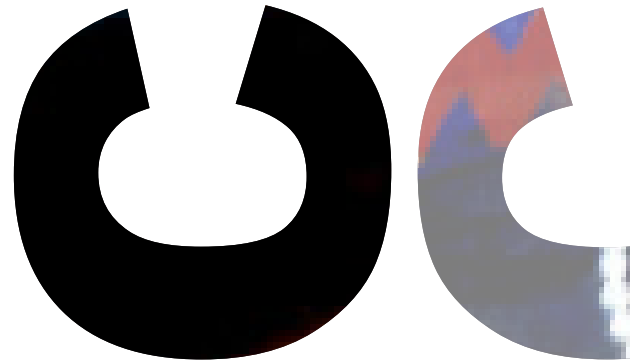


**AFRICAN-  
AMERICAN  
CULTURAL  
CENTER**

# **ANNUAL REPORT**

2018-19

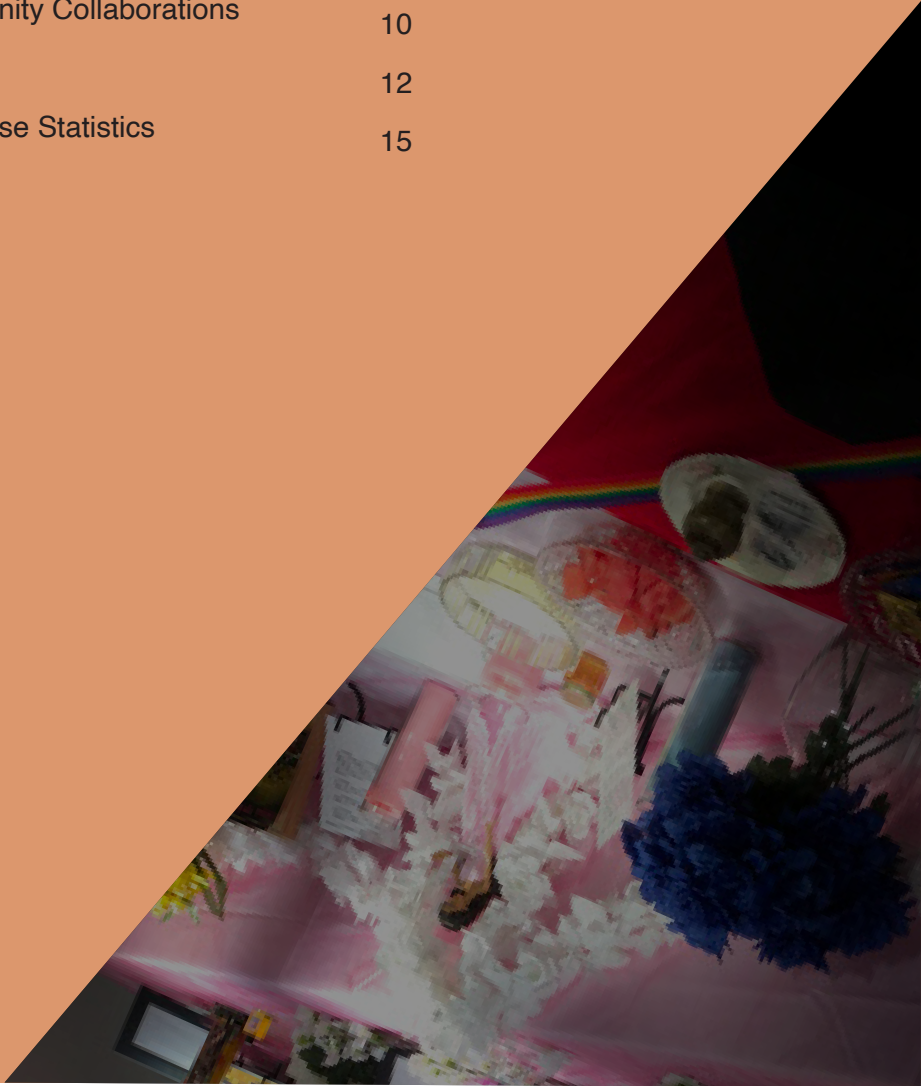


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## About the African-American Cultural Center

One of 7 Centers for Cultural Understanding and Social Change, the African-American Cultural Center is an interdisciplinary unit housed in Academic Affairs under the reporting line of the Office of Diversity and the Provost. The Center curates, produces and sponsors exhibitions, performances, films and film screenings, open-mic poetry gatherings, lecture demonstrations, dance, storytelling, visual and performing arts workshops and projects. We also coordinate high school and college internships, student and postdoctoral research, and lend our expertise to a number of programs and initiatives. The gallery and library spaces are also available for quiet study, working groups, meetings and presentations.



