



AFRICAN- AMERICAN CULTURAL CENTER

Annual Report 2017–18

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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.

Library, Gallery and Other Resources

The AACC Library, located in room 200 Addams Hall, has wireless access, two pc workstations, a flat screen television, a book collection and resources for research on African-American and Diaspora topics for dissertations, theses, term papers, and projects. Members of the UIC community can check out books and other materials from our collection at no cost.

The Library and Gallery (room 207) are also available for open study. They can be reserved by registered student organizations, campus units and community partners at no cost.

To reserve either space, complete a Space Request Form on our website: <http://aacc.uic.edu>

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 faculty, staff, students, community partners and other stakeholders in programs and initiatives that contextualize, highlight, present and critically examine Black diaspora traditions, histories and experiences.

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



Lori D. Barcliff Baptista
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Student Marketing Assistant



Kevin Bell
Student Marketing Assistant

2017-18 Advisory Committee

- Olateju Adesida, Fehinty African Theatre Ensemble
- Sienna Little, UIC School of Public Health '15
- Jane Rhodes PhD, Professor & Chair UIC African-American Studies
- Gerald Smith, Director of Minority Affairs, UIC College of Engineering
- Brian Weddington, UIC School of Theater & Music '08
- Sonia Yaco-Asst. Professor & Special Collections Librarian, UIC Library

A YEAR OF AFRO GEOGRAPHIES

African-American Cultural Center Goals:

- To positively impact the recruitment, retention and success of Black faculty, staff and students 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

AFRO GEOGRAPHIES PROGRAMMING

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 from all majors and cultural backgrounds each day for drop-in open study.



Bingefest@AACC_Black and Sexy TV

Oct 4, 11, 18 & 25/AACC Gallery

UIC students, faculty, staff and community allies joined the AACC staff and #streetteam to watch and discuss episodes from Black&SexyTV. The online media network streams stories from a Black perspective and explores racial and sexual politics, love and intimacy in Black communities.

CAN_Curator Talk w. Jacqueline

Nov 15/AACC Library

UIC Alum Jacqueline Yvonne Smith contextualizes the historical significance of Chicago's 1940 American Negro Exhibit, discusses its key stakeholders, and provides a brief history of large expositions—including the World Columbian Exposition—and their relationship to the American Negro Exposition's significance.



Breakfast at the AACC

May 7-9/AACC Gallery

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



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.



Accessing Joy

March 7 /AACC Gallery

An interactive arts workshop that explores how joy might be mobilized to promote community care.

Featuring the works of visual artist Nathan Mansakahn

CCUSC Joint Tabling

Nov 2 & 9/AACC Gallery

The Centers for Cultural Understanding and Social Change have a collective purpose to broaden awareness about underrepresented groups at UIC. Through tabling events such as Market place and Student Involvement Fair, the CCUSC team is able to reach students, faculty, and staff and bring awareness of the Centers and the resources that they provide.



Reimagining Masculinities

Nov 2 & 9/AACC Gallery

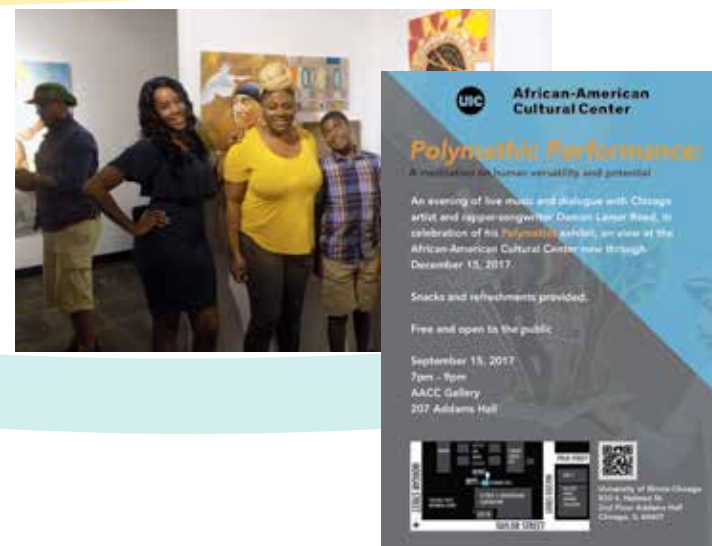
The Reimagining Masculinities Initiative is a collaborative project between the Centers for Cultural Understanding and Social Change that strives to support and affirm male allies and advocates. Through dialogues, films and workshops, this initiative unpacks what it means to be masculine, and explores issues of masculinity and gender.



