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We demand that the College respond ...

Protection for Students

“Sarah Lawrence is and must be a community that welcomes and nurtures people of all races. The college rejects all forms of racism.”

<from the memo dated March 1st signed by the administration>

We students of color do not believe this statement to be true... the college community has failed to meet the liberal principles it professes. If we students of color are truly part of this community, if healing is ever to take place, there must be action. - Concerned Students of Color, 1989

We, the Diaspora Coalition, are a group of students who can speak to the injustices imposed on people of color by this institution on a daily basis. The Diaspora Coalition was established this fall in order to address the pain of marginalized students as well as to advise the administration on how to best address this pain. Each of us has seen this administration repeatedly diminish the hard work of student activists who merely want a quality education and the personalized curriculum that SLC promises. We extend solidarity to all people of color in the Sarah Lawrence Community, including international students, graduate students, faculty, and staff.

In spring of 2018, Inaugural President Cristle Collins Judd held a meeting with students of color in Common Ground where we implored she respond to the demands of #BlackoutSLC2015. Our inquiries were evaded and our time wasted. This school year, we are losing our Chief Diversity Officer, Director of Diversity and Campus Engagement, and Assistant Director of Diversity and Campus Engagement. We blame the administration’s lack of tangible commitment to diversity for these losses. There has been no word from the administration on restoring the department.

On March 11, 2019, the Diaspora Coalition, along with our allied peers, will occupy Westlands, make calls to the board, and present demands that describe not only our ideal vision for the school but also what we see as the only acceptable terms by which Sarah Lawrence can remain for the students and against hate. If the College does not accept these demands, it will no longer be hailed as a progressive institution but instead remembered for its inability to truly embody its self-proclaimed progressive ideology and support all students against an international rising tide of white supremacy and fascism. Sarah Lawrence was not founded on racial or economic equality and has not implemented sufficient strategies to dismantle systematic oppression to be sustainable or safe for marginalized people in an increasingly dangerous political climate. Low-income students should not have to question if they belong

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The Diaspora Coalition and our allies fully intend to have a peaceful demonstration that does not result in any damage to SLC property.

1. Housing Accommodations and Accessibility

- a. Sarah Lawrence must commit to actualizing the value that **housing is a human right**.
 - i. **The College must provide winter housing to students at no charge.** This housing must include a communal kitchen with dry goods from the food pantry available for all students.
 - ii. In the extreme case that housing cannot be provided to students during break due to housing probation, the school must **provide a list of local low-cost, free, and/or accessible housing options for students.**
- b. The College will **designate housing with a minimum capacity for thirty students of color** that is not contingent on the students expending any work or labor for the college. This housing option will be permanent and increase in space and size based on interest.
- c. All campus laundry rooms are to supply laundry detergent and softener on a consistent basis for all students, faculty and staff.

2. Food Security and Accessibility

- a. Sarah Lawrence must commit to actualizing the value that **no student go hungry**.
 - i. The College must commit to devising a food plan where **every student has access to, at minimum, two meals a day**, including weekends, school breaks, and days when the college is closed due to weather. When dining options are closed on campus, **the College must provide free meals for students staying on campus**, including vegetarian, gluten-free, vegan, halal, and kosher options.
 - ii. A commitment that no student goes hungry includes graduate students and students that live off-campus. The College will design **meal plans for graduate and off-campus students based on need.**
 - iii. The College must ensure that students can share and transfer meal swipes and/or use multiple within the same dining period. It is unacceptable that there are students with leftover swipes at the end of the semester when other students are going hungry because they run out of meal options.
 - iv. **The College will support the food sharing place and institutionalize it as a food pantry.**
 1. **The Food Pantry will get a permanent location in the Barbara Walters Campus Center** to be opened in the Fall of 2019.
 2. **Sarah Lawrence's Food Pantry will join the College and University Food Bank Alliance (CUFBA)** by the Spring of 2020.
 3. **The College will provide enough food for three hundred students per semester along with continuing to accept donations.**
 4. **The Food Pantry will expand its hours to eight hours and four days a week.**
 - v. The College will include students currently organizing around food security in the discussions for these developments.
- b. Kosher/Halal Kitchen

- i. Jewish students at Sarah Lawrence asked for the construction of a kosher kitchen as early as 1978. The College has yet to construct one. With the addition of another dining space in the Barbara Walters Campus Center, as well as the forthcoming vacancy of the Pub, this is an opportune moment for the college to make good on its commitment to diversity and inclusion by guaranteeing that **Muslim and Jewish students may observe the dietary practices of their faiths.**

