Statement by the Department of Sociology and Anthropology in Support of Academic Freedom

The members of the Sociology and Anthropology Department at the College of Charleston strongly condemn the recent vote by the South Carolina House of Representatives to cut funds from the College of Charleston’s budget appropriations in retribution for the College’s adoption of Alison Bechdel’s novel, *Fun Home*, for its “College Reads!” program. This legislation, explicitly designed to seek control over the manner by which the College fulfills its mandate to instruct its students, flies in the face of the principles of academic freedom, free speech, and respect for diversity that in a democracy are the responsibility of all citizens -- particularly those who serve as elected officials -- to uphold.

We in the fields of Sociology and Anthropology, aware as we are of human variation, appreciate and honor gender diversity across the globe, and through our teaching and modeling, encourage our students to do the same. We assert that any denial or misrecognition of the many ways that human sexuality is expressed in areas that include, but are not limited to, marriage, mating, parenting, and coming of age, does a great disservice to the kinds of knowledge that the social sciences in general have gleaned, distilled and theorized over the years.

Further, we decry any effort to promote heterosexism at the expense of other expressions of gender identity. We reject homophobia, transphobia, bullying and any other form of violence in word or deed perpetrated against any individual on or off campus.

Finally, we believe that all persons, no matter who or where they are, deserve the right to express their identities, gender-related or otherwise, to the fullest, and we stand against those who think or act in a manner that contradicts this basic right.