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## Rise Up: 2020 Vision and a New Era of Intersectional Grassroots Activism

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## THESIS SUMMARY

On November 16, 2015, I sat timidly on the steps of Longstreet Theatre trying to hide in a sea of students and faculty dressed in all black. Around 11:30 AM, I stood up and took my spot next to Karli, both of us holding a banner that I had painted the night before. It read, “Learning humanizes character and does not permit it to be cruel,” the University of South Carolina (USC) motto. We marched silently to the Osborne Administrative Building on the Historic Horseshoe, students and faculty marching behind us two-by-two, in what seemed to be the longest two blocks that I have ever walked. At Osborne, we delivered our twelve demands to University administrators.

The small-scale organizing I dabbled in during my first few years at USC came nowhere close to the walkout that Karli Wells, Megan Taylor, and I organized the fall of my junior year. Years of mutual disappointment and frustration over University policies and campus relations led to months of research and deliberation through the student organization Students Invested in Change (SIC), which led to a weekend spent holed up in a study room planning the 2020 Vision movement. After the walkout, Karli, Megan, and I (as well as other members of the 2020 Vision movement) engaged in follow-up with University administration in order to ensure that the demands were taken seriously; this entailed weeks of email and phone correspondence, as well as multiple in-person meetings with administrators, in the immediate aftermath of the walkout.

I spent the semester after the 2020 Vision walkout interning in Washington, D.C. and consequently, was not as involved as I would have liked to been in 2020 Vision’s later follow-up. However, I published a piece on Southern student activism with media outlet *Bitch Media* that semester, highlighting some of my experiences with the 2020 Vision movement. That piece is included in this work, as it greatly shaped my understanding and perceptions of 2020 Vision’s

role in the context of contemporary student activism and was the first instance in which I openly spoke about my role as a co-organizer of the movement.

The 2020 Vision movement was intended to be anonymous from the get-go: in our logistical document, rule #6 reads, “This is a ‘We’ movement not an ‘I’ movement. No individual is to take responsibility, credit, or blame for the work and actions of the group. This has always been, and is still, a complicated issue, but writing my piece for Bitch Media began to change how I viewed our stance on anonymity. While there were multiple reasons we stressed anonymity originally – group mission and power, safety in numbers, and obscurity of the group’s origination point – being overly cautious in the organizing and aftermath of the walkout only served to make us more paranoid, and the lack of clear and public custody of the movement has permitted its deterioration. Now, over a year after the walkout, Karli, Megan, and I have all individually come to the conclusion that it is better for this movement to be recorded and retained in UofSC’s history, even if that means claiming the title of co-organizers of the 2020 Vision movement. While 2020 Vision was, and will always be, bigger than the three of us, it would not have happened without us.

This thesis tells our story, the story of 2020 Vision, so that it is not lost to time and indifference. We have made our mark as activists on a campus that does not engage in activism, and attempted to make the University we all love a place that is more welcoming to its minority and marginalized students, faculty, and staff.

## PREFACE

I am a native of Greenville, S.C., as well as a senior at the University of South Carolina (USC), preparing to graduate with a B.S. in Biology and Psychology in May 2017. My interests in activism differ greatly from my academic pursuits, stemming from involvement with organizations such as the Feminist Collective (FemCo), for which I served on the executive board for three years. Despite being involved with many progressive organizations across campus over my four years at USC, my role as a co-organizer for the 2020 Vision movement predominantly originates from being a member of Students Invested in Change (SIC).

As I prepare to graduate from USC and reflect on my experiences over the past four years, 2020 Vision immediately comes to mind. I, as well as my fellow co-organizers, spent a long time grappling with the idea of remaining anonymous within the movement. We went to absurd lengths in order to conceal our identities and put the power of 2020 Vision behind a set of ideas rather than a few people. For so long, taking ownership of the movement in a public manner seemed completely antithetical to what I thought 2020 Vision represented: a group united under a shared vision. However, Karli Wells, Megan Taylor, and I all eventually admitted that it was never realistic to think that we could orchestrate a walkout and go unnoticed.

Karli Wells is from Columbia, S.C. and an alumna of the University of South Carolina class of 2016, having received her B.A. in African American Studies. After serving on the executive board for USC's NAACP chapter, Karli founded SIC, a student organization created for the purpose of making progressive change, which fed into her role as a co-organizer of the 2020 Vision movement.

Megan Taylor is currently a junior majoring in Political Science at the University of South Carolina, anticipating her B.A. in May 2018. Much like myself, Megan calls Greenville, S.C. her hometown and attributes her contributions to 2020 Vision as a result of her involvement with SIC, as well as other organizations and offices such as FemCo and the Office of Multicultural Student Affairs (OMSA).

In the wake of the walkout, it was easy for us to get caught up in paranoia and fear, and anonymity provided a sense of security. The 2020 Vision movement will always be more than just Karli, Megan and me. But without claiming our place within this movement, there is no one to tell 2020 Vision's full story.

When I published the piece "At Southern Colleges, Students Challenge History and Tradition as they Demand Change" with *Bitch Media* on May 25, 2016, I told part of the story of the 2020 Vision movement and part of my story as a co-organizer within it. But that article represents only a tiny portion of this movement's origins and events, and while my memories of 2020 Vision are important to the story, they are not its entirety. In writing this thesis, I aim to document the movement more fully, through not only my own perspective but the perspectives of my co-organizers as well, and to show the crucial, yet polarizing, role of the 2020 Vision movement's intersectional framework.

The piece that I published with *Bitch Media* is included on the next few pages in order to provide context for this work. Following it is the collective narrative of the events of the 2020 Vision movement, as dictated to me by Karli and Megan, with my own memories included alongside theirs and relevant documents interspersed to provide a historical framework.

## AT SOUTHERN COLLEGES, STUDENTS CHALLENGE HISTORY AND TRADITION AS THEY DEMAND CHANGE

“So we’re really doing this.”

It was both a question and an answer that had been decided days earlier. My friend and classmate Karli and I stepped out of my old minivan—our activist headquarters for the past weekend—with black banners and copies of our demands for better gender identity and inclusiveness policies, which we would be presenting to our university administrators. We could’ve hopped back in the car and just driven away. But after a moment of anxious pause, we left the parking lot, and the thought, behind us.

An hour later, we were marching side by side in complete silence, carrying a banner painted with the University of South Carolina’s school motto, “Learning humanizes character and does not permit it to be cruel.” Beneath this was the hashtag [#2020Vision](#). I stared straight ahead, refusing to make eye contact with anyone, as photographers ran ahead of us. A handful of students walking between classes stopped and stared at the spectacle. All I heard was the crinkle of butcher paper signs and the rhythm of synchronized footsteps as Karli and I led 150 students, faculty members, and staff clad in black and marching two by two through the campus to the Osborne Administrative Building. Outside of Osborne, the list of demands was passed from student to student as we read them aloud. When the paper reached me, I recited demand number four: “We demand that our university acknowledge gender identity and expression as protected classes under Title IX.” Scanning news coverage of the protest later that day, I read comment after comment from opinionated and often anonymous voices, one misguided commenter going as far as denying that USC has trans students at all.

It's not easy being a minority student on a traditional Southern college campus. And it's even harder to advocate actively for the marginalized populations at these schools when students, professors, and administrators continuously ignore and erase not only the needs but also the existences of some individuals on campus. Long weary of the old question, "If you don't like it, then why don't you just leave?," young activists in the South trek on and fight the same battles as the seasoned rabble-rousers before us as well as [new battles that continue to crop up](#). As a born-and-bred South Carolinian, the cause, along with all of its complicated and messy confrontations, is now mine to take on too.

For those of us torn between love for our home and the toxicity of "Southern pride," rebellion is by no means new. Universities in the '60s and '70s were characterized by many as breeding grounds of civil unrest, and Southern campuses were no exception. Recently the annual [American Freshman survey](#) found that college students, specifically incoming students, are more likely to engage in activism now than at any other time in the past 50 years. This resurgence of student protesting began before the devastating announcement that Darren Wilson was not indicted, but the events in Ferguson, Missouri afterward were an indisputable catalyst for nationwide activism.

On Southern college campuses the old adage "never the twain shall meet" isn't applicable: the energized politics of youth meet the remnants of the Old South's staid affairs. The new youth of the South, [more likely to be highly educated than past generations](#), sometimes proud to don their Southernness and oftentimes embarrassed to take ownership of such a complicated and messy heritage, have a tendency to clash with the stoicism the region is known for. So what does Southern activism look like from millennials on college campuses? Just ask those at [#DismantleDukePlantation](#), [We Are Done](#), [Concerned Student 1950](#), [Louisiana's budget](#)



[cut protests](#), [USC 2020 Vision](#), [Appalachian State's administration occupation](#), [#UTDiversityMatters](#), and [Georgia's #UndocumentedUnafraid](#). Across the country students are pushing for their colleges to be more equitable and inclusive in big, substantive ways. Statistics site FiveThirtyEight [examined the demands](#) racial justice student groups have made at 51 schools.

The most frequent demands for current student groups include increasing the diversity of professors, requiring diversity training, funding campus cultural centers, increasing student diversity, and keeping track of race-related offenses on campus. Protestors at some universities and colleges have also called for the renaming of campus buildings bearing the names of known racist figures, while other student groups have demanded explicit recognition of their schools' oppressive histories. University of Alabama student activists presented the option for either solution in their list of demands: "Remove the names of white supremacists, klansmen, confederate generals, and eugenicists from classroom buildings or include a visual marker to indicate the history of racism that the building's namesake was associated with." A handful of schools have agreed to such [name changes](#) on [university buildings](#) while others continue to [hold out despite rising tensions](#).

While the acquiescence of administrators is a tough battle to win as a student activist, convincing students that they have the power to stand up for what they believe in is even harder. Apathy from the student body can be exceptionally difficult to fight on campuses that traditionally have been dominated by middle- and upper-class white students. At the University of Alabama, Amanda Bennett, a senior English and African-American studies major and co-organizer of the We Are Done movement, says that much of that apathy and lack of involvement by minority students in leadership roles is driven by [The Machine](#), a powerful secret society that

has operated with the tacit backing of the Greek system for decades and continues to monopolize student government. Not coincidentally, [We Are Done's list of demands](#) clearly specifies that the university administration and board of trustees recognize the existence of The Machine.

Cassidy Ellis, a master's student in communication studies at the University of Alabama, says, "In my many years at UA, it has often felt as though the issues that concern minoritarian groups—women, POC, LGBTQ+ students, differently abled students—are an afterthought. I think these issues are slowly becoming more salient in the minds of students, faculty/staff, and the administration, but I'd like to feel as though the issues we face are being addressed proactively."

While it may lack the name and storied history of Alabama's Machine, the University of Missouri, which is arguably the [heart of recent student activism](#), has its own Southern tradition of stifling the concerns of minority students. Senior English and political science major Samantha Franks remembers how hard it was to be supportive of Concerned Student 1950 while also holding office as an executive in student government. Concerned Student 1950 is an activist group focused on racial justice at Mizzou whose name pays tribute to the year the university admitted its first black student. The group set off a wave of student coalitions across the United States protesting and presenting demands to university administrations. "Anything I said or did would be seen as a representation of that government and not necessarily just of my beliefs," Franks says. "As such, when CS1950 first emerged, I—and the rest of my Cabinet—were really cautious. That changed during homecoming. At that point, CS1950 stopped the parade to protest the failings of the administration. As a member of the homecoming court royalty, I was in the car behind [then-]President [Tim] Wolfe. I watched him ignore the students. I watched the police threaten them. I was utterly helpless and useless in that moment, and that's never been a position

I'm comfortable with. It was a seismic shift, then, for me." Mizzou has now lost \$2 million in donations over tensions on campus, so the institution is wedged between a rock and a hard place in light of the Concerned Student 1950 demonstrations.

It's not news to anyone that things move slower down South. Words come in drawls, and the heat and humidity can be suffocating, making days crawl on like molasses; in similar fashion, Southern politics and activism traditionally have lagged behind the progressivism exhibited in other state governments. Few truly know the cult of "heritage" like Southerners do. "Heritage" has long been a word designed to bring us all together at the table—one built on racism, homophobia, transphobia, misogyny, xenophobia, violence, and a strong tradition of sweeping things that just ain't "polite dinner conversation" under the rug. This stereotype denies the South its diversity; a veritable motley crew, Southerners call a region that's a colorful medley of experience and identity home. But still, that narrative is often replaced by a national stereotype that dismisses the South as a shameful stain on the fabric of America.

Nicole McCauley, Virginia native and first-year graduate student at Brandeis University's Heller School for Social Policy and Management, participated in the Ford Hall 2015 sit-in, in which students issued a list of 13 demands and occupied the administrative building on campus for 12 days, including Thanksgiving Day. McCauley says that she didn't come into her activism until heading to Brandeis University in Waltham, Massachusetts, but she expects that it will bring her South again one day: "I think activism is necessary in the South simply because of this country's history with Southern individuals: how they were treated, how they are still treated, and how strong traditions play a role in continuing to make certain Southern spaces still racist, sexist, and otherwise oppressive."

But the “South” isn’t relegated to the southeastern region of the United States. At Pennsylvania college Bryn Mawr, two young women faced backlash after hanging a Confederate flag in their residence hall, citing “Southern pride” as the reason for ignoring the requests of their peers to remove the symbol of hate from their common living area. “The South is full of traditionalists and conservatives, which can make it especially difficult to navigate as an activist looking to make progressive change,” says McCauley. “This is not to say, however, that the North is not racist, sexist, and otherwise oppressive; I think the South gets the brunt of this reputation unfairly...there is, after all, no border that exists to keep oppression bound to one geographical location only.”