3. Resources for First-Generation and Low-Income Students

- a. We demand the College appoint a designated staff member in the Office of Student Affairs as the administrative liaison for first-generation resources. This role should include, but not be limited to: advising the First Generation Student Union, leading orientation programs, conducting semesterly check-ins, organizing trips, answering questions, and providing information for families.
- b. We demand an increase in transparency in the office of the Dean of Studies, including how to receive a book stipend. We demand that the fund for books and the internship travel stipend be increased.
- c. We demand the College further the accessibility of the college's website for our diverse campus community by creating language-friendly resources on our digital platforms.
- d. We demand the College provide accessible information for GED, community college transfer applicants, and other non-traditional student information on the official college website.
- e. We demand the College provide free storage to low-income and international students during the summer session between academic calendar years.
- f. We demand the College actualize the value that healthcare is a human right by providing free health insurance to students with demonstrated financial need.
- g. In addition to the expansion of the food pantry, we demand the College implement a 24/7 space in the Barbara Walters Center focused on providing food and necessities including pads, tampons, and detergent. Students should be able to obtain these items using with their meal plan or meal money.
- h. We demand a mandatory first-year orientation session about intellectual elitism and classism.
- i. We demand the removal of tuition insurance and other costs that prevent students from caring for urgent needs including their mental health and families.
- j. We demand international students be included in the provisions stipulated above.

4. Support for International Students

- a. We demand the College give a mandatory information session detailing the EAL/ESL resources available and how they might be accessed by students during international student pre-orientation, as well as once at the beginning of every semester. The information provided must contain a list of available tutors, their offices, and contact

information. Faculty must also be given this information to disseminate to students in need.

- b. We demand the College provide free storage to international students as part of the College's commitment to student welfare. The College must host information sessions every spring semester detailing low-cost storage options and transport available to students who prefer an off-campus alternative.
- c. While the College provides OPT and CPT training for international students, it would also be beneficial for international students to receive instruction on the American tax system. There must be mandatory information sessions for international students on how to file their taxes at the beginning of every spring semester with particular emphasis on graduating seniors. Counselling must also be made available to students who require further help.
- d. To embody its professed commitment to diverse and inclusive excellence, we demand that Sarah Lawrence College be made accessible to low-income and first-generation students from the Global South. The College will broaden its admissions global recruitment efforts to include developing countries in the Global South. The College will send recruitment teams to countries in Latin America, the Middle East, Eastern Europe, Central and Southeast Asia, the Pacific Islands, and Africa.
- e. We demand the College meet the demonstrated need of low-income international students by expanding the funds for the International Scholarship.
- f. The F-1 visa does not allow for international students to secure employment off-campus. International students are also ineligible for work-study. Student employment must accommodate and prioritize international students when considering job applications at the beginning of the year.

5. Faculty

- a. Diasporic Studies
 - i. Students of color should not be forced to resort to racist white professors in order to have access to their own history. It is crucial that the College **offer courses taught about people of color by people of color** so that students may engage in and produce meaningful work that represents them authentically.
 - ii. We demand there be **new tenured faculty of color** – at least two in African diasporic studies, one in Asian-American studies, one in Latinx diasporic studies, and one in indigenous/native peoples studies.
 - iii. We demand there be at least **three more courses offered in African diasporic studies** taught by Black professors.
 - iv. We demand that the College offer classes that embody intersectionality, as defined by Kimberlé Williams Crenshaw, and address the racial diversity of the LGBTQ+ community instead of centering whiteness.
 - v. The aforementioned classes must be taught by professors who are a part of the culture they are teaching about.

