The Department of Pan-African Studies

Our department offers an undergraduate major leading to a Bachelor of Arts degree and a minor in the College of Arts and Sciences. Pan-African Studies includes the study of Africa and the African Diaspora. Our major and minor course sequences are structured to provide an in-depth study of history, language, philosophy, education, literature, art, music, science, sociology, and other subjects as they relate to people of African descent throughout the world. These courses also expose students to theoretical, practical, and domestic and national issues facing African Americans. Majors and minors can choose from five areas of concentration, including a generalist Pan-African Studies emphasis; African Diaspora Studies; Literature, Arts, and Culture; Pedagogy; or Theoretical and Applied Research. Students are encouraged to use their intellectual skills to bring about better organization and development within the African American, African, and African Diaspora communities.

Students majoring in any field—from Business or Education to the Humanities and Fine and Professional Arts—are encouraged to consider Pan-African Studies as a minor.

The PAS curriculum includes courses which cover a broad spectrum of the Pan-African experience. Its purpose is to provide students with basic information and questions which will lead to further research, study, and analysis. The curriculum also seeks to investigate the African connection and/or influences among other ethnic groups, particularly Native Americans and Latin Americans, and the extent to which these may be reciprocal.

Please find below a list of general courses offered in the Department of Pan-African Studies. (For available courses each semester, see General University Catalog and Schedule of Classes for each semester.)

PAN-AFRICAN STUDIES (PAS) for placement and credit in foreign language courses see Arts and Sciences--Foreign Language requirement--placement and credit.

| 10101 Elementary Kiswahili I (3) | 33508 Caribbean Social and Political Directions (3) |
| 10102 Elementary Kiswahili II (3) | 34000 Introduction to African World View (3) |
| 13002 Foundations of Pan-African Studies II (03-03) | 35200 African Social, Political, and Economic Systems (3) |
| 20101 Kiswahili III (3) | 36210 African Traditional Architectural Settings (3) |
| 20102 Kiswahili IV (3) | 37000 Oral and Written Discourses in Pan-African Studies (3) |
| 22000 African World Creative Writing (03-06) | 37010 Research Methods in Pan-African Studies (3) |
| 22101 African-American Visual Artists (3) | 37020 Pan-Africanism and the Model African Unity Organization (OAU-AU) (3) |
| 22200 Introduction to African Arts (3) | 37143 The African Brazilian Experience in Culture and Literature (3) |
| 22201 Expressivity in African Arts (3) | 40080 Pedagogy for Pan-African Studies |
| 23001 Black Experience I (3) | 41192 African-American Affairs Practicum (1-12) |
| 23002 Black Experience II (3) | 42095 Special Topics in the Literature of Pan-Africa (3) |
| 23171 The African American Community (3) | 42500 Black Education in America (3) |
| 24095 Black Writers Workshop (3) | 43296 Special Topics in Pan-African Literature, Arts, and Culture (3) |
| 24407 Caribbean Studies (3) | 43396 Special Topics in African Diaspora Studies (3) |
| 30010 African and African American Philosophies (3) | 45095 Special Topics in Pedagogy in Pan-African Studies (3-12) |
| 30120 Contemporary Issues in African-American Education (3) | 47010 Theoretical Approaches to Pan-African Studies (3) |
| 31092 Practicum in African Theatre Arts (3-9) | 47091 Senior Seminar in Pan-African Studies (3) |
| 32010 The Pan-African Essay (3) | 47095 Special Topics in Theoretical and Applied Research (3) |
| 33100 African-American Family in Historical Perspective (3) | 47150 The Underground Railroad (3) |
| 33110 The Black Woman: Historical Perspectives (2) | 49093 Variable Workshops in Pan-African Studies (2-6) |
| 33120 The African-American Man in Contemporary Society (3) | SU Grading Prerequisite: Permission |
| 33200 Ancient-African Cultures (3) | 49095 Selected Topics (2-3) |
| 33203 Kiswahili Conversation (3) | 49096 Individual Investigation (1-3) |
EMPOWERMENT
To all UHURU readers:

I want you to think about it.

What are we really here for? Are we here to party every weekend, skip class and wake up every Sunday morning with a hangover?

For some people, that’s the reality.

For others, it couldn’t be further from the truth. No one’s saying it’s wrong to go out and party or drink and socialize with your friends. It’s perfectly acceptable. After all, this is college. It is the one time where our obligations are few and our dollars are.... well, short.

But college is also about getting an education. And if by the time you graduate, the only thing you’ve learned is that vodka is your drink of choice, you’ve got a serious problem.

College is a time to learn how to be professional, set goals for yourself and to handle your responsibilities like the adult you are.

So we need to get “empowered.” We need to learn how to take care of ourselves financially, mentally, spiritually and physically.

This is why we chose the theme “Black Empowerment.” We want the students on this campus to become the true leaders we know they are capable of being.

I’m proud to say the articles in here are extremely diverse this semester, while at the same time they all stick to the theme of “Black Empowerment.” We have articles about video games, Pan-African Studies, Black Greeks, student entrepreneurs and the 35th anniversary of the shootings Jackson State. We even have our own list of the Top 21 Most Powerful Books for black college students to read.

I would like to take the time to thank my staff members, who have been so helpful during this entire process. Every single one of you has made a great contribution and I can not put into words how grateful I am. Thank you!

Sincerely,

Tara M.L. Pringle
Editor/General Manager

P.S. Check out our new Web site at www.uhuru.kent.edu. It’s guaranteed to make you think, or as Dean Moore would like to say, it’ll “shake you up!”
WHAT MOTIVATES YOU
AMERICAN, BLACK OR AFRICAN
REPRESENTATION IN VIDEO GAMES
THUGS VS. GENTLEMEN
ENTREPRENEURS
KUUMBA
BLACK GREEKS
TOP TWENTY ONE BOOKS
JACKSON STATE
What motivates you?
Your past can push you into your future

Black History Month is usually the time for all of us to reflect on what it means to all of us as black people. Every year I always try to go to the different services and hear people talk about how far we have or have not come as a people.

The sad thing about it is that some of us only tackle serious issues that affect African Americans during February. Don’t get me wrong. I know that people still talk about these things year round but somehow February is the time when everyone wants to remember. It trips me out when I see MTV and VH1 doing a black history commercial. I feel that everyday should be about black issues, not just February.

I have always felt this way about February, but this semester I have been taking a class in African American Literature and it has really made me think about how far we have come as a people. Even though we still got some issues I think that black people embody a lot of strength and a will to push forward.

I could not imagine having to live in a day where some one told me that I was not allowed to read as they did Frederick Douglass and so many others. I could not imagine being told to sit in the back of the bus like Rosa Parks. I could not imagine not being able to make my own choices in life.

Education is a very essential thing for everyone in today’s society. I feel that sometimes I forget that people fought and died so that I could sit in a classroom at a university. I know that we all get to those points where we don’t feel like doing any work or going to class, however we must remember that our ancestors would have given anything to be in our place.

I feel like things are still not equal when it comes to our society, but at least we have the freedom to choose what we want to do with our lives. Even after slavery ended blacks were so discriminated against that they still could not accomplish the things that they wanted. Nowadays you see black people doing a little bit of everything. You see a bit of color in music, movies, fashion, and even at the heads of companies. To me this should be motivation for all of us to know that if we keep striving that we can do anything.

