Dani Bernstein
Historical Tour Outline

I. Introduction

Goal: prepare tourists for the general layout of the tour

A. Hi, my name is Dani Bernstein and I'm a second-year from NYC

B. Before we begin, I just want you to know that this organization that leads tours is a completely student-run, volunteer group, so I have had a lot of autonomy in crafting this tour and I'm incredibly passionate about it, which is why I'm so grateful you would come spend your free time talking to me about this history. But that doesn't mean my way is the only way to tell the history of this school, so please ask me questions about what interests you, and I'll do my best to give you as complete a version as I can of what has happened at this University since its creation.

C. I tend to view the University's history as a reflection of the greater goings on in the United States at various times, and since so much of U.S. history is, frankly, difficult to talk about, some of what I cover today will also be difficult to talk about. But I think it's very important to tell the full story, and in this case, the full story covers some very uncomfortable topics, and I just want to acknowledge that there may be points on the tour that will be uncomfortable for both of us.

D. That said, I'm so, so grateful to have your time today and can't wait to share this history with you. So, let's get started!

II. Background (Special Collections)

Goal: general overview of TJ, the ideas he had when founding the University, and what the context of that founding was—really set a scene for them

A. **Thomas Jefferson** (Galt Statue)

1. I want to begin by talking a little bit about Thomas Jefferson, who, in addition to being a Founding Father of our nation and serving as our third President, also founded the University of Virginia. Jefferson was born on April 13, 1743 and conceived of the idea of the University in his retirement, and fortunately he lived to see it open in 1825 before he died on July 4, 1826.
2. This statue was built by Alexander Galt in 1861 and it's actually a life-size statute. Jefferson was 6'2.5" and as far as we know is pretty accurate to what Jefferson really looked like; apparently, at the unveiling of the statue, his granddaughter Mary Randolph exclaimed something along the lines of, "add red hair and freckles and you have my grandfather." It's interesting to me to talk about whether or not we portray Jefferson accurately in artistic ways, because that's a conversation that's constantly being had at the University in a broader way—whether or not we're fulfilling Jefferson's vision for the school, which I will explain over here at what's called the Maverick Engraving.

B. Maverick Engraving

1. Peter Maverick made this engraving in 1822 of what Thomas Jefferson planned for the University to ultimately look like. I want to tell you right off the bat that this drawing is

completely inaccurate in terms of scale, but it is accurate as a general idea of what Jefferson wanted. So there are a couple interesting things about the layout Jefferson wanted for UVA:

a) Academical Village—based on experience at William & Mary: professors in Pavilions, students in lawn rooms. Hotels behind where students ate, and gardens which are now pretty but functioned as plantations then.
b) Rotunda—very controversial, library and not a chapel. Half-scale copy of the Pantheon.
c) The school opened on March 7, 1825 and Jefferson was alive for its first year of classes and he took an active interest in what was going on at the University. And I do want to say something about what was going on at the University on March 7, 1825 and for many years following it, which we'll discuss a lot on this tour today. The day this school opened, the only students were Southern, white males from wealthy families, typically slave-owning. These men were a reflection of the kind of man Jefferson was and the kinds of people Jefferson thought would and should be future leaders. I'm very conscious of the fact that Jefferson would not want me to attend this University, and that's something else we have to reconcile ourselves to, that as much as we admire Jefferson for so many of his ideals, much of the changes that we consider good about this school now completely defy what he intended for it.

C. With that, let's head out of this area and actually see some of these spaces for ourselves!

III. What Early UVA Was Like (Poe's Room)

Goal: Use Poe to describe early life at UVA, how rowdy students were, and the oppressive dynamics that existed

A. So, I talked a little bit about what the school was like when it first opened, and I think one student in particular can illustrate that for us. This is supposedly where Edgar Allen Poe lived when he attended the University from February to December of 1826. I say "supposedly" because historians have never really figured out whether he lived in room 13 or room 17, but given the option to put Poe in room 13, they went with it.

B. So, I mentioned that Poe went here for less than a year, and he didn't actually end up graduating from the University. This is because he couldn't afford to continue attending the University after his father refused to pay for it, and he had run up huge gambling debts and couldn't pay for it himself. But, that doesn't mean his time at the University didn't have an impact on his life. In fact, he probably wrote his first published story, "Manuscript Found in a Bottle" here, as well as the story "Tamerlane." And he did use the University as a setting for the short story "A Tale of the Ragged Mountains," so we know that his time here did serve as some kind of a literary inspiration.

