



COLLEGE of
CHARLESTON

CENTER FOR THE STUDY OF
SLAVERY IN CHARLESTON

Center for the Study of Slavery in Charleston's Commitment to Making #Blacklivesmatter

The Center for the Study of Slavery in Charleston (CSSC) stands in complete solidarity and allyship with the families, protestors, and community members grieving and demanding justice for the recent murders of Breonna Taylor, George Floyd, Tony McDade, Ahmaud Arbery -- and our own Walter Scott and the Emmanuel 9 (to name only a few). We recognize that these acts of violence are deeply rooted in the institution of slavery which served to deny the sanctity and sovereignty of Black life.

As a Center that studies the history and legacies of chattel slavery in the South, we see the recent instances of brutality occurring nationally and in Charleston as but the latest manifestations of our country's long history of violence against Black, Brown, and Indigenous peoples. We are deeply pained by these tragic events, which serve to remind us all that the history of racism and white supremacy are clearly not past: we are still living them, and they are ever-present on our campus and in our local community. Because of this, the CSSC was established in 2018 to foster a deeper public understanding of slavery and its complex legacies. A part of our mission is to raise awareness and fight to bring an end to their brutal impacts. It is in this spirit that we stand in solidarity with the Black Lives Matter movement and campus activists.

We demand social justice. In March 2020, we had planned a community-wide conversation on reparations in Charleston that was interrupted by COVID-19. The combined tragedies of state violence against Black Americans and the disproportionate effects of the pandemic on the Black community highlight the urgency of this work. We call on the College of Charleston leadership to make good on its promise to combat racism and white privilege by dedicating more robust support to the CSSC. And in turn, the CSSC pledges to advance learning and research experiences for our students, staff, and faculty to further our understanding of how our history of slavery shapes the present, and to collaborate with members of the campus and Charleston community to create programming and restorative dialogue to promote social justice, racial healing, reconciliation, and transformational change.

We see our work as a tangible affirmation that Black Lives Matter (and have always mattered).

June 16, 2020

CSSC Executive Board: Bernard Powers (Director), Shannon Eaves, Julia Eichelberger, Grant Gilmore, Celeste Green, Aisha Haykal, Simon Lewis, Kameelah Martin

CSSC Social Justice Working Group: Jen Wright (Chair), Lisa Covert, Matthew Cressler, Julia Eichelberger, Courtney Hicks, Blake Scott, Marjory Wentworth, Lisa Young