# MISSION STATEMENT

## MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of the African-American Cultural Center at UIC is to support the academic and diversity missions of the University by engaging UIC students, faculty, staff, community partners and other stakeholders in programs and initiatives that contextualize, highlight, present, and critically examine Black diaspora traditions, histories and experiences.

# VISION STATEMENT

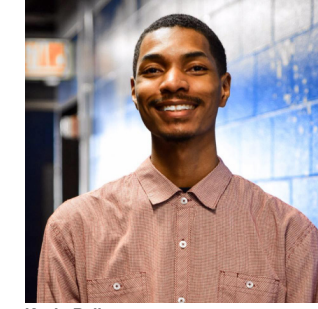
## VISION STATEMENT

We envision the Center as a safe, brave and inclusive hub for collaboration, creative and scholarly practice, engaged learning, service and social justice.

# STAFF



Candance Barclay  
Student Marketing Assistant



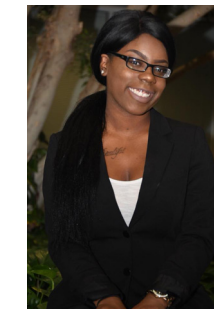
Kevin Bell  
Student Marketing Assistant



Dr. Cynthia Blair  
Director



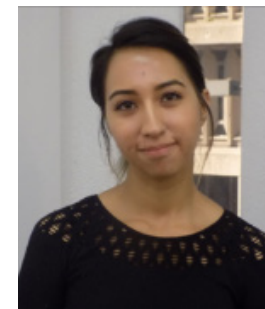
Dakota Burnett  
Student Marketing



Kilah McCline  
Student Graphic Aide



T'Yanna Moore  
Student Graphic Aide



Sandra Muñoz



Brenda Pinkett-Little  
Assistant Program Director

# A YEAR OF WELLNESS

## African-American Cultural Center Goals:

- To positively impact the recruitment, retention and success of Black students, faculty, and staff through creative practices that intentionally leverage the power of Black arts, cultures and creativity to build character and quality of place
- To draw upon diverse perspectives and methods of teaching and learning to engage and positively impact UIC students both inside and beyond the classroom
- To promote a climate of diversity and equity in which UIC students, faculty, and staff feel welcomed in their identities, valued for their contributions, and feel their identities can be openly expressed wherever they live, work and study
- To become a leader in cultivating rigorous engagements with Black diaspora communities, artistic practices, pedagogies, and scholarship
- To engage in mutually beneficial partnerships with campus, local, national and international individuals, organizations and institutions
- To develop sustainable and resilient operational models
- To promote intercultural understanding that leads to social change

## Breakfast at the AACC

Dec 10-12 & May 6-8/AACC Gallery

Each semester during finals week, the AACC remains open until 9pm for extended study hours. Snacks and a hot soul food breakfast are served. 83 students joined us for the fall 2018 breakfast, and 130 students participated during spring 2019 finals.

## Wellness Wednesday's: Yoga and Wellness Workshops

Wednesdays /AACC Gallery

Through a series of conversations, lectures, yoga and meditation classes we will together navigate a path to wellness.

**UIC African-American Cultural Center**

**Join the AACC for Wellness Wednesdays:**  
Practice Self-Care & Restoration

**FREE YOGA**

Healthy Snacks Provided

**Wednesdays**

- Jan 30 12:00pm - 1:00pm
- Feb 13 4:00pm - 5:00pm
- Feb 27 12:00pm - 1:00pm
- Mar 13 4:00pm - 5:00pm
- Apr 13 12:00pm - 1:00pm
- Apr 17 4:00pm - 5:00pm
- May 8 12:00pm - 1:00pm

University of Illinois-Chicago  
830 S. Halsted St.  
2nd Floor Addams Hall  
Chicago, IL 60607

For more info please call (773) 998-5000 or visit www.aacc.uic.edu. If you require any accommodations, please contact the AACC.