University of South Carolina senior psychology major, spoken-word artist, and queer black activist Joseph Sewell also takes issue with the notion that other regions of the United States are absent of oppression when compared to the “narrow-minded” South. Sewell, a Philly native, Floridian, and participant in the USC 2020 Vision walkout last November, says, “We have this pervasive belief that the South is the last bastion of bigotry in the United States. And as someone who isn’t Southern, I can see that...these problems are American problems, not just Southern problems.” The South may make itself an easy target, but it isn’t a vacuum of intolerance.

Despite everything, for some of us, the South is still home. The millennials who have often begrudgingly taken on numerous battles to make where they live truly home make up a new generation of fighters with new tactics, messages, and ideals for the South.

I believe the feeling can be summed up by Ellis’s words: “For a long time I couldn’t wait to leave the South. I was excited to move somewhere else and abandon this region. But then I realized that if everyone who were trying to make change here [left], who were trying to make

this region a better and more hospitable place for everyone to live, then nothing would ever change. I think it's especially important for Southern-identified people to work to change the region, because if we don't, who will?"

## 2020 VISION

### Students Invested in Change

**KARLI WELLS:** The fall of my junior year [2014], it was announced that Darren Wilson was not going to be indicted in the death of Michael Brown. At that time, I was on the executive board for the NAACP [at USC], and it was growing, but not where it needed to be yet. Jaquon Irby was the president at the time. I was on Twitter and could see that there was a lot of pain just in the people who were around us, so I texted Jaquon and I said, “Hey, we need to have a vigil.” He asked, “Can we do that tonight?” and I responded, “I think we can pull it together.” So we started organizing that almost immediately.

10:30 that night, we had a vigil and almost 100 people or so came to the Horseshoe. From that, this group emerged; there wasn’t any direction to it, people would just volunteer to do what needed to be done because over the next two weeks we hosted a second vigil, and then a forum, and a march, and a planning session. But we were planning all of this through GroupMe [an online group messaging service and app], and it kept growing and it hit like 100 people – or 150, maybe 200 people – and there were maybe 15 people who were actively involved in doing the work. It got to be too much.

Parallel to that narrative is that the NAACP chastised us because we weren’t officially large enough to have a college chapter. So because we were organizing under the NAACP name (or at least that first night we were organizing under the NAACP name), the NAACP state office called and said absolutely not. Now mind you, this is what the NAACP is for. But then we started

getting a lot of positive press and they called us back and asked, “Why aren’t you organizing under the NAACP name?” So between those two things, I decided that we needed to have some sort of organized structure – without the red tape of the NAACP – and that was more than the fluid structure of GroupMe – in order to actually be effective. So then we started planning the process for what would become SIC.

**MEGAN TAYLOR:** There was the Horseshoe vigil for Mike Brown and I was really, really sick, but I knew that it was happening and I felt like I needed to go (this was as I was getting really involved in activist, “woke,” Twitter). So I went, and that event, if I remember correctly, spiraled or spawned a lot of student activist leanings: a lot of people were like, “What can we do about this? What can we do that’s going to create change, that’s going to prevent this from happening again and address the situation?” So that naturally led into the formation of SIC.

**CLARIE RANDALL:** I also attended the Horseshoe vigil for Michael Brown in the fall of 2014, but in the capacity as a staff photographer for *The Daily Gamecock*. It was around that time that I began to feel more uncomfortable standing on the outsides of events to shoot photo when my heart was really with the other activists that were gathering; I cut back on taking assignments for *The Daily Gamecock* and eventually left the staff the next semester.

I found SIC in January 2015; I was a second semester college sophomore and President of FemCo, which met in the same room an hour after SIC, so although I wasn’t really in the position to be taking on more responsibilities or co-curricular activities, the meeting time and location were far too convenient for me to pass up (also because I am bad at saying no, and was

even worse at it my sophomore year). So I settled into that first meeting, where many of my friends also showed up to express their interest in promoting change on USC's campus, and then settled into adding another regularly scheduled Wednesday evening meeting on my phone's calendar.

**KW:** We called that first meeting and maybe 30 people showed up. [At that meeting] we made a list of all the things we cared about – all the issues on our campus, all the issues nationally – as a starting place for what we thought we were going to organize around. That was the very beginning. So in the subsequent meetings we tried to figure out what we could do around these issues and what made the most sense in terms of where we start addressing those issues (because police brutality is an issue, but that's not necessarily something we can tackle at this moment, on this campus, and make a difference). And so we sort of narrowed that down to focus on what was happening here, locally, around us.

We wanted to be an organization that was creating action around the issues that we cared about, and did more than just host forums and dialogues. I didn't want it [SIC] to be something that had a person at the top with other people sort of falling in line, because that's not what organizing is. It was intended to be a collective vision. But because USC has its rules, on paper we had to have a president, and a vice president, and a treasurer, or whatever, which I think hindered us long term.

**CR:** That semester, SIC worked through the challenge of becoming a registered student organization on campus, as well as figuring out what its purpose was. As a group, we struggled



through countless attempts to implement a flat leadership structure (which ended up not working out) and had to essentially re-organize every week, as some members would leave and others would show up, unaware of any previous progress we had made in prior weeks. It grew frustrating and monotonous, and we knew we ultimately needed a better plan.

**MT:** On a larger scale, we had started to look at the issue of the [Carolinian Creed](#)<sup>1</sup>.

**CR:** The Carolinian Creed is a document created in 1990 that serves as “the University’s social honor code” and “a complement to the University’s conduct code” (University of South Carolina, n.d.). While the Creed is generally unenforceable, unlike the student conduct code (which is why SIC ran into problems when trying to work with it), that hasn’t stopped free speech groups from raising hell about it. In fact, the Creed’s website is very careful in its wording, reading, “Instead of limiting student’s rights through the creation of more rules, it set an example for all to follow” (University of South Carolina, n.d.) so as to carefully maneuver around free speech groups like the Foundation for Individual Rights in Education (FIRE).

FIRE’s mission is “to defend and sustain individual rights at America’s colleges and universities. These rights include freedom of speech, legal equality, due process, religious liberty, and sanctity of conscience—the essential qualities of individual liberty and dignity” (Foundation for Individual Rights in Education, 2017). While FIRE identifies as non-partisan, it often targets diversity and social justice initiatives on campuses while supporting libertarian groups and right-wing causes. FIRE directly targeted USC around the same time of the walkout and its aftermath, but due to an incident that occurred when the Libertarian group on campus held an inflammatory

<sup>1</sup>See Appendix A for the full Carolinian Creed.

“free speech” event on campus. As tensions were already high in institutions of higher education across the nation due to student protests, debates over “safe spaces” and “trigger warnings,” and discussions of the erosion of free speech on college campuses, the USC College Libertarians’ event stirred the pot even more. At the end of a complicated, months-long back-and-forth between the University and Ross Abbott, the President of the USC College Libertarians at the time (who was threatened by the University with disciplinary action that was later dropped), he ended up taking USC to court with the support of FIRE backing the lawsuit (Morey, 2016, February 25). Because of this, USC actually wound up making FIRE’s 2017 “10 Worst Colleges for Free Speech” list, residing among the ranks of prestigious institutions such as Harvard and Georgetown Universities (FIRE, 2017, February 22).

**MT:** I think a lot of us saw it [the Creed] as a framework under which we could do a lot of really good work: that the Carolinian Creed was expecting us to behave a certain way and to live up to certain standards of civility, and kindness, and education, and justice. We started to try and push at that, but when we got to people who worked in various offices that had power over things like the Creed, we realized that there was not only a potential legal issue with enforcing the Creed (because of organizations like FIRE that target honor codes), but also that a lot of people weren’t really interested in enforcing it: they were more interested in having it as an ideal that they could trot out for things.

**CR:** Then, in early April, “[whiteboard girl](#)” happened. Within a week, virtually every student on campus had heard about the incident: in one of the Thomas Cooper library study rooms, a USC student named Gracen Tilton sent a SnapChat of herself writing a list on a whiteboard, “reasons

why USC WiFi blows,” the first reason listed containing a racial epithet. While SnapChat deletes images and messages on users’ phones after a given period of time, it doesn’t protect from screenshots. The screenshot in question spread rapidly over Twitter, eventually making its way to Facebook and multiple local news outlets.

**KW:** Hands down, I don’t think anybody would disagree that it [the catalyst] was the Gracen Tilton quote on the whiteboard incident – it gave us [SIC] direction, in a lot of ways. One, we were the only group of people that said, as a student organization at least, “This is what we want to do.” It wasn’t a matter of other people not wanting to do that, but that’s what SIC was created for, that was the space that needed to be filled that no one else had filled yet. So we said we needed to have this forum, because it [the incident] was all people were talking about, and it was not the kind of thing that had happened just once.

**MT:** SIC (because we had all experienced this before – white student does something racist, gets caught in the act, and then everyone’s upset but nothing happens to them) had forums and conversations around it. And we were trying to say, “This is upsetting. This is not just a one-off, this is a part of the atmosphere at the University and you can’t ignore this and expect students to feel safe and protected, but also feel like the university is doing its due diligence of addressing racism and systematic injustice.”

**CR:** But we [SIC] also knew that it wasn’t often that instances of bigotry on campus blew up like this, out in the open for everyone to see; while many in the group had plenty of their own stories to tell about racism, sexism, homophobia, transphobia, xenophobia, etc. on campus, we all knew

that proof is hard to come by, and even with modern technology it still isn't easy to document every time someone says or does something hateful. With this clear evidence presented (paired with the feedback about USC's campus climate that members had been gathering at regular tabling events on Greene Street), we all quickly rallied together and organized a town hall to discuss the Carolinian Creed. This town hall, dubbed "Unite USC," was more successful than many of us were anticipating: the ballroom was packed, consisting of mostly students, some faculty, and a few administrators. Representatives from local media stationed their cameras and equipment at the back of the room.

**KW:** So, for us to hold that event, it did two things for us. One, it gave us direction, but two, because that event was so successful, it gave us clout with the administration that I think later on would help them listen to not only SIC, but also USC 2020 (because in their eyes those two things are the same thing).

It's [my memories are] murky, because everything after that happened so quickly. The forum happened, and I think that is when all of the invitations to sit on this committee, and that committee, and this other committee all started. Because it was the University's way of saying, "We're listening to you." There was the Welcome Table Steering Committee [Collaborative on Race and Reconciliation Steering Committee], the Diversity and Inclusion Advisory Committee and the Social Compact Committee [Social Compact Task Force] ... I feel like there was one more, at least. It was so silly. [Karli had to check her resume for the other, which was the Racial Justice Summit Planning Committee.]

**CR:** Because of my general involvement on campus, I also was invited to sit on the Social Compact Committee and Diversity and Inclusion Advisory Committee, of which Karli and I were both members in the fall of 2015.

**KW:** The committee invitations started, but then also from that incident, I think that's the first time that we [SIC] started the loose framework for what would become the list of demands. Because after the Gracen Tilton incident, we had a more narrow focus. We had been looking more broadly, not just at USC, but at the community in general. So that's when the brainstorming happened around all of the issue areas happening at USC.

**CR:** While the discussion at Unite USC was somewhat productive, after the event SIC fell back into a similar monotony of indecision as before. We had more of a guiding light now, but we still didn't have a direct plan for what we wanted to accomplish; eventually, final exams ensued, the semester wrapped up, and we all parted ways for the summer.

I stayed in town that summer, taking classes and doing research on campus, and lived in an apartment building a few blocks down Main Street from the South Carolina State House. On July 10, the Confederate flag mounted outside the State House finally came down, after much local unrest at its continued prominence and its connection to the devastating massacre at Emanuel AME church in Charleston that happened almost a month before. South Carolina and former Governor Nikki Haley were the hot topics in media that summer, and when August rolled around and university students started creeping back onto campus, SIC started back up with a renewed spirit.

SIC held a second forum that fall, named “[State of the Students](#)”<sup>2</sup>,” around the same time that President Pastides gave his annual “[State of the University](#)” address and Alicia Garza, a founder of Black Lives Matter, visited campus.

**KW:** We had the second forum and people didn’t show.

**CR:** I personally cannot speak to the success of the “State of the Students” forum because, ironically enough, I was not there due to a prior engagement.

Karli was interviewed for an article in *The Daily Gamecock* about the State of the Students event, where she discussed SIC’s organizational structure and mission: “The organization operates under what Wells called ‘flat leadership’ or ‘equal voices,’ which means that the opinions of organization administrators do not have any more weight than the opinions of regular members. ‘No one face is the face of USC, so no one face should be the face of our issues,’ she said” (Barber, 2016, September 16).

Flat leadership is a concept that Karli brought into SIC’s vision from the very beginning. Everyone in SIC was incredibly on board with the idea, despite the fact that most of us were unaware of how flat leadership worked in practice; while we liked the thought of “equal voices,” I’m not sure many of us had ever seen flat leadership executed before. Inevitably, our idealism doomed us from the start. There’s always going to be a leader, or leaders, of a group, and specifically in the context of SIC, Karli was designated on paper as the president. We carried the

<sup>2</sup>See Appendix B for *The Daily Gamecock* article about the State of the Students (referred to in the article as the “second Unite USC forum”).

idea of flat leadership over into the implementation of 2020 Vision, which led to our greater issues of anonymity and eventually fed into the unraveling of SIC.

