

June 19th, 2020

To the University of South Carolina,

Five years ago, students of the University of South Carolina demanded top-down systematic changes to our campus. They sought to create a more inclusive, representative, and diverse Carolina through focused, deliberate, and attainable changes. This set of demands was titled *2020 Vision*.

Today, 171 days into 2020 and 25 days after George Floyd's death, we are invoking the past, recognizing the present, and advocating for a better future. It is time to address the requests made by the group of Gamecocks, who are now alumni, and recognize that their vision is still incomplete. While many changes were completed, we, as current students of the university believe it is time to revise their demands, and put forward some of our own.

Over 200 years ago, South Carolina College welcomed its first students. Since then, the university has steered a rollercoaster of great triumph and noticeable shortcomings in its inclusion and equity efforts. From the desegregation of the university on September 11th, 1963 by Robert G. Anderson, Dr. Henrie Monteith Treadwell, and James L. Solomon Jr., to leading the creation of the African American Studies department by key civil rights leader, Dean Willie Lloyd Harriford Jr., there are many triumphs to be remembered. However, the university has also been shrouded in shameful darkness by praising our most historically prominent alumni without addressing the horrors of their past. Without addressing the past, the university remains neutral in the judgement of these injustices. Since the university's founding in 1801, one constant has remained: our marginalized students are not safe from hate. This twenty-first century hatred has manifested itself on Zoom, Snapchat, and in daily microaggressions meant to chip away at our identities. We have worked in the past to improve the student experience on this campus. But as we look forward, we must first recognize what has changed since 2015.

The following have been completed since the first declaration:

- 1) In 2018, the African-American graduation rate was 75% , a percentage more than twice the national average, and up 17% over the past decade.
- 2) Markers have been placed on the Horseshoe to commemorate the slaves that built and maintained the university.
- 3) The university elevated the position of Chief Diversity Officer to Vice President for Diversity, Equity & Inclusion.
- 4) The creation of a Graduation with Leadership Distinction pathway in Diversity & Social Advocacy.
- 5) In 2017, the Intersection Multicultural Student Lounge was created in the West Wing of the Russell House Student Union.

Although progress has been made towards a more inclusive Carolina, there is more to be done. Carolina is home to us all, but we experience the university in different ways. This action plan is a way to ensure progress for our marginalized communities. As students, these actions are a necessity to the creation of a greater Carolinian experience for all.

Below is an action plan that we, as current students at the University of South Carolina, believe **must** be implemented by the university to initiate positive change within the Carolina community. We demand the following:

- 1) We hold that the university revisit the Carolina Core and other degree requirements to include a variety of coursework options focused on marginalized communities, such as African-American, LGBTQIA+, and Latinx-based offerings. This includes but is not limited to:
  - a) Allowing more courses about marginalized communities to fulfill the required course categories of U.S. History, English, Ethics, and other Carolina Core requirements.
  - b) Implementing mandatory course requirements that focus on the intersectionality of the major course and topics of diversity. EX: Journalism 311: Minorities, Women, and the Mass Media.
  
- 2) We hold that the Board of Trustees, as a governing body, take an intentional stance supporting:
  - a) The renaming of all buildings on our university campus named after individuals with racist backgrounds. This includes but is not limited to: having direct involvement with the ownership of slaves, hate speech, and/or identity-centered violence. While we affirm the creation of the Presidential Commission on University History, the buildings we, as current students of the university, believe must be immediately renamed are: J. Marion Sims Women's Residence Hall, Strom Thurmond Wellness & Fitness Center, and the Thomas Cooper Library.
  - b) The continued work of the Presidential Commission on University History to publicly address and disseminate historically accurate information related to the University's expansion. This work should begin with addressing the historic Ward One District. In addition, we hold an increase of funding to the Center for Civil Rights History & Research and the formulation of a collaborative relationship between the center and commission.
  