**UIC African-American Cultural Center**

Join the African American Cultural Center for our Fall Film Series:

**BLACK SEXUALITY & THE CINEMATIC IMAGINATION**

MONDAYS 3:30pm - 5:45pm  
AACC GALLERY/207 ADDAMS HALL

- 10/15 Nothing But a Man
- 10/22 Foxy Brown
- 10/29 Bush Mama
- 11/05 Boyz 'N' the Hood
- 11/12 Eve's Bayou
- 11/26 Moonlight

This series of six films explores the work of filmmakers who have created powerful re-visions of gender and sexuality within the black community. Each film illuminates the ways that cinematic representations of gender have both contributed to and challenged popular ideas about black sexuality, family, and community.

A brief discussion will follow each screening. Light snacks will be provided.

For more info please call (773) 998-5000 or visit www.aacc.uic.edu. If you require any accommodations to participate, please contact the AACC.

University of Illinois-Chicago  
830 S. Halsted St.  
2nd Floor Addams Hall  
Chicago, IL 60607

## Black Sexuality and The Cinematic Imagination

Oct15 /AACC Gallery

The series of six films explored the work of filmmakers who have created powerful re-visions of gender and sexuality within the black community. Each film illuminated the way that cinematic representations of gender have both contributed to and challenged popular ideas about black sexuality, family, and community.

### Lunchtime Reading Room

Feb 7, 14, 21, 28/AACC Gallery

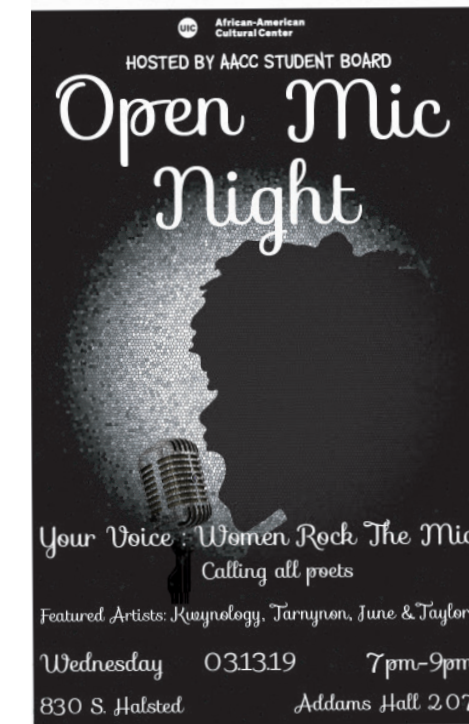
Each Thursday we discussed short and thought-provoking selections by black poets and authors. Discussions were led by African American Studies faculty. We explored history and politics by developing programming that probes the politics of black hair, looking closely at the way black folks have cultivated black hair as a source of respectability and a means of resistance to dominate beauty ideals.



### Your Voice: Open Mic @ the AACC

Feb 13th, Mar 13th, Apr 17th/AACC Gallery

Come join us as we listen to talented artists speak their peace. Featured artists are announced monthly and walk-in poets are welcome too!



### Viewing Party: Red Table Talk

Mar 6th, 20th/AACC Gallery

Drop in for a Red Table Talk viewing and conversation about sisterhood and the racial divide. March 6th we viewed Girl's Trippin, which is a conversation about the ups and downs of friendships and sisterhood. March 20th we viewed The Racial Divide: Women of Color and White Women, a tough topic of race relations between women with Jane Elliot.



### Black Hair Film Series

Feb 7, 14, 28/AACC Gallery

History of Black Hair  
Good Hair  
Happily Never After

### Black Hair Workshop

Feb 21/AACC Gallery

This workshop included a demonstration of black hair care techniques.



### Throwback Thursday's

Mar 7th, & 21st/AACC Gallery

Join the AACC Student Board as we listen to old tunes and watch great movies from the past.



# EXHIBITS

## TRANSMEDIA COLLAGE: SOUTH SIDE SPECULATIONS

APRIL 4 - JUNE 28, 2019

Project Team : J.Ash, I.Bennett, J. Brier, J. Buckley, P. Jagoda, G. Kafer, M. Rhyme, C. Ridley, N.Scott, A. Thakkar, N. Versenyi, A. Yusuff, L. Wiltz, M. Wizinsky. Youth Creators: C. Ayanlaja, D. Barrera, D. Bonsu, C. Chambers, S. Davis, A. Edwards, T. Ellis, L. Johnson, L. Johnson, M. Lagundoye, Y. Lagundaoye, S. Lee, A. Magana, N. Nobles-Vincent, M. Okwuedei, O. Olugbala, S. Peterson, S. Pettis, G. Rodriguez, J. Rubio, K. Thomas, M.Webb, K. Williams.