What has motivated me to get through college has been the fact that I came from a single parent household and wanted a better life for myself and my future family. I am very grateful that I have had the opportunity to come to college and the freedom to go on in any career that I choose. I personally know that it has been nothing but the Lord that has got me to the point that I am at now. I look back at the people that helped to get me here and I know that if they could make it then surely I can too. My advice to everyone that reads this article is to not only think about our history in February, but think about it everyday.

When you are walking to class, studying, or just chilling with your friends think about the fact that you are free to just be you, and let our ancestor’s steps and experiences motivate you to move forward.

In thinking about motivation I have talked to a few of your fellow Kent State students to find out what has motivated them through college. Here are some of their answers:

Erica Ham is a graduate student here at Kent State. She completed her undergraduate degree in Health and Family Studies in December of 2004. She says that her past experiences motivate her. She believes that life is about growing, change, and self-improvement. Knowing that God has truly blessed her in all of her endeavors, she wants to make a difference in the same way the God has made for her.

Her desire is to become a school counselor because she has always enjoyed seeing people excel. Her experiences in public high schools were that oftentimes students were misguided because of a lack of guidance and encourage-ment. She believes that all individuals whether children, students, or adults have the capability to grow into something awesome.

Her plans for the future are to graduate from Graduate School within two years. She hopes to find a job as an academic counselor so that she can help fix the school system and administrate activities to help excel students. She says that she feels really blessed to have freedom to choose her own path.
Nakiya Kirtron is a senior fashion major here at Kent State. She was also the Renaissance Ball Queen of 2004. She says that she watched her parents and many others all around her struggle financially. She has a desire to push forward. She wants to learn as much as she can so she can fully realize every talent inside of her. She wants to be a fashion designer because she loves creating things that people love and want to keep. She feels that clothing can be a beautiful ministry if created in the right way. Her desire to bring the classy meaningful style of fashion is what keeps her pushing for this field.

In the future she hopes to have a family that she can share her love for life with. She hopes to have a secure job that she can grow with. After exploring various areas in life she wants to have franchises of her own clothing stores throughout the world.

"Sometimes freedom seems like just a word. I do appreciate the more tangible things that I can access to gain more knowledge, however bondage is still possible. I love having the freedom to be who I am and love me," Kirtron said.

Crystal Huggins, a sophomore journalism major and UHURU staff writer, says what motivates her to go to college was that she always had her mind set on furthering her education and knowing that she could go further up the career ladder with a college degree. Support that she gets from her family and friends also motivates her.

With their love and support she knows that she will have the much needed motivation to succeed. She chose to be a journalism/communications major because she has always wanted to be a writer and she can't see herself doing anything else. Her plans for the future are to start working for a magazine such as Essence, The Source, and Vibe. Then a few years down the line she hopes to start her own magazine someday. She is also very grateful and privileged to have the freedom to make her own choices in life.

Martin G. Martin, freshman graphic design major, says that his motivation for coming to school was to make his parents proud and make money. He wants to be successful and have a comfortable lifestyle. He went into graphic design because he studied art in high school and he feels that it is a field that he is comfortable with. His plans for the future are to have his own business, have nice cars (BMW, Range Rover) and a nice house.

"I feel very fortunate and lucky to be living in a more understanding society," Martin said.

James Matlock, freshman exploratory major, says that his parents motivated him to come to college. What keeps him going in school is having a career, an education, and being able to provide a future for his family. His future plans are possibly owning his own business or being a sports broadcaster for ESPN.

Brittany Warren, a freshman computer information system major says that she was motivated to come to school so that she could be successful and live a comfortable life. She says that her parents have motivated her through school thus far.

In the future she plans to become a software engineer, get married, and raise a family. She loves having the choice to choose her path in life so she won't be stuck doing something that she doesn't want to do.

I hope that this has inspired you all. The next time that you think about cutting class, blowing off your homework, or find yourself taking your education for granted just think about the people who bled, fought, and died for your freedom to choose. Remember that everyday that we live is a gift from God, so live it to the fullest and remember to keep Him first. Recognize your gifts and talents and live up to your highest potential. Never forget where you came from and always know where you are going. Most importantly remember that if you ever want to make a difference in moving the world you must first have to will to move yourself. Good luck to all of you and your future endeavors. I pray that each and every one of us gets the opportunity to live out our dreams and pass on a legacy to the generations that are yet to come.

Peace, Love, and Blessings!!!!!

By: Autumn Ritchie
Illustration by: Kristen Custon
American, Black or African?

An Examination of Cultural Terminology

By Jamal Ratchford
Guest staff writer

One day people are Mexican, Puerto Rican or Cuban and the next day they are “Hispanic.” One day people are Choctaw, Seneca, or Chippewa, and the next day they are “Indian” or “Native American.” One day our ancestors were Wolof, Fulani or Susu, and the next day they were Negros, Niggers and Colored.

Due to white supremacist convenience, drastically different peoples were collectively merged into imaginary, homogenous groups. In fact, “Hispanic” is a neologic term created by Richard Nixon for the Census Bureau in order to classify “brown” or Latino people. Similarly, indigenous people of this land and region were grouped into a homogenous category. For instance, named in honor of Amerigo Vespucci by German mapmaker Martin Walseemuller, “America” essentially refers to a European claim of a non-European land.

In addition, Christopher Columbus problematically encounters the wrong people; however, he insists that distinct indigenous peoples be known as “Indians.” Lastly, our ancestors once possessed specific connections to an ethnic group.

However, due to a white, hegemonic, superiority-inferiority complex syndrome, our ancestors were classified by terms that reinforce subordinate status. In other words, since racial distinction is an important component of western dominance, generalized homogenous language becomes necessary.

When investigating modern terms such as black, African-American, American or African, the result becomes complex. We commonly align ourselves with “black” because of the courageous sisters and brothers who connected self-determination and beauty with “black.”

We commonly align ourselves with “African-American” due to DuBois’ belief that we are in fact African and American. We commonly align ourselves with “American” due to a subconsciously pseudo belief that we are in fact “American.” In actuality, we are no more than “gate keepers to the estate of white owned mansions.” The few of us who do see ourselves as African believe in the concept due to our willingness to connect with the land of our ancestors. We connect with Africa because it is the most
One day people are Mexican, Puerto Rican or Cuban and the next day they are “Hispanic.” One day people are Choctaw, Seneca, or Chippewa, and the next day they are “Indian” or “Native American.” One day our ancestors were Wolof, Fulani or Susu, and the next day they were Negroes, Niggers and Coloreds.
On this bright morning, the sun is shining. A young black man, adorned in his gang colors, rolls up to the street corner in his hydraulic equipped low-rider. Seeing a member of a rival gang saunter down the street, he and the rest of his crew pull out their submachine guns. The man walking down the street is wasted in a hail of gunfire, and the low-rider speeds off.

This scene could be from any number of Hollywood’s blockbusters, but it’s not. It’s a scene from Grand Theft Auto: San Andreas, (GTA) the latest effort from Rockstar Games. The success of games like GTA has pushed the entire gaming industry into new realms of success. In recent years, the gaming industry has rivaled the movie industry in terms of revenue. Many popular movies, in fact, spawn different versions of games like, Chronicles of Riddick: Escape from Butcher Bay. Some games even become the basis for movie scripts like the forgettable “Alone in the Dark.”

