbing to this committee than SCS's efforts to justify his cruel practices to his readers, policy makers, and scholars, was his lack of concern for the impact eugenics had and would have on the people he targeted.

It is important to acknowledge that this committee is not primarily concerned with critiquing the quality of SCS's scholarship, scientific thinking, and writing. We address this here only to make clear that the science of the time was already widely refuting the claims of eugenicists like SCS. This means that his willingness to sacrifice marginalized and vulnerable members of the community for the advancement of the privileged is all the more grotesque. He was willing to commit atrocities that would have no benefit other than to affirm his and his peers' own sense of supremacy.

Even if his ideas were not considered extreme then (though our research tells us that, for many, they were extreme), based on what we know today, and really what they knew then, they should have been. Whether the majority or even the vast majority of people in the early 1900s thought eugenics was a good idea, we know better today. Thus, we should never promote eugenics and the supremacist ideas it is based on, nor those like Samuel Christian Schmucker who helped popularize them, even if he promoted them more than 100 years ago.

5: Near Unanimous Support for Changing the Name

In addition to reviewing the materials submitted to the President and the Council of Trustees, which will also be addressed below, the committee invited faculty members whose expertise informed our work in understanding eugenics and the role of Samuel Christian Schmucker in the eugenics movement more broadly as well as at West Chester Normal School, specifically. They came from History, Women's and Gender Studies, Educational Foundations and Policy Studies, Biology, and Holocaust and Genocide Studies, with expertise in genetics, history of medicine and science, sociology of education, American urban history, sexuality studies, among others. In this section, we summarize statements made in support of removing the Schmucker namesake and changing the name of the science center. These statements came in the form of

formal, written statements; opinion pieces submitted to the student newspaper, *The Quad*; interviews with faculty, and public presentations made available to us by members of the West Chester University community. In the following section, we will address the statements made for retaining the Schmucker namesake.

The consensus among students and student groups ranging from a grassroots organization to advocate for the removal of the Schmucker name, Students Against Schmucker, to the Executive Committee and the Senators of the Student Government Association is that the values espoused by Schmucker and reflected in his scholarship are contrary to those embraced and espoused by West Chester University in 2023:

> Specifically, Dr. Schmucker has made statements in his published works that align with eugenicist and white supremacist viewpoints. Comments on a hierarchical nature of ethnicities, dehumanizing thoughts on disabled individuals, and reductive ideas on the role and capabilities of women all serve to cement Dr. Schmucker's legacy as one that is against West Chester University's statement of values. Particularly, we feel that this contradicts our University's published principles of "the worth and uniqueness of each individual... and the appreciation of the ideal of an inclusive society. (SGA Executive Committee Memo to Council of Trustees)

Similarly, Dr. Margaret Ervin, speaking on behalf of APSCUF, echoed these sentiments in her statements delivered to the Council of Trustees:

> APSCUF joins with students and faculty leaders in advocating for the removal of Schmucker's name from the science center building. A legacy of racism, eugenics, and sexism directly contradicts the values of the University as well as flying in the face of accepted scientific principles. Such a legacy should not be associated with our Science Center.

All community members we spoke with, save for one, were strongly in favor of doing away with the Schmucker name. The sole dissenter cited a variety of reasons, historical and ethical, which will be discussed in more detail below. While it could be argued that SCS did not necessarily seek to exclude from educational opportunities BIPOC, Queer, and Disabled people, it is clear that even during his time at WCNS, SCS wrote, taught, and lectured advocacy for policies and practices that would eliminate or dramatically harm those groups. We know that SCS wrote in *Heredity and Parenthood*, years after his retirement:

> If by any worthy means (and notice please that word worthy) [emphasis on the word "worthy" in the original], he can increase the proportion of fine strong beautiful upright human families and diminish the ratio of shiftless, weak, defaced, unmoral people, then the world will be bettered for ages. (14)

We know from Edward Davis that: "Teaching was indeed for Schmucker nothing other than the practical part of his religion of divine immanence" (70). From SCS's *Man's Life on Earth,* that

divine immanence was, for SCS, the reshaping of humanity in God's image through science, and eugenics was the tool to achieve this (285-6). This tells this committee that throughout SCS's teaching at WCNS, he was advocating in his classroom a consistent support for eugenics as a mission.