Wellness Center

Feb 20, March 20, & April 10/AACC Gallery

The AACC has collaborated with the UIC Wellness Center as a drop location for the Pop-Up Pantry. A donation bin is located within our premises all items go directly UIC students. The AACC was also the site for the Wellness Center cooking skills/food demonstration workshop available to students once per month in February, March, and April.



Polymathic Performance

Sep 15-Dec 15/AACC Gallery

An evening of live music and dialogue with Chicago artist and rapper-songwriter Damon Lamar Reed, in celebration of his Polymathic exhibit, on view at the African-American Cultural Center September 15 through December 15, 2017.

EXHIBITS

POLYMATHIC

Curated by Damon Lamar Reed



Polymathic meditates on human versatility, polyvalence and multi- disciplinary. Every individual born was created with a potential for greatness. We confront problems. We seek solutions. Everyday we focus on one or the other. This decision binds the framework for the life we have created. With each situation that arises, a screwdriver might do the job today. Yet tomorrow, a sledgehammer might be a better tool.



BLACK SPECTRUM: A CLOSER LOOK AT BLACK JOY AND EXPRESSION

Curated by Nathan Mansakahn

This photographic exhibit focuses on black millennials and how they choose to put their appearance together their hairstyle, their clothes, their shoes and their accessories in ways that resist the status quo and constricting ideas of blackness. As a black millennial, Mansakahn also explores the different places that Black Millennials frequent and their hobbies, which might contradict what the general public would assume about black people.



