Senate Resolution:
The Immediate Removal of the Confederate Flag from Summerall Chapel
Proposed: August 23, 2016

Rationale:

As proud and loyal faculty members of the Military College of South Carolina, we call for the immediate relocation of the Confederate Naval Jack from its current display in the Summerall Chapel to a more appropriate location in the recently renovated Citadel Museum.

We make this call in the belief that the South Carolina legislature, by taking a similar action more than one year ago, established a precedent for the proper interpretation of the Heritage Act that can and should be followed without further legislative action.

More specifically, Governor Nikki Haley, on July 9, 2015, signed a bill to remove a flag of the Confederate States of America from the grounds of the South Carolina capitol to a museum of history where it could be studied in proper historical context. The stated governmental reasoning was that to continue to fly such a flag on public grounds of assembly more than 150 years after the end of the American Civil War is inappropriate and contrary to the best interests of the citizens of South Carolina. If such is the case in Columbia, then surely such is also the case in Charleston. To contend otherwise defies logic.

Moreover, the South Carolina Heritage Act requires that “No person may prevent the public body responsible for the monument or memorial from taking proper measures and exercising proper means for the protection, preservation, and care of these monuments, memorials, or nameplates.” As stewards of the flag, we believe—along with members of the General Assembly who spoke on the matter one year ago—that the best way to fulfill that legal responsibility is to place our Confederate flag in a museum, where its history and context can be properly and respectfully explained. At present, its display in the Summerall Chapel (like the former display of a Confederate flag on the Capitol grounds) is confusing and divisive.

The history of the Confederacy deserves to be told. Many southern soldiers displayed heroism and valor in the American Civil War. Included among them are those alumni of The Citadel who perished in the Civil War. However, none of that comes through with the flag in its current location. As one of the premier academic institutions in the South, we feel it is our duty to examine and discuss events from the past that have shaped us into the state and nation we are today. Honest debate is the lifeblood of our institution. Displaying the Confederate Naval Jack in its proper
context allows us to carry on discussions that are so necessary to help shape our students into the principled leaders The Citadel has produced for over 170 years. Over one year ago, The Citadel’s President, Lieutenant General John W. Rosa, announced that The Citadel’s Board of Visitors had voted nine to three to move the Confederate Naval Jack from Summerall Chapel to an appropriate location on campus. In a statement he made on June 24, 2015, General Rosa said: “Moving the Naval Jack to another location is consistent with [Citadel] values and is a model to all of the principled leadership we seek to instill in our cadets and students. It also promotes unity on our campus, in our community and across our state during this time of healing.”

We could not agree more. The time has long passed for the Confederate Naval Jack to be moved to an appropriate and respectful home on our campus. Taking this step now will demonstrate to the world that we are committed to ethics in action and that we dare to lead on their behalf.