*South Side Speculations* asks what is possible when young people investigate their neighborhoods' histories and imagine how to build healthier and freer futures. Resisting progress narratives that promise things will always get better and nostalgic accounts of carefree pasts, this exhibition asks how economic, political and cultural structures evolve in the past, presents and future. We imagine alternatives physical and social infrastructures for neighborhoods and communities, detail complex social determinants of health, and document ever present policing. Redirecting our scale of imagination, we seek to challenge the idea that all problems have solutions. The work you see, hear and touch should provoke questions about how we want the future of Chicago's South Side to look, as it resists easy answers based on dominant representations of the city today.



# MANIFESTATIONS OF THE AFRICAN DIVINE

FEBRUARY- MAY 2019

Curated By Mario LaMothe, PhD

*Manifestations of the African Divine* showcases the ways in which students critically respond to these phenomena through auto-ethnographic writing and research papers, class presentations and workshops. The purpose of this exhibit is to raise awareness about African diaspora religious, cultural alliances and difference across time or place, and the politics and ethics of representation vis-a-vis African diaspora traditions. We want to extend knowledge about ways that iterations of migration and diaspora inform current investigations of African diaspora migration, and migration in general. Finally, we highlight the convergence of Diaspora Studies, and acknowledge the many in which ways in which these interconnections by people of African descent is not a new phenomenon.



# SANCTIFIED

SEPTEMBER 19 - DECEMBER 14, 2018

Curated by Lori Barcliff-Baptista and Mario LaMothe

Sanctified is an exhibit meant to increase public knowledge of the contemporarily famous gay black author and black and gay rights activist Assotto Saint (b. Yves Francis Lubin) and introduce visitors to new ways of thinking about Afro - Diasporic religion. Sanctified searches for guidance and healing through the imagery and evocation of vodou. The use of color, altars, and the synchronization of Assotto Saint with vodou loa (Iwa) connect the visitor to Saint in physical and spiritual transformation that can be found in the reinvention of self and the practice of ancestral religion. The exhibition blends the spectacular and transformative nature of vodou with the spiritual release found in the performative self.



# TRAVELING EXHIBITS

## A CHOREOGRAPHY OF CONTAGION

Contagion explored how people of African descent have been represented in public health campaigns. The traveling exhibit featured a collage of early 20th century newspaper prints and images from private institutions, health journals and popular media alongside modern health campaigns involving global epidemics from cholera to Ebola and HIV/AIDS to malaria. Contagion embraced visual arts concepts, dance concepts, and epidemiological terms to present a nuanced understanding of how metaphors, images and symbols are artfully used to convey complex meanings in public health campaigns.

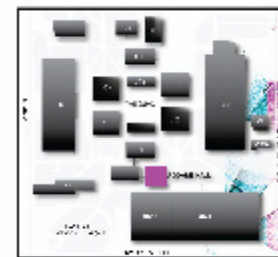
### A Choreography of **CONTAGION**

Absence and Presence of  
Black Bodies in Visual Culture

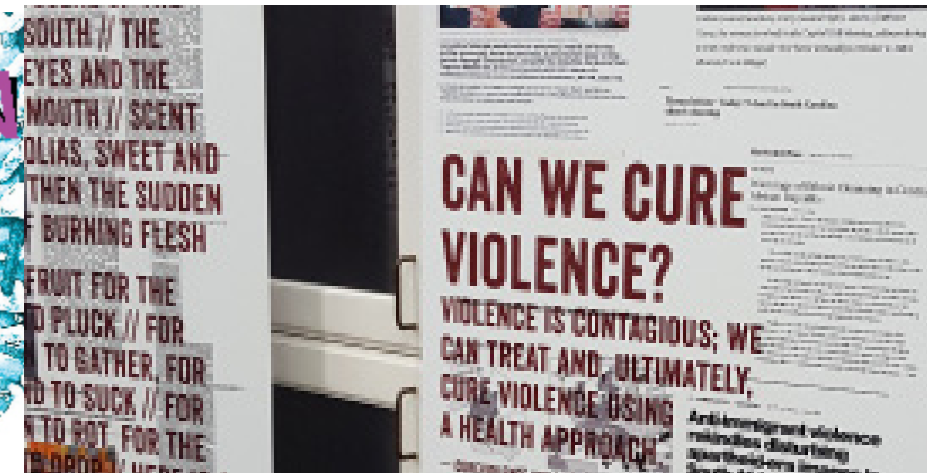
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Free and open to the public.