IT AIN'T WHERE YOU'RE FROM

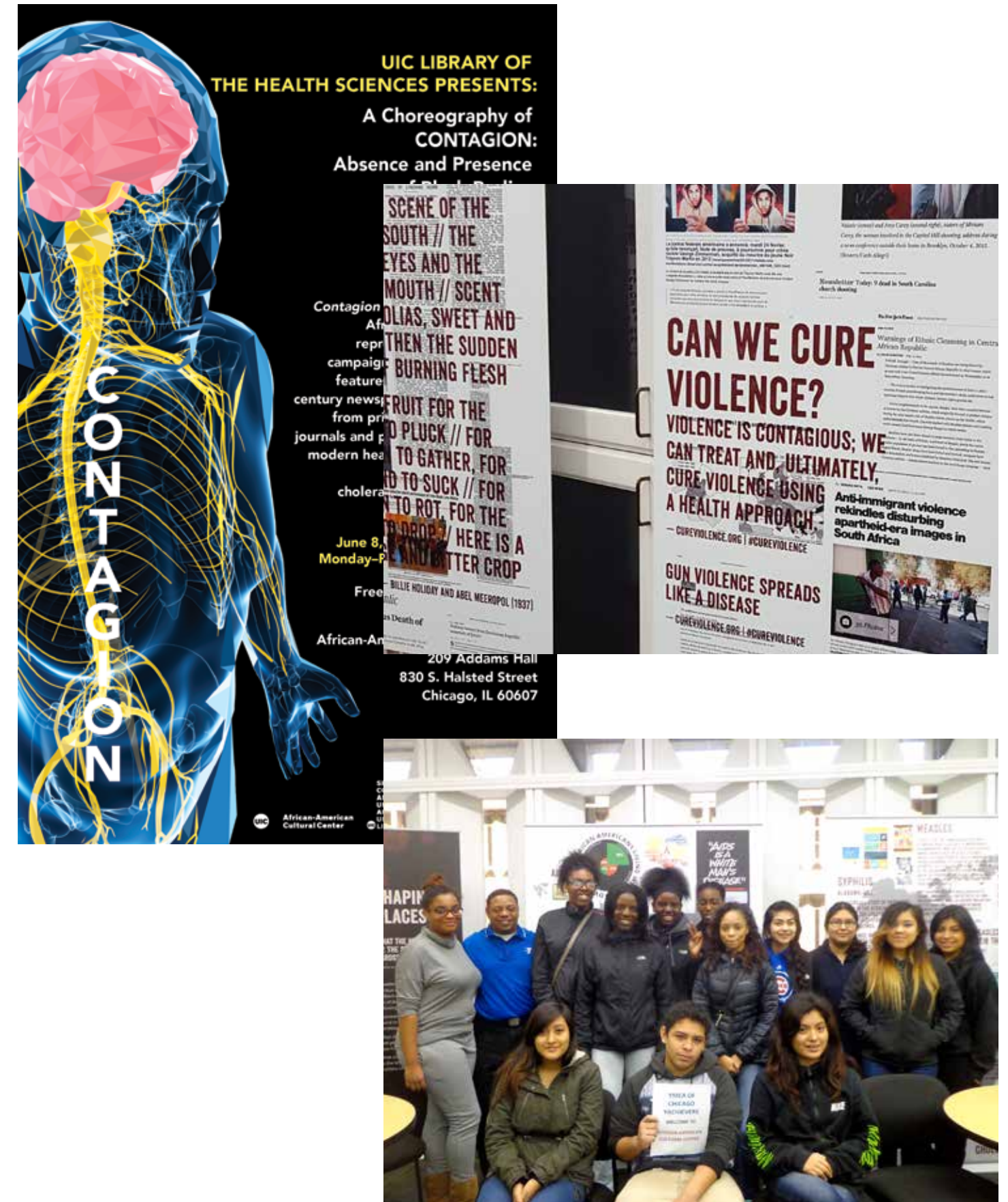
Curated by Lori Barcliff-Baptista

Dr. Baptista integrates arts, humanities and social science frameworks, practices and perspectives to examine cultural representations and their impact on marginalized communities. Her scholarly work and research interests reflect a long standing preoccupation with how members of diverse communities transmit social knowledge and a sense of identity through seemingly mundane objects, materials and expressive formats.



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.



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 Black to School BBQ, Summer College, Urban Public Policy Fellows Seminar, Civic Engagement Days, Black History Month Programming, AfricanAmerican Studies' Grace Holt Luncheon and Lecture, Illinois African American and Latino Higher Education Alliance Diversity Dialogue and Student Research Forum and public lectures.

Grace Holt Luncheon

March 14/AACC Gallery

The Grace Holt Legacy Luncheon hosted by 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 Zakkiah Najeebah and Terrion L. Williamson along with Cecil C. Curtwright, Associate Vice Provost, Academic and Enrollment Services.



REFLECTIONS

LORI
BARCLIFF
BAPTISTA



For the past seven years, I have been privileged to imagine, research, teach, curate, support, share and collaborate on projects that explore how members of diverse and often marginalized communities use objects, images, and cultural practices to negotiate their places in the world.

Afro-Geographies is my culminating project as director. Anchored in a number of academic and creative collaborations, the project travels the roots and routes where peoples of African descent see themselves in the archives, literature, global foodways and performance venues. Afro-Geographies presents multiple points of view and unseats the reliable narrator with the plurality of many voices. Simply put, the project endeavors to show and tell how black cultural identity is constantly formed and reformed by individuals who attempt to reconcile their encounters with often conflicting histories, sources, experiences, encounters, allusions and desires.

It is a rare opportunity to be the steward of an enterprise that nurtures ideas and experiences that affirm, challenge and hold us accountable for our shared values and commitments. I am grateful for the possibilities embraced and realized by my amazing staff, colleagues and students. Through my work with African-Americans with ties to the rural agricultural south, immigrants, refugees, volunteer doulas, formerly incarcerated women, student veterans, environmental stewards, abolitionists, and a diverse cross-section of UIC faculty, staff and students, I have developed a deep and felt sense of how we are intimately connected to people in ways that might not be apparent in the first encounter, but are revealed in the course of sincere dialogue and practice.

DR. MARIO LAMOTHE



During my two years as the African-American Cultural Center's first postdoctoral fellow, my colleagues provided me with the resources and warm collegiality to advance my research, pedagogy, and community engagement with peers at UIC and elsewhere.

I transformed aspects of my research into forthcoming peer-reviewed essays. Participation in conferences and fieldwork generated keen insight into the development of my book manuscript, *Vodou/Voodoo Bodies*.