Yet, while games and movies are moving ever closer in terms of revenue and collaboration, one area in which there is still a large gap is minority inclusion. While Hollywood surely isn’t racially representative, video games are worse.

Are games intentionally racist? Are the games racist at all? Are gamers of America being fed anti African-American images and themes as they play? Is it the gaming industry’s responsibility to change, and if so, are they changing?

One of the main complaints leveled at the gaming industry is the lack of African-American characters. Games featuring an original (i.e. not inspired by movies or comic books) black lead character are rare. Emiko Omabegho, freshman Computer Information Systems major and avid gamer agrees. “The only original character you can play is probably [GTA: SA protagonist] Carl Johnson,” he said.

A study conducted by Children Now in 2001 found that of the 1,500 game characters surveyed, 288 were black males, and 83 percent of those were athletes. That leaves 49 African-American characters in non-athletic roles from a pool of 1,500. There are several reasons for this disparity.

One possible cause is the people making the games. Japan is commonly known among the gaming population of America to be the source for many popular games. Japanese developers have dominated the game development landscape, and it’s only recently that developers from other countries are making an impact. Japan has one of the most ethnically homogenous populations in the world, so diversity is not a major influence in game design, simply because it’s not something the Japanese have experience with everyday.

“The majority of videogame characters are White or Asian because most videogames originate in Japan, and for a while the target audience was White middle class kids,” freshman sociology major and hardcore gamer Brian Samsen said.

Second, games have been traditionally marketed at adolescent White males, which explains the gaming industry’s obsession with female characters wearing virtually (pun very much intended) no clothing to cover their unrealistically Barbie doll-like figures.

“That’s changing because they realize there’s a larger market,” Samsen concluded.

As the gaming industry realizes that there is money to be made by catering to the minority market, the number of black and other minority characters is bound to increase. “The fact that they’re actually bringing out black characters is a sign of the times,” Omabegho said.

Video games are becoming more diverse, but like Hollywood, there’s hardly a social or cultural motivation. Game developers, like movie studios, go where the
One of the main complaints leveled at the gaming industry is the lack of African-American characters. Games featuring an original (i.e. not inspired by movies or comic books) black lead character are rare.

money is, and with the current influx of rap and urban culture into mainstream America, the money is in more diverse games. There will surely be more African-American game characters, but how will they be portrayed?

Over the course of Grand Theft Auto: San Andreas, Carl Johnson and his mostly black crew will engage in drive-bys, gunfights, turf wars, robbery and a slew of other crimes. Taken out of context, these acts could be seen as negatively stereotyping blacks as gangsters. What few people realize is that the Grand Theft Auto series is an equal opportunity ridiculer. In the series' first real success, GTA III, players took the role of an escaped white inmate who begins a new career working for the Italian mob.

GTA: Vice City gave players the opportunity to live out their Scarface fantasies in the decadent 80's, Hawaiian shirt and all, as Tommy Vercetti. But stereotypes, no matter how prevalent, don't have to dominate a player's experience with any game. "Mario and Luigi are ridiculously stereotyped Italian plumbers," Samsen said, speaking of the Mario Brothers video game. "But I don't stereotype Italians from Little Italy."

The actions that Carl Johnson engages in are definitely antisocial, but in no way unprecedented for the series. Each GTA has given the player a fictional city heavily influenced by a particular time and place. In GTA III, players got to run around a New York/Chicago hybrid in the present day. Vice City's namesake is a neon-drenched Miami clone. San Andreas is no different. Carl Johnson and crew exist in a California lifted from such influential films as "Boyz n the Hood" and "Menace II Society."

Because it is so very high profile, Grand Theft Auto: San Andreas is bound to receive some criticism for having a young black male lead in game about life in an early 90's ghetto. It will probably receive more criticism for casting Carl Johnson's all-black gang in the supporting roles, where they spend most of their time swearing, shooting, and doing or dealing drugs. It will definitely receive still more criticism for giving players the ability, if they decide to, to murder prostitutes and pedestrians for spare cash. But here's the thing everyone is missing: San Andreas is a spoof, a satire, a send-up of American culture, as is every GTA game before it. Included with each copy of the game should be a card with the words "Do not take this game at face value" printed in large red letters.

All aspects of American culture are mocked in the GTA series, from gun ownership to talk radio. Racial stereotypes are used liberally and with no concern for color. Vice City's Love Fist is a hair-metal spoof, cheesy songs and all. Also in Vice City is Umberto Robina, a Latin Lothario, who left his game in Cuba. San Andreas features OG Loc, a recently released black convict with aspirations of becoming a "gangsta" rapper, but without the talent.
For most gamers, race isn’t an issue to begin with. The interactive nature of gaming helps the player dissociate from real life and step inside the world of the game. “The thing is, you don’t have to worry about race,” Omabegho said. “You stop seeing race and just put yourself in the character’s shoes.”

The GTA series can be taken, generally, as an illustration of the characterization of Blacks in games. Carl Johnson and company commit murder and other crimes, but so do their white counterparts. There will be characters that will put blacks in a bad light, but there have been, and will continue to be white characters being portrayed just as badly. In this respect, there needn’t be calls of racism. Where GTA is an exception to the rule is with the inclusion of a black main character. Here, games have serious ground to make up, and though the motives aren’t the best, despite what the marketing executives say, they are making an effort. Even if it is simply to try and cash in on an untapped market, more games than ever feature blacks and minorities in starring roles.

For most gamers, race isn’t an issue to begin with. The interactive nature of gaming helps the player dissociate from real life and step inside the world of the game. “The thing is, you don’t have to worry about race,” Omabegho said. “You stop seeing race and just put yourself in the character’s shoes.” Indeed, the thing that makes gaming so very attractive might also be the thing that brings gamers of all colors together. “Gaming is really about the gameplay,” Samsen said. “If a game is fun, it doesn’t really matter.”
The tears I cry have come to life. And the only way to escape the pain is to rewind the memories that intrude my mind. Now let me take a trip down memory lane.

From the purest rhymes of KRS One to the love filled tunes of Marvin Gaye, music has inspired generations of youth to rise up and overcome oppression, express political views, and develop a progressive culture through which its voice may be heard. We used to listen to songs that told us to "fight the power." Now we listen to songs that disrespect our women, promote and glorify the thug life, and tell us promiscuity is acceptable.

Throughout the years this mainstream acceptance has garnered a following amongst the new generation of youth. Misogyny is heard all throughout the hip-hop culture. African-American males are now and have been for awhile a dying breed in all facets of everyday life. Because of the lack of male representation in the African American household, the woman had to step up and become all of the positive representation for the Black family. Now negative images of women are portrayed in hip-hop videos, and have become the social norm in our culture.

Throughout all of the negativity the Black woman has stood strong, and have taught and passed down strong morals and values to their daughters and nieces. Knowing that the Black woman is the backbone of the family, I was surprised to hear a song by a group of women who are role models to thousands of young African American girls promoting and glorifying woman talking to thugs.