University of Illinois-Chicago  
930 S. Halsted Street  
2nd floor Addams Hall  
Chicago, IL 60607



If you require any accommodations to participate, please contact the AACCC.





# CAMPUS & COMMUNITY COLLABORATIONS

The Center continued to strengthen its relationships with student organizations, student support and academic units through our sponsorship and participation in events such as the Urban Public Policy Fellows Seminar, Civic Engagement Days, Black History Month Programming, African American Studies' Grace Holt Luncheon and Lecture, and Student Research Forum and public lectures.



## Grace Holt Luncheon March 14/AACC Gallery

The Grace Holt Legacy Luncheon held at the African American Cultural Center honors the founder of the Department of African American Studies. There is a presentation of the Grace Holt Awards, food, conversation, networking, and celebration featuring a panel of reminiscences from former UIC students Amanda McDonald and LaCreshia Birts.



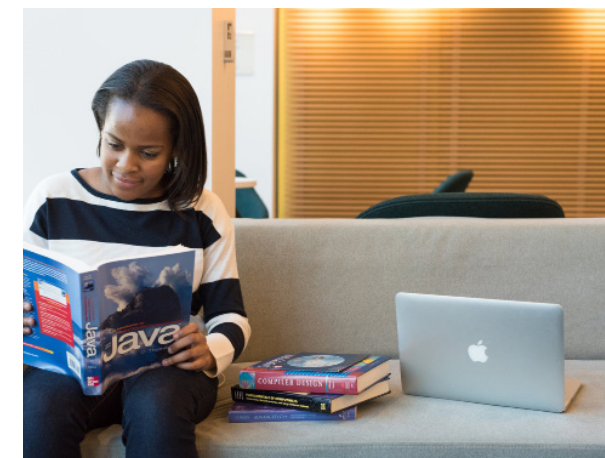
## Heritage Garden July 26/AACC Gallery

The UIC Heritage Garden is a hands-on internship program that works with faculty, staff, and community members to connect horticulture with environmental sustainability. Under the leadership of the AACC during July, the interns visited Otis Fresh Farm, whose goal is to help the surrounding community in Bronzeville and beyond embrace, enjoy and be educated about local organic food.



## Open Study AACC Gallery and Library

The AACC, with the support of other collaborative campus partners, has dedicated space in our Library for quiet study during the hours of 9am–5pm. Students are welcome to enjoy a relaxing hospitable environment that includes a microwave, computer workstations, couches, television, and snacks. We see more than 50 students each day from all majors and cultural backgrounds for drop-in open study.



# REFLECTIONS

## DR. CYNTHIA BLAIR



Cynthia Blair studies the intersection of race and sexuality in American society, African American urban history, American film and popular culture, West Indian immigration, and transnational networks and identities. Her research focuses primarily on the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

Her first book, *"I've Got to Make My Livin': Black Women's Sex Work in Turn-Of-The-Century Chicago"*, explores African American women's sex work in Chicago during the decades some of the city's most explosive growth, expanding not just our view of prostitution, but also of black women's labor, the Great Migration, black and white reform movements, the emergence of modern sexuality, and the criminalization of Black women in the early twentieth century city. The book won the Lora Romero Book Prize awarded by the American Studies Association to the best-published first book in American Studies that highlights the intersections of race with gender, class, sexuality and/or nation.

She is currently working on two research projects. The first, *Moms Mabley: A Cultural Biography*, is a book project that examines the life and career of the African American comedian Jackie "Moms" Mabley. The second, *"In a Time Like This": Jamaican Migrants to the United States, 1940-1964*, is an oral history and documentary project that explores the migrations of men and women from Jamaica to the Midwestern United States at the middle of the twentieth century.



## KEVIN BELL

From the moment I arrived at UIC, I naturally gravitated towards the African-American Cultural Center. I felt welcomed and the space provided an excellent atmosphere to get work done. Even though I graduate in May of 2019, my memories of the AACC will stay with me forever. The long nights studying in the gallery, the events, the exhibitions, the food, and most importantly; the people I've met. I came to UIC to obtain a degree in computer science, I'm leaving with that, and much more; I'm leaving with a new family.

