Spring semester at the Black Cultural Center means that ensemble spring productions are in full force. The remaining April production is “Carnival Unveiled,” featuring the Jahari Dance Troupe. It takes place on April 25, 2015 7:00 pm at Loeb Playhouse. The primary inspiration for the title of the show was the fall research tour to Trinidad & Tobago. Ensemble members desired that the show mirror the legacies and traditions of Carnival. The show’s choreographer, Joshua Ishmon, desired to give student choreographers the opportunity to let their imagination run free inside of a more structured format than usual.

Jahari has been working diligently all year long to conduct an inspiring performance and celebrate the carnival tradition. The rehearsal process is definitely one that is very tiring for both the choreographers and dancers. Ishmon describes preparation this way “It’s all a process of building the confidence & accountability of the dancers/choreographers. The ensemble members contribute ninety percent of the creative works. I serve the purpose of managing the space & production as well as facilitating a safe & encouraging environment.” Practicing twice a week for three hours at a time could be very time consuming and frustrating especially when balancing class requirements and academic success.

JorDann Phillips, Jahari Student Coordinator, shares that “we have been working extremely hard preparing for our spring production. The preparation for this show has been definitely been a challenge because this genre is out of our comfort zone. The audience should expect a fun filled event with lots of fast movement, bright color, upbeat music, and portrayals of many Carnival characters. Jahari members can apply this preparation to other areas of their life because when a situation is challenging it is very easy to give up and every ensemble member has stepped up and risen to the occasion. Working together we have created a great show!”

For those interested in attending the production tickets are: $5 Purdue Students, $7 General Public.

Juanita Crider, Editor
Success is a Way of Life....

Success! We think about it, write about it and strive for it. But what is it? A quote from legendary basketball coach John Wooden comes to mind. John Wooden was a native of Indiana and a three time All-American at Purdue University. As head coach at UCLA he won 10 National Championships in a 12 year period. John Wooden described success as “Knowing that you did your best to become the best you are capable of becoming.”

Last summer I spent my vacation in Asheville, North Carolina. I was in awe with the breathtaking view from the Smokey Mountains, the beautiful wildflowers, streams and creeks on the mountainside. As I think of success I draw the analogy to climbing one of those mountains. Live your life each day, as you would climb a mountain. An occasional glance toward the summit keeps the goal in mind, but many beautiful scenes can be observed from each new vantage point along the way. Climb slowly, steadily; enjoying each passing moment and the view from the summit will serve as a fitting climax for the journey you have made.

If you are a graduating senior, it is my hope that you will be able to look back on your Purdue journey and know that you have enjoyed each new scene and passing moment. Some of the special moments may have been membership into your fraternity or sorority, making the Deans list, performing in Loeb Playhouse as a member of one of the BCC ensembles, attending a classroom lecture that inspired you, or participating on your residence hall council. I hope that you have enjoyed the daily pleasures of life and have developed life long friendships with individuals you met through your student organization involvement. As you walk across the Elliott stage on graduation day you should be proud that you have reached your climax at Purdue University.

For those of you who will return to campus next fall I encourage you to set new goals, and take full advantage of your Purdue experience by becoming involved with the Black Cultural Center. Plan to join our Research Tour to Birmingham, AL and explore the Civil Rights Movement. You will be amazed at how these young people changed the American landscape.

However you define success, it is important to keep in mind that success is not a project, act or job description; it is a way of life. It includes going beyond the normal call of duty, stretching perceived limits, and holding ourselves responsible for being the best we can be.

Renee Thomas
Director
“A Retrospective: Exploring Purdue Life Through A Black Lens”

Gordon Parks
Fine Arts Ensemble

“A Retrospective: Exploring Purdue Life Through A Black Lens”
April 8-22, 2015
Throughout the BCC

Enjoy an exhibit of photographs which contrasts themes of perception vs. reality in portraits of blackness on campus.

Jahari Dance Troupe
Spring Revue

“Carnival Unveiled”
Saturday, April 25, 2015
7:00 pm
Loeb Playhouse

Come see how ensemble members were inspired by the fall research tour to Trinidad & Tobago as they interpret the tradition of Carnival.
Tickets: $5 Purdue Students
$7 General Public

This is just a small sampling of photographs from the Gordon Parks Fine Arts Ensemble Exhibit. We encourage you to visit the BCC to view the exhibit in its entirety.
Graduates...