C. Poe's legacy is definitely strongly felt by students today. The Raven Society keeps up his room, and in fact in the mid-1900s a student even noticed that Poe had graduated without paying a fine he owed the University. There was a rare book display in Alderman Library, and one of the books had been checked out by Poe and returned late. Fortunately, the

librarian at the time, Harry Clemons (for whom Clemons Library is named) paid the fine and expunged Poe of his debt, which was very kind of him.

D. But I do want to talk a little bit about what the University was like in its early years, since Poe was here as one of the earliest students. I mentioned earlier that the incoming class of students was exclusively white, male, Southern and wealthy, and typically anti-Federalists like Jefferson, but not only that, they were extraordinarily entitled. These were students who had never heard the word "no." If you look through old Board of Visitors minutes, you can find allegations against students of partying in front of their professors' houses, shooting at the buildings for fun, and even getting incredibly violent—there were some reports of students beating professors' dogs and their slaves, and in one case there were reports of a student housing a prostitute in his room. There's a great way to demonstrate the contrast between what life was like then and what it's like now—now, when first-years come to UVA, we tell them they can't bring their cars; back then, when first-years came to UVA, they were told they couldn't bring their slaves. These students were from a completely different context than today's, and they were also completely out of control. To me, this is such an unbelievable thought—if the third president of the United States were constantly checking up on me, I'd be pretty careful to be on my best behavior, but I think that really illustrates how entitled the students who went here felt.

Introduce Topic of Slavery: walk towards Lawn through the space bet. Gardens I and III and point out where enslaved laborers lived en route

IV. Architecture (Pavilion I/Around the Lawn Area)

Goal: Use architecture to elaborate on Jefferson's ideals for the University

A. So this is Jefferson's Academical Village, and what I'd like to focus on here is the architecture behind it and why Jefferson made the decisions he did.

B. So if you look around the Lawn, you'll notice that the Pavilions are all different, and in particular you may see that the capitals on the columns are all different orders. There is an order to those capitals—the lowest is Tuscan and the highest is Composite, and these columns range between those orders, except for Composite, which I'll get to. The most significant distinction on the Lawn itself is that Tuscan capitals are only in front of student rooms, putting students at the lowest position, while the Pavilions, which were professors' homes, have either Doric, Ionic or Corinthian capitals. There wasn't really a basis for the differentiation between capitals on the pavilions, but there was definitely a reason Jefferson chose not to put Composite capitals on the Lawn. In fact, there's only one place at this whole school that has Composite capitals. Any guesses as to where? The only place with Composite capitals is the Dome Room of the Rotunda, since that was the original library of the University, and Jefferson put the library at the top of the University hierarchy, even above professors, which is pretty cool. Unfortunately, since the Rotunda's closed, you can't see those Composite capitals, but they are a combination of Ionic and Corinthian styles, so they have the acanthus leaves of Corinthian capitals and the volutes, or scrolls, of Ionic capitals.

C. The last thing I'll say for now about the design of the school is that there is a story being told between Pavilion 1, the Rotunda, and Pavilion 2. Pavilion 1 has a frieze depicting Apollo Kouros, or Apollo the Youth. This is supposed to demonstrate the youthful demeanor of students who would enter the University. Pavilion 2, on the other hand, has a frieze of the temple of Fortuna Virilis, or "The Temple of Masculine Virtue." So the idea is, students come in at the stage displayed in Pavilion 1, they pass through the Rotunda, which is the center of knowledge, and then they reach Masculine Virtue by the time they reach Pavilion 2. I like to emphasize that this is a frieze of masculine virtue, because it again speaks to Jefferson's vision of the kind of student he wanted here—meaning, no women. Kind of ironically, the school now makes an effort to specifically house female faculty or administrators in this pavilion to demonstrate their commitment to coeducation.

V. Expand on Topic of Slavery (Pavilion VII)

Goal: Explain how integral slavery was to the creation of the school; make it clear to tourists that slavery is the basis for this institution

A. I've brought us to Pavilion VII because, especially after talking a bit about architecture, I think this building is particularly relevant to the beginnings of the University. That's because this is where the cornerstone for the University was laid, on October 6, 1817. Jefferson, James Madison and James Monroe—who was President at the time—were all in attendance when that happened, which is really a mind-boggling idea. Just imagine what it must have been like to see three brilliant men come together to begin this institution—it's an incredibly humbling thought as a student. I also particularly like Pavilion VII because, as the first part of the University that Jefferson built, I think it lends a lot of insight into the changes Jefferson would make. For example, this is the only pavilion with arcades instead of columns, and you can quickly see why Jefferson moved away from arcades, since they block light from coming into the pathways. This was also the library at the University while the Rotunda was being finished, so it was probably a pretty important space for early students.

