ADDRESSING THE LEGACY OF SLAVERY 1 2 IN THE FOUNDING OF AMERICAN COLLEGES 3 4 5 Forgetting is a crucial factor in the creating of a nation. Ernest Renan, 1882 6 7 There is no document of civilization which is not at the same time a document of barbarism. -8 Walter Benjamin, 1940 9 What are Americans always so insistently innocent of? - Toni Morrison, 1992 10 11 WHEREAS, recent scholarship, such as Craig Steven Wilder's Ebony and Ivy: Race, 12 Slavery and the Troubled History of America's Universities (2013), has uncovered the extent to 13 14 which the earliest and most prominent American colleges established in the colonial period were founded on the structural racism of slavery and the theft of indigenous land; and 15 16 WHEREAS, in spite of the official amnesia at the heart of U.S. nation-building, and in 17 spite of persistent anti-racist efforts, the effects of this foundational racism, this "document of 18 barbarism," persist in the university to this day; and 19 20 WHEREAS, in 2003 Brown University, under the leadership of President Ruth Simmons, 21 acknowledged its historical involvement with slavery and in 2006 issued a report documenting 22 the role of early college benefactors in the slave trade, and the history of Brown's being named 23 24 for a slave-trading family and being located in Rhode Island, a state that had been important in the Atlantic slave trade; and 25 26 27 WHEREAS, the College of William and Mary has acknowledged that it owned and exploited slave labor from its founding to the Civil War and Atlanta's Emory University, the 28 University of South Carolina, the University of Virginia and institutions of higher education in 29 the North as well as the South were built, brick by brick, by slaves; and 30 31 WHEREAS, Ebony and Ivy documents the relationship between higher education and the 32 Atlantic slave trade, demonstrating that the "academy was the third pillar, along with religion 33 and the state, of a civilization built on bondage" and that slavery contributed significantly to the 34 rise of American colleges; and 35 36 37 WHEREAS, Harvard, founded 1638, faced a financial crisis in the 1640s and sought to resolve it by raising funds from the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in New England 38 to create an "Indian College," which never enrolled any Native American students; and 39 40 41 WHEREAS, Dartmouth was founded in 1769 with a special mission of educating Native Americans but graduated only 20 Native Americans in two centuries, and, at one point had more 42

WHEREAS, Princeton (1746), Columbia (1754) and Rutgers (1766) were among the eight colleges founded during the peak of the slave trade and were subsidized by merchants,

slaves on the campus than faculty and students; and

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slave-traders, and planters, who frequently willed their plantations to endow Northern schools that recruited to campus the sons of Southern and West Indian planters as a means of securing funds; and

WHEREAS, as some colleges have focused on their later role in the anti-slavery movement, others have also begun to reject what Toni Morrison calls "American Innocence" and acknowledge past injustices, by the creation of symposia, lectures and other memorials; and

WHEREAS, a stronger response to the past involvement in slavery and structural racism would be to go beyond a rejection of what Renan calls "forgetting," and address its consequences in the present—including a continuing pattern of underfunding of colleges that serve predominately the working class and people of color, and an emerging pattern of resegregation of colleges based on race and ethnicity;

RESOLVED, that the PSC build on its important current work on diversity in higher education, and reaffirm its commitment to end structural and institutional racism in U.S. colleges and universities; and

RESOLVED, that the PSC work to expose and end policies and practices that facilitate or advance the resegregation of American higher education on the basis of race, ethnicity and class; and

RESOLVED, that the PSC use its publications to inform members about the legacy of slavery and the ways that the interests of benefactors can still distort or undermine the academic goals of institutions today.