But luckily, we spent SIC meetings during the 2015 fall semester moving in a more definitive direction; we decided to use the commentary from Unite USC, student feedback collected from tabling on Greene Street, and our own experiences at the University to create a list of concrete issues facing minority and marginalized communities at USC. SIC was created with the intention of advocating for a multitude of minority and marginalized populations and communities on campus, many of which were already reflected in separate student organizations that fell under the Office of Multicultural Student Affairs. So the list of issues that we were working with reflected many student identities on campus; the members of SIC wanted to make change that reflected our many (and intersecting) identities. That list grew and grew, then shrank as we reined it in, targeting the most prevalent and worthwhile items. Many of these were chosen out of practicality: issues that were feasible to tackle, with a fairly clear-cut solution, and oftentimes were already implemented by peer institutions, providing a model that USC could follow. While many of us in SIC were idealists by nature, we nixed suggestions that were too “pie-in-the-sky” and stayed the path of pragmatism.

**MT:** There were a lot of different issues students wanted to work on; we compiled a list of issues that spanned from very specific “fix this, do this, check on this,” to larger, long-term issues of funding and how the University runs certain things. A lot of the responses that we’d gotten [from the University] were, “Oh, you don’t understand how complicated this is, you don’t know what you’re talking about,” so we had planned to present a full policy presentation of issues, saying,

“Here are the issues we want addressed. Here are the solutions that we’re proposing; here is the research of other universities that have done this; here is what this has been showing at our peer institutions and our aspirant institutions; here’s how this benefits the University as a whole; here’s how this benefits individual students; and here’s what happens if you don’t address this.”

[We wanted to approach this] not only from a personal perspective of what we’re going to do and how we see this issue, but also how this affects students in the long run and how it decays the higher education atmosphere. So we set out to have this demand list and have it be at least a starting point for a lot of different issues for students: from trans student inclusion to working on having proper acknowledgement of the role of slavery in building the University.

**CR:** SIC meetings consisted of laptops and papers strewn about the floor of our meeting room in Russell House: groups of members huddled together, conducting research on University policies and practices, scouring websites and databases diligently, and reporting back to the main group about what we had found. Eventually, this list of issues turned into a list of solutions, and we were left with the question of where to go next.

**MT:** When we were thinking about the policy plan, we had a goal of putting this out during the University’s big MLK week; we were going to do this at a very apropos time, and it was going to be very poetic, and we were going to have plenty of time to plan, and it was going to be great. I can’t remember exactly what group of things caused us to change it – it was a mix of the fact that Mizzou was happening and we were seeing a lot of students capitalize on this ability, this space that was being created for students to speak; [students] capitalizing on universities being just a



little bit afraid of what would happen when their students started asking for these things, and how they would respond. Not just because of Mizzou, but because there was so much angst on campus already, and we didn't want to wait until MLK week. By MLK week, winter break would have happened, exams would have happened, people would have been spending their week at MLK breakfast and listening to speakers, and everyone would have felt nice and warm and fuzzy inside about USC. While we didn't want to stir anger against the University, we wanted students to be in a frame of mind that all of this angst fit into a framework in which we, people of marginalized groups, are not being centered as a priority by the University. Also, there were significant events that had come up during Homecoming, a flood happened somewhere in there, and maybe we were all a little bit stir-crazy, I don't know.

**CR:** A lot of the tension going on at USC at the time was perpetuated by that year's [Homecoming Commission's treatment of the Step Show](#)<sup>3</sup>. The Step Show, which is an event showcasing NPHC (National Pan-Hellenic Council) organizations during Homecoming, was cancelled and a lot of the Black community at USC was justifiably upset. There was some back-and-forth on Twitter, and ultimately the [press release](#)<sup>4</sup> the Homecoming Commission released about the cancellation of the Step Show did more damage than good. USC's Homecoming Week, which already catered to White Greek Life on campus, only got whiter.

Outside of our work with SIC, I spent a lot of nights hanging out with Karli in her room; one night, Karli, Megan, and I were all crowded on Karli's bed, discussing our contempt with

<sup>3</sup>See Appendix C for *The Daily Gamecock* article about NPHC organizations withdrawing from Homecoming activities in 2015.

<sup>4</sup>See Appendix D for the 2015 Homecoming Commission's press release concerning Homecoming week events and the controversy surrounding the Step Show.

Homecoming, University practices in general, and what we could do about it with SIC. I pulled out a notebook and sketched some ideas down: one of those concepts was the “Here’s No Place Like Home” image (a joke about that year’s *Wizard of Oz*-inspired Homecoming theme, “There’s No Place Like Carolina”) that we used on 2020 Vision’s online petition and across our social media platforms.

Here’s No Place  
Like HOME

**KW:** Just the idea that the University of South Carolina has not stopped calling me for money; Homecoming is about alumni, and if I didn’t enjoy my college experience, what am I coming home to? HBCU (Historically Black Colleges and Universities) Homecomings are so much a part of the culture and are so much a family reunion; it’s a space that’s for us, by us, about us, celebrating us. To be Black and know that tradition, and be on a PWI (Predominantly White Institution) campus and not feel like Homecoming includes you at all – to know that Homecoming does not, in fact, at all, include you, and the one thing that did include you has now been taken away because there’s no Step Show – it sort of magnifies the situation.

**CR:** Everything happening all at once changed the conversations we were having both within and outside of SIC. Considering the climate of unrest at USC, as well as on college and university campuses across the U.S., the timing seemed to fit together too perfectly and many of us in SIC grew irritated with the lack of information we were able to find about University policy, budgets, and the like.

**MT:** All of the budgets aren't online because USC is a public university and if the budget is public, then everybody gets annoyed when their pet project doesn't get money (and everybody wants to be petty about money). However, there should be a way for students to figure out why one set of student life programs is being funded to the maximum capacity while student orgs are scraping together money.

**CR:** This weekly rhythm of going to SIC meetings where we were trying to create policy proposals and plans for implementing our ideas eventually started to wear on all of the members, and I recall leaving meetings feeling like our work was utterly useless and destined to go nowhere.

**MT:** We [SIC] realized that we didn't have the tools to put together a policy proposal; that student government was intentionally made in such a way that they didn't have any sort of real policy-making power, and we looked around and said, "This is silly. Why are we going to keep trying to mess around down here until they [administration] say, 'Oh do you have a problem, would you like some help with that?'" No, let's just go straight to the top: here are our problems, here are some solutions we suggest, figure it out (because that's your job). It is not our jobs to

make the University's policies for them: we are not in the position to do so, and there are people who have degrees who have studied higher education for years and years who know why these things are necessary, and they've been saying these things and no one's listening. What they [administration] needed was not for us to put together a policy proposal; what they needed was for us to give it [these issues] the push that it needed to say students are aware of this, students want this change, it's important to us, and we're watching this.

There were also the Homecoming issues and all these intervening factors, and we thought that there wasn't really a reason for us to wait until we had a full policy proposal, so we decided to dispose with the long-term plan and go with something more public.

## **The “Three Day Hellhole”**

**CR:** On Thursday, November 12, 2015, Karli and I made the decision that ignited what would become 2020 Vision.

**KW:** [I remember] sitting in a University administrator’s office, listening to other University administrators say out loud, “Have you seen what happened at Mizzou? Could that happen here?” I heard that conversation multiple times [that day]. And trusted folks were saying, “This is all the administrators are talking about.” They were worried that [Mizzou] could happen here; little did they know, it was already happening here.

**CR:** That night, Karli and I were entering one of our apartments in 650 Lincoln – we had grown close that semester not only through SIC, but because she lived in the apartment right above mine – frantically talking with one another about what she had overheard that day, when we stopped in the doorway, turned, and stared directly at one another. It was as if we had read the other’s mind; “We need to do this now,” came out of our mouths, and 2020 was set in motion. Admittedly, we wavered on this decision for a little while (like 30 minutes), because we knew it was quite the undertaking we were about to get ourselves into. Nevertheless, we persisted.

**KW:** Really, we were capitalizing on their [the administration’s] fear. Because when people react and they’re afraid of something, it’s already on the forefront of their mind. The impression that I got from the administrators was that their belief was that USC was better than all these

other places [having protests]: [the idea that] USC doesn't have those problems. Which I think signifies how out of touch they were with the student population, or at least part of it.

**CR:** Making the decision to take action was the easy part; actually setting 2020 in motion proved to be more difficult. Somehow Megan got roped into this as well, which was likely because she was always hanging out at 650 Lincoln, despite not living there. That night, we made the call to separate SIC from 2020 Vision: one was a student organization, the other a movement. But since SIC had played such an integral role in researching and structuring what became the twelve demands, SIC members were the first ones contacted to take part in 2020 Vision.

**KW:** The message that I sent [to the SIC GroupMe] said, "Hey, we're calling an emergency SIC meeting, like right now." Thursday night, in that meeting, we finalized what the twelve demands were.

**MT:** We didn't want to have to do anything that would put anybody who worked in Student Life offices in an uncomfortable position where they would have known what was going on with SIC, so we got a little bit paranoid and kicked people out of [the SIC] GroupMe.

**CR:** It was a very last minute, late night meeting, and I was honestly surprised by how many people showed up to my apartment. SIC was fully on board with what Karli, Megan, and I wanted to do.

**MT:** It [the walkout] couldn't happen within this framework of SIC because we knew we were going to be doing something that wouldn't necessarily be entirely "kosher" – not as in illegal, but

as in we didn't want a student activist organization to get shut down because of a student walkout and march. We didn't want this to become a thing that was formalized, where the University could very easily go, "Who's listed as the secretary, the president, the vice president, and the treasurer of SIC? Let's bring them into the office." We wanted to say that this wasn't from SIC, but a conglomeration of students from all different backgrounds, and they couldn't just pull one of us in the office and expect us to work these problems out.

**KW:** [In that meeting] we had that conversation [about anonymity] because we were worried about what the administration would say, and how people would react, and retaliation, even though they [administration] knew exactly where to come.

**CR:** For a long time, I didn't tell this story because of this issue of anonymity, and I still wholeheartedly believe in the idea that 2020 Vision was a collective of students wanting change at USC. But the decision to be anonymous was also a very conscious, and somewhat selfish, decision by Karli, Megan, and myself: none of us wanted to be singled out (despite the fact that Karli's role in 2020 was obvious due to her other involvement on campus) because we were all worried about the potential consequences of being named by the administration, and the culture at USC is not the same as Berkeley's or any small liberal arts college where protesting is part of the daily fare. It just doesn't happen here.

**MT:** Protesting does not happen at USC; you sort of complain about it [problems] in your own groups, you talk about it with the Student Life people that you know, and everybody acknowledges the problem but nobody ever goes to the higher-ups and says, "We want the thing

and we want it now” or, “We want you to fix this problem.” We wanted to make a statement, and we wanted it to be bold, and we knew that there was sort of a respectability politics line to play. We knew that we couldn’t get into this area of being angry, SJW [social justice warrior], liberal protestors who are “snowflakes” and are “triggered” and whatever, and compared to other universities, we weren’t asking for much.

**CR:** Eventually everyone who had shown up from SIC left my apartment that night, and Karli, Megan, and I began to mentally prepare ourselves for what we knew was going to be a long (and sleepless) weekend. Even the majority of Friday was fairly uneventful (my calendar says that I had an exam that day and a couple of meetings), including the student leader meeting that Karli and I had hurriedly scheduled on Thursday night (in a Russell House conference room that I reserved last minute under the Feminist Collective’s name since we decided to take as many measures possible to ensure that 2020 Vision could not be directly traced back to SIC).

**KW:** Friday, I don’t remember much of the day; I imagine I went to class and work, but I do remember the student leader meeting. When we got to the meeting, we read the list – or handed out the tentative-wording list – to student leaders and asked them if they were on board. That was when [a student leader] said, “We need to add in the Unity Tree for AAAS,” and so we added that to the first demand, and that was really the only feedback we got that night. People just sort of stared at us in that meeting. Other than that, Friday was normal. It was the rest of the weekend where we just sort of didn’t leave the study room in 650 Lincoln except to eat.

**MT:** We were doing this work [on Saturday and Sunday] in 650 Lincoln, which is a cooperative



effort [student apartment complex] between a private group and the University, and there were cameras in the workroom that we were in. While I understand this – surveillance cameras are just there in case like, somebody smashes a window and they want to find out who it is, and typically they don't have audio on them – at one point we looked up and (scream) [we realized] we're being watched!

**CR:** Upon visiting the 650 Lincoln study room later, it appears that this might never have been the case at all; what we thought were surveillance cameras turned out to be motion detectors that trigger the lights when people walk into the study room. However, in our panicked frenzy that weekend, we didn't quite have time to question whether we were being overly paranoid or not.

We were worried about everything – we were trying to keep everything off of our student emails, we were even worried about using the University Wi-Fi. We were worried about sending GroupMe messages that were too specific. I think there's nothing that says, "I'm paranoid about and being surveilled more than 'we should get a burner phone.'" We made separate email accounts (I think a lot of them were still made under my Google account, but I was sort of the background one and I was not a "big enough" person at USC). Nobody was like "I wonder if Megan is involved?" They were like, "Who's she?" Which was fine for me. To an extent now, it's all out in the open and everyone knows, but at the time it felt very high stakes because no one had done anything like this before. The University didn't have a precedent on which we could anticipate their movements.