In fall 2017, I developed the Honors College seminar *Pedagogies of Protest*. The class interrogated what "protesting" can do and teach, as we drew inspiration from student activism that took place, on and off-campus, in our city and state, across the nation and the world. The seminar culminated in a student-curated exhibit.

In addition to my duties as a co-convenor of the Re-imagining Masculinities Initiative, I represented AACC on the community advisory board of the university's community health initiative Integrated PASEO (Promoting Affirming Services, comprehensive Education and community Outreach).

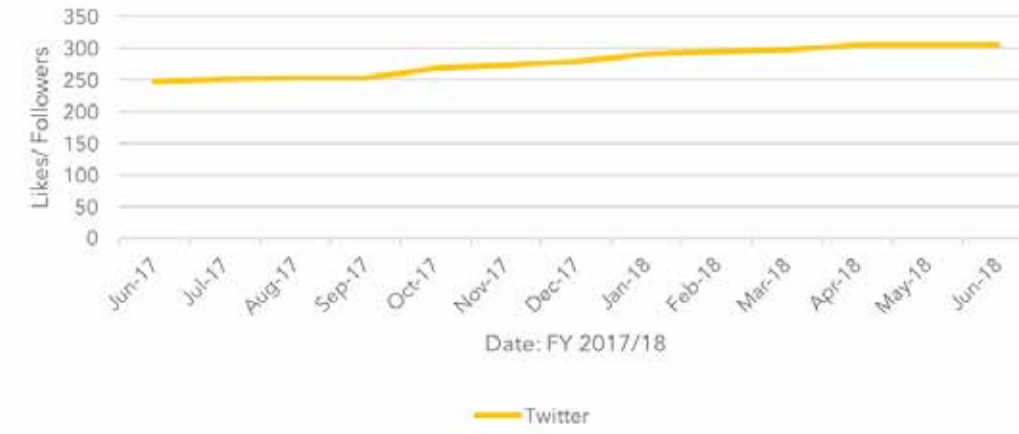
Most notably, the postdoctoral fellowship helped me secure me a tenure-track position at UIC. Beginning fall 2018, I will become an Assistant Professor in the departments of African-American Studies and Anthropology, specializing in arts and expressive cultures in African and its diaspora. I will also be a member of UIC's Diaspora Studies Cluster. As I transition into new aspects of my career at UIC, I feel humbly indebted to my colleagues at AACC and countless others who have helped me along the journey. It's been an enriching experience.