Having the African American Cultural Center has been a treasure in my UIC experience. People often use the cliché, "home away from home," but that is the best way I can describe the feeling that the AACC provides me. Walking into the center and conversing with Aunt Brenda, Sandra, Prof. Blair, or my peers working like Kilah or Dakota made it feel like I was just chopping it up with family. I truly value what this space gave me being here because I didn't always feel this welcomed outside of center. But when walking to Addams Hall, I could feel stress fall off of my shoulders, knowing that I had a community of folks supporting me.

## AMANDA MCDONALD



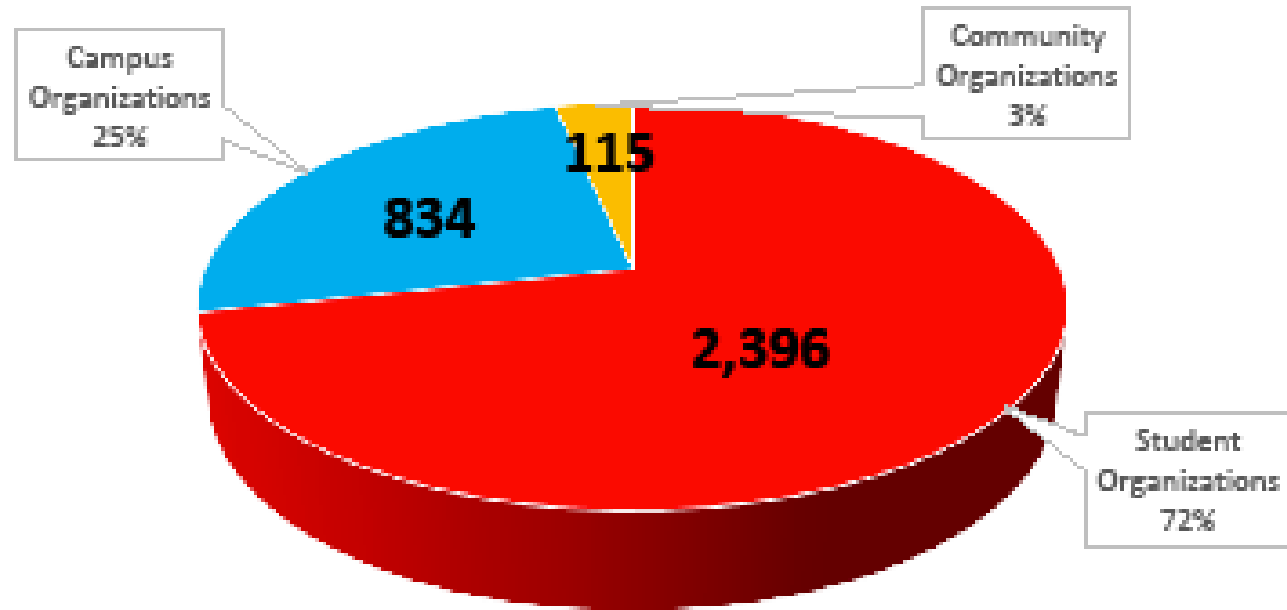
Over the past few years, working at the African-American Cultural Center has been full of learning experiences that have aided me in becoming a better person and designer. Since my first year as an undergrad, the center has welcomed me with open arms. Through countless programs and exhibits, the AACC has exposed me to cultural practices, art, and histories of black identity. I hope to bring my experiences and knowledge from the center into my future professional practices.