**KW:** Saturday, we really got into the demands, and I remember being frustrated because there

was more happening than I could control in my brain. And then there were the Google Docs. There were like, seven, at one point and I was overwhelmed because that's not how I function. Megan was thrilled [at the Google Docs, not at Karli being overwhelmed]. I remember being angry at Megan for all the Google Docs because they didn't make sense to me: one said there was like twelve things we still needed to get done, and it didn't make sense, and it wasn't coming together.

[The op-ed that I wrote](#) – mostly [wrote], there are some parts in there that aren't me – got published the day of [the walkout]<sup>5</sup>. So working on all of those things at once, and then trying to figure out what the rules were going to be, what we were going to expect of people – we were trying to have control over a situation that we really couldn't control. We didn't know how difficult it would be to manage people then, but we know it now. We spent most of that Saturday on the wording of the demands, because that had to come first. Then at some point we realized, “[If] we're asking people to do this, we need a plan for how we're going to tell people that they need to come, how are we going to disseminate this information, are we going to litter the campus with demands? Are we going to staple it to doors 95 theses style?” I still have the packs of paper that we bought when that was the idea that we were going with.

**CR:** That whole weekend is mostly a blur in my memory: I know that everything we did was important and stressful and daunting, but honestly, all we did was sit around a table in a 650 Lincoln study room, working for hours on end, until one of us decided we all needed to eat. And then we would leave, get food, and return back to the same seats and continue what we had been

<sup>5</sup>See Appendix E for Karli's full op-ed, “Letter to the Editor: Students who love USC must criticize USC's indifference to marginalized students” from *The Daily Gamecock*.

doing. We occasionally took time to goof off, or get some air when it had become evident that we had spent too much continuous time together without a break: there were points when I thought Karli had finally reached her breaking point with Megan and the Google Docs, and I worried about a fight erupting. But each of us managed to maintain our composure (at least, with each other) that weekend.

Outside of working on the demands, there were lots of little logistical things that we had to figure out, and doing the legwork for all of that was more time consuming than any of us had really anticipated. I took on the task of creating 2020 Vision's branding art, which only happened when I pulled out my notebook and found the "Here's No Place Like Home" art that I had drawn earlier that semester. I cranked out an actual logo for 2020 Vision (based on USC's logo, but with the Horseshoe gates closed), digitized both pieces (on an iPhone), and uploaded them to the platforms we were working on.

But there were bigger hurdles that we all faced: for example, the question of whether or not we were legally allowed to protest on the Horseshoe.

**MT:** This was sort of a funny little

jurisdictional thing – the Horseshoe is public property, but it's also protected because it's part of



the historic homes, and it's also a national park. Is it a public park? Is it a university? Is it a national park? Is it a historic homes district? We literally ended up calling somebody's parent who is a lawyer and she was like, "Girl, I don't know," because we didn't know if we were going to be asked to leave. But we were sort of banking on the fact that it would look bad for them [administration] to get rid of us and push us off the Horseshoe – and we even had an alternate route, we were so prepared – but we were luckily allowed to remain on the Historic Horseshoe and on the bricks, which was much more picturesque.

**KW:** I personally could not see the vision for it. I could see the end product, but there was no structure to it because we didn't know what we were doing. I mean, we knew what we were doing, but we were also kind of just making it up as we went. It was okay *only* because we were in it together.

Sunday took on a life of its own. [But] I even feel like Sunday morning was like "la-dee-dah, this day started great." Panic did not set in until two things happened simultaneously. [1] People were leaving GroupMes and not responding. We couldn't get people who previously worked with us, as individuals on things, to say yes [to supporting the demands]. Nobody wanted to sign off or to put themselves out there. [2] People don't want to put themselves in that kind of danger, because even though they know that they deserve their rights and their freedoms and their justice, sometimes the consequences of what it takes to get there – that barrier for entry – feels higher than what it really is. Especially if you can't see what's on the other side. Which we experienced, because there were a few emails that we got from people saying, "Hey, I really wasn't at the walkout today because (insert various excuses here)," and the moment it [the walkout] was

successful, people were saying, “Oh I want to be a part now.” So between those two things, it was just very, very, difficult to get people to say, “Yes, I will stand for all the things on this list.”

**MT:** In the strangest of ways, somebody got the logistical document<sup>6</sup> who should not have gotten it. The first place we saw it publicly posted was on an SEC sports forum; a Clemson student was like, “LOL look at what these USC students are doing!” and then USC students responded with things like, “We would never do this, we love President Pastides! This is a hoax, this is a Clemson hoax!” So we’re sitting in the apartment having realized that this has no longer stayed within our specific circles of people who could be trusted – it had somehow gotten out.

And then we started getting phone calls. We got phone calls from people we know in Student Life; we got phone calls from administrators. And we’re thinking, “Do we pick up the phone?” It is now Sunday: we have been making signs for the march, and it is now past eight o’clock. All of the administrators should have been in bed by now, but they have clearly been called. There has been an alert sent out, they know what’s going on, and the whole logistical document has been leaked. And then [DrinkingTicket](#) posted the whole document – I remember that.

**CR:** DrinkingTicket is a Twitter account known for rapidly circulating information online about Columbia and USC, and is described on their website as “a viral media account that was created years ago by a couple of University of South Carolina students and has grown to be one of the most popular Twitter accounts at The University of South Carolina. With approximately 3 out of every 4 undergraduate students actively following DrinkingTicket on Twitter it can be argued

<sup>6</sup>See Appendix F for the full logistical document disseminated the night before the 2020 Vision walkout.

that DrinkingTicket is one of the most wide-reaching social media accounts at The University of South Carolina. The purpose of DrinkingTicket is to provide live, local, and breaking information to University of South Carolina students and the Columbia, SC community” (DrinkingTicket, n.d.). DrinkingTicket covers topics such as USC school closings, the weather in Columbia, Five Points drinks specials, hot topics on USC’s campus, traffic updates and car accidents, and what it was originally created for, information about SLED, undercover cops, and DUI checkpoints. As much as I personally disagree with many of DrinkingTicket’s questionable practices, it is not a journalistic account and does not claim to be; it prioritizes being the first to break a story over checking facts, unlike a more credible news source. Despite all of this, DrinkingTicket often gets the story right, and before any other source does.

Once our plans for 2020 hit Drinking Ticket, it felt like the world was collapsing in on us. I think that was probably the closest my body has ever come to actual fight-or-flight mode.

**KW:** We called an additional SIC-esque meeting, although at this point it’s no longer SIC, at this point it’s USC 2020. The information hit Twitter [on Drinking Ticket], and we had a bajillion followers, and my phone rings and it’s John Dozier [USC’s Chief Diversity Officer]. I ignored that call. [The President of AAAS] picked up though, and they had a conversation; then he called me back and I answered. Everything was happening so quickly.

We were sitting in your [Clarie’s] apartment, and I was sitting on the floor shaking, literally shaking, because the tweets that came initially were not support tweets. The president of AAAS was standing in the hallway and calling people [who were originally supportive], saying, “Hey,

what's going on?" and people were telling her, "We just don't know about this." So I was thinking, "Oh my gosh, all the people who have been here with us to this point are not going to show up, and we're going to go out there and it's going to be the people in this room, and that's it." And then I moved from the floor to the couch – and at this point, I had not eaten anything in hours because I just couldn't eat – and the president of the NAACP looks at me and goes, "Listen. Do you believe everything we wrote on that list?" and I said, "Yeah," and she said, "Well alright then! Every time I get like this, every time I face something that, in the struggle for justice, I'm not sure how it's going to go, I try to remind myself that I'm doing this so that the next little brown girl doesn't have to."

That's the only reason I think I got any sleep that night. It was like – you know what? We did this and – with all of the data that we had collected from these people who now were hands off – it was okay. You don't have to show up for yourself, we'll show up for you.

## **November 16, 2015: The Walkout**

**CR:** Sunday night I think I got some sleep, but it wasn't much. The next morning, I woke up, got dressed in my all-black outfit, and drove out of the 650 Lincoln garage with Karli, the banners we had painted the night before, and all of the copies of the demands she had printed out (on 650 Lincoln's printers).

We parked in a lot behind the Horseshoe, and despite everything else that happened that day, ultimately the luckiest thing that happened to me was that my car wasn't towed or ticketed. Karli and I went back-and-forth for a while, sitting there in my parked car, saying that there was still time for us to head back to 650 Lincoln and pretend like that weekend never happened. But we did get out of the car eventually, and carried our incredibly conspicuous banners and lists of demands (in our all-black getups) across the Horseshoe.

**KW:** The sense of relief that I felt when I could see Longstreet [Theatre] and there were like fifty people already sitting out there was, "Oh my God, we're not out here by ourselves." It [that day] was this mix of I am completely and totally afraid, and also not afraid at all. It's not even fear, because you know what you're doing is right. It wasn't terrifying, but you can't help but feel in this moment that this is exactly what people like Dr. King felt. This is how John Lewis had to feel. They knew that they were on the right side of history, but there's always this, "But is this the right way? Is this the right thing?" In truth, there's no wrong way to fight for justice, other than to not fight for justice.



**CR:** As camera crews surrounded the area and watched as the crowd of marchers grew, Karli, Megan, and I sat on the steps of Longstreet Theatre, blending in with everyone else who had shown up, and speaking in whispers so as to go undetected. When it came time to start the march, Karli and I decided to relinquish some of our anonymity; together, we carried a banner with the USC motto painted on it and led the 2020 Vision movement to the Osborne Administrative Building, marching two by two.

**KW:** The comfort I felt in seeing the African American Studies department march with us – I think that was the moment when I was okay.

**MT:** We had been really guarded with letting faculty or staff [members] know about this because some faculty [members] don't have tenure, and some faculty [members] sit on, or are chairs of, their departments and have administrative responsibilities. But the entire Black Faculty Caucus, once they had heard about it, showed up and were with us at Longstreet. They insisted on walking at the back of the group, behind the students. They were totally on board, and it was just this really, really, wonderful show of support from the faculty.

**KW:** By the time we were going to stand up [to start the march], we decided against chanting anything. So it was just silent, which made that walk really, really, long for it to be two blocks. The deafening silence: all I could hear was our conversation and there were camera clicks, and shutters going, and people running.

**CR:** That march to Osborne was one of the longest walks of my life. My shoe was ill fitting and

my foot started cramping once we got to the Horseshoe because I kept trying to flex my foot so that the shoe wouldn't fall off. This, combined with the photographers that I was trying to ignore and the fact that everything was silent other than the rustle of the banner we were carrying, made that walk feel far longer than it should have.

**MT:** Because it got out earlier, we could sort of anticipate what was going to happen. We gathered at Longstreet [Theatre] and we did what we were going to do; we got there [to Osborne] and they [administration] were prepared for us, and we were prepared for them. They [administration] had a whole night, plus the morning, because we do not do early morning protests because we are college students. This was not a 9 AM protest; they [administrators] had several hours in the evening before midnight; they probably all could have gone to bed by 11 PM and gotten a solid nine hours of sleep and then gotten up in the morning and had a few more hours of planning. Especially since they [administration] were aware of what we were doing, they were prepared. They knew we were predictable. So the University was given a chance to allow, in some aspects, free speech. In the end, I think they should be very thankful that they were given this chance to look so magnanimous in the face of student protest, because they came off smelling like roses in comparison to universities who had called the police on their students.

**KW:** John Dozier, who I talked to the night before – so we knew there were going to be plainclothes cops – called right as the march was getting ready to start, with that foolery about how Dr. Pastides wasn't present but wanted to have a handful of the student leaders come in and have a conversation with him on the phone. And I said, "No, we're not doing that. You get none of us or you get all of us."

**CR:** After the last pair of marchers crowded onto the Osborne Patio, we read off the demands one by one. Included on the next two pages are the letter to President Pastides and the list of demands, both of which were printed out and disseminated at the walkout.

Dear President Pastides,

The demands that follow are not new. These demands are a reflection of our collective experiences attending this university and our discontent with the university's dialogue-only initiatives. Despite our efforts to spur committee action, provide our own programming, and advocate for our needs, we have seen few substantial changes in university policy or practices. Therefore, we have yet again taken it upon ourselves to enact change at our university.

We have heard our university question, "Could this be Mizzou?" over the past week. The answer is no. We stand with Mizzou, but our needs are different. Some of our demands need no additional explanation. Others do. While we recognize the existence of racial tensions on our campus, it would be irresponsible to ignore the lived struggles of all minority groups. With this list, we stand together.

The university has done a disservice in failing to address our history of racism that impacts our culture today; USC, like many universities, was built on the backs of enslaved people, and it is necessary for our university to formally recognize this. USC must acknowledge and take responsibility for its history of white supremacy that permeates campus even now. This history continues to exist in subtle ways, as there is an obvious lack of representation of minority groups on our campus. And with an increase in the diversity of our student population, the need for a mandatory faculty and staff diversity training and a larger budget for the Office of Multicultural Student Affairs is even more pressing.

It is the responsibility of our university to hire and train faculty and staff that have the best interests of students in mind. While we acknowledge the difficulties and intricacies of working with students, it has come to our attention that some of our faculty and staff do not always speak or act in ways that benefit students. Specifically, we are calling for an investigation into three administrators who have not responded to student concerns in ways we deem effective, and in some cases, say and do things that are damaging to the student experience. We need the administrators in these positions to be able to stand up for us, particularly when there are so many factors already working against us.