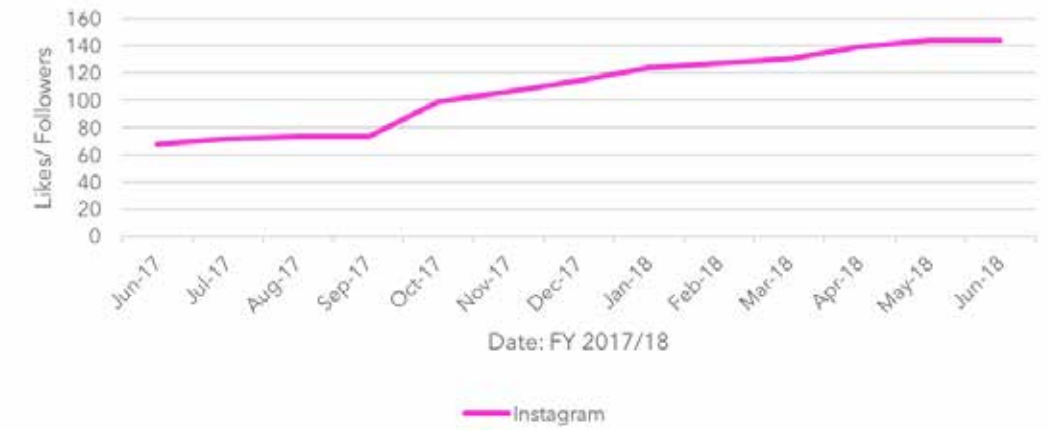
APPENDIX: AACC USE STATISTICS

APPENDIX SOCIAL MEDIA

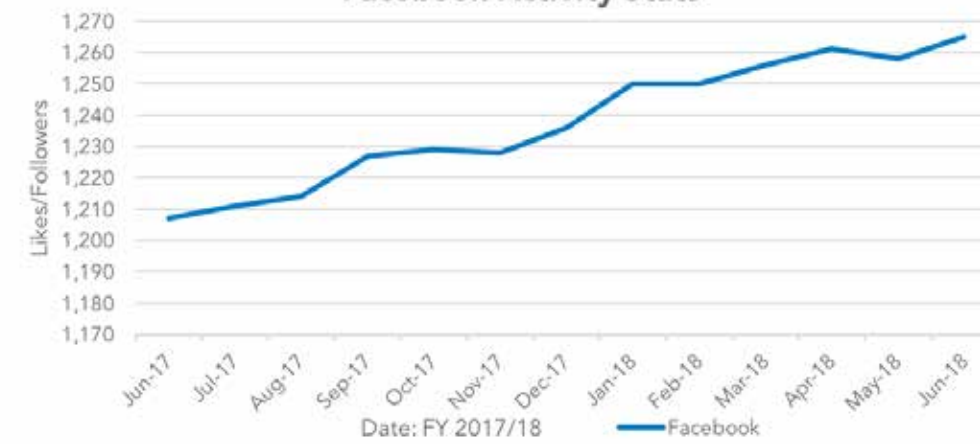
Twitter Activity Stats