## T'YANNA MOORE



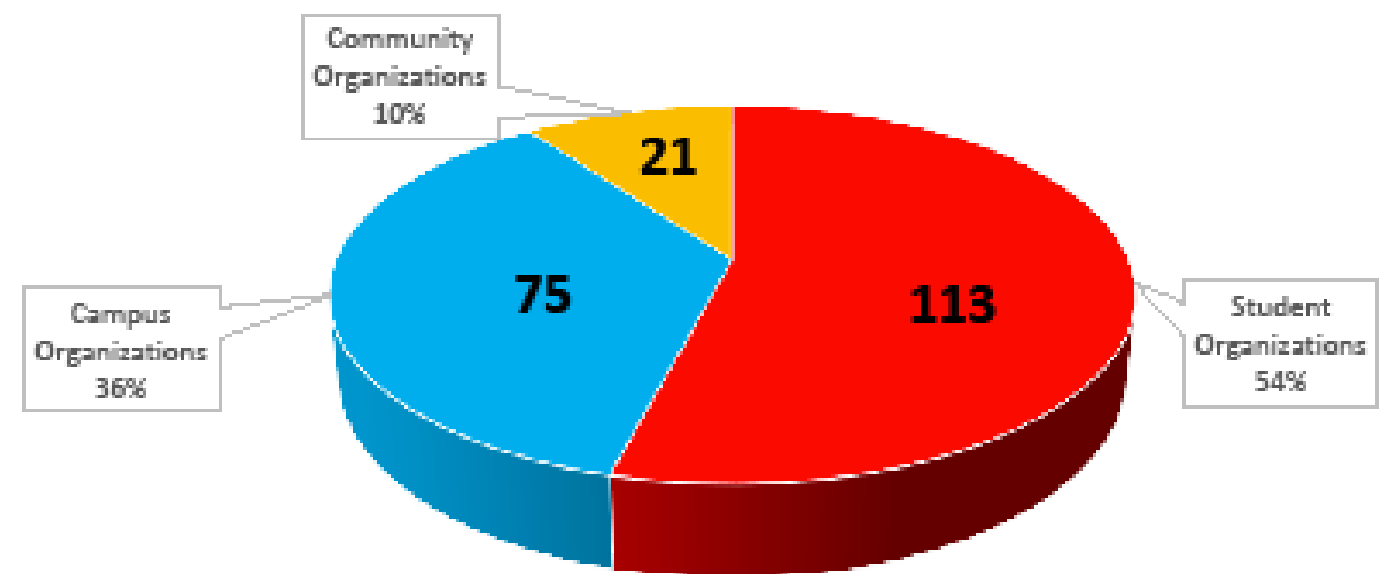
# APPENDIX: AACC USE STATISTICS

Total Number of Attendees



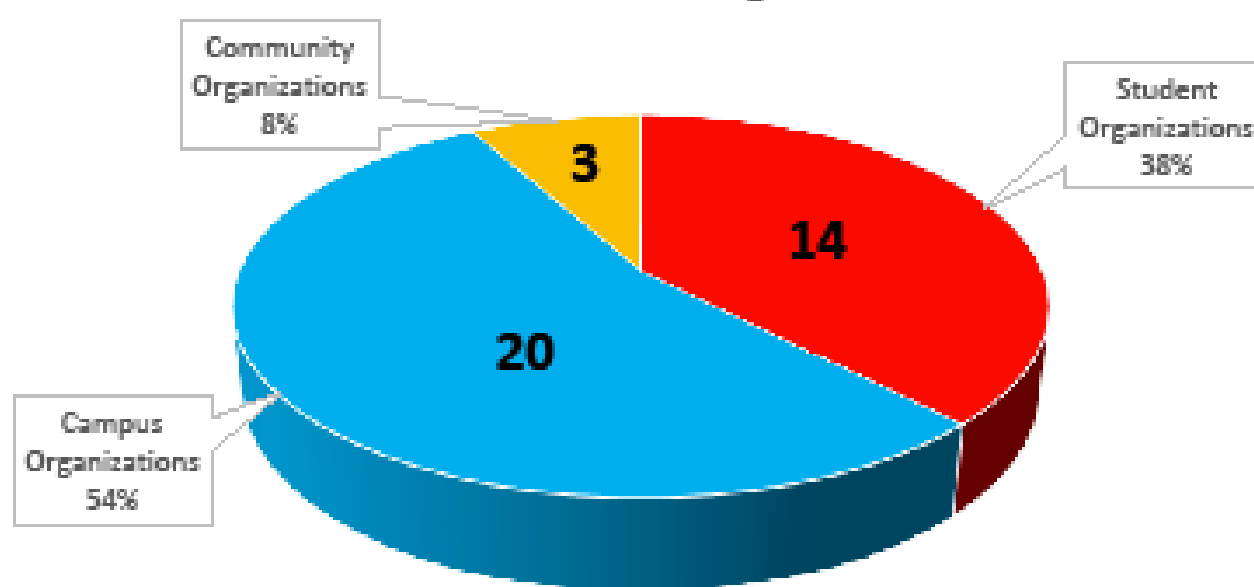
■ Student Organizations ■ Campus Organizations ■ Community Organizations