I heard songs before by women that would tell women to cheat on their man amongst other things. But this Destiny's Child song titled "Soldier," upset me when I heard it.

Songs from the past like MC Lyte's, "I Need A Ruffneck" have glorified the thug image also. "I Need A Ruffneck" was one of the first songs I heard that glorified thugs and put them on a pedestal. And to tell the truth, I was engulfed by that thug image, and I myself felt I needed to be a ruffneck so that I could get a girl. The song distinctly described what a ruffneck was and what a ruff neck looks like with lyrics like, "Evil grin with a mouth full of gold teeth/ Startin' beef is how he spells relief" and "Eat sleep shit fuck, eat sleep shit/ Then it's back to the streets to make a buck quick."
The song upset me because what Destiny's Child spoke of is relaying the wrong message to young black females and males. There have been other songs in the past that glorified the thug image and promoted negative images to our youth. But Destiny's Child is a group that a lot of young women look up to as role models. Therefore the effect of this song is much stronger and widespread than songs by artists such as Lil' Kim, Milla, and TiTina, who most people wouldn't consider role models. Parents let their children listen to Destiny's Child because of their clean lyrics and the positive image they portray in the spotlight. A lot of other songs by both male and female artists are careless also but to put money in front of your morals is wrong.

Some of the words stated in the song are, "If his status ain't hood, I ain't checking for him. Better be street if he looking at me...." I feel that there is nothing wrong for someone to represent where they are from, but you don't have to conform to your environment. The song is basically saying that if I'm not street (or a thug) that I shouldn't try to approach certain females who are now obsessed with thugs. Young girls look up to Destiny's Child and view them as their role models. And for Destiny's Child to continue to promote negativity and influence young girls to do things that they wouldn't do themselves is putting young females on the same downward spiral that our young men have been on for awhile now. From their old song "Jumpin' Jumpin'" that told women to leave their man at home and go to the club to their recent album that has lines like, "We like dem boys that be in dem 'lace leaning, leaning.' Open they mouth they grill gleaming, gleaming." Destiny's Child has told easy influenced young woman that look up to them, to go find a thug that smokes, hustles on the block, and has gold or platinum teeth in their mouth. "Soldier" goes on glorifying thugs as the new sex symbol, and the perfect man for young woman out here. Too many females would rather have a thug, and always talk about getting into a relationship with one.

Destiny's Child is not the only group of artists that are promoting thugs. Most recently Tweet has came out with a song featuring Missy called, "Thug Man." This song mostly talks about the sexual things that she claims thugs can do better than other men, but it also goes on to tell women that they need to be with a thug because thugs are the best men to have.

Missy boldly makes statements like, "I'm in love with a thug cuz he make me feel right. Wish I could explain what he make me feel like yes! and my friends don't like/ cuz he hot on the block and he be ridin' ninja bikes yeah." Everybody knows what being "hot on the block" mean. Is this the type of guy you want your sisters and daughters talking too? She is telling young girls that even if people don't like him because he is a thug, he still is the best man for them. If we keep feeding this thug image to our youth, there are going to be more young Black men in jail, and more single mothers in our communities.

Everywhere I go, I seem to hear the same conversations among a lot of Black females. "My man on the block..." "My baby daddy in jail..." "Girl, I need a thug..." are some of the many comments I hear from a lot of Black females. I hear these comments at home, at the mall, and on campus.

I hear very few females say that their man is in college, or has a college degree. My sister is 20 years old with a 3 year old son, and her baby-daddy/"soldier" is doing a quarter-century in a federal prison. Women always want the bad guy, but complain when she gets hurt by him, and then constantly states that "there are no good Black men out here." A lot of young ladies need to WAKE UP! Drug dealers don't pay child support. You can't pay child support without a legal job.

We need fathers and husbands in our communities; we don't need anymore thugs. In my eyes the positive Black man/Black women are under-appreciated and not respected in our culture. I would be wrong to say that this song or group is the beginning of the problem because this problem has existed long before this song came out.

With all the negativity coming from male hip-hop artists and with female artists glorifying the thug/drug dealer image as well, we are setting our own communities up for failure. Music does influence people isn't that the same reason they took the drum away from the slave?

"The Black woman needs to hold up the Black men that are doing the right thing, just as much as they respect and love these thugs," said a male source who wishes to remain anonymous. It's not the song that's the problem; it is the message that is in the song that is the real problem. And another problem is who the song is coming from. It's not just a song; it's a song that conditions the minds of so many youth—both male and female. Girls want a soldier, and boys think they have to be that soldier. Today I take a stand against this negativity.

I am not a thug.
I am a strong, positive, educated Black man.
Ladies bolt at me.
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Chandra Phillips
Electronic Media Production, undergraduate degree Spring 2002
Media Management, current graduate student

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~ Dr. Pete Goldsmith
Vice President for Enrollment Management & Student Affairs

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Most college students are forced to have a job while maintaining those A's and B's in class. With a job you're able to buy the type of clothes you want, pay the necessary bills, or even take a trip if you save enough money. A job affords you all these things— except the luxury of pure freedom. A job is not the way that these former and fellow students of Kent State University wished to go. They considered a job being just a step over being broke—a feeling that no one wishes to have about their employment, but a constant reminder of how dollars and cents dictate almost everything in America.

UHURU Magazine sits down with some well-renowned top brass in the Black community (who have either graduated from the University or still attend) to discuss the experiences that young entrepreneur's face in today's marketplaces.

Shannon Lanier & Chandra Lanier of L&P Productions, Traci Easley-Williams, co-owner of Royalty Studios, Dar-Ron Henderson, owner of Hotcards.com, and Samuel "Blitz" Bazawule, CEO of Reprisal Records all give an insight into the growing pains of trying to do for self.

Humble Beginnings

If you attended the University from 2000-2004, you may know of Shannon Lanier and Chandra Philips. The two met at Kent State University and continue to have a business and personal relationship. Shannon had already released his book, "Jefferson's Children: The Story of One American Family" (2000). Before doing that he had also filmed weddings when attending high school. Shannon and Chandra did a couple of videography favors for the staff and faculty of Kent State University, which stimulated the idea to start their own business.

They researched the videography and editing equipment that they felt looked professional and was affordable. The two stepped out on faith to make their first business purchases from B&H in New York City — Shannon with his book revenue and Chandra with her credit card.

Her rationale was that most people run up their credit card debt for frivolous items. But this was an investment that would hopefully pay off—and it did. In time, they became more in-depth with the business and incorporated the company.

The hardest aspect of starting their business venture was formulating a business plan, which outlined their vision, mission, goals and objectives. Being consistent with their endeavors and concentrating on gaining experience and exposure for the company was a primary goal.

Discipline Is the Key

Business, in any venture, is a cutthroat game. Once you have delved deep enough into its trenches you are no longer a passerby; you are now prey to be hunted by those who want your position. Or you are a mentor to those who wish to attain some, if not more, of the success that you are enjoying.

So you want to be your own boss? These students have been there, done that and will tell you how they did it.
A motivating factor for success in the eyes of Traci Easley-Williams, who runs Royalty Studios with her partner, Monique Williams, includes not having to work for someone else.