Each spring we give graduating BCC employees and ensemble members an opportunity to reflect and share feelings about their time at Purdue University. Read and enjoy!

Profiles of graduating seniors are continued on pgs. 5-8

Casarae Gibson, Ph.D. English
Hometown: San Francisco Bay Area/Sacramento Valley, California

“The Black Cultural Center has been a space where I felt safe. The BCC is my home away from home. The lasting friendships, great research tours, good food, cultural and leadership development and resources the BCC provided me and other students was the ultimate gift. I am forever grateful and thank the BCC staff for being a family that nurtured me and believed in my potential. My advice to current and potential Purdue students is to find mentors, create an active network of friends, stay confident in your craft, never give up, go to Chicago, Indianapolis or elsewhere to find your Black (center) if you need it. Lastly, know that being at Purdue you will receive a great education and gainful employment after your educational journey is complete so ‘keep pushing’ and believe in God’s purpose for your life.”

After graduation Dr. Gibson will be working as an Assistant Professor of African American Literature in the Department of African American Studies at Syracuse University.

Doniece Leshore, Public Health, BVOI, Hometown: Marion, Indiana

“I had been singing in choirs my whole life. I knew when coming to college I did not want to be involved in just any choir. I wanted to sing in a choir that focused on music of the African American tradition. Coming to the BCC felt like home and being in BVOI has been lifechanging. I have grown spiritually. Coming to Purdue and being around a diverse group of people at the BCC has helped with my relationship building. At the BCC I have been introduced to cultural experiences I have never had before, for example traveling to Trinidad & Tobago. A scholarship I received from the BCC helped me to stay in school and be more aware of my academics. My advice to current and future Purdue students is to take advantage of any opportunity to participate in leadership development programs and gain experience across cultures. This allows you to get out of your comfort zone which is important because you never know what you’re capable of doing until you take some chances. Also keep up on your academics! You may not think so but there’s someone always looking and the BCC looks into that if you’re involved with them and will guide you to campus resources to help you.”

After graduation Doniece plans to work for a while before applying to graduate school at Washington State University.
Amadin Osagiede, MBA, business Administration
Black Thought Collective
Hometown: Born in Nigeria, raised in New Hampshire

“ I have been a member of The Black Thought Collective for three years. I came to the BCC because I thought it would be a good space to be around other people of color. I have gained a sense of family in my involvement. I felt displaced when I first came to Purdue. The BCC has made me feel very comfortable and has been an outlet with good support from the staff and other students. The center’s programming have helped me connect with home and the black experience. The BCC has been a place of rejuvenation for me. Traveling on the BCC research tour to Trinidad & Tobago will always be an outstanding memory. My advice to current and potential students is that despite grades being very important try to focus not only on academic life. Have as many social and cultural experiences while you are here. They are very important. Learn to budget your time but get a good balance of the social, cultural and academic experience that Purdue has to offer because it will be definitely be worth it!”

After graduation Amadin will be moving to Arizona working in supply chain management for Intel.

Jessica Savieo, Pharmaceutical Science, BVOI
Hometown: Fort Wayne, IN

“ I have been a member of BVOI off and on for too many semesters to remember. I came to BVOI on an invitation from my residence hall neighbor who was a member of the choir. Being in BVOI taught me a lot about African American culture, which I didn’t learn much about in my small private school. My faith also grew from the experience. It’s like a family at the BCC. My favorite memory is the concert BVOI did with the Lafayette Symphony. We worked very hard and it all paid off. My advice to current and future Purdue students is to use your resources; all the BCC staff have an open door policy. There will be difficult times and utilizing resources will help you succeed. Also set the bar high when it comes to your goals because when you do you set your aim on hard work which breeds success. Jessica is still seeking employment in some aspect of the pharmaceutical industry and hopes to move to the west coast.
Marcus English, Communications/ Marketing & Advertising, Library Aid  
Hometown: Michigan City, IN