Instagram Activity Stats

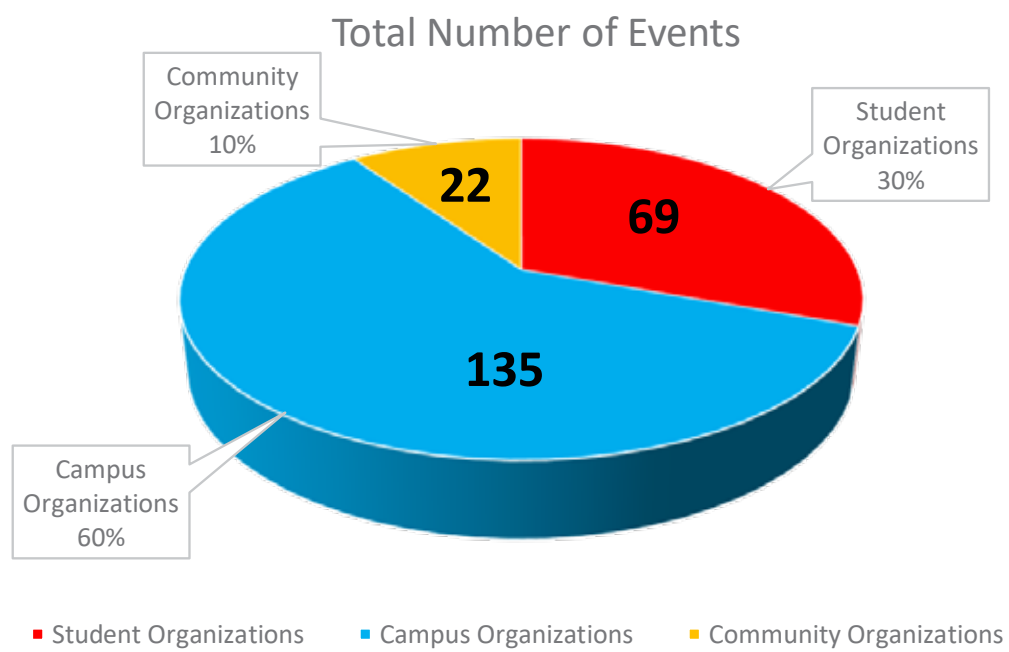
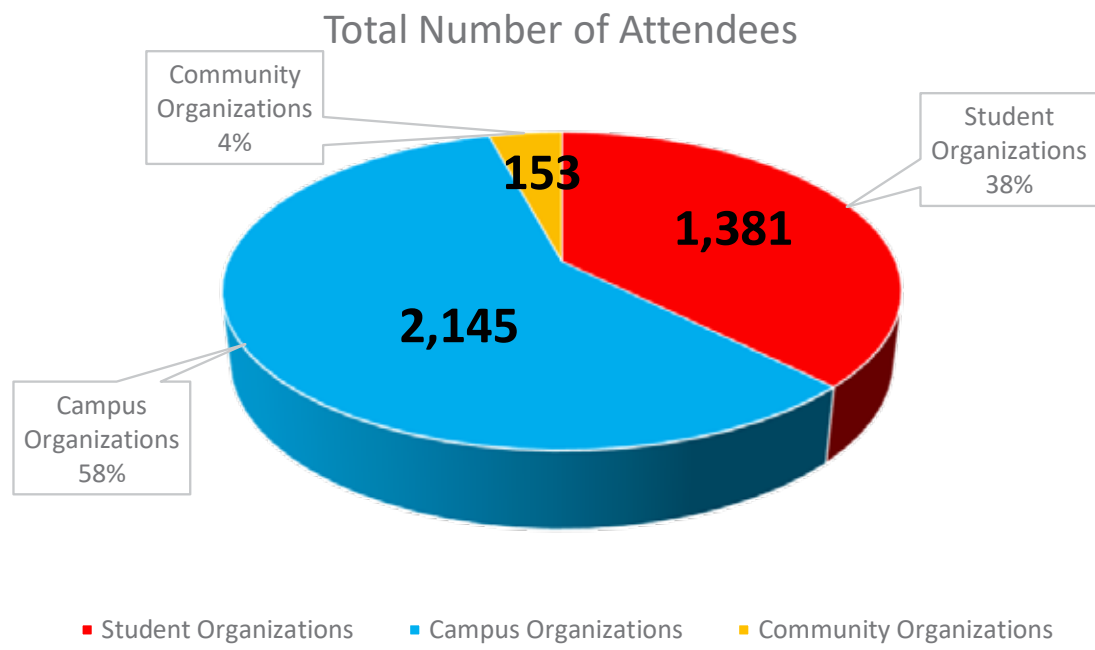
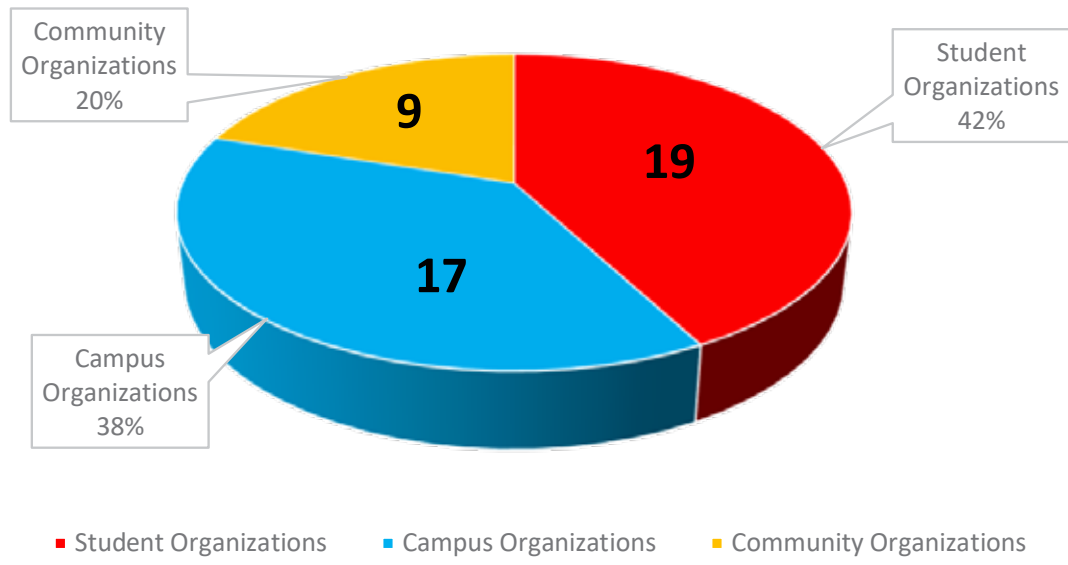