It is not enough for our university to simply comply with government mandates like the Clery Act and Title IX. Our university must take a proactive stance in protecting its students through policy and data collection to better inform policy decisions. We must also recommend that our university publicly oppose congressional bills H.R. 3403 and H.R. 3408, otherwise known as the "Safe Campus Act" and "Fair Campus Act", which, despite their misleading names, would be detrimental to survivors of sexual assault.

Lastly, as you well know, college is a major transition period for all students no matter their identities. Because of this, it is imperative that our university provide adequate and accessible mental health care to its students. No student should ever go without proper care or accommodations due to a lack of information about university resources.

In order to meet the following demands, we are asking that the university create a diverse, representative, knowledgeable Student Board of Trustees. This board will oversee the implementation of our vision before the year 2020. Additionally, to carry out these initiatives, we ask that the university use its many diversity committees to aid in the follow up required for these demands. Show us that you truly believe in no limits at the University of South Carolina.

Signed, 2020 Visionaries

### **Demands for Our 2020 Vision**

- 1) We demand that our university acknowledge that this institution was built on the backs of enslaved Africans. Further, we expect that this acknowledgement is included in tours, especially areas like the garden directly behind the president's house where slaves were once housed. This acknowledgement should be reflected in markers on historic buildings. Additionally, we expect that the university will raise the plaque marking the AAAS tree to increase its visibility.
- 2) We demand that our university improve and expand minority recruitment efforts in order to increase racial diversity on our campus. We call for the creation of a minority scholars program through the South Carolina Honors College.
- 3) We demand that our university provide gender neutral housing and restrooms that are accessible and convenient. We call for our university to create a streamlined process for changing gender markers and names within university databases and records. We require that university personnel use personal gender pronouns as indicated by the individual. Additionally, we ask that our university provide informed, comprehensive health and mental health care that meets the specific needs of transgender students and ensure that all health and mental health care providers are competent on transgender issues.
- 4) We demand that our university acknowledge gender identity and expression as protected classes under Title IX.
- 5) We demand that a transparent and independent investigation be launched into the following university administrators: the Executive Assistant to the President for Equal Opportunity Programs; the Associate Vice President for Student Affairs and Academic Support, Student Life and Development; and the Vice President for Student Affairs, Vice Provost and Dean of Students.
- 6) We demand that our university increase the funding allocated to the Office of Multicultural Student Affairs. Additionally, we require that OMSA be housed in a new cultural center that celebrates all identities. As campus continues to grow, it is imperative that support for all students continues to grow.
- 7) We demand that our university increase funding for the Counseling Center, so that there are more available appointments and more appointments provided free of charge to each student.
- 8) We demand that all faculty and staff, especially those who engage students on a regular basis, participate in a mandatory diversity training provided by the Office of Diversity and Inclusion. This training should be intersectional and representative of a wide variety of identity groups.
- 9) We demand that our university institute a policy of transparency through data collection and dissemination on the topics of admissions and enrollment, campus sexual assault, sexual harassment, and hazing by providing existing statistics in a communicable way and conducting new research to better identify its problems on campus.
- 10) We demand that our university provide a social justice minor and cognate to expand its current offerings to undergraduate students.
- 11) We demand that the Office of Student Disability Services be renamed the Office of Accessibility and Accommodation Services. Additionally, we call for the advancement of student knowledge of this office through new student orientation, residence life, the counseling center, psychiatric services, and student health services.
- 12) We demand that USC Homecoming be restructured to accurately reflect and celebrate the various communities and cultures that exist and continue to grow within our campus, our alumni, and our community. As it stands, Homecoming is just for some, but we all want something to come home to.

**#2020Vision**

**CR:** After handing off the demands the tone of the walkout completely changed, and USC's administrators took it upon themselves to dictate what happened next.

**KW:** She [Provost Joan Gabel] started talking, and it was like, "No, no, no. You have a prepared speech? We have questions. We want answers. Why do you have a prepared speech?" And in my brain I thought, they [administration] want to control this. We have questions, and the fact that you [administration] don't have suitable answers says that there is a problem.

**CR:** While Karli had already told Dr. Dozier that none of us would be going inside of Osborne, the administration still pushed it. We held firm and stayed outside, and after a while (questions to administration were fielded, there were some speeches, and many people gave interviews to the press in attendance) it became clear that our demonstration was over.

**MT:** Because I had come in at the back [of the march line], I was in this really interesting position of being able to see everything that was happening. There were weird adults [someone had come from Atlanta and used the walkout to announce his 2016 Presidential campaign] trying to use this activist moment for publicity, which ... IDK [I don't know], that's your hustle. But there were also plainclothes police officers there: not as combatants of students, but for protection of students and everyone who was gathered there. First off, because there were a lot of people in a small space, but also because all of this got out earlier; there were all of these threats being made on social media – people on Yik Yak [smartphone app that allows users to post and communicate with other users anonymously, all within a certain geographic radius] saying they were going to "call the Klan to throw watermelons at the monkeys marching on the Horseshoe," and so I was very aware of the fact that they [the plainclothes police officers] were not there to

be in opposition to us. They were there to make sure that the situation stayed under control and that there weren't any bad actors from the outside. We had seen universities where students had done sit-ins in offices and had been dragged out by the police; we had seen them be removed from public spaces on campus, and it was surprising to have the police there [at our walkout] as a protective force, [but] that's very much what it was, because the only thing that would have been worse press than having students removed for protesting would be having some sort of act of violence against student protestors and not having any safety precautions in place.

There was a little bit of a dust-up because somebody was out of line during the presentation of the demands, and I saw the officer, who was not reaching for a gun, but he was alert – he didn't know what was going to happen, and clearly the tensions were high. He was very discreet, but he was watching. And I think that this speaks to the fact that USCPD is one of the better campus police forces. They're aware of the atmosphere on campus and the tensions on campus just as much as anybody else is, and they work well within that. But it was interesting to have them in that position rather than having them dragging us out of an office.

**KW:** The most uncomfortable thing [at the walkout]: Dennis Pruitt [Vice President for Student Affairs, Vice Provost and Dean of Students] was there, and at this point he knows he's named [in Demand #5] – he knows his job title – and afterward, he came and shook my hand and said, "Good job," and I could just see the pain in his face.

**MT:** The student reactions can be summed up in a few different categories. There were the people who were out there with us or supporting from the sidelines, there were the people who

are always ready to critique but not ready to participate or to act (which is fine, that's some people's place in the world), there were the people who were majorly opposed – the people on Yik Yak who were saying that they were going to call the Klan and calling it [the demands] reverse racism or PC [politically correct] culture run amok – and then there were, so often the case at USC, the apathetic thousands.

There are a lot of people who aren't involved, some because they don't want to be, some because they don't have the time. When the University is looking at students and what they want, they want to see 15,000 out of 28,000 asking for something – they want to see a majority, a critical mass of students who want something – but there aren't 15,000 students at this University who care. The people who were very opposed were not too difficult to deal with because they disperse pretty quickly; the nay-sayers stick around and are harder to deal with because they're still needling at you a year later about why you didn't do something this way or that way.

**KW:** The reaction [to the walkout] was generally positive, and I think what made the difference there was the administration saying, “Yeah, we have a problem. We want to fix it,” without going outwardly on the offensive. So I think that changed the narrative – and that's really what was the big difference between what happened at Mizzou and everywhere else.

**CR:** There was even a statement released by Wes Hickman [USC's Chief Communications Officer] that reiterated this. The [WYFF4 coverage](#) of the walkout included Hickman's statement:

While we have made great progress in diversity and inclusiveness, there is always more to be done. We appreciate our students making their voice heard, participating in civil



discourse and continuing the dialogue toward making our campus a safe and welcoming environment to all students. The issues they have raised will do much to guide the conversation. In fact, many are already being addressed or are included in the university's strategic plans. We are launching a new initiative designed to host further dialogue and conversation, the South Carolina Collaborative on Race and Reconciliation under the direction of our Chief Diversity Officer, Dr. John Dozier. We are creating a new leadership distinction for graduates in Social Justice to encourage individual and societal efforts to improve the lives of all. The Social Compact Task Force that has been meeting this semester is addressing many of these issues as well, and a full report and recommendation is expected in the spring semester. Just to name a few. We remain steadfastly committed to improving our institution for the benefit of all members of the Carolina family. The leadership and opinions of these students is welcome and much appreciated. We look forward to addressing them as we move forward in creating a safe, welcoming and comfortable environment in which all Gamecocks can thrive. (WIS 2015, November 17).

**KW:** There were three things that happened [in the landscape of student protests] and really, we were in the best of those situations. One, you have the Mizzou administration that doesn't respond at all – and the football team says that they're not going to play before anything happens at all, and even then, it's not change – and then you have administrators sort of ignoring the fact that this is happening, thinking it will die down, and then you have our administration. So maybe not at the level or with the quickness that they have needed to have in the long run, but the fact that they engaged with us meaningfully – because there are ongoing efforts to deal with the demands – I think that makes all the difference. In the immediate aftermath [of the walkout],

there really wasn't much from students. Professors were supportive; there were a couple of faculty groups that reached out. But the immediate aftermath [for me, Clarie, and Megan] was just fear.

**CR:** Really, our work only started with the walkout. While we had anticipated and tried to prevent as much backlash as possible, because of USC's climate and culture, we truly could not have avoided the pushback and still have accomplished what we needed to. Intersectionality is still a concept that is new to many folks, and its prominence in our list of demands pushed some of the people that we thought we could count on away from the movement. However, the intersectional framework of 2020 Vision was exceptionally intentional, from the inception of SIC onwards. Multiple different student identities were included and represented in the demands because so many students with intersecting identities were part of SIC and 2020 Vision.

**MT:** There are trans students who are Black. There are students who want to see the history of slavery talked about at this University, and those people are also queer-identified. There are people who are experiencing things that have to do with microaggressions and racial battle fatigue and they need to be able to have competent counselors within the Counseling Center. The University can't just do MLK week programming, invite Black speakers, give Black students and community members a space during Black History Month and MLK week, and then ignore it the rest of the year. We're really asking them to look at the way they run the university and how they prioritize things and ask, "Is this really representative of our values: of education, of acceptance, of the Carolinian Creed?"

People want to be in the front and people want to take credit, but people don't want to take risks. As grateful as we are for everyone who supported and everyone who showed up, there were some people who questioned inclusion of certain issues on the list of demands. We can ask for everybody's wellbeing to be improved, we can ask for everyone's student experience to be improved, and that's not threatening anybody's wellbeing as a student. This is standing in solidarity because, as fragmented groups, we are very small interest groups and even together we are small in comparison to a 28,000-student university.

There were a lot of people who sat on the sidelines and critiqued but didn't, and haven't since then, engaged in the work of fixing these problems. They acknowledge that there are problems [at the University] but then will say, "Oh well I would have gone about it differently," or "I think that was overly harsh on this person or this aspect of the University." But they could've been involved; there are always a lot of critics and not a lot of people doing the work.

**KW:** None of us are free unless all of us are free, right? Not that USC is some sort of slave system, but the idea that I, as a Black person, don't feel like I have a safe space that I can go to is just as pivotal in the fight for freedom as, "You know what, I am a person who identifies as LGBT and don't have a place where I can go, or the place where I can go to get resources is underfunded or doesn't take my issues seriously." When we saw that Homecoming wasn't inclusive, that impacted not just Black people. That [impacted] everybody who wasn't white and in a Greek organization. And you had to be both – it couldn't just be one. I stand by the list because we worked really, really, hard to be diligent and not put anything on that list that wasn't a true issue.

**CR:** And I think we all [Karli, Megan, and I] still stand by the list. If we didn't, we wouldn't still be talking about it, and we wouldn't still be trying to push our University to better itself. But in the aftermath of the walkout, sometimes it was difficult to stand by what we had done. Of course, there are things that we could have done differently – different decisions we could have made – that might have produced better outcomes. After all, hindsight is 2020 Vision (minor pun intended). But the intersectionality of the list is something that we can't, and won't, give up, no matter how many people say they won't support 2020 Vision because they don't agree with every demand (and there were quite a few people who Karli tried to call the night before the walkout who rescinded their initial support of 2020 Vision because of the demand's intersectional focus).

Admittedly, there were numerous times in the weeks that followed the walkout when the stress and paranoia began to eat away at me, and all I wanted was to go back and completely change the few decisions that spurred the walkout.

## **The Aftermath**

**MT:** The University and its representatives – the administrators, the president – wanted to communicate with individuals. They wanted names; they did not use the forms of communication that we had asked them to. They were trying to pin it [2020 Vision] in a place, in an organizational place, and because we were a vaguer conglomeration of students, that wasn't comfortable for them. So when they were trying to get individual students to come in for meetings, we had no idea what would happen once we got into those meetings; while we had been well received publicly, that was something we could anticipate because they [administration] had time to prepare and because we knew that they wouldn't want to look like the bad guys of the situation.

And we didn't want to get cornered – to the point of paranoia – we didn't want to be stuck in a room where we didn't know what was going to happen, where our statements were being recorded, where we were being asked to speak on the behalf of all students, and potentially asked to put leadership in the form of praise or blame on one person.

And I think this is sort of why we were nervous about what would happen after: even if everybody in Student Affairs was on board and wanted to accomplish all these things, USC has a Board of Directors, and there's a state legislature that likes to jump down people's throats when they do things that are vaguely progressive (and punish universities and remove funding). There are free speech groups all over the United States, like FIRE, who came to our [SIC's] forums and tried to say that we were infringing upon free speech for calling out students or for asking the

University to punish students that used hate speech. So we knew that there were still going to be these obstacles.