Members of the Biology Department's Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion team brought specific attention to the impact of working and learning in not a single building but a *complex of buildings* dedicated to a man whose unequivocally stated values denied the very humanity of many of the students, faculty, and staff, who would have been historically excluded from academic study at WCNS, in part because of ideas like those espoused by SCS. Dr. Lair supported the views of the science faculty when he observed that:

> We live in a world where the medical, legal, and political gatekeepers have defined who is *disposable* and who is not, and these gatekeepers are directly informed by the ongoing presence of eugenic ideology. Building names represent an institution, and a name like Schmucker, and what he espoused, sends a direct message to individuals that a eugenic perspective is valid – it legitimizes their hate and fear of trans people, people of color, disabled people, and anyone not deemed "normal" by the mainstream. (Lair, Brief, 2-3)

Periodic reexamination of institutional traditions, including the naming of facilities, and the messages these traditions communicate, is necessary to ensure that the actions and values of the university continue to be reflected in its traditions and that those traditions which no longer reflect our values be allowed to fall away. However, it is also important to recognize that ignorance of that history and those who are memorialized not only perpetuates the harm done by these individuals but can often create a sense of over-sentimentalization, preventing serious discussion or consideration of changing or de-naming facilities: "The history of Eugenics is not taught and most people will not learn about it as part of their normal studies. We should consider our troubled history as an institution of higher learning that played a role in the Eugenics movement" (Brumley, Brief, 3).

West Chester Normal School's relationship with eugenics goes further than the work of SCS. Dr. Henry Goddard, a WCNS professor as well as an extremely prominent eugenicist, along with Schmucker, not only taught and further developed their ideas while at WCNS, but they did so in many of the same facilities we occupy today (Brumley, Brief, 3). Systemic discrimination stemming from values rooted in eugenic thought -- educational policies, practices, and standards -- many of which are reflected in the writings of SCS, continue to influence and impact us today – IQ tests, standardized tests, establishment of norms in medicine among others (Brumley, Brief; Morrison, Brief). Dr. Dana Morrison points out that "[Schmucker's] reality of schooling, however, is deeply rooted in the eugenics movement of that time, with prominent eugenicists leading the charge to employ "scientific management" in the nation's schools" (1).

The committee acknowledges that part of the impact of retaining the Schmucker name includes tacit endorsement of his *entire* body of work, including his work on eugenics, and legitimizes the history of irreparable harm done to women, queer people, people with disabilities, and people of color – "to memorialize eugenicists is to legitimize this history" (Lair, Brief, 1).

Dr. Lair continues, offering the following, which speaks to the lasting impact of eugenic thought in our society:

> Histories of eugenics are still with us. We cannot consider eugenics without also considering systems of oppression that manifest historically, culturally, institutionally, and ideologically. There are no "good sides" to a eugenic framework, and there is no way to recuperate or memorialize eugenics without perpetuating the systems of oppression embedded in it. To name a building for someone is to memorialize that person, thus to keep this name, particularly in an effort to "preserve history" is misguided at best, and at worst, incredibly damaging for those in our campus community.

Given Schmucker's role and understated influence in the eugenics movement on the one hand, and WCU's value statement on the other, we are presented with an ethical issue: should the Science Center continue to bear Schmucker's name as an acknowledgement of his eugenics bona fides or should his name come down to signify the University's break with that horrible episode in American history? As Dr. Dana Morrison stated in her submission to the committee:

> we must boldly set aside symbols of a disgraced ideology that damaged and ended the lives of millions. Renaming the West Chester University science center is one small step toward restoring trust between schools and people with disabilities, BIPOC, the LGBTQ community, and other groups marginalized by our educational institutions. (Morrison. Brief, 2)

These statements from members of the community lend credence to the committee's view that Schmucker's name should be removed from the Science Building. The committee wishes to state, however, that not every submitted brief supported the removal of SCS's name, considers him a eugenicist, nor sees eugenics as necessarily a bad thing. As the committee deems it equally important to present opposing views, we devote the next section to addressing those arguments.

