



The Honorable Nikki R. Haley
Office of the Governor
1205 Pendleton Street
Columbia SC 29201

June 22, 2015

Dear Governor Haley:

We write to inform you of our receipt of a grant of \$8,000 from the South Carolina Humanities Council to support a speaker series on twenty-first century race relations, titled "Black Lives Matter," and we invite you to attend.

The humanities focus on what it means to be human and how we treat each other as human beings. The South Carolina Humanities Council supports exploration of these relationships through "history, literature, languages, linguistics, philosophy, ethics, comparative religion and anthropology, as well as historical, critical and theoretical approaches to the arts," for these facets "are how we understand ourselves and our world. They're also how we communicate that understanding to others."

Our objective with this series is to engage the community in conversations about the historic and contemporary connections between race, policing, and community safety. In addition to the Humanities Council-supported events, we are collaborating with the Chapman Cultural Center, the Urban League of the Upstate, and Spoken Word Spartanburg. The South Carolina Humanities Council previously supported the University's highly successful celebration of the 50th anniversary of the *Brown v. Board of Education* decision. We hope to replicate that success and appreciate your support of these events.

Last year after the tragic deaths of 12-year old Tamir Rice in Cleveland, Michael Brown in Ferguson, and Eric Garner in Staten Island, as well as the tasing of a developmentally disabled, non-communicative African American man in Greenville, we began to discuss what we could do to examine the issue of these shootings from an intellectual perspective.

We noted with surprise and pleasure that, unlike other states, there has been a culture of accountability in South Carolina. However, although leaders stepped up on these issues (i.e. outcry from political leaders across the state, among them Senator Tim Scott, the obtaining of an indictment of a Charleston County police officer for the murder of Walter Scott, the implementation of body cameras in several South Carolina communities including Spartanburg County, and the current debate about purchasing body cameras in Spartanburg City), the public did not always display the same sense of concern for what these killings meant in terms of how we engage each other as Americans. It was particularly distressing to hear comments rooted in popular myths about racial difference – myths which permit little empathy for the lives that have been lost.

We believe that concern for others comes from knowing the paths they walk. We decided that the best way that we could help generate empathy for lives lost was through education. This led us last winter to develop a one-credit course entitled Black Lives Matter and to apply for the Humanities Council Grant.

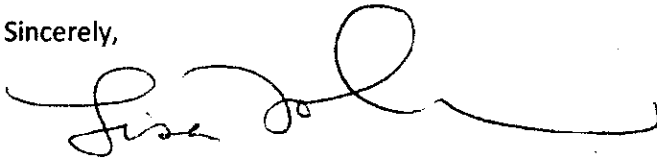
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We believe that our speaker series will contribute to constructive dialogue in our community, promoting greater respect and understanding of those who find these shootings distressing.

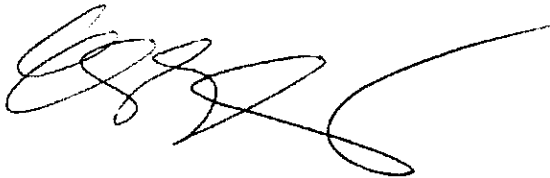
Our series will include three noted scholars of race and race relations who will provide an academic context for the Black Lives Matter movement and the pattern of incidents that prompted it. A capstone community event will permit attendees to engage in an open discussion about race and policing at the end of this series. Attached you will find a list of event dates and presenters.

Thank you in advance for your support and for supporting the humanities. We hope to see you at one or more of our events.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Lisa Johnson", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Dr. Lisa Johnson, Director of the Center for Women's and Gender Studies

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Carmen Harris", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Dr. Carmen Harris, Professor of History

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Laura Jennings", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Dr. Laura Jennings, Associate Professor of Sociology

Dr. Cassandra Jones, Assistant Professor of African-American Studies

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Cassandra Jones", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.