B. I like to highlight this plaque in particular, because I think it says a lot about how we gloss over some unfortunate elements of our history. It is so amazing to think that Jefferson, Madison and Monroe were all here together to build this place—but when we highlight them, we tend to forget the other people who were present when this cornerstone was laid. In particular, we know that several slaves both made and laid down the cornerstone. This school was literally started by slavery. Unfortunately, we don't know the names of most of the slaves who worked for this school, but we do know one. Thrimston Hern was born into slavery at Monticello in 1799. We have volumes and theses and documentaries on Jefferson, Monroe and Madison, but we can say all we know about Thrimston Hern in just a few sentences. We know he was a second-generation slave at Monticello; we know that he was very skilled, if he was given the task of laying the cornerstone; and we know that he was sold in 1829 to Arthur Brockenbrough for $600, which at that time was a very high price, suggesting he was especially talented. The last thing we know about Thrimston Hern is that the wages he should have been paid for his work building this school were given to his new master, Arthur Brockenbrough, once he was sold.

C. I like to tell the story of Thrimston Hern because you can hear about the stories of these other great men anywhere, but you can only hear about Hern here. It's important that when we see these scenes in our minds we see the full image. If you look out behind you on the Lawn, you'll notice that the land is terraced. When the school was being constructed, this was completely done by enslaved laborers. If you look at this pavilion and the adjacent Lawn rooms, you'll notice a difference in the quality of bricks—pavilions have nicer bricks that are straighter, whereas student rooms have bricks that are of a somewhat lower quality. This is because artisans built the pavilions, while slaves built the student rooms, again highlighting a hierarchy between professors and students.

D. Slavery was absolutely integral to the founding of this school and to its functioning up through the Civil War, and free blacks were still treated terribly here for at least a century following that. To me, the lack of mention of this issue on this plaque demonstrates our continued inability to address this topic in the way it deserves. That's why whenever I come to this spot, I think about Thrimston Hern and how hard he worked to build this space that I walk in every day.

VI. War Stop (Middle Pathway)

Goal: Stress the school's strong ties to the Confederacy; illustrate the continued importance of slavery and the fact that UVA's student body continued to be homogeneous

A. During the Civil War the only two schools in Virginia that stayed open were UVA and the Virginia Military Institute, and UVA actually became a hospital while classes went on. We can't know for sure, but it's possible that a soldier died in every single one of these Lawn rooms.

B. The mood here at UVA was definitely favorable towards the Confederacy, but not right away. In fact, the prevailing opinion in Virginia was that the state should remain a part of the Union, and that certainly applied to students here as well. The reason Virginia sided with the Confederacy—aside from ideological reasons and the desire to uphold slavery—was that by the time Virginia seceded, enough states had seceded that Virginia no longer had the voting power to prevent an amendment to the Constitution that would abolish slavery. Even though it did take some time for Virginia to move towards secession, UVA students definitely moved in that direction on the earlier side, since secession wasn't until April 17, 1861, and UVA students professed their loyalty to the Confederacy in February of 1861. A group of students actually flew the first Confederate flag in Virginia on the top of the Rotunda. There were two competing student groups—the students who lived by Carr's Hill, and the students who lived on Dawson's Row, and in 1861 they competed to see who could get a Confederate flag to the top of the Rotunda first. The Carr's Hill men went up the Rotunda in the middle of the night and got the flag on the roof first.

C. Another unfortunate display of students' support for the Confederacy stems from the Jefferson Literary and Debating Society, which has existed here since the University's first year. In the time leading up to the Civil War tensions were so bad that in 1854 one Southern congressman, Preston Brooks, actually attacked Northern senator Charles Sumner, who was an abolitionist, in Congress with his cane. When he did this, his cane

broke. As a show of their support, the Jefferson Society sent Brooks a new cane to replace his broken one.

D. Just a couple years ago a student living in Lawn Room 19 noticed a loose floorboard and lifted it up, and to his deep surprise found an old Civil War rifle still sitting there from whichever soldier inhabited his room during the war, which must have been a really shocking discovery.

