Welcome to Purdue University!

Welcome to Purdue University! On behalf of the Black Cultural Center, I extend my congratulations on your acceptance to Purdue University. You represent the best and most talented students in the country and around the world. The college experience is an exciting time – of dreams, hopes and fears, great joys, major adjustments and some disappointments. It is a time to grow and learn.

The Black Cultural Center is a place where the African American experience is explored, celebrated and shared. The center provides an intellectually stimulating and comprehensive program by sponsoring an array of special lecturers, performances by distinguished artists and alumni speakers who enhance cultural diversity and improve campus life at Purdue. The BCC publishes a monthly newsletter, houses a library – offering a variety of materials on African American culture, and a computer lab, all providing support for your educational needs.

Black Cultural Center staff strives to provide a welcoming, supportive and caring environment. We are here to enable you to achieve academic, intellectual and personal success at Purdue University. I encourage you to actively participate in BCC programs and activities this fall. Please utilize the BCC library for research and studying, and take full advantage of the computer lab. Your involvement in the BCC will enhance the social, cultural and intellectual vitality of campus life and will promote your personal growth and development.

The Black Cultural Center has planned two special events for first year African American students, Boilerfest and the BCC Performing Arts Ensemble call out and orientation. The purpose of these programs is to introduce you to the Purdue community and the various services available to assist you in achieving your educational goals. The events are highlighted in this newsletter. The BCC staff is anxious to get to know you personally. Staff at the BCC empower students and promote cultural and academic success. Please stop by the BCC and introduce yourself. I am confident you will appreciate the way in which all of us share in your dreams and goals. The BCC looks forward to playing a vital role in your educational journey at Purdue.

Sincerely,
Renee A. Thomas
Director
Introducing the Ensembles...

If you sing, dance, love creative writing or get dramatic on stage, then check out the BCC. We sponsor four performing groups in dance, drama, music, and creative writing to explore African American/African Diaspora traditions and experiences through artistic engagement. Or if you prefer to engage in provocative discussions and exploring subjects in depth to foster critical thinking, then check The Black Thought Collective. Each ensemble is instructed by a professional Artist/Scholar-In-Residence. We consider the Performing Arts Ensembles the heartbeat of the center. Our ensembles affirm students in the area of character and leadership development.

Black Thought Collective

Taking on a think tank approach, the Black Thought Collective (BTC) blends seamlessly with the existing BCC Performing Arts Ensembles, with a “Scholar-in-Residence” who works with the student coordinator to oversee the group. BTC has three standing committees that provide opportunities for all members. “Black Thought in the Media” focuses on current events publicized via local, national and global media; “Past to Present” explores black history and culture focusing on the resources of the BCC library and other campus departments; and “The Awareness Movement” concentrates on future action to better educate Purdue students, faculty, staff and the greater Lafayette community on black history, black culture and black thought.

Black Thought Collective presented at the 2009, 2011, and 2013 National Council of Black Studies Conference. BTC also hosts a spring symposium where they present individual research on the fall semester theme.

Jahari Dance Troupe

Named for the Swahili word, meaning “jewel,” the Jahari Dance Troupe is trained in a variety of techniques in black dance from traditional to contemporary. Over the years, Jahari’s repertoire has evolved to include African, Caribbean, ballet, jazz, modern, hip-hop, and tap. The troupe has received instruction from internationally recognized dancers and choreographers. The troupe has performed widely across the Midwest and has also participated in cultural exchange programs with similar dance companies in the region. Joshua Ishmon is the Artist-In-Residence for Jahari. Ishmon is a dance and choreographer and instructor for Deeply Rooted productions. His responsibilities at Deeply Rooted include: 1st Company Dancer, Assistant rehearsal director of their Emerging Artist Ensemble, Artistic/Producing Director of Emerging Choreographers Showcase and Summer Intensive Instructor/Choreographer. Each year Ishmon has several members of the professional staff of Deeply Rooted share their areas of expertise with Jahari members. This expanded relationship will continue to build Jahari’s repertoire again this year.
The Ensembles Continued...