**CR:** Because of this medley of uncertainty, Karli, Megan, and I spent the next two weeks living in a constant state of paranoia. We wouldn't text one another, and only talked over the phone if it was necessary. The majority of our meetings were held in my minivan, and I can only imagine the miles I put on it in that short span of time.

**MT:** It [the walkout] felt illicit even though it was very respectful, it was very peaceful, it was very intentional, and it was not raucous. I'm not saying that it shouldn't be raucous – I'm perfectly fine with raucous – but we knew the space in which we were working. Since we had no idea what was going to happen [after the walkout], we felt protective over every aspect. We were driving around in a van, picking people up because we didn't want to meet anywhere too public where we could be overheard, but we didn't want to be anywhere that was University property. We were like, "Do we go to IHOP? Do we go to Waffle House? 650 Lincoln? Or are we just going to drive in this van?" I think that part of it was exacerbated by getting phone calls from administrators on personal numbers.

**KW:** It [2020 Vision] took a toll on my grades, for sure. Let's pretend that semester didn't happen. In hindsight, we probably could have gone without a lot of what we did. I remember the President of AAAS calling me and saying, "I have a question about an African American Studies class, meet me in the garage," and then it was not about a class at all, it was 2020-related – so we're meeting in the garage so we can have this conversation because we're afraid to have

conversations on the phone. But you know what I think that was, honestly, truly? At this point, we hadn't slept. I was literally surviving on Cookout that I ate only at two or three o'clock in the morning because that was when I would realize, "Oh, I haven't eaten today." The week of the protest I literally dropped five or ten pounds.

**CR:** There were many meetings with administrators that happened after the walkout, and trying to retain anonymity became harder and harder. Karli and I went to these meetings, but we always tried to bring others with us; despite that, I'm sure it was fairly evident to the administrators we were meeting with that we had played a large role in 2020, and it became almost undeniable that we were the organizers by the time we met with President Pastides.

**KW:** I remember very little about the meeting with Pastides. I think we were all on the couch – it was me, you [Clarie], and him [President Pastides] – and you were closer to him than I was; it was really weird. But the meeting with Wes Hickman I remember way more of, because that was the first time – I felt like John Dozier was going to cry – we said, "We don't trust you [John Dozier]. Students don't trust you."

They [administration] said to us, "We don't want to put Dr. Pastides up on stage and just have students yelling at him for an hour," and I said, "No, but they've got to yell at somebody." This is where the clout that we had built the previous semester [with SIC] comes in: it was like, look, you already know that we know how to facilitate and have these conversations in a way that is constructive and not destructive, because we'd already done that with the Gracen Tilton situation.

I think he [Wes Hickman] actually said this in a PR class I took over the summer (not verbatim):  
“If not for the way that we [SIC] handled that forum, the University would have had a PR nightmare.” And he thanked us for that.

**CR:** Most of the meetings we went to were incredibly unproductive. While we wanted to have a forum with President Pastides, the end of the semester was encroaching and the idea of planning that before students left for winter break was quickly scrapped: we weren’t able to agree on a time and date to hold the forum and Karli, Megan, and I were swamped with schoolwork (our actual work) and preparing for finals.

**KW:** We came to you [administration] in the way that we did because we wanted to be heard; now that we’ve got your ear, let’s figure this out together. And they [administration] just didn’t want to trust us. And we clearly didn’t trust them. So we left that meeting, and then got all these emails saying, “Can you meet at 8 AM on Thursday morning?” Well no, because I’ve got class, and you’ve got class, and we all have class. And then they offered up the meeting the Friday night before exams, and we were like, “Who’s coming? Nobody, nobody’s coming to that. I’m not coming because I’m failing classes enough as it is fooling with you people.”

**MT:** This continues to be an issue – student affairs and administrators want to meet and they want students to be there, but they don’t want us to be there enough to check our schedules. But they’re also like, “you’re a student first!” Am I? Am I a student first? Do you really think that?

**CR:** Around this point, my role in the aftermath of 2020 starts to diminish, as I was planning to



spend the next semester [spring 2016] in Washington, D.C. We discussed ideas for putting continued pressure on the administration over winter break, but as could be expected for college students, none of that came to fruition. When January rolled around and I left Columbia, I tried to stay looped in to what was going on but eventually faded out due to distance and the fact that very little was actually happening in the wake of 2020. I stayed connected enough to know that a forum with President Pastides was finally planned, and that SIC started falling apart, but other than that, I didn't hear much.

**KW:** We were having these meetings [to plan the forum] and they were at inopportune times, and we were trying to get people from SIC to come, but there are certain people you don't want in that space. When you are advocating for a diverse group of people or issues, you have to be careful that the message doesn't get co-opted, which makes having voices that understand the entire picture that much more important. You don't want people [there] who are going to cause the University to shut down, but you also want don't people who are going to pull you off track. In general, in life, everyone deserves a seat at the table. But there are places and tables that you have to work your way to. If you aren't doing the work to work your way to that space, the door closes and you're left outside.

So you have these meetings – they're all the same – and we spent all this time planning the [President's] forum, and then it finally came and it wasn't much of anything. It was a panel: John Dozier, Dr. Pastides, and maybe one other person just answering questions. And a lot of the questions that were posed to Dr. Pastides he answered, "You know, I don't have the knowledge base to answer that." And so they got deferred, which is fair; he didn't lie. They [administration]

gave an update – a brief, miniature update – on any of the demands that they had started on, which at the time I think was very little. It [the forum] was a great show, and John Dozier talked a lot about his website [Karli rolls her eyes]. Little happened, honestly.

More of the story there is the story of SIC falling apart. People were getting upset because 2020 was much bigger than SIC. I know that, and you [Clarie] know that, and Megan knows that. And really, SIC should know that. But because you have those people who feel like they have more ownership of 2020 than they really do, they were upset because there were people [not in SIC] who were instrumental in making 2020 happen who had a seat at the table.

Ownership of USC 2020 – nuts and bolts – belongs to you [Clarie], me, and Megan. [While] so much of the work that went into the research happened because of SIC, the act of organizing, the action that brought about the change, came from us. It's a weird place to be, especially when the University identified us as the leaders of that movement. That made a lot of people unhappy, but because we [Karli, Clarie, and Megan] were the folks who decided what we were going to act on, there is a level of ownership that they [SIC] don't have. They couldn't tell this story.

I missed SIC once or twice, and I think somebody said something about how they were more productive without me. At the time, I was getting ready to cross [as a sister of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc.] and could not make the meetings anyway, and I said, "Ok, well if that is really the sentiment that you all feel, that you are more productive and get more done without me, then I will step back." It was fine; I wasn't worried about it. SIC planned an event, except that nobody planned it, and then no one attended. So I felt much better, personally, because what that said to

me was, “I am not the problem that you think that I am.” But at the same time, it made it hard because there was really no leadership transition.

That said, there was so much opposition in SIC that last semester that I was present. SIC still has a purpose; there are still things SIC could be doing. And quite honestly, SIC, at this point, could take on custodianship of 2020 if it wanted to, and be that presence. But [at the time] we were in a place where you [Clarie] and I knew that SIC was going to have an expiration date, hopefully when the demands were completed.

**CR:** In May, I returned to Columbia. Karli graduated that semester, and the three of us somewhat moved on with our lives. However, Megan and I (as well as some others we roped in to helping us) did send an email to both Dr. Dozier and President Pastides on November 16, 2016, the first anniversary of the 2020 Vision walkout, to discuss the progress that we had seen thus far and remind administration of the five year deadline (which the movement is named after) that we set for these demands. The response we got was positive, and both Megan and I met with Dr. Dozier shortly after to discuss with him the progress that has been made, and the plans that the University has in the works for accomplishing the goals listed in 2020’s demands.

To Whom It May Concern:

We've been quiet, but that doesn't mean we haven't been busy. After the demonstration held on Monday, November 16, administration reached out to a few 2020 Visionaries to help plan a town hall meeting. We feel that it is imperative that President Pastides be present for this town hall meeting, but due to his lack of availability this time of year, we were unable to agree upon a date for this meeting that would occur before winter break. That being said, there will be a town hall in January when we return.

We commend the University's action thus far on these issues: the public acknowledgements of this movement and the concerns of students, faculty, and staff, and the promises to push greater emphasis on issues of diversity and inclusion and structure solutions to the problems that we continue to see at our university on a daily basis. We know what steps are being taken and what statements have been issued and want to ensure that this fast-paced progress does not remain solely reactionary towards this movement. We are dedicated to guiding and assisting in the process of bettering our university, so long as administration continues to indicate that it is dedicated to our issues as well.

In the meantime, our Chief Diversity Officer has proposed that the University's Diversity and Inclusion Advisory Committee, comprised of students, faculty, administration, and alumni, address each of our demands (as well as other related issues not specific to our list) through subcommittees. While we are committed to working with the University, one of our primary goals has been – and will continue to be – transparency. As we are a movement and not a student organization, this is somewhat difficult, but we are looking for ways to get information out so that everyone is on the same page and can remain engaged. We are also pushing the University to be open and transparent on their end for the same reasons.

The outpouring of support we have received from faculty and alumni has been tremendous. Going forward, we will continue to work with everyone who has expressed their support for our cause and we will do our best to support others as they come forward with their own concerns. In the letter that we issued to President Pastides to pair with our demands, we addressed other concerns that were not explicitly included in the list. Going forward, we will continue to advocate for those important issues as well.

As a coalition of mainly students, we are responsible for our academic lives first, which prevents us from dedicating more of our time to this work. Looking toward the future, we hope to find a balance between having a few trying to represent the whole and ensuring that each individual voice is heard. As always, feel free to tweet us your thoughts or questions.

Signed,  
The 2020 Visionaries

**MT:** As far as what's happened since [the walkout], there's been a lot of really good work from individuals. The demand asking for changes to Homecoming – they [USC Homecoming Commission] got pretty much straight on top of that one since planning for Homecoming starts pretty early. We saw a lot of inclusion in the recruiting process. While there's still some issues there and while it's not really showing the diversity of the University that we want to see, I think that they're making really good progress and making Homecoming something that can be enjoyed by far more people.

Student Disability Services has been doing focus groups on changing the name of the office. The Counseling Center has been working more on LGBT competency and being inclusive of students in their leadership, but I still think there's a lot to be done there, especially because every time a student goes in there and has a poor experience, they do not want to come back, and that's isolating a lot of students. The Health Center has been wonderful in implementing LGBT competency training for all of their staff: they did an open house at the beginning of the year for LGBT students. There's a lot of stuff in the works; there's been a lot of public programming around diversity. If nothing else, it has given a broader awareness, a broader platform, and the University has been much more intentional – from who they invite as speakers to what kind of programs they're promoting – in addressing a lack of representation in programming for the University.

**CR:** To my knowledge, there are some other things that are being worked on, such as programming that is focused on connecting children from neglected and poorer schools in the Columbia area to USC, and creating a new campus map app that has multiple overlays, including

a bathroom map (to make finding single stall restrooms easier for trans students, faculty, and staff) and a campus history map (to acknowledge the often-ignored role of Black people in the University's history). However, I am not aware of how far along those initiatives are, or when the USC community should expect them to come to fruition.

Most recently, *The State* published [an article](#) about two new plaques that USC trustees approved for the Horseshoe in order to recognize the history of slavery at the University. According to *The State*, the plaques will read:

#### Slavery and the South Carolina College

“The Horseshoe, the original campus of the University of South Carolina (established in 1801 as the South Carolina College), still appears much as it did in the mid-1800s. Its buildings and historic wall were substantially constructed by slave labor and built of slave-made brick. Enslaved workers were essential to the daily operations of the college, whether they were owned by the faculty or the college itself, or hired from private citizens. Enslaved people lived in outbuildings, one of which still stands behind the president's house. The University of South Carolina recognizes the vital contributions made by enslaved people.”

#### Slave quarters

“The last remaining kitchen and slave quarters on campus stands as a tangible link to the enslaved people who lived and worked here. South Carolina College, a forerunner to the modern university, owned a number of slaves and hired countless others between 1801

and 1865. Enslaved people made significant contributions to the construction and maintenance of college buildings and to daily life on campus. Despite limited references to individuals, enslaved workers who appear by name in archival records include Abraham, Amanda, Anna, Anthony, Charles, Henry, Jack, Jim, Joe, Lucy, Mal., Peter, Sancho and his wife, Simon, Toby and Tom. Naming these individuals is an effort to remember substantial contributions to the University of South Carolina.”

The article mentions the 2020 Vision movement multiple times, but also says “USC officials say the school already was working toward the plaques before the march. Pastides said he appointed a committee of students, faculty members and trustees to research the issue and draft language for the plaques.” Furthermore, the article quotes President Pastides as saying, “We have continued to make great progress, by the way, not as a response to a demand, but because it’s the right thing to do” (Wilks, 2017, April 21).

While I do not doubt that the University assembled a committee for this task before we held the walkout, I am still left to wonder just how quickly these plaques would have materialized if 2020 Vision had not pushed the administration in the direction that we did. Change is slow: Karli, Megan, and I are all extremely aware of that, and none of us expected for all of the demands to be met by the year 2020. But by setting a date, we were able to make a point about accountability at the University, as well as encourage continued progress on campus, some of which (like the recognition of slavery at the University) we knew was already in the works but thought might benefit from a push by non-administrative entities in the USC community.