E. **WWI, II and then Vietnam**

1. WWI, students served
2. FDR stab-in-the-back speech, 1940; students served, UVA is a government repository and site of research for the Manhattan Project; after war, influx of war veterans as students (GI Bill)
3. But then, as we reach the Vietnam War and the many changes of the 20th century, we see the first massive student protests here at the University of Virginia. In general, across the country, college students were incredibly opposed to the Vietnam War. At UVA, students held very well-attended protests and really pushed the University president at the time, Edgar Shannon, to voice his support of their actions. Shannon was very much in support of the students exercising their first amendment rights, but he refused to take a political stance. Then, after Nixon invaded Cambodia, students protested much more vocally than they had before. May of 1970 is known in University history as the "May Days"—students protested and, on one night in May, 67 UVA students were arrested by the Charlottesville police for protesting. In response to this, which outraged the student body and University administrators alike, President Shannon demonstrated his support for the protesting students by canceling classes. He decided to allow students to either keep the grades they already had as of May 1, or take finals if they wished, but did not require any student attendance to allow students to protest full-time. He gave a speech to the student body on May 10 condemning the invasion of Cambodia and demonstrating his solidarity with the students, ending by sending a letter against the Vietnam War to Virginia's senators. So, as you can imagine, the climate at the University really shifted over the course of these several wars -- all the way from the Civil War to the Vietnam War -- towards a much more vocal and activist student body, but at this point, in league with the University administration.

VII. 20th century social changes

Integration (Lawn Room 43)

A. I've brought us to Lawn Room 43 to talk about integration, because this is where the first black resident of the Lawn lived. His name was A. Leroy Willis. Just to get a general sense, do you have any guesses as to when the University began accepting black students?

B. The answer is a little complicated, but the shortest version is 1969, when the University officially opened its doors to black males in all of its schools. But if we back-track a little further, we get a fuller story.

C. UVa actually admitted its first African-American student in 1950. His name was Gregory Swanson and he attended the Law school, which he was able to do after suing the

University to let him in. They were forced to let him in by the courts, since there was no "separate but equal" law school for African-Americans in Virginia at the time. Swanson was already a practicing lawyer and was incredibly qualified to attend UVa, but his classmates treated him very poorly despite his obvious talent. He ultimately left the University in 1951 because of how hostile the environment was, and black students did not truly become integrated into the school until many years later.

D. By 1954, the landmark *Brown v. Board of Ed.* case had already demanded integration of schools, but this still didn't really play out at the University. In 1955, three black men enrolled in the University's undergraduate engineering program. Only one of those men chose to stay at the University. His name was Robert Bland, and he was the first black undergraduate to graduate from UVA. He endured complete alienation from his peers and had a very isolated experience at UVA. Professors would give him Cs on papers and when he questioned it, they would say, "You don't look like an A student to me." His experience was marred by complete, blatant discrimination. But his endurance became a rallying cry for future minority students who wanted to enter the University, and "Bobby stayed" was something those students reminded themselves when they were here.

E. By 1960, A. Leroy Willis entered the University, ultimately becoming the first black student to live on the Lawn. But even though he lived on the Lawn, that didn't mean black students became fully integrated into the school. By 1970, only 1.8% of the UVA population was black, and today only 6% of it is. Numbers can never tell us peoples' stories, but in this case I at least think those numbers don't bode well for inclusion at this school.

Co-Education (Still at Lawn Room 43)

F. Switching gears, I thought I'd also talk here about when and how women entered the University. With the dates we've talked about so far in mind, around when would you guess women entered the University? (Let them respond; give real answer) Based on that, when do you think they began living on the Lawn?

G. So I love asking this question because it's so interesting to me how recently this history happened. Women were officially admitted into the University in 1970, and Cynthia Goodrich lived on the Lawn in 1972. And this was not a seamless transition or something the student body wanted.

H. As we've discussed, women were not a part of the original equation of this school. But around the 1880s, schools began to co-educate in the U.S.—not in large numbers, but to some extent. Around the turn of the century, the push for female enrollment at UVA started. Women began to take final examinations here to get certificates, and in response to the push to co-educate, the University started offering a co-ed summer school and a two-year nursing program for women. Georgia O'Keeffe actually taught art classes at UVA in the summer in 1913, before she made it big.