Black Voices of Inspiration

The Black Voices of Inspiration (BVOI) choral ensemble is made up of student and community individuals committed to the performance of music enhanced by the music traditions and experiences of African Americans. The ensemble’s concert literature includes spirituals, jazz, blues, gospel, anthems, hymns, and contemporary music. The group has received international acclaim as apart of the 1999 Voices of America concert tour to Australia, New Zealand and Fiji. BCC full-time Artist-In-Residence, James Dekle, is responsible for conducting weekly master choral classes and preparing BVOI for ensemble engagements. Dekle comes to the BCC from Atlanta, Georgia where he served as Choral Director for the Dekalb Early College Academy and the Atlanta Music Project, a 501(c) 3 non-profit organization that provides intense music education for under served youth. He brings an extensive musical background to the Black Cultural Center. As a performer, he was a member of the “World Renowned” FAMU Marching 100 Band, Concert Choir and The Connection, a performing arts group dedicated to university recruitment Check out the 2014 BVOI concert with the Lafayette Symphony Orchestra on You Tube: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=G9CcBIvyPmk

Haraka Writers

The Haraka Writers are a collective body of student and community writers committed to literary expression of the black experience. Haraka is a Swahili word that means “expression.” Through essays, prose, poetry, and short stories, the Haraka writers strive to reinforce the essential bonds that give hope and strength to people. To much of their credit, four publications of the Haraka Writers are currently in print: “Ebony Thoughts”, “Black Expression of Life and Love”, “Poems for a Sun Lady”, and the 1987 “Haraka Reader” containing selections from the writers workshop was published. The most recent publication in which the Haraka Writers appear is entitled, Eclipsing a Nappy New Millennium-An Anthology of Contemporary Midwestern Poetry. Haraka is under the direction of Artist -In-Residence Khari Bowden, a.k.a. Discopoet Khari B. Khari B. has been performing poetry since 1992. His presence has been requested and hailed internationally. He also has been recognized for his talents by the late great Gwendolyn Brooks and performed with renowned Last Poets via a personal invitation. He is the host of the “The Soul Poetry Cafe,” which is recognized as the nation’s largest open mic show.

Join the BCC Ensembles!
Attend call outs September 2 or 3 at 6:30 pm
The Ensembles Continued...

New Directional Players

Since its debut in 1971, the New Directional Players have become a highly respected theatrical company. NDP’s repertoire ranges from outstanding works by masters of black theater to original pieces by emerging writers and playwrights. They present traditional plays, and perform poetry, dramatic monologues, one acts, musicals, and adapted works. Each production is designed to generate social awareness about various Afro centric issues. NDP performs various engagements during the school year both on and off campus. NDP is under the direction of Artist-In-Residence Kecha Nickson-Kambe who serves as an adjunct professor at Elmhurst College and lecturer at Chicago State.

Gordon Parks Fine Art Ensemble

Established in the fall of 2014, The Gordon Parks Fine Arts Ensemble is the BCC newest ensemble. The conversation about creating this ensemble had been brewing for a while. According to Bill Caise, BCC Assistant Director and ensemble instructor, “Over the course of several semesters students who have been interested in some form of visual arts have approached me inquiring how their interests might connect to the ensemble model of the BCC.” Additionally the BCC has recently featured several artists’ exhibitions as part of the cultural arts series, most notably the Afros photography exhibition by Michael July and the paintings of Purdue alum, Joe Barry Carroll. Caise also stated “when thinking about everything that the BCC currently does in using the arts as a vehicle to teach about black history, culture and thought, it became a no brainer to implement a fine arts ensemble.” Why the name Gordon Parks Fines Arts Ensemble? Gordon Parks is described by many Black Studies scholars as a true African American renaissance man. Parks is perhaps best known by some as the director of the 1971 film Shaft. However, he was primarily a photographer and also a composer, author, and poet. If you are interested in participating in this ensemble, please contact Bill Caise at: wpcaise@purdue.edu.