Total Number of Events



■ Student Organizations ■ Campus Organizations ■ Community Organizations

Total Number of Organizations



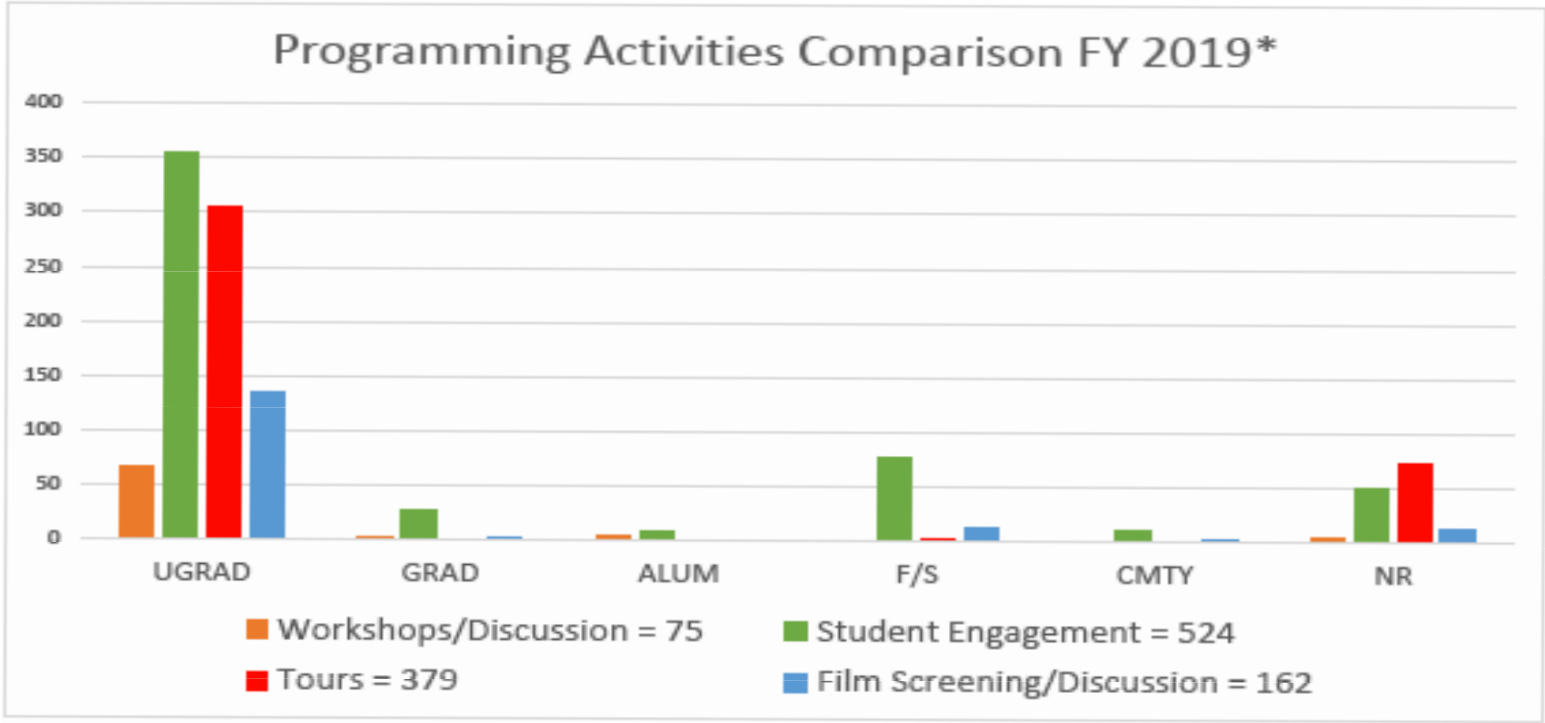
■ Student Organizations ■ Campus Organizations ■ Community Organizations

K-12 Programming Activities Comparison

FY 2019\*



■ Student Engagement = 23 ■ Tours = 172



### Support the Center

If you wish to make a donation to the African-American Cultural Center please contact us at [uicaacc@uic.edu](mailto:uicaacc@uic.edu)/312-996-9549 or make your donation online by visiting: [give.uic.edu](http://give.uic.edu) and type African-American Cultural Center in the search field.



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