Facebook Activity Stats

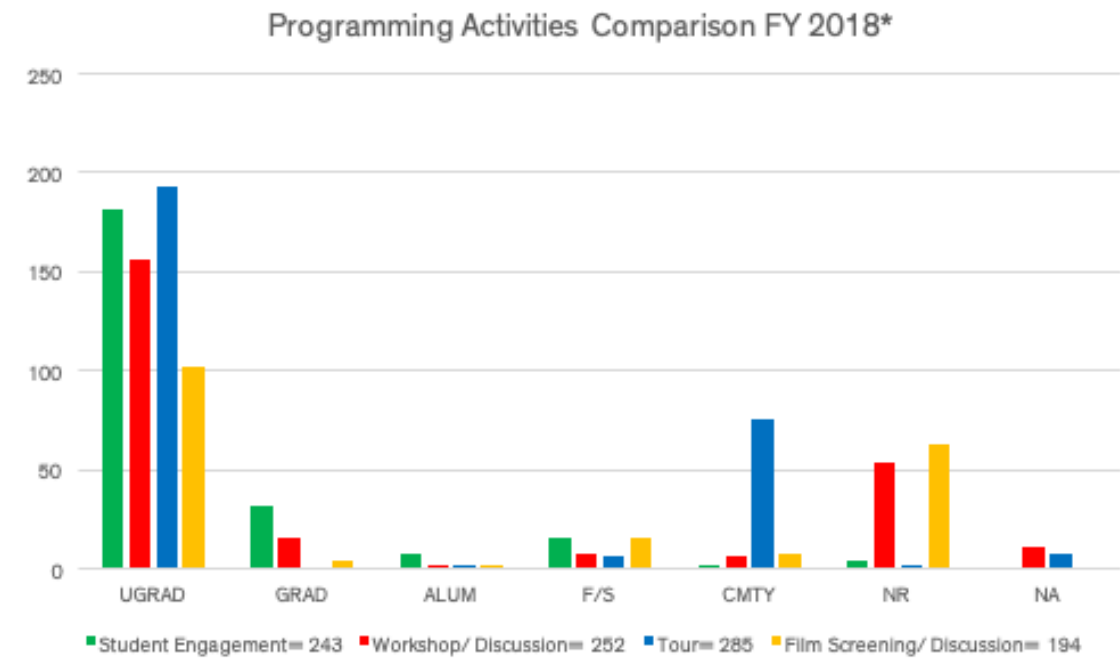
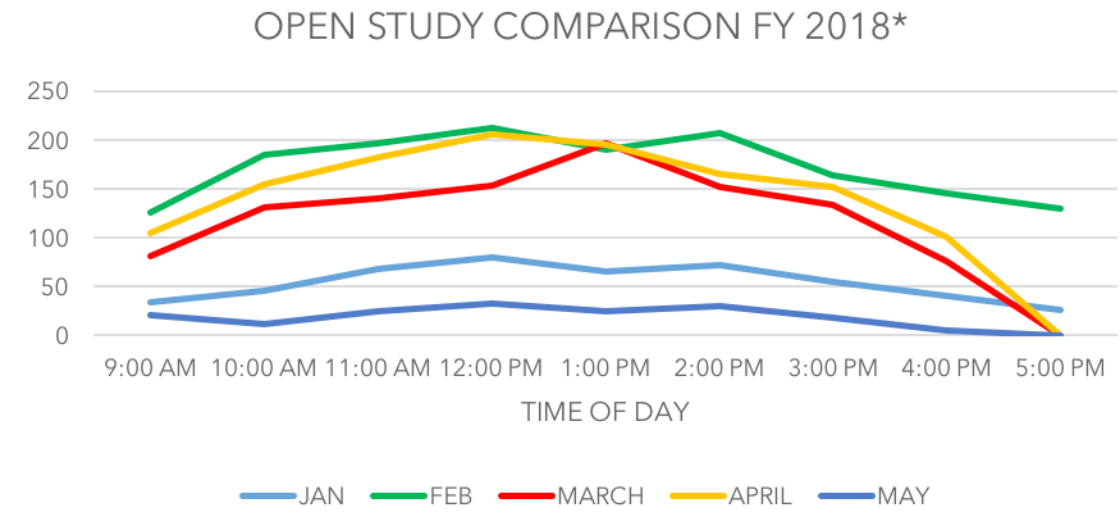


APPENDIX **SPACE UTILIZATION**

AACC Gallery and Library FY 18



APPENDIX **PROGRAMMING**



K-12 Programming Activities Comparison FY 2018*



Support the Center

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



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