I. But the push for coeducation was very, very slow. In 1935 an African-American woman, Alice Jackson, applied for a Master's in French, and UVA was so against her attending the school that they actually paid for her to go to Columbia instead. UVA literally paid a student's tuition to a rival school so that they wouldn't have to admit women.

J. Basically, this trend continues for a long time, with women slowly trickling into some programs at UVA, but still being refused entry at the undergraduate level. But then, my favorite President of UVA, Edgar Shannon, put together a commission to begin the gradual admittance of women in the late 1960s/early 1970s. While he was doing that, a very brave young woman, Virginia Scott, alongside three other women, sued the University for admittance with the help of the ACLU in 1969. The Court said UVA would have to fully co-educate within three years, and with that mandate in mind, the University admitted 450 women in 1970.

K. The transition wasn't easy, but to me this is actually one of few social success stories at UVA. Initially, women were treated pretty badly—men harassed them, they were told they couldn't live on the Lawn because there were no bathrooms for them. But the response to women was not uniform. I think this is best exemplified by women's entry into working for The Cavalier Daily. One staff writer, Holly Smith, was welcomed in fairly easily and rose to a high position in the paper, and the first female Editor-in-Chief for The Cavalier Daily took on that role in 1976. But, some women were turned away when they came to sign up to write for The Cavalier Daily. To me, this demonstrates the mixed range of opinions students had about coeducation. Fortunately, now women make up 55% of the student body, so that transition, in my opinion, was ultimately very successful.

VIII. **Symbolism of Old Cabell area and how it cuts us off from the surrounding community; where we're headed for the future (Old Cabell)**

A. We've talked a good deal about social change at the University, and I love to come to Old Cabell to talk about that because it holds a lot of symbolism to me. As we've discussed, the original part of the University is the Academical Village behind us, which means these buildings were added on later. This was done between 1895 and 1898 by Stanford White, a prominent NY architect. At the time the University was in need of more academic space, as the student population had grown significantly since 1825. But placing buildings in this specific area directly defied Jefferson's architectural vision—he wanted the Lawn rooms and pavilions to simply extend outward infinitely as space needs grew, so students could maintain a view of the Blue Ridge Mountains, which they would look out into when they graduated so they could see the world they were about to contribute to. So why would the school's Board of Visitors want to defy that vision? At the time, behind these three buildings was something called the Venable Lane Community, an African-American community that was so foreign to UVA students that they called it "Canada," because the community was geographically close but culturally different. The school deliberately built these buildings here to block the view of that community.

B. We've covered a long span of time today, and that very racialized decision was made before the 20th century. To bring it into the 20th century, I want to tell you another story about this area, specifically Old Cabell Hall. I mentioned the entry of African-American students at the school, and one in particular, Wesley Harris, was an active student on Grounds when he was here in the early 1960s. In 1963, he invited Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. to come speak at UVA, and MLK spoke right in Old Cabell Hall to 900 students and, apparently, one professor. So, the most important Civil Rights leader in American history

spoke to the University community in the very space that was built to insulate that community from issues of civil rights. To me that's pretty powerful. But perhaps even more notable is that when Dr. King left the speech, a car nearby backfired, and if you've ever heard a car backfire, it sounds like a gunshot. When Harris heard this, he jumped in front of Dr. King to protect him. Harris put himself in the (nonexistent) line of fire, knowing just how important King was and thinking it was his duty as a civil rights advocate to sacrifice himself for that cause.

C. And that's really how I'd like to end today. I'd like to think that the student body here has changed enough over time that we would, collectively, put ourselves in the line of fire for the issues that matter to us. In a lot of ways we struggle to balance the idea of maintaining a lasting commitment to Jefferson and his vision of the school, which at this point has become very antiquated, and ensuring progress. But if we start to pick and choose the ideals that make sense to us now—like student self-governance and political participation—I think we'll be able to find the right balance. As we've seen on this tour today, this school has progressed a lot since it opened in 1825. While our history is a complex one that includes slavery and marginalization, it's also a history of brave students, like Holly Smith and Wesley Harris, who took on challenging issues and broke down barriers to make this school a more inclusive place. As long as we continue to attract students with that kind of drive, passion, and moral compass, I think we have a very bright future ahead of us.

D. Thank you so much for coming on this tour today. I really enjoyed having you and I hope you enjoyed visiting the University. If you have any questions or want any recommendations for what to do, please ask away. If not, have a great rest of your stay in Charlottesville!