- 3) We hold that the Office of Pre-Professional Advising expands their efforts to engage more students of marginalized groups through the process of moving from undergraduate to professional school. This includes but is not limited to: the application process, availability & acquisition of resources and aid, and/or overcoming other barriers to entry. In addition, we hold that the office:
  - a) Complete a comprehensive research study investigating how many medical, dental, law, and other professional school matriculants have come from the University of South Carolina, by race since 2000.
  - b) Develop innovative methods and key partnerships with other university offices and entities to better connect with underrepresented and in-state students so these students receive the university resources needed to become competitive applicants for professional school.
  - c) Increase peer-to-peer mentorship opportunities between undergraduate and graduate students to serve as an avenue for educational development.
  
- 4) We hold that the university expand minority recruitment efforts in order to increase racial diversity on our campus by:
  - a) Creating a minority scholars program through the South Carolina Honors College, Capstone Scholars, and Top Scholars programs that provides financial aid and mentorship for minorities.
  - b) Increasing funding for Diversity and Inclusion recruitment in the Office of Undergraduate Admissions.
  - c) Increasing funding for the Grace Jordan McFadden Professors Program and other opportunities specific to underrepresented graduate students, both masters & doctoral.
  - d) Improving the relative racial/ethnic and gender representation in the selection of our university's higher administration, faculty, and staff.
  
- 5) On May 31 2020, President Caslen held that all first-year students at the University of South Carolina would be required to complete a new diversity module as part of their orientation process. We hold that this training includes: comprehensive and expansive diversity & inclusion modules including topics related to implicit bias, LGBTQIA+ education, and socioeconomic mobility. Further, we hold the addition of mandatory diversity education requirements through graduate student teaching assistant (TA) orientation or training, such as requiring Safe Zone training through the Office of Multicultural Student Affairs to ensure an equitable classroom experience for graduate and undergraduate students. We also hold that this training be expanded to faculty and staff, and that each university

department, including athletics, complete an annual report outlining their plans to promote diversity and inclusivity within their sector.

- 6) We hold the further establishment of on-campus gathering places celebrating the multicultural history of the university through the development of the Woodrow court and when enacted, the new university student union.

### Forever to Thee



Toneia T. Douglas  
President  
Association of African American Students



Joseph Boyd  
President  
National Pan-Hellenic Council



Issy Rushton  
Student Body President



Hannah White  
Student Body Vice President



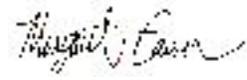
Reylan Cook  
Secretary of Inclusion & Equity  
Student Government



Michael Parker  
Treasurer  
Association of African American Students



Christal Harvin  
President  
Black Honors Caucus



Margaret Carson  
President  
Graduate Student Association



Alexandria Moore  
President  
SAVVY



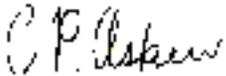
Joshua Carriger  
President  
B.O.N.D.



Jared Dawson  
Chief Advisor to Student Body Vice President  
Student Government



Laetitia Amihere  
Officer for Equity & Inclusion  
Student-Athlete Advisory Committee



Caden Askew  
Student Body Treasurer



Zachary Dunbar  
President  
Residence Hall Association



Tiffany Marquez  
President  
Multicultural Greek Council



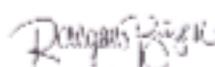
John David Jacobus  
Speaker of the Student Senate



Rachel May  
President  
College Panhellenic Association



Grace Lady  
President  
Dance Marathon



Raegan Brizek  
President  
Homecoming Commission



Sudipta Saha  
Graduate Council Representative  
Graduate Student Association



Hannah O'Toole  
Chief of Staff to the Student Body President  
Student Government



Jacob Hoffman  
President  
Carolina Productions



Maxwell Akonde  
Vice President  
Graduate Student Association



Christopher Eddy  
Treasurer  
Graduate Student Association



Brice Talley  
President  
Interfraternity Council