Additionally, this article presents the USC administration's clear refusal to acknowledge 2020 Vision. I can't hide my frustration over the claim that USC's progress has been driven "not as a response to a demand, but because it's the right thing to do." If recognizing the history of slavery is the "right thing to do", why are transparent actions only being taken now? Of course progress takes time, but crafting a response in this way ultimately sends the message that the administration's actions are not at all influenced by calls for change coming from the community of students, faculty, and staff at the University. And frankly, isolating the University's progress outside of the context of 2020 Vision feels like a blatant slap in the face. I don't expect administration to be able to push for progress without also a push from the USC community, and it isn't bad or weak to recognize students, faculty, and staff for the dedicated work that they have contributed to make USC better for marginalized and minority populations. In fact, I think it would make us – the University community – stronger.

Reflecting on what I know now about 2020 Vision and its aftermath, there isn't much I would go back and change. My main critique of our work is that I wish we had involved faculty members more heavily; however, due to the rushed timeline in which 2020 Vision came together, we did the best with what we had and tried to make decisions that would protect staff and faculty members in the case of a hostile administration. (Luckily, that didn't happen.) There are some other moves we could have made for our own sake – like relinquishing anonymity sooner – but I'm not sure they would have made much of a difference in the way 2020 Vision played out.

**KW:** [If I could change the way things happened,] I definitely think that we would have played hardball a little bit more that second semester because we were kind of passive, because at that



point we were counting on the University to do the right thing. That was a part of the argument too: people just kept wanting to do things and they felt we were just sitting on our laurels doing nothing when we were meeting with administrators. They wanted to keep demonstrating. I'm not saying we should've [demonstrated again], but there were definitely ways we could have been more aggressive in keeping their [administration's] feet to the fire.

I identify as an organizer. As a lifetime profession of things that I do, I am an organizer. So the number one thing I think that annoys me is when people don't recognize all of what goes into organizing; you see the marches, and the walkouts, and you see the demonstrations without recognizing that you can't just up and do something unless you've had that conversation first. Because if you can have a conversation with somebody and say, "Hey, I need you to change this thing," and they say, "Ok, great," then there's no need for a walkout. You have people wanting to, having had that taste of what that kind of a public action feels like, do more public action, when the bulk of organizing actually happens in meetings with people trying to figure out where to give and where to take.

What it would take to build the kind of pressure that doesn't rely on the University being responsible [for meeting the demands] – I just don't think it's going to happen. That said, my hope is that we did enough that the University feels like they have a place to start. Because in the year before we did all this, there were seven forums where we sat down with administration and were like, "This is what's going on." And maybe not even forums necessarily; because I went to a lunch with Jerry Brewer (Associate Vice President for Student Affairs and Academic Support,

Student Life, and Development) and we had a conversation with a lot of student leaders and I remember him specifically saying, “Well, my hands are tied on that,” a lot.

We [2020 Vision] have given you a way to untie your hands. Since we figured that much out for you [administration], I would hope that you take that and use that as a starting place, and are diligent in that. Because if not, what’s going to happen is this: we’ll be back here. *We* [me, Clarie, and Megan] might not be – it might not be us – but I would hate for you to be having this conversation with a whole new group of students in ten years. And the people who *were* here – the faculty and the staff – will say, “Hey, we’ve been here before.” And so we’ve given you a framework; do something about it. Because it is not, nor has it ever been, our responsibility to have to fight for this. If you’re going to provide for the needs of every other student, you need to provide for our needs too.

CR: 2020 Vision was not only a movement (that I hope will leave some impact on the University), but also an incredible learning experience. As I prepare to graduate, I hope that those behind me continue to raise hell and push for progress at USC, whether that is within the framework of 2020 Vision’s demands or not. Knowing what I do now, I have high expectations for the progress that the University needs to make, and hope that by our 2020 deadline, we will have seen some impactful change.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to thank my co-organizers Karli Wells and Megan Taylor for their tireless and dedicated work; without them, the 2020 Vision movement would not have been possible, and their support and generosity has allowed this thesis to come to fruition.

Thank you to my thesis director, Dr. Ed Madden, whose kind words and invaluable insight propelled me through the deepest throes of this process (and who did not give up on me despite overhauling my topic at the last minute). Thank you to my second reader, Gavin Weiser, for being encouraging, compassionate, flexible, and supportive, all while challenging me to do better than I have and be better than I am.

Thank you to everyone who walked out as part of 2020 Vision; this movement would not have happened with you, and the University of South Carolina is better because of you.

Thank you to my family, whose support has allowed me to be where I am, doing what I love. To my parents, thank you for listening to and growing with me, and for teaching me to never stop asking questions.

To the friends I have made and become closer with while at the University of South Carolina, thank you for your encouragement, empathy, solidarity, intelligence, laughter, thoughtfulness, ingenuity, and most importantly, love. I wouldn't be who I am without you.

Finally, thank you to the University of South Carolina for being my home the past four years. I am a better person because of you, and I believe that you are (and will be) a better University because of 2020 Vision.

## APPENDIX A

# Carolinian Creed

The community of scholars at the **University of South Carolina** is dedicated to personal and academic excellence.

Choosing to join the community obligates each member to a code of civilized behavior.

## As a Carolinian...

*I will practice personal and academic integrity;*

•

*I will respect the dignity of all persons;*

•

*I will respect the rights and property of others;*

•

*I will discourage bigotry, while striving to learn from differences in people, ideas, and opinions;*

•

*I will demonstrate concern for others, their feelings, and their need for conditions which support their work and development.*

Allegiance to these ideals requires each Carolinian to refrain from and discourage behaviors which threaten the freedom and respect every individual deserves.



## APPENDIX B

# Unite USC hopes to bring about positive discussions

By EMILY BARBER | 09/16/2015 | 12:36am

Students Invested in Change (SIC) is looking to have an open, positive conversation about issues within our community at Unite USC, a discussion-based forum, at 6 p.m. on Thursday in the Russell House Ballroom.

The discussion will cover race relations, gender, sexual identity and Greek life on campus. This is the second Unite USC forum.

SIC President Karli Wells believes that this type of conversation is essential to improving campus-wide acceptance.

“We want to be a community of people who can not only coexist ... we want to be able to thrive together,” Wells said.

The first Unite USC forum was held in April, shortly after the controversial incident in which a student wrote a racial slur on a white board. SIC viewed the incident as an opportunity to discuss issues that had not yet gotten the attention they deserved. According to Wells, some USC professors observed the event to be the first of its kind on campus.

SIC chose topics for the second forum, called “State of the Students,” by collecting narratives from students and determining which topics are most important to the student body. Wells hopes that the discussion will largely be led by students who attend, rather than SIC members alone.

“We’re really asking for the student to be the ones who direct what’s happening,” Wells said. “We’re asking students for their stories, and also their solutions.”

This forum is just days after [Alicia Garza’s #BlackLivesMatter speech](#), and at a pivotal period of social change in South Carolina. Between the shooting of the Emanuel Nine in Charleston and

the removal of the Confederate flag from the State House over the summer, Wells said she thinks South Carolina is in a position to have these kinds of race-based conversations.

According to Wells, SIC is a way for students to become more involved in making our campus friendly to all races, gender identities and sexual orientations. It helps students come up with and implement realistic, tangible solutions to these issues. SIC also focuses on intersectionality, examining what it looks like when identities such as race, gender, sexual orientation and class overlap.

SIC is a relatively new organization, having only begun formal meetings in January. Despite its youth, Wells estimates that 30 to 40 students regularly attend the meetings.

Wells emphasized that, while SIC is passionate about minority issues, the organization is open to anyone who wants to join.

“We aren’t just for black people. We aren’t just for people in the LGBTQ community. We’re for everyone,” she said. “I think the only way this conversation really works is if at some point we have everyone in the room.”

The organization operates under what Wells called “flat leadership” or “equal voices,” which means that the opinions of organization administrators do not have any more weight than the opinions of regular members.

“No one face is the face of USC, so no one face should be the face of our issues,” she said.

## APPENDIX C

# National Pan-Hellenic Council organizations withdraw from Homecoming activities

By PATRICK INGRAHAM | 10/12/2015 | 11:23pm

The National Pan-Hellenic Council (NPHC) at USC has announced there will not be an NPHC stroll-off as part of this year's Homecoming events and that the nine historically black Greek organizations in the NPHC will not be participating in any homecoming events.

The stroll-off event usually has been in the form of a step show but was changed to a stroll-off because the Homecoming Commission failed to reserve a venue for the event.

Vice President of NPHC to the Sorority Council Karra McCray released a statement to the University of South Carolina Association of Black Journalists late Monday night.

"The organizations of which NPHC is comprised were extremely disappointed upon hearing there would be no step show this year, and we are collectively even more frustrated in the cancellation of the stroll-off as well," McCray said.

The NPHC said they had issues with the Homecoming Commission in planning on where to hold the event, whether the commission would sponsor the stroll-off and that the commission failed to comply with the description of the stroll-off submitted by NPHC for promotion citing evidence that the Homecoming Commission referred to the stroll-off as a "cultural dance competition" on its website. The press release said that description is not accurate of what the event is nor something the council agreed to.

On Friday Oct. 9 the commission informed the NPHC via email that the stroll-off would take place at a different time than scheduled and would be on Greene Street, when both parties had planned to have it on the Blatt Field, and that the DJ for the event would be one different from the performer the NPHC had already booked. All of this came without prior notice.

Because of this, the organizations involved in NPHC have made the decision to withdraw from the line-up of Homecoming activities.

The nine NPHC organizations are: Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity, Inc., Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc., Kappa Alpha Psi Fraternity, Inc., Omega Psi Phi Fraternity, Inc., Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc., Phi Beta Sigma Fraternity, Inc., Zeta Phi Beta Sorority, Inc., Sigma Gamma Rho Sorority, Inc. and Iota Phi Theta Fraternity, Inc.



## APPENDIX D

**For Immediate Release:**  
Homecoming Commission  
(803) 777-7130  
[sahc@mailbox.sc.edu](mailto:sahc@mailbox.sc.edu)  
[homecoming.sc.edu](http://homecoming.sc.edu)



### Homecoming 2015 Commission Statement

*Columbia, SC – October 26, 2015* – on behalf of members of the 2015 Homecoming Commission (HC), we'd like to first extend our deepest thanks to all of you who made this year's Homecoming week possible. In light of recent tragedy, it became difficult for our commission to walk the line between allowing events to go on in celebration and being sensitive to the issues that had affected so many within our community. A week before the Homecoming events were supposed to begin, we were tasked with creating/developing/adjusting events to include a bigger emphasis on unity, compassion, and service; a task that we, as the commission, felt was our duty and gladly accepted. We were also informed that we'd need to make difficult decisions regarding our current events, being that many of the staff and personnel we were requesting to make these events possible were no longer able to be of service. We did our best to be forthright and honest regarding changes to the schedule of events to all those who were participating in Homecoming.

We were amazed at the outpouring of support from our students, faculty and staff, and community members who took the adjustments in stride and worked their best to help out a cause that was much bigger than us. In one week, we hosted 11 different events including a competitive field day, an outdoor movie night, a Homecoming King and Queen royalty crowning, a dance competition, and a trivia night, among other week-long participatory events. We also hosted three repurposed events to allow students the opportunity to connect with and serve our greater community: our "Kickoff to Support Carolina" helped students to fill four encouragement banners with nearly 2,000 signatures and encouraged them to fill out 232 thank you cards which were given to first responders in the area. During 'Cocky's Donations' we collected nearly 9,000 items, in addition to several hundred dollars, all of which were donated to local charities in the area. We closed out the week with a celebration event that showcased student leaders and highlighted organizations while recognizing local heroes here at USC and in the surrounding community.

We'd also like to take this time to respond formally and respectfully to the disappointment expressed regarding our Homecoming Week of Events this year. As the Homecoming Commission, it has always been, and always will be our most sincere intent and mission to provide a week of events that promotes and encourages diversity, inclusivity, and the upholding of USC's most recognized tradition. It is our deepest regret that individuals on this campus were in disagreement with this statement and frustrated with our handling of Homecoming week as a whole.

Through analyzing written press and social media, we decided it best to specifically address the facts as they pertain to the overall schedule of events. To begin, it was always the desire of the HC to have a Step Show on campus during Homecoming week. A meeting was held on March 5<sup>th</sup> between campus partners representing both the HC and the Colonial Life Arena (CLA) to discuss the event. During that meeting, the dates of October 15<sup>th</sup> and October 16<sup>th</sup> were given to the HC for use as event dates that would be put on hold with CLA for the fall.

On April 13<sup>th</sup>, a HC representative found out through a friend that there was a concert scheduled for the

night of October 16<sup>th</sup>, and immediately an email was sent by the HC to the CLA representative, inquiring about Homecoming events on the CLA calendar. CLA responded confirming that a concert had been booked on that day because, as the representative stated, “nobody told me it was Homecoming.” The HC immediately began searching for any venue in the area that would be able to host the event (keeping in mind venue capacity and budgetary restrictions) for Friday (10/16), and all were unavailable. A meeting was then hosted on April 24<sup>th</sup> between the HC and NPHC leaders within the Leadership and Service Center to address those scheduling conflicts and discuss possible solutions for the event.