Photography by Ivan Jackson Gordon Parks ensemble member and graduate student in American Studies
The Purdue Black Cultural Center will sponsor a 5 day research tour to Birmingham and Selma, Alabama Friday October 9 – 12, 2015. This trip serves as a vehicle for education and reflection about struggle and equality. The BCC will utilize sites related to Civil Rights events in Birmingham and Selma to trace the history of the Civil Rights Movement in the 20th century. During the tour we will retrace the steps of Dr. King and other civil rights heroes. Students will relive the bravery of the people who participated in the Civil Rights Movement. This area of the country has an exceptionally rich history that provides a ready-made laboratory for studying the Civil Rights Movement. Through a combination of scholarly lectures, site visits, master class art instruction, and guided tours, research tour participants will come to a comprehensive understanding of the history of a segregated society and the continuing struggle to dismantle it. The tour will include a visit to The Birmingham Civil Rights Institute, a “living institution” which views the lessons of the past as a positive way to chart new directions for the future. Students will experience the drama of the courageous story of the civil rights movement as it is told in the permanent galleries. Historic landmarks include the Sixteenth Street Baptist Church, the site of the infamous 1963 bombing that killed four little girls. Kelly Ingram Park, distinguished as “A Place of Revolution and Reconciliation,” the Edmund Pettis Bridge, and Tuskegee University. The tour is limited to 45 participants. Membership in one of the BCC performing arts ensembles is required for you to participate. If you are interested in joining the tour, please contact Renee Thomas, BCC director at rathomas@purdue.edu. Feel free to call the BCC at 765-494-3091 if you have any questions. The tour is filling up quickly so please register early to secure your spot.
Welcome to the BCC Library

The Black Cultural Center Library is charged with the special mission of preserving knowledge in the field of Africana Studies. It is the only library on campus specializing in materials related to the historical, sociological, political, and cultural aspects of people of the African diaspora.

The Library presently contains more than 7,000 books and materials and subscribes to more than 30 periodicals including popular magazines, scholarly journals, and newspapers. Holdings include such titles as African American Review, Black Scholar, Ebony, Essence, U.S. Black Engineer, and the Western Journal of Black Studies. Current subscriptions to Black newspapers include the Chicago Defender, Gary Crusader, and Indianapolis Recorder.

More resources can be found on the BCC Library’s web site which contains information on various collections and databases as well as external research links all related to the Black experience from a domestic and global perspective. Patrons may access the web site and online library catalog via a public use computer within the library, or remotely either on or off campus.

The library serves to enhance the patron’s knowledge of African American heritage by providing information which can be utilized for academic research and personal growth. The BCC Library works in cooperation with Purdue Libraries. Its cataloged holdings are included in the Purdue Libraries online catalog.

All Purdue students, faculty, and staff may borrow materials and use the resources and services of the Black Cultural Center Library. The public is also encouraged to interact with the collection via the web site at: https://www.lib.purdue.edu/libraries/bcc.
Boilerfest 2015

MARK YOUR CALENDARS FOR THURSDAY, AUGUST 27TH FROM 4-6 PM IN THE BCC PARKING LOT FOR BOILERFEST 2015!

Boilerfest introduces new students to the BCC, various student organizations, and campus support services. Join us in celebrating the BCC fall semester theme “The Black Freedom Struggle: Historical Narratives, Contemporary Echoes.” We will kick off a semester highlighting the relationship between the black freedom struggle and the arts. Come out and celebrate with the Friday Night Funk Out student band and President Daniels. We invite you to an afternoon filled with music, food and fun! See you there.

Save the Dates...

Wednesday, September 2
Thursday, September 3 2015
@ 6:30 pm

BCC Performing Arts Ensembles Call Outs
At The Black Cultural Center
Multipurpose Rm 1

Bold, cutting edge, culturally relevant performances that foster understanding is the aim of the BCC Performing Arts Ensembles.

Join us this fall!
Upcoming BCC Events....... 

Wednesday and Thursday September 2-3, 2015
Performing Arts Ensemble Call Outs
6:30 p.m.
BCC
If you are interested in joining one of the ensembles or even thinking about it.
You are invited to come out and see what it is all about!

Wednesday, September 16, 2015
Frank X. Walker
Krannert Auditorium
5:30 pm
A founding member of the Affrilachian Poets, he is the editor of America! What’s My Name? The “Other” Poets Unfurl the Flag (Wind Publications, 2007) and the author of over four poetry collections. A Kentucky Arts Council Al Smith Fellowship recipient, Walker’s poems have been converted into a stage production by the University of Kentucky Theatre department and widely anthologized in numerous collections.

Saturday, September 19, 2015
Friends and Family Day: Featuring Yvette Chatman
Immediately following football game
Black Cultural Center
Participate in a “hands on” learning experience contemporary and past African Americans who dared to make a difference throughout history. Also view Ms. Chatman’s original paintings, They Dared, which will be on exhibit at Fowler Hall through December 5,

Friday & Saturday October 23-24, 2015
Performing Arts Ensemble Showcase
7 pm Black Cultural Center