**HAND DELIVERED**

October 28, 2016

Peter Salovey

President

Yale University

Woodbridge Hall

105 Wall St

New Haven, CT

Dear President Salovey:

We are writing to you in regard to your decision to retain the name of Calhoun College.

The *Change the Name Coalition* includes community leaders, student groups, faith based leaders and non-profit organizations that have come together with one primary goal: to advocate for the renaming of Calhoun College. We are aware that you have appointed a committee (“The Committee to Establish Principles on Renaming”) whose charge is to “to articulate a set of principles that can guide Yale in decisions about whether to remove a historical name from a building or other prominent structure or space on campus —principles that are enduring rather than specific to particular controversies.” Notwithstanding, we strongly urge that you take the necessary actions to immediately rename Calhoun College.

Since the early 2000s, students at the university, especially students of color, have fought for the renaming of Calhoun College. This activism again resurfaced over the last several years, with students and some faculty engaged in sustained and courageous efforts to bring about a change in the name of the college. Much to our disappointment, you announced last May that the university had chosen to keep the name of the college intact.

The incident involving Corey Menafee last summer raised awareness of the issues and controversy surrounding Calhoun College for city residents. Many saw his arrest and termination by the university as a grave injustice infected by racial bias. The incident also highlighted the deeply racist and hostile work environment that city residents of color who are Yale employees at Calhoun College confront on a daily basis. As a result, the fight to rename Calhoun College expanded beyond the university to the city at large. City residents from all neighborhoods and walks of life have since joined the growing movement to rename the college. We are repulsed that the university has so willfully and intentionally chosen to continue to honor and celebrate – in our city -- a white supremacist and the nation’s most ardent proponent of slavery.

Many of Yale’s neighbors in New Haven are descendants of slaves. Yale does not need an intellectual exercise or administrative process in determining the bounds of renaming Calhoun College. It need only think of the recurring harm, hostile work environment, and miseducation of New Haven children that the simple existence of a shrine to Calhoun creates. Simple decency towards your neighbors and honest reflection on the evil Calhoun represented in American history are all that is necessary to end decades of delay and rename the college after someone that represents Yale’s better angels and not its most infamous racist.

In April of 1963, Dr. Martin Luther King wrote his remarkable “Letter from a Birmingham Jail” to a group of well-meaning clergy members who felt that he and all African Americans should wait patiently until the process set up by the institutions of the day delivered change in Birmingham and throughout the South. Dr. King responded with the following words:

There comes a time when the cup of endurance runs over, and men are no longer willing to be plunged into the abyss of despair. I hope, sirs, you can understand our legitimate and unavoidable impatience.

The time for change has come, and this community intends to fight until that happens. No process, no matter how well meaning, should be allowed to delay the inevitable.

Sincerely,

The Change the Name Coalition