- b. Reject Funding or Involvement from the Charles Koch Foundation and Koch-Affiliated Organizations
 - i. From 2010-2017, Sarah Lawrence accepted \$89,500 from the Charles Koch Charitable Foundation. Professor Sam Abrams is an alumnus of the Institute for Humane Studies (IHS) at George Mason University (GMU), of which Charles Koch has served as chairman of the board for almost four decades. The IHS is linked to the League of the South, a neo-Confederate hate group that proudly “dared go to Charlottesville in August 2017” for the infamous white supremacist demonstration that resulted in the murder of 32-year-old anti-racist protester Heather Heyer. With this company, it is unsurprising that the Koch brothers wield their corporate influence to fight against free speech and progress, as documented by activists including the group Transparent GMU and news publications including The New York Times and The Washington Post. The fact that Sarah Lawrence utilizes money from the Charles Koch Foundation, at best, demonstrates a passive condoning of the violent ideology of the Koch brothers and their efforts to maintain the institutionalization of oppression against marginalized people. Accepting such money completely violates SLC’s “progressive” values and displays a gross indifference towards the suffering of marginalized students and faculty. Sarah Lawrence must confront how the presence of Sam Abrams, an anti-queer, misogynist, and racist who actively targets queer people, women, and people of color and is an alumnus of an institute with direct ties to a neo-Confederate hate group, affects the safety and wellbeing of marginalized students. Additionally, **Sarah Lawrence will forfeit donations and interactions from the Charles Koch Foundation and never hire alumni from the League of the South-aligned Institute for Human Studies** in the future.
- c. Professor Samuel Abrams and Defending Progressive Education
 - i. On October 16, 2018, politics professor Samuel Abrams published an op-ed entitled “Think Professors Are Liberal? Try School Administrators” in The New York Times. The article revealed the anti-Blackness, anti-LGBTQ+, and anti-woman bigotry of Abrams. The article specifically targeted programs such as the Our Liberation Summit, which Abrams did not attend, facilitated by the Office of Diversity and Campus Engagement. The Sarah Lawrence community deserves an administration that strives for an inclusive education that reflects the diversity of our community. Abrams’ derision of the Black Lives Matter, queer liberation, and women’s rights movements displays not only ignorance but outright hostility towards the essential efforts to dismantle white supremacy and other systems of oppression. This threatens the safety and wellbeing of marginalized people within the Sarah Lawrence community by demonstrating that our lives and identities are viewed as “opinions” that we can have a “difference in dialogue” about, as if we haven’t been forced to debate our very existences for our entire lives. **We demand that Samuel Abrams’ position at the College be put up to tenure review** to a panel of the Diaspora Coalition and

at least three faculty members of color. In addition, **the College must issue a statement condemning the harm that Abrams has caused** to the college community, specifically queer, Black, and female students, whilst **apologizing for its refusal to protect marginalized students** wounded by his op-ed and the ignorant dialogue that followed. **Abrams must issue a public apology to the broader SLC community and cease to target Black people, queer people, and women.**

6. Staff

- a. The Rehiring of Title IX and Diversity Officers
 - i. We demand the positions of Dean of Equity and Inclusion, Director of the Office of Diversity and Campus Engagement, and Assistant Director of the Office of Diversity and Campus Engagement will be filled by three separate people of color by the beginning of the fall 2019 semester. A panel of students of color will be formed and will be instrumental in deciding who fills these positions.
- b. Mental Health Support for Students of Color
 1. We demand the College provide and support at least:
 - a. One new Black therapist
 - b. One new Asian therapist
 - c. One new Latinx therapist
 2. We demand all students have access to unlimited therapy sessions through Health and Wellness.
 3. We demand the College provide transportation to students with weekly therapy in the Westchester area.
- c. We demand the College facilitate **annual diversity training** during the first two weeks of the fall semester mandatory for faculty and first-year students and available to all students and faculty. The training will be crafted in a democratic manner with the input of students and staff from the Diaspora Coalition.

7. Funding

- a. Scholarships for Students of Color
 - i. We demand the College fund a new scholarship program initiative specifically for students of color, with priority given to low-income and first-generation students. This program initiative must include:
 1. An endowed scholarship fund, ensuring that the funding will last for generations of students to come. This funding should come from both institutional monies and donor giving.
 2. The Office of Advancement and the Office of the President must commit to fundraising for this endowment immediately by establishing at least \$30,000 by the beginning of the next academic year (fall 2019).

Additionally, the students of color scholarship must be listed as a top priority for the next capital campaign. The scholarship shall be awarded to first years and stay at the same or increased amount every year until the graduation of the selected students.

3. In addition to the scholarship, this program initiative must provide the selected students the commitment of community. This shall include mentorship through pairing with an upperclassman and a staff member from the Office of Diversity and Campus Engagement.
 4. This program should:
 - a. House the students together in their first year
 - b. Offer a stipend of at least \$500 per semester for each student
 - c. Provide a free standard meal plan
 - d. Plan outings and workshops throughout the academic year
 - ii. The College must provide full transparency to incoming students looking for information on scholarships. There is no information on the website on the process of scholarship selection nor how one can be considered. The College must add more information on the scholarship process by the next academic semester.
 - iii. The College must fully meet all demonstrated financial need of accepted students of color. Students of color consistently and overwhelmingly experience financial distress and fail to be accommodated by the Office of Financial Aid and the Office of Student Accounts. This is part of the reason why the college's retention rate for students of color is so low. Both offices should be obligated to provide scholarship resources for those in need of outside help.
 - iv. The College must guarantee work-study for all students awarded work-study funds for the year. As the funds cannot be accessed without a campus job, it is the duty of the College to provide students the opportunity to earn the money listed on their financial aid package.
- b. Permanent Funding for Identity Groups
- i. The College will provide a set budget of at least \$500 per semester to:
 1. Black student unions
 2. Asian student unions
 3. Latinx student unions
 4. Indigenous student unions
 5. LGBTQ+ student unions, including QPOC
 6. Disabled student unions
 7. First-generation college student unions
 8. International student unions
 - ii. The student body will in no way pay for these funds.
 - iii. Identity groups will be allowed to request for senate funding in addition to this set budget.