“The Black Cultural Center seemed very inviting, seemed like a good place to do work and be involved in the Purdue community. You get to know what’s going on in a real chill environment. I wanted to be more involved with the black community at Purdue. I love all cultures but felt the need to be more involved with my own culture on campus. While working at the BCC and participating in BCC programming you learn to be proud of who you are. I feel so much more educated coming here and experiencing personal growth. One of my most memorable BCC moments is when I helped with a BCC educational tour with 120 elementary students during Black History Month. They were really a great group of kids from a variety of ethnic backgrounds. This made me feel that as a society we are headed in the right direction. My advice to students is to try to figure what you want and go for it. Don’t ever let negativity tell you you can’t do something. I believe that if you go towards something full force you can get it. Also it really helps to be kind to people. Stress can really get you down in college. Maintaining a healthy lifestyle during college will help alleviate stress.

Marcus is still looking for positions in the field of marketing. Also on the side he and his brother want to start racing motorcycles professionally.

Marcellus English, Communications, Student Receptionist  
Hometown: Michigan City, IN

“I was motivated to become more involved at the BCC during my last semester in college. I had been to the BCC a few times but I never interacted with too many of the people there. I felt it was time to step up and get out of my shell and get more involved; to get more in touch with my black culture. One thing I have gained from making the decision to become more involved at the BCC is more friends. I often questioned if I was “black enough” and my time at the BCC showed me that there’s no such thing as being black enough. I realized that I am black but everyone has their own personality. My favorite BCC memory is just working during my second week and being so comfortable in the great atmosphere getting to know two other student workers. My advice to current and future students is to definitely stop by the BCC. You will find family there. You will feel more than welcome. Although studying is very important you’re not going to remember the nights when you stayed up all night studying. You’re going to remember the relationships you built. Academics are extremely important but building relationships is something that can take you far.

Marcellus is still busy applying for jobs and really likes racing motorcycles and desires to do that professionally one day.
Jima Fahnbulleh, Law and Society, Jahari
Hometown: Liberia - Avon, Indiana (10 years)

“When I first arrived at Purdue some people tried to disuade me from becoming involved at the BCC but I had to check it out for myself. Also I knew I wanted to dance, specifically with my people. As a freshman it was great meeting people with the same passions that I have. I have been a member of Jahari since my freshmen year. When I first joined Jahari I learned about the scholarship I could earn upon getting a 3.5 GPA or higher. I earned a 3.3 the first semester and was determined the second semester that I would meet the scholarship requirements and I did! My favorite BCC memory is the research tour to Detroit and being nominated outstanding freshmen from the Jahari ensemble. I did not win the overall BCC freshman of the year. However, being nominated was very rewarding. My advice to current students is to be patient and to just know being human means you often have to go through rough patches. Set high academic standards for yourself. When you start off strong and set the bar high no one can tell you that you did not try.”

After graduation Jima plans on attending law school. She is waiting for her acceptance to Ohio State, Duke or Indiana University Law School.

The BCC also congratulates the following ...

Anita Asuquo
LaQuan Lunford
Ashley Lunford
Sarah Muhammad
Routa Mestin
Chaelyn Allen
Valdimir Talley
Shayna Abel
Schane Coker
Alyssa Mullens

We wish all graduates success in all of their future endeavors!
This is my favorite time of year on campus. Why? I enjoy encountering all of the students who are busy preparing and planning for graduation and their post Purdue lives. As we have watched the media coverage of current news events during the past academic year, from “Black Lives Matter” to “I Can’t Breathe!” and “Hands Up Don’t Shoot,” it seems that our community was in constant struggle. Yet in reflecting on the above listed events and the others too numerous to name I find myself hopeful. Why, because among those graduating from Purdue are scholars, activists, educators, policy makers, legislators, scientists, etc... who will work diligently to make the world a better place; a place where all lives matter. How can I be so sure? I have the joy of being in contact with many Purdue alum who have gone on to do great things in my job here at the BCC. This week we were able to bring one back to campus, Dr. Heidi R. Lewis, who is currently a professor at Colorado College. She is just one of many who are engaging students in new and exciting ways while also encouraging them to be accomplices more than allies as they work to make a difference. If you need a reminder I hope you read the testimonials of the graduates in this issue. If not go back and read them! Yes, even in your struggles here at Purdue, the education you received and your graduation matters. I wish you success and expect you to change the world. Boiler Up!