On June 15<sup>th</sup>, advisors working with the NPHC organizations were notified of options we’d be able to offer concerning the Step Show. On June 18<sup>th</sup>, an email was sent to all NPHC presidents with an invitation to participate in a Step Show to be held on October 11<sup>th</sup>; they were asked to confirm their participation by the deadline of the 30<sup>th</sup>, which was then extended due to no reply until July 7<sup>th</sup>. Negotiations made with NPHC leaders were unsuccessful. On July 9<sup>th</sup>, NPHC leaders confirmed in an email to the HC that they, after speaking with NPHC presidents, would no longer be participating in the Homecoming Step Show; they would instead hope to participate in a Stroll-Off, in which proposal ideas were then set in motion. Both parties respectfully agreed there would be no Step Show this year and intended to move forward in other directions to accommodate.

In mid-July, student leaders representing the NPHC organizations emailed a proposal for a Homecoming Stroll-Off to the HC advisor, who then looked over the proposal in order to confirm the event request. A meeting between the Stroll-Off organizers and the HC was held on August 14<sup>th</sup>, to discuss the feasibility and details of the event. The Stroll-Off proposal was tentatively accepted on that same day via email, pending the confirmation of a date, time, funding, and sponsorship.

On August 20<sup>th</sup>, an email was sent to the Stroll-Off organizers confirming that the HC would not be able to directly sponsor their event because we didn’t have any hand in actually planning the event itself, and we couldn’t directly sponsor an event to happen without having a HC Director in charge. All other collaborative events held that week followed the same rule. Also, Stroll-Off organizers expressed their desire to have the event be exclusively open to only NPHC organizations in regards to participation, and because that fact prevented the event from being holistically inclusive, the HC could not serve as a sponsor. The HC was happy to agree to help fund and promote the event as part of Homecoming week. It was agreed upon by both parties on September 4<sup>th</sup> that the HC would provide the needs of the stage, AV/lighting/sound, and security for the Stroll-Off.

The HC and the Stroll-Off organizers met to discuss the Stroll-Off again on September 17<sup>th</sup>. After that meeting, it was confirmed that the HC would still be providing the stage, AV/lighting/sound, and security for the event that would be held on Friday, October 16<sup>th</sup>, time pending the confirmed Carolina Productions event. Stroll-Off reps solidified a venue and a sponsor for their event shortly after that meeting. On October 1<sup>st</sup>, after releasing a statement regarding our Homecoming Week of Events that included the Stroll-Off, we were informed via email by Stroll-Off organizers that we had wrongfully adjusted their description before posting online, which we sincerely apologized for as a grave mistake on our end, and made immediate amends so that an updated press release could go out the next morning.

After the flooding occurred, the HC was tasked in making extremely quick decisions regarding the Homecoming Week of Events to not only accommodate the students coming back, but to also remain sensitive to the needs of this community. Due to already-taxed responders and infrastructure within our community, the parade was cancelled, the Kick-Off/Pep Rally event was altered, and adjustments were made to our week-long events.

In the midst of these changes, the HC was also informed around 4:00 PM on October 9<sup>th</sup> by the sponsor of the Stroll-Off that the Stroll-Off organizers had decided to move the location of their event to Greene

Street to accommodate the already taxed infrastructure of the community. The HC then sent an email confirming that information at 4:59 PM. In that same email, we also included that we'd secured for them a DJ and the stage for their event to hopefully help the organizers out with these last minute changes to the schedule. The HC received an email at 6:32 PM that stated the organizers respectfully declined to have the event at that time. Confused by this, we were informed later that same evening that the decision had not, in fact, been made by the Stroll-Off organizers to switch the location, and that it had instead been a miscommunication to the HC. The decision to cancel the Stroll-Off was made by the Stroll-Off organizers in accordance with this confusion. As this event was a Homecoming promoted event and was not planned by the Homecoming Commission, we could not move further with any plans.

In the past, USC Athletics has granted us the opportunity to be present on the football field during halftime of the Homecoming game; this also became a contested topic as it was suggested that the HC decided to change things this year in choosing to appear on the field during pregame instead of halftime. However, this was actually something completely outside of our control. The HC requested the use of the field during halftime this year, and our request was denied, as local responders in the surrounding community were being honored and recognized. As the men and women being honored were risking their lives each and every day to keep this community safe, it was appropriate that the halftime be dedicated solely to their efforts. Instead, we were offered the pregame show, which we gladly accepted. The week took on a whole new theme, and we did our best to stay as organized and diligent with it as possible.

For any miscommunication on our end, we sincerely apologize. It was an unfortunate series of situations that led to this point, and to the ultimate cancellation of some of our most treasured events. On behalf of the 2015 Homecoming Commission, it is and will continue to be our responsibility to supply you all with the facts to better explain the situation that had unfolded.

**CALL TO ACTION:** If this year taught us anything, it has taught us first and foremost that we have incredibly passionate students, who long to make a difference on campus. We strongly encourage those of you looking to make that difference to stand up and apply to be on the commission, in order to voice your concerns and offer suggestions as to how we can make future homecomings the best, most inclusive programs for ALL students.

We hear your disappointment, and we want that feedback. Attacking the individuals who are often merely messengers in these situations is not only unfortunate, but it's unfair. We ask that you please act – don't just react, and we'll all continue to become better USC students and Carolinians.

All of that being said, it is our commitment to you all that future Homecoming celebrations encourage ALL students to get involved and to have a voice in how we showcase USC to the community and to our alumni. We want as many students to have a say in the planning process, and we hope to encourage future discussions, specifically regarding USC Homecoming 2016 events, inclusion and diversity, service opportunities, theme, and competition.

**OPEN FORUM:** Please join us on **Wednesday, November 4th at 8:00 PM** in the **Leadership and Service Center** (located on the 2nd floor of the Russell House across from Einstein's bagels) for a discussion on USC Homecoming 2016 and all that it can be. We look forward to seeing you there, and making next year's Homecoming experience the best yet.

Respectfully yours in sounding off,

The 2015 Homecoming Commission  
803-777-7130  
[sahc@mailbox.sc.edu](mailto:sahc@mailbox.sc.edu)

## APPENDIX E

# Letter to the Editor: Students who love USC must criticize USC's indifference to marginalized students

By KARLI WELLS | 11/15/2015 | 9:08pm

Our university, much like our state, participates in sweep-it-under-the-rug politics.

As long as we can present the façade of diversity, then we stay out of the limelight. It is no coincidence that the Confederate flag came down only after South Carolina made the national news. Concerns have historically been met with phrases like “my hands are tied,” “help me help you” and “if you bring us solutions we’ll try to make them happen.” Each round of complaints or issues ends with the creation of a new committee on diversity, a forum or an email from our president that promises change, when historically, the only promise that gets kept is that we will have ongoing discussions on our issues.

These discussions did not stop Gracen Tilton. These discussions have not added gender neutral restrooms to our campus. They have not increased minority enrollment or retention, and homecoming is still only meaningful to a homogenous group of students.

It needs to be said that I love this school. However, in 1955 James Baldwin said, “I love America more than any other country in this world, and, exactly for this reason, I insist on the right to criticize her perpetually.” This is how I feel about USC. For all the wonderful experiences and opportunities that we have access to by nature of our status as students, minority students have not been afforded the necessary protections and resources in order to thrive without having to create our own spaces, programs and opportunities that others are given inherently.

We should no longer struggle to provide for ourselves what can and should rightfully be provided for us. Why are we paying the university to provide programming, policies and protections that are for all us but are insufficient for many?

Certainly the events of Columbia, Missouri, mirror the frustrations of us here in Columbia, South Carolina. But to be clear, these frustrations did not come from theirs. For months we have sat on committees, attended forums and waited for change to come.

Unfortunately, it is beyond evident that these things only do lip service for the purpose of keeping up appearances. Some of us have been working hard to find solutions to the issues that plague us. But this work is not our responsibility; rather, it is the responsibility of the administration to provide equitable resources to all students.

There is never going to be a perfect time for us to stand up and say that we need to be heard. There will never be a better time than the present for our university to ensure that all students are afforded equitable experiences without limitations. Instead of a “Stand with Mizzou” demonstration, our solidarity should be in the form of fighting for our own justice.

To our friends at Mizzou and colleges across the country: we hear you, we see you and we stand with you. Right now, we have an opportunity to change the landscape of college campuses for historically marginalized groups and individuals for generations to come.

But in order to do that, we must work on our own campus first.

— Written by Karli Wells, fourth-year African-American Studies student and President of Students Invested In Change

## APPENDIX F

### Logistical Document for Here's No Place Like Home #2020Vision

***DO NOT SHARE THIS DOCUMENT UNTIL GIVEN THE GO AHEAD ON SUNDAY.***

***DO NOT FOLLOW THE TWITTER OR TWEET USING THE HASHTAG UNTIL  
MONDAY.***

#### Table of Contents

1. Communication
2. Schedule
3. Rules for the Presentation of Demands
4. Frequently Asked Questions
5. Abbreviated List of Demands
6. Protest Route
7. Flyer

#### Communication

Communication Rules - This is highly secret until Sunday night! At 7:00 PM on Sunday you may share this logistical document with your membership and friends. When you share this abide by the following rules.

1. **DO NOT USE** university emails, student org listservs, any communication group including university faculty or staff, or facebook groups (specifically Carolina Facebook groups).
2. **DO NOT** share with any USC faculty/staff member, law enforcement, or anyone who might feel obligated to share this with said parties.
3. Instead, use verbal communication (in person chats, phone calls, skype calls, facetime, etc.), facebook messenger, groupme, personal emails, imessage, direct message, etc.

#### Schedule

Sunday

7:00 PM - Student leaders and organizations spread word

Monday

10:45 AM - Social Media Blitz Begins

11:00 AM - Walk Out Begins

11:30 AM - March from Longstreet to Osborne Begins

#### Rules for the Presentation of Demands

1. Follow all instructions of law enforcement.

2. When you walk out do not make a scene; leave silently and calmly.
3. **DO NOT** engage in aggressive, combative, or violent behavior; no heckling administrators, faculty, or students.
4. **DO NOT** engage counter protesters or hecklers.
5. Bystander accountability will be enforced.
6. This is a “We” movement not an “I” movement. No individual is to take responsibility, credit, or blame for the work and actions of the group.
7. In case of an emergency, direct message @USC2020Vision.
8. Speakers and chant leaders have already been identified in order to ensure structure for the protest. Please respect the structure as written and follow the direction of speakers.
9. Stay out of the street, as to avoid blocking traffic; stay on sidewalks and bricks.

### Frequently Asked Questions

1. Q: What do I wear?  
A: Please wear all black.
2. Q: What can I do if I can't demonstrate or march?  
A: If you cannot demonstrate with us please share this document with those who would be interested in or sympathize with our cause. Additionally sign onto this petition [https://www.change.org/p/university-of-south-carolina-president-harris-pastides-2020-vision-at-the-university-of-south-carolina-a6c15882-f42d-4fe0-9be3-ba232b7d169e?recruiter=426839082&utm\\_source=share\\_petition&utm\\_medium=coppylink](https://www.change.org/p/university-of-south-carolina-president-harris-pastides-2020-vision-at-the-university-of-south-carolina-a6c15882-f42d-4fe0-9be3-ba232b7d169e?recruiter=426839082&utm_source=share_petition&utm_medium=coppylink) which will show broad support for our demands, and share the link with other USC students. This allows you to show our administration
3. Q: What do I do if I am approached by media, but do not wish to speak to them?  
A: Find one of our designated media representatives who have been briefed and prepared to give official statements to reporters. They will speak to the press on behalf of the students gathered.
4. Q: What do I do during the social media blitz?  
A: Tweet at @USC2020Vision and share your concerns, experiences, thoughts, and questions for the university using the hashtag #2020Vision. Post on Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, Yik Yak, etc. Please be respectful and do not engage in flame wars, threats, or trolling. You may also email us at [uscvision2020@yahoo.com](mailto:uscvision2020@yahoo.com).

### **Abbreviated List of Demands**

1. Acknowledgement of USC's slave history by including it in the historical portion of tours and adding plaques/markers to buildings constructed by slaves, and raising the plaque for the AAAS Tree to increase its visibility.
2. Expansion and improvement of minority recruitment efforts and creation of a minority scholars program through the Honors College.
3. Policies and accommodations for trans students including gender neutral housing and restrooms and streamlined process for changing gender markers and names within university databases and records.
4. University acknowledgement of gender identity and expression as a protected class under Title IX.
5. Investigation into the following university administrators: the Executive Assistant to the President for Equal Opportunity Programs, the Associate Vice President for Student Affairs and Academic Support, Student Life and Development, and the Vice President for Student Affairs, Vice Provost and Dean of Students.
6. An increased budget for the Office of Multicultural Student Affairs.
7. An increased budget for the Counseling Center so that there are more available appointments and more free appointments provided to each student.
8. Creation of an intersectional diversity training provided by Office of Diversity and Inclusion that is mandatory for USC faculty and staff.
9. Transparency campus-wide through collection and visibility of data in relation to admissions/enrollment, campus sexual assault/rape/sexual harassment, and hazing.
10. A Social Justice minor/cognate allowing students to academically study intersectional forces of injustice and the solutions to these issues.
11. Renaming of the Office of Student Disability Services to the Office of Accessibility and Accommodation Services, and increased visibility and promotion for the office.
12. A plan to make USC Homecoming more inclusive to reflect and celebrate the diversity of our campus, our alumni, and our community.



## Protest Route



@USC2020Vision

#2020Vision

Here's No Place  
Like HOME



*Emollit mores nec sinit esse feros  
Learning humanizes character and does not permit it to be cruel*

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