8. Indigenous Land Acknowledgment

- a. We demand indigenous land acknowledgement at all orientation and commencement ceremonies in addition to a permanent land acknowledgement page on both MySLC and the Sarah Lawrence website. These pages must also include a list of resources for local tribes.

9. We demand that the College respond to our demands with a detailed timeline of when the demands will be met.

- a. We demand that the following administrators from the College attend the student-facilitated talk-back on March 13, 2019 at 5:30pm in Miller Lecture Hall regarding this document:
 - i. President: Cristle Collins Judd
 - ii. Vice President of Administration: Thomas Blum
 - iii. Vice President for Finance and Operations: Stephen Schafer
 - iv. Vice President for Advancement and External Affairs: Patty Goldman
 - v. Chair of the Board of Trustees: Mark P. Goodman '83
 - vi. Dean of Equity and Inclusion: Al Green
 - vii. Dean of Students: Danny Trujillo
 - viii. Dean of Studies: Beverly Fox
 - ix. Dean of Student Affairs: Paige Crandall
 - x. Dean of Enrollment: Kevin McKenna
 - xi. Provost and Dean of Faculty: Kanwal Singh
 - xii. Associate Vice President for Advancement and Principal Gifts: Ellen Reynolds
 - xiii. Associate Dean of Studies: Polly Waldman
 - xiv. Assistant Dean of Studies/Director of International Admission and Advising: Shirley Be
 - xv. Director of Financial Aid: Nick Salinas
 - xvi. Director of Admission: Jennifer Gayles
 - xvii. Director of Student Involvement and Leadership: Joshua Luce
 - xviii. Director of Residence Life: Myra McPhee
 - xix. Director of Human Resources: Danielle Coscia
 - xx. Director of Donor Relations and Advancement Communications: Dorothee Ahrens
 - xxi. Senior Director of Development: Abigail Feder Kane
 - xxii. Senior Financial Aid Counselor and Coordinator of Student Employment: Catherine Douglas
 - xxiii. All active department heads
 - xxiv. Assistant Director of Financial Aid: Roberta Daskin
 - xxv. Assistant Director of Admission: Seth Katz
 - xxvi. Assistant Director of Student Involvement and Leadership: Valerie Romanello

- xxvii. Assistant Vice President for Campus Operations and Facilities: Maureen Gallagher
 - xxviii. Assistant Director of Residence Life: Erica Monnin
 - xxix. All active members of Advisory Committee
 - xxx. All active members of Committee on Diversity
 - xxxi. All Admissions Counselors
- b. We demand President Cristle Collins Judd release a public statement by March 30, 2019, the end of spring break, responding to the demands.
 - c. We demand the College release a formal annotated response to our demands that will be presented to students in a face-to-face meeting no later than April 5, 2019, the Friday following our return from spring break.

10. Protection for Students

- a. The College's work-study employers will respect students' right to protest during the week of the sit-in and in the future.
- b. The institution will not use the threat of expulsion, removal of positions held in student government, or any other forms of punishment in retaliation to civil disobedience.
- c. We, the Diaspora Coalition and our allies, demand that students not be penalized for participating in sit-in commencing on Monday, March 11, 2019. We expect faculty to understand that student activists attending the sit-in may not be able to attend class. We ask faculty to support the student activism happening this week, which includes the sit in, distribution of demands, and a talk-back taking place on Wednesday, March 13th at 5:30pm in Titsworth Marjorie Miller Leff Lecture Hall. It is our hope that faculty and staff value our voices outside of the classroom and support students' right to protest without repercussion.

We invite and expect our administration, faculty, and student body to stand in solidarity with #SLC50sitin.

The following administrators will sign this document agreeing to attend the talk back on March 13th, the meeting on April 5th, and see that further negotiations are scheduled until all the demands have been processed to their fullest extent.

President: Cristle Collins Judd
 Vice President of Administration: Thomas Blum
 Dean of Students: Danny Trujillo
 Dean of Studies: Beverly Fox
 Dean of Student Affairs: Paige Crandall
 Dean of Enrollment: Kevin McKenna
 Provost and Dean of Faculty: Kanwal Singh