Section 6: Response in Support of Schmucker and Eugenics

Considering ongoing debates across our country about removing monuments and changing namesakes, the committee anticipated strong responses to the question of removing a name from a building. If WCU keeps the name, are we ignoring harms caused by the namesake? If WCU removes the name, are we rewriting history? Is it fair to hold someone who lived a hundred years ago to our standards of today? While we heard from many community members arguing to remove the name, we surprisingly only heard from one in defense of the name. As a

result, this committee has struggled with how best to respond to that sole defense of SCS and eugenics.

It is the opinion of the Committee that the supporter of the Schmucker Science Center namesake failed to offer a credible defense of SCS's views or eugenics in general. We have concluded that the arguments presented us were based on misreadings of the scholarship on eugenics, SCS's scholarship, and SCS's disregard for the humanity of his main target—people with intellectual differences—and the devastating impact on their lives.

The argument for retaining the Schmucker namesake was: one, that the portion of Schmucker's scholarship devoted to eugenics was minimal; and two, eugenics was scientifically valid and morally valuable. The committee finds the first argument troubling for two reasons. One, it is inconsequential how much he advocated for eugenics—he still advocated it. Whether one advocates morally reprehensible behaviors rarely or regularly, one has still advocated morally reprehensible behavior. Beyond the equivocation about the relevance of the amount of SCS's advocacy for eugenics, it is also patently untrue that only a small amount of his scholarship was about eugenics. The entirety of his last book, *Heredity and Parenthood,* is about eugenics. And as we have already established, *Man's Life on Earth* devotes chapters to demonstrating the genetic superiority of white Europeans. *The Meaning of Evolution* has the most direct reference to eugenics, but the text overall suggests a commitment to a eugenics program. Further, historian Edward Davis was cited to show that SCS had little to say about eugenics. But when we read the cited paper by Davis, we found he actually said this:

> As the reader might guess, Schmucker was an ardent, outspoken advocate of what he called "the new, and as yet very imperfectly developed practical science of Eugenics." The "high hope" of eugenics, as he put it, was to "increase the proportion of the fine strong beautiful upright human families and diminish the ratio of shiftless, weak, defaced, unmoral people," and thereby "the world will be bettered for ages." (73)

That Davis's paper was used to distance SCS from eugenics has given this committee pause. The defense of SCS relied heavily on Davis, yet Davis makes abundantly clear that he agrees with the committee's assessment: Schmucker was a strong proponent of eugenics. In addition, there were other cases where the argument that SCS was not an avid proponent of eugenics relied on out-of-context quotes or misunderstandings of the meanings of the sources cited. Because the committee feels that much of the evidence that refutes the claim that SCS was not closely aligned with eugenics can be found in earlier sections of this report, we do not feel compelled to unpack the arguments distancing SCS from eugenics further here. Therefore, we will briefly address claims that eugenics is not entirely a bad thing below.

The critically important *Oxford Handbook on the History of Eugenics* (2010) was offered in defense of eugenics and the Schmucker namesake. It was argued that this anthology, and in particular the introduction, it seemed, proved the benefits of eugenics. As the committee was unable to initially obtain a copy of that text, we emailed the authors of the introduction, who also edited the book. We asked the editors if the claim that their anthology defends eugenics

held true. After contextualizing our committee's work, we asked: "Is it accurate to say that your scholarship defends eugenics as sound science and that eugenics is a good thing?" (Levine and Bashford, "Email").