"I'm happier now because I am more in control of what's going on," she states. "Because unfortunately, when you're working in someone else's environment, all they say is, 'This is your job, do your job. I don't want to hear anything else, just do what I tell you to do!'"

Remaining strict and being focused is something that DaRon "DJ LoKey" Henderson says is important. Not only in terms of being successful, but also in avoiding being broke.

"If you look in your bank account and have nothing to show for the work you put into your business... that's bad," DaRon says. He continues to say, "That's where that discipline comes into play."

Discipline is very important it comes to funds. "Just because it's there doesn't mean that it's yours," DaRon finishes. DaRon deejays the majority of the Black events on campus, in conjunction with running Hotcards.com, a car detailing shop, and recently opened a dance studio. He believes firmly that being disciplined is essential to being a successful entrepreneur.

Not falling into the typical role of a strict businessman but no stranger to having to handle his own biz, Samuel "Blitz" Bazawule is building a movement from the ground up. A current Kent State student, Blitz is the CEO of Reprisal Records. The first release was entitled, "Soul Rebel." It had dropped last year.

"Discipline," he begins, agreeing with the sentiments echoed by both Traci and DaRon, "that's number one! It has got to be discipline."

"We do this for the love, but also understand, that we do this to pay the rent. If you are not a disciplined person, then you already fail at being a success," Blitz said.

The pitfalls of a business are hard, the risks involved are steep, severe costs are at stake, your very name is on the line the minute you begin to strike out with your beliefs. You, as the budding entrepreneur, must take into consideration all the ingredients that go into making your dream become a success. If you do not take the necessary precautions, it could turn into a nightmare.

**Trials & Tribulations**

In every business there are highs and lows. Cracking the Fortune 500 is most definitely a high, but losing to a corporate merger, or forfeiting the majority percentage of your stock is a depressing low. An important reminder to you, the reader, is that in business you strive for the highs, but can't always avoid the lows. Trials and tribulations are always going to be at your doorstep. Whatever risk you decide to take or not take may have dire consequences. You must attack each choice enthusiastically — whether you win or lose. Everyday that you wake up, if it is a high or a low, you must face the music as long as you continue to strive to achieve your goal.

"Money, money, money... and MORE money," is the roadblock that Traci finds herself facing from time to
time. “You need money to do everything, equipment, to pay people. It’s just been finances that has kept [the company] moving as slow as it has been moving.”

Yes, capital is a main reason why some ideas do not get nourished. This is where discipline comes into play. If you decide that going into business for yourself is where your heart lies, understand that you will not reap the benefits right away. You must always do more than what you get paid for in order to be a successful entrepreneur. Also, you must always have knowledge of what you’re doing in order to grow within the marketplace. Whether that is being an accountant or struggling to become the best actor, it is imperative that you know all facets of the business.

“If you’re in business and don’t know the business, you’re not handling your business,” DaRon says concerning issues of doing the job correctly.

DaRon goes on by saying, “Everybody needs capital to get started.”

While there is no right, “by the book,” formula you shall continue to find yourself facing challenges. “Enormous, enormous trials, man. I wake up everyday pissed,” Blitz explains. “My creativity feels limited constantly just because the market is not open enough to listen to creative minds build.”

“For not being able to distribute the album how I want it, to lacking capital and human resources, it’s just immense trials, mad problems,” Blitz said.

Kent State University has helped all of these individuals garner a better insight of business through the classes that they have each taken.

Blitz says, “A college education, contrary to popular belief, is not a narrow path, not just give me a degree and a job after I get out of here.” By attending classes one not only builds better discipline and learning tools needed for business, but also finds a sense of self. A successful business not only helps the creator expand; it also unites and helps to cultivate the culture.

You, the budding entrepreneur, are going to go through many phases in starting your business. This is not for the faint of heart. A lot of blood, sweat, and tears goes into creating a place for yourself in this land of milk and honey. But once you get through the rough ordeals of trials and tribulations, you find yourself wanting to keep going for
Shannon and Chandra advise to those who have an entrepreneurial spirit, "Learn your craft to the fullest. A craft worth doing is a craft worth learning. You do that by not just going to class, but having a presence in class."
And although mistakes will be made and consequences for those actions will be handled accordingly, you must stay motivated for the success that you not only see for yourself, but for others as well.

**Constant Motivation**

You will fail. You will not make it to the top overnight. Although most people on the outside assume otherwise, a lot of hard work and sleepless nights have gone into the creation of a successful business endeavor. It is imperative that you are constantly motivated to succeed. Challenges are only small obstacles that you can overcome in due time. Once a goal has been reached, you must strive to conquer other things in order to maintain some sort of success.

Traci has worked on eight feature films and she has done two movies here at Kent State in conjunction with the Pan-African Studies department and Family Tree class. Through the work her company produces it is important to Traci that she gives a voice to the voiceless that are trying to break down the walls of Hollywood.

When talking about her passion and why it keeps her motivated, Traci says, "I have never been a 9-to-5 person, but I know that I can stay in my office till three, four, five in the morning just doing what I love. It's in my heart."

Passion is a beautiful feeling when it caters to your need to be successful.

"I just want to see everyone be successful," DaRon says, "and that is a motivating factor. I have people who intern here, I'm trying to hold a small business seminar soon so that other people who see themselves in that entrepreneurial light have somewhat of a road map on which way to go."

Support is another motivating factor. Aside from these past and present students of Kent State University, we also have the black barbershops and hair salons that are within walking distance of the campus, in addition to the Keepers of the Secret on North Mantua. Creating commerce for each business through referrals and word-of-mouth references could motivate the Black owners to continue to improve and strive for unity, which is "a problem that is troubling to most Black businesses," DaRon says.

Change may also be a principle factor in trying to continue to be motivated for success. Blitz believes, "If I run into you today, I try to make sure that when I run into you tomorrow, I will not be on the same level that I was yesterday."

**Advice – Final Thoughts**

The media only shows us what it's like to be successful, to have the fast cars and lights all glaring upon you. Very few instances do you see where the struggle of making it is shown honestly. The present and past students of Kent State may ultimately be your future millionaires. The same
people you've passed on the way to your economics class could be the same people whose movie you see at the theater, whose television show you may watch on the regular, or the same person whose CD you buy because the music speaks rebelliously to your soul. All these entrepreneurs say the same thing - discipline. It is essential to your future. In all things that you wish to learn, whether it is academically, socially, or otherwise, it takes some form of discipline.

Shannon and Chandra advice to those who have an entrepreneurial spirit: "Learn your craft to the fullest. A craft worth doing is a craft worth learning. You do that by not just going to class, but having a presence in class. Starting a business is like walking the tight rope without a safety net. You can't afford to fall - to lose focus. Always be about your business. Compromising can be beneficial, but always know the cost of what you're gaining. Have faith and continue to pray to God."

Traci says, "You must have a love for what you do. It's regular to just get up and go to work. That may become boring after awhile. But if it is something that you love to do it is fun and it is something that never gets mundane."

"Attend small business seminars, constantly read, you must be a forever learner of whatever it is you decide to do with yourself," DaRon says. He also exhales, "Pay your taxes!!!"

A final word of advice from Blitz is, "Diversify. Even though everyone is boxed in, trust me, don't get it twisted, everyone fits into that box - find that niche and target it."

