

Black Faculty Caucus Statement of Principle on University of South Carolina Community Engagement

The University of South Carolina (UofSC) is one of only a very few state university flagship campuses located in the heart of a midsize or large urban area. With that good fortune comes a special obligation to be a good neighbor, a community partner, and a force for social good. Like many colleges and universities, UofSC has not always lived up to that obligation but opportunities to do better are ever-present.

Therefore, we, the members of the UofSC's Black Faculty Caucus, urge the university to commit itself to being a good neighbor to those neighborhoods that immediately surround the campus proper, and to being a force for social good here in the Midlands and throughout the state.

As members of the UofSC faculty, the Black Faculty Caucus commits itself to the same on the basis of these three enduring principles.

1. ***A recognition of past harms.*** The land that Richland County and the University of South Carolina sits on was originally occupied by the people of the Congaree and Santee. Many of the structures that currently stand on the historic Horseshoe were built and maintained by enslaved labor. More recently, the UofSC has had a problematic history of campus expansion that includes substantial displacement of people in once predominantly African American neighborhoods nearby, like Booker T. Washington, Ward One, and Wheeler Hill.
2. ***A holistic consideration of problems.*** The UofSC must think holistically about re-examining its history of past harms to Indigenous, African American, and other marginalized people. Such a re-examination may at moments call for meaningful symbolic gestures, including renaming buildings and other sites, but it must also include other more concrete efforts to repair harm.
3. ***A commitment to restorative justice.*** Undergirding any efforts to a holistic consideration of problems must be a commitment to restorative justice. Its grounding principle is to reduce and repair harm, and any such effort must include all parties who have been subject to harm. A commitment to restorative justice should apply to university expansion and its relationships to law enforcement, business partners (e.g., student housing developers), suppliers and vendors, etc.