Their response was, in part:

> Thanks for your note. I'm afraid [this] reading of our work displays a lack of understanding of the arguments we advance in the introduction as well as those in the chapters authored by our contributors. We do take issue with the popular view of an association between Nazism and eugenics but this by no means equates to a recuperation of eugenic practices. Our point, in fact, is that that association is in many respects a misreading of both eugenics and Nazism.
>
> Nowhere in our work will you find the claim that "science in the last 40 years has come to conclude that eugenics is actually good." (Levine and Bashford, "Email")

The argument in support of Schmucker also cited authors Diane B. Paul, Daniel Kevles, and Mark Largent to argue that eugenics should not be seen as necessarily bad. After reading these authors and other source materials offered as support, it was clear to the committee that these texts do not support the arguments made in support of either SCS or eugenics.

To be clear, we have found nothing to support the claim that the scholarship on eugenics over the last 40 years has shown the positive attributes of eugenics. Rather, everything we read, including the sources cited in defense of SCS, demonstrated the exact opposite. Eugenics is seen by scientists as a pseudo-science, though it is true that it also should not be reduced to a "cartoonish view of Nazis" (FB Post 1), but this is, according to experts, because the harm done by eugenics is more extensive and permeates even the most benign-seeming policies, practices, and beliefs.

Conclusion

We conducted an in-depth investigation including months' worth of interviews, research, and committee meetings. We have endeavored to ensure a variety of perspectives were fairly heard. We heard from students, faculty, and staff. Community members submitted documents both solicited by the committee as well as those volunteered. We read the letters students submitted to *The Quad*. Committee members spent countless hours researching literature on the history and morality of eugenics.

First and foremost, it cannot be said enough that Aaron Stoyack was an undergraduate student when his research first uncovered SCS's history with eugenics. That a college senior conducted such important research and produced scholarship of such a high quality (from what the committee has seen of it) should be celebrated. Further, the criticisms made about Stoyack's work, as far as we can tell, are inaccurate. His conclusions about SCS were correct. He made an important discovery, worked with a faculty member (Ruswick) on developing that discovery

into a paper, and sparked a movement that has impacted our entire campus. The committee feels Aaron Stoyack is owed at the very least some form of accolade for his work on this subject.

As an expert on the history of eugenics, Dr. Ruswick helped Stoyack with his research. He also served as an important resource to the committee, gave public presentations to educate the campus on the subject of eugenics and its history at West Chester, and served as a guide to students doing historical research. When checking his sources, the committee found his analysis to be thorough, detailed, and fair. His work on this demonstrates the best of the teacher/scholar model. This committee is aware that, for as much time and energy as we put into this committee, Dr. Ruswick did as well. We thank him for that.

The surfacing of Samuel Christian Schmucker's legacy is a testament to the real world, collaborative, and impactful work being done between students and faculty at WCU. In the end, there is no conclusion to be drawn except that the name of the Schmucker building must be changed. The harm caused by Schmucker through his advocacy for a dangerous pseudo-science still reverberates on our campus today.

The choice should be clear to all: WCU does not memorialize oppression in any form by memorializing the people who defined the contours of that oppression.

Our charge being fulfilled, the committee respectfully submits this report for your consideration with the recommendation that *the namesake of Samuel Christian Schmucker should be removed from the science center complex at WCU*. However, the removal of the Schmucker namesake should be done in such a way that acknowledges, rather than ignores, how Schmucker, and our institution's complicity with his agenda, has and continues to marginalize the very "undesirables" eugenics sought to eradicate. We cannot forget that SCS was a revered member of our community whose name graced the halls of science research here for half a century. We must continually ask ourselves how his thinking and the thinking of other eugenicists have worked their way into our scholarship, teaching, and policies. The removal of Samuel Christian Schmucker's name from our science center should be a call to remember and learn, to strengthen our engagement with history, not to hide from its lessons or escape accountability, not to erase it.

We will submit, under separate cover, the Process Memo requested addressing the implementation of the Procedure to Review and Propose the Removal of a Namesake from a University Facility or Program for your review and consideration.

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