He continues by saying, "Follow your dreams. Do NOT get caught up in the cookie-cutter, assembly line nature of this world where everybody just falls in line and tries to fit the same screw."

"You are in college not to get a job; you're here to CREATE a job," Blitz said. "Right now - start building, there is no time to wait till after you get through with school to go out and do your own."

"If you're in business and don't know the business, you're not handling your business," DaRon says concerning issues of doing the job correctly.

In my own words, fellow entrepreneurs, seize the day. Stating the same sentiments as my colleagues also express, I would say network. Go out and create relationships with people who also are like-minded in what you want to do.

Have a team. Because no one man is an island to himself, meaning that you, alone, do not create a success or amass riches unto yourself. It takes a strong unit to struggle and thrive together.

Continue to educate yourself and others. Everyone is scratching and clawing to do the same thing that you want to do. It is imperative that you give back to the community, whether it is here at Kent, Cleveland, Akron, Cincinnati, or elsewhere. The same background that you came from is the same element that people still reside in and if you are able to reach back and pull someone else out of the institutionalized condition... by all means do so.

You are NOT expected to succeed, you are NOT allowed to succeed by other's standards - prove everyone wrong. Defy the odds, master your craft, and enjoy the reality of your dreams.

Lastly, remember that a goal is only a great idea that has a deadline. Once you've reached those deadlines, you should always have something else to strive for.
“For The Rest of My Life”
Kevin L. Clark

She listened to what I had told her, and her brilliance shone through,
I can’t believe that I broke down about what I’d gone through,
Yet, she stood tall, her resolve was rock-hard,
She let my eyes shed tears, but still in my mind, she was a gift from the Lord,
She kissed the stained tears from my cheeks,
And when her lips touched my skin, volumes did my Heart speak,
For the rest of my life, I am in debt to you,
Ms. Queen, you’re more than wonderful, if it wasn’t for you,
I’d be less than the person I am today, I guess I am lucky to be next to your presence,
So, the conversation proceeded, but I could still feel your essence,
Gripping my soul, a feeling that I’d never want to let go,
We talked about what I needed to do to get myself out of this hole,
To love myself, more than anything, because if I do as such,
Then I love her too, so I should give myself love more than much,
For than I’ll love her the same, even in times of the brink of day,
Those stars are still there to shine and speak to me to say,
“Love is her, she epitomizes it, songs were crafted in her name,”
I live by those words, so my motives for loving her remain the same,
Only change is to occur when it grows more and more each day,
For the time that we spend is limited, so, “I love you,” is appreciated,
but I’d rather stay...
...Stay next to you, in those arms of yours tonight, just to be consoled,
To be babied, don’t ask me why, I just want to be spoiled,
I want to be selfish too, I don’t want ANYONE to experience what I have with you,
That is why I want to spend all my time, just telling truths true,
How you made my heart swell the night of the Lord, when you didn’t want me to leave you,
And I had to pry you off of my body, just so I can leave you...
Sounds kind of... bad... don’t it? You wanted me to stay, even if I had to go,
But I wanted you to come with me so bad, that it hurt my soul to say, “No.”
For if the rest of my life, we’re going to have to endure the up’s and down’s,
The smiles that come with the laughter, the pouty lips that come with the frowns,
Thank you, for this is a list of experiences down the road, we’ll look down on with glee,
Just how you put everything else behind me,
I did the same with you, and alone together we stood,
You took me out of the glum and darkness of the so-called ‘hood,’
And I took your heart and gave it a needed kiss of sincerity,
But last night, you gave my mind, body, heart, and soul, a sense of clarity,
I am at peace for the time being, but this is only to grow with more time,
For I place no one above you, you’re irreplaceable, I can go on and on in this rhyme,
About how much to you I owe, in my life, you’re my one and only,
All I want is to be together with you, whether in a crowd, or in a house with you and I together... lonely...
This may not be the best way to say this, for it’s not even the masterpiece... yet... but say...
When the winds pass my ear, I hear your name, so I ask, would you be my fiancé?
Incomplete

Anonymous

I would travel to the end of the Earth
If I knew you’d be there
I would give up everything.
If I knew you still cared
I would stop the hands of time
If it meant more time with you
For you I’d commit any crime
If I thought your love was true

The more I try to make you happy
The more you make me cry
The more I try to live for you
The more I wish I would die
I feel unloved when we’re together
Incomplete when we’re apart
Either way it goes I suffer
Because you control my heart
Every single move I make
Is strictly for your pleasure
Thinking that if I keep you happy
We would last forever
But nothing is forever
I had to learn the hard way
No matter how hard I try
You’re determined not to stay

Laughter

By: Brian Savage

So comforting, so reassuring
This is the feeling of sheer happiness
Accompanied with smooth mahogany lips
That breathes the sweet smell molasses
Exposing one of Gods greatest treasures
That is majestically vibrant and resilient
Angelic in the morning’s exuberant light
Pearls of a goddess given wake
To a beautiful dawn twilight
That lightens a weary heart
And eases ones troubled soul
The sound of harmonious laughter
A chuckle that leads to heavens abode.
Kings and Queens
By Keith “Speak” Williams

What if I told you, you were descendants of kings and queens?
That would change everything.
From the way you dress, to how you act
See Black people as a people there’s something that we lack.
History has had our artifacts, made us forget about our arts and crafts, told us lies about ourselves
But those aren’t facts.
See I take it back...
To the days of being black.
And shoot, back then was enough to get you smacked, welts on ya back from a whips crack,
And no matter how many history lessons skip that,
I will never forget that.
Nor let you either, but see what I teach ya is deeper.

Cause even with chains and whips the system couldn’t beat us
Even with chains and whips the system couldn’t beat us
Couldn’t defeat us...
We still exist however there lurks evil in our midst.
Too many lost blinded by the mist
Can’t see past the media’s myth of blacks
Invading our homes through a satellite TV dish.

Got you and I thinking that were ignorant, illiterate, inconsiderate
This could be true but it constitutes a small percent of it.

Don’t forget those before us, let me remind you of who Dr. Charles Drew is
Creator of the blood transfusion but when he needed the help hospitals refused him.

Don’t forget Carver, McCoy, W.E. DuBois, Garvey, Newton, I means there’s so many more...
And Queen had to remind me of sister like Assata Shakur.

Black people hold ya head up
We come from a lineage that consists of writers, inventors, architects, doctors, musicians, lawyers, athletes, artists, speakers, leaders, dancers
Government broke up the panthers cause they had some of the answers.

Shook hands with those that murdered our ancestors.
Mothers, fathers, brothers, sisters
Raped us, lynched us
Ransacked our home, invaded the empire we were snatched from the throne,
Brought into a land that is not our own...
And that’s why our hair does not fit through those combs.
See extra! Extra! Read all about it! Black Wall Street burned down! Tulsa, Oklahoma! Black Wall Street burned down!

No more Black businesses, this is ridiculous!

How could you not be proud to be a part of a people so magnificent.

The world had put us in a predicament, Black neighborhoods prospered until the crack epidemic hit

Now they're ghettos and slums, and look on that corner right there you see those bums?
How did they get like that, what type of background did they come from?
Now America got a war on drugs cause its affecting their sons.

But I reveal the evil, for centuries ya'll have tried to kill my people, but you can't succeed
You can't succeed through crack and weed
No manner of disease will bring us to our knees.
The breath of life is what we breathe, our spirit lives and we remain strong
Keep on singing the same song.

So no matter how many books that Plato and Aristotle take credit for that were written by Egyptians,
To binding us up on slave ships,
To Jim Crow segregation,
To bias school systems of education,
To the spread of drugs across the nation
Through every trial and tribulation...

We survive and triumph as conquerors.
The fall initiates of Kappa Alpha Psi Fraternity, Inc. completed their show and marched off into the night. Members of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority Inc. began to do their call and chant. Before finishing the Sigma Gamma Rhos joined in with a chant of their own. As the tension began to rise some fraternity members came in the middle to prevent the yelling from escalating into anything more. Just when it looked like everyone was leaving the tension mounted again, but this time there was no interceding. Individual members of Delta Sigma Theta and Sigma Gamma Rho began to fight, and as more members jumped in it turned into a huge brawl. I'm sure if you didn't see it you heard about it. For some it was a big deal, for others it wasn't and for many it was the grand finale for the entertainment of the night. But does what occurred contribute to the ideas that many have about Black Greek organizations?

I want to explore this notion and give some exposure to Black Greek life then rather than now. By taking a look back at the foundation of these organizations their true meaning will be discovered. All information is taken from the respective websites of the organizations. (continued on pg.30)
True or False?

Alphas get straight A's.
AKAs can pass the paper bag test and are snobbish.
Kappas think they're prettier than the females.
The only care about biting women's behinds at parties.
Deltas failed the paper bag test and decided to create their own sorority.
Sigmas just couldn't get into any other fraternity.
Big ugly girls apply for Z Phi B.
Big ugly girls and sometimes men apply for Sigma Gamma Rho.
Iota Phi who?

True or False?
Black Greeks only know how to step.
Black Greeks forget about the community.
Black Greeks just like to wear paraphernalia.
Black Greeks are nothing more than legalized gangs.

Have you done your research? Do you go only to the parties or do you participate in these organizations' programs, fundraisers and community service activities?
Or is there a lack of these activities on the Kent State campus?
Over the years the image of the Black Greek has deteriorated.
Membership is down and quality programming is down. What is the source of this deterioration? Are the members not fulfilling their pledges? Do changes need to take place with the intake process?
Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity, Inc.
Cornell University, 1906: Seven founders "recognized the need for a strong bond of brotherhood among African descendants in the country" and wanted to be a "study and support group for minority students facing racial prejudices educationally and socially."

Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc.
Howard University, 1908: Nine women felt it was "critical to have an association that cuts across racial, international, physical, and social barriers to help individuals and communities develop and maintain constructive relationships with others."

Kappa Alpha Psi Fraternity, Inc.
Indiana University, 1911: Ten men sought an organization that would "raise the sights of black collegians" and "stimulate them to accomplishments higher than they might have imagined."

Omega Psi Phi Fraternity, Inc.
Howard University, 1911: Four men believed in manhood, scholarship, perseverance and uplift and named the fraternity from the initials of the Greek phrase that means, "Friendship is essential to the soul."

Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc.
Howard University, 1913: Twenty-two women wanted to use their "collective strength to promote academic excellence; to provide scholarships; provide support to the undeserved; educate and stimulate participation in the establishment of positive public policy; and highlight issues and provide solutions for problems in their communities."

Phi Beta Sigma Fraternity, Inc.
Howard University, 1914: Three men founded on brotherhood, scholarship and service wanted to "deliver services to the general community by being 'apart of' rather than 'apart from'."

Zeta Phi Beta Sorority, Inc.
Howard University, 1920: Five women wanted "to address societal mores, ills, prejudices, poverty, and health concerns of the day" and "sought to establish a new organization predicated on the percepts of Scholarship, Service, Sisterly Love and Finer Womanhood."

Sigma Gamma Rho Sorority, Inc.
Butler University, 1922: Seven school teachers who wanted to "address concerns that impact society educationally, civically and economically."

Iota Phi Theta Fraternity, Inc.
Morgan State University, 1963: Twelve men who were founded on the purpose of "the development and perpetuation of Scholarship, Leadership, Citizenship, Fidelity, and Brotherhood among Men."
greeks
The history of each organization is rich, and although the societies differed with regard to what they felt was the best method to accomplish community growth, they moved with purpose toward the goal to be obtained. These students saw a need and decided to meet this need through service, scholarship and unity. It was collective strength that helped make progress in the Black community through discipline, dedication and production of quality leaders to implement what they were taught on their college campuses. Some of the most famous blacks of yesterday and today are apart of Black Greek sororities and fraternities. Many are writers, entrepreneurs, government officials/politicians, doctors, lawyers, educators and scientists. Let's just say there are members of Black Greek organizations in every field imaginable.

From a historical perspective there's clear evidence of the purposeful beginning and intentions of Black Greek organizations. The question that is raised is: are Black Greeks following through with their purpose, and if not, what's the difference between them and now?

I spoke to students around campus with specific intentions to address the current state of Black Greeks at Kent State. Many said they do not know or hear much about Black Greeks. When asked what they do know a common answer is that Black Greeks go to and throw a lot of parties where they step all the time. Only one student was able to give a rundown on Black Greek involvement and some programs they have done, but it was from more of a national perspective rather than based on what she has seen here at Kent.

This is a major difference between then and now. When these Greek organizations were founded and years after they made their mark in the uplift of the Black community, there was no question about the contributions they had made. According to many Alumni at the University, Black Greek members and student leader positions went hand in hand. If a lettered organization wasn't implementing the programming, then non-Greek organizations were, and most of the time, the president or chair of that group was also Greek.

While the productivity of Black Greek organizations has changed, others feel the problem lies within the membership. For some it's the process or lack there of. Danay Mitchell, Freshman Accounting major, said that Greeks say they practice no hazing, but they really do. This seems to be a general opinion shared by many students. When Dean E. Timothy Moore, Associate Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences and associate Professor of Pan-African Studies became a member of Omega Psi Phi Fraternity Inc. in 1970, the pledge process was not illegal. He feels the legal limitations on this process has led to a rise of "underground pledging" and has consequently "shown a disconnect of the original principles and the way they continued on pg. 46
Pan African Studies is designed for students to learn about the African Experience. The experience of life, tradition, customs, and culture is focused through Pan African Studies.

Pan Africanism is the belief that African people share common bonds and objectives and advocates unity to achieve those objectives. The concept first developed outside of Africa in the late 19th and early 20th century. The idea came from the fact that Africans resisted European domination and wanted to be their own people. Pan African Studies is designed for students to learn about the African Experience. The experience of life, tradition, customs, and culture is focused through Pan African Studies. Pan African Studies is meant not only to educate but also to open up the locked doors to see history what it is and not just for what are high school textbooks taught us. Pan African Studies will help students grasp the truth of our ancestors' history and how they contribute to the development of the society in which we live in.

The foundation for the Department of Pan African Studies began around 1969. At that time African Americans college students through out the nation wanted to be able to have classes and programs that focused on the history of their African decent ancestors.

In the 1960s, Kent State students began to protest and they
held demonstrations to get their demands met and after years of hard work and dedication, Pan African Studies was born. Contrary to popular belief, it didn't start off as a department.

Dr. Edward Crosby, a Kent State graduate and well-respected member of the community, founded the Institute for African-American Affairs. While focusing on the Pan-Afrikan experience, the institute was founded with the intent to never "divorce itself from investigating the white world — its science, its politics, its economics, for if we allow this to happen, we run the risk of crippling those who come under the program's tutelage more than if they had stayed in white educational programs."

The Institute became a department in 1976. Today Oscar Ritchie Hall is devoted to Pan African Studies. Oscar Ritchie Hall was dedicated in 1977 in memory of the late Dr. Oscar W. Ritchie, who was the first African American faculty member at Kent State.

Today Oscar Ritchie is the hub of black culture on campus, housing not only the Pan African Studies department but Black United Students, Harambee, Black & Latino Greek Council, Kent African Students Association, Voices of Testimony Gospel Choir. Oscar Ritchie is also home to the very magazine you are reading now, UHURU.

Oscar Ritchie Hall is not just an academic building. It is the center of all things social, academic and cultural to people of African descent. There is the Uumbaji Art Gal-
One of the many posters in Oscar Ritchie Hall, representing heroes and African people that made programs such as Pan African Studies possible.
“I took a Pan African course not only because it fulfilled an LER requirement, but because I wanted to take a course that looked completely at the Black Experience because I never got to take a course like that prior to college,” Noel Kelly said.

“My first experience a Kent was the S.T.A.R.S. program. In the program we were required to take seven credit hours,” Michelle McCall said. “One of the classes we took was Black Experience I with Professor Okantah. The entire S.T.A.R.S. experience was centered around Africa and being a community. As I took the classes I realized how important it is to know about your heritage. Black Experience is my favorite class because it required me to ‘unlearn’ the history that I was taught for example: America wouldn't have been so great with out the slave trade. It was a huge money maker. American was really built on the back of slavery.”

If you compare Kent State’s Department of Pan African Studies against any other department in the country, you will see that Kent State is by far the most prestigious and accomplished. There is a great wealth of knowledge at your fingertips. Take advantage of what Kent State’s Pan African Studies department has to offer.
Oscar Ritchie Hall is not just an academic building. It is the center of all things social, academic and cultural to people of African descent. There is the Uumbaji Art Gallery, the Henry Dumas Memorial Library, and the El Hajj Malik El Shabazz Computer Lounge.
Go Golden Flashes!
Have Friends & Family Planning to Visit Kent State University?
We can help....call for a free Visitors Guide or visit the Central Portage County Visitors Bureau web site for:

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what about Jackson State?
35 years later, tragedy still echoes

By Tara Pringle

Kent State University.
May 4, 1970.

Those two phrases will be eternally linked together. While the events that took place on the Kent campus were certainly traumatic and the horror cannot be compared, there was another incident that took place that year that certainly deserves recognition as well:
Jackson State University, May 15, 1970.

Less than 11 days after the events at Kent State, two students were killed on the Jackson State campus after a night of rioting and protest. Twelve others were wounded from gunfire and others were wounded from shattered glass.

Many people believe the Jackson State incident didn’t receive as much exposure as the events here because Jackson State was, and still is, an all-black school.

While race may have played a factor, the events are still horrific no matter what the race of the victims.

According to information from the Jackson State Web site, the events originally started on May 14, around 9:30 p.m. Riots had started on campus as a result of rumors that Charles Evers, the mayor of Fayette, Mississippi, and his wife had been killed. Charles Evers was the brother of civil rights activist Medgar Evans.

Some motorists reported to police that students had been throwing rocks at their cars, which later was attributed to another group. Students set fires and overturned a dump truck.

Police were called to the scene to control the crowd while firefighters tried to extinguish the fires. Some National Guardsmen were on duty from the previous night and were armed without ammunition.

There were 75 policemen present while the firefighters extinguished the flames. Once the fire was out, the firemen left and the police marched toward the women’s residence, Alexander Center.

The crowd of students numbered anywhere from 75 to 100 students. Students reportedly threw bricks and other objects at the police.

There are many conflicting reports on what happened next.

Some said the police opened fire without warning; others said police warned the students before firing their weapons. Others still said the students were under control when the shootings started, and another witness said they saw a firearm in the window of the dormitory.

The shootings, which occurred just after midnight on May 15, lasted for more than 30 seconds. Every window in Alexander Hall that faced the street was shattered. More than 460 rounds were fired, according to FBI investigators.

About a month later, President Nixon called for a commission on the shootings. There were no convictions or arrests made.

May 2005 marks the 35th anniversary of the shootings.
TOP 21 most influential books for black college students

Illustration by: Kristen Caston
Editor Tara Pringle and the UHURU staff invite you to check out our list of the 21 Most Influential Books for black college students. We believe that reading is the first step to becoming an influential member in society. If you truly want to empower yourself, you must first take the time to educate yourself.

Without a true education, you are only a pawn.

So take a trip to the library, pull these books off the shelf and empower yourself.


While polling faculty, students and staff for this list, this book was the most popular choice. This gripping tale about a young project girl and her drug-dealer father doesn’t censor itself and tells the truth about living in the projects. Read this if you truly want to open your eyes.


There’s no need to say anything else. This book is one of the most powerful books ever written about one of the most powerful men to walk this Earth.

3. No Disrespect by Sista Souljah.

This book is just as powerful as The Coldest Winter Ever. However, this book is a piece of non-fiction, as Sista Souljah chronicles her life story from her childhood to the present.

4. The Color Purple by Alice Walker.

Alice Walker’s 1982 book remains a classic. The movie inspires you, but reading this book is an unforgettable experience. Black women, in particular, can learn from its message of loving yourself and overcoming incredible obstacles.


Just reading the title inspired many people to pick up the book, myself included. Dyson, an established author of other books such as Holler If You Hear Me, highlights different women in his life who have made an impact on him.


When I was a freshman, this book was required reading by the Honors College. This book begins the reversal of all those years of misguided history classes. It will tell you the truth about Columbus, slavery and all those facts you just knew were true and didn’t think twice to question.

Not just for those who are aspiring doctors, but for all majors. Ben Carson, the world-renowned neurosurgeon, came from nothing and made a name for himself in one of the most intellectually demanding career fields in the world.

8. Conversations with God by Neale Donald Walsh. Dean E. Timothy Moore recommended this book for anyone who wanted to get "shook up." In this book, Neale Donald Walsh, angry at the world and his life, starts to write a letter to God and to his amazement, God responds directly to him. This book is for people who aren't afraid to stretch their minds.

9. Having Our Say by the Delany sisters.

The Delany sisters both lived to be over 100 years old before they died. Their story is one to be shared with all. They lived through the Depression and the Civil Rights movement. One can only imagine the things they lived through. After reading this book, you won't have to.

10. Roots by Alex Haley.

Before the miniseries was a huge success, there was the book. Well over 600 pages, this book is challenging for some to get through. However, the story is compelling enough to get even the most reluctant reader to keep going. May this book inspire you to think about your own roots.


Like a few other books on this list, students can learn the truth about their history.

12. Their Eyes Were Watching God by Zora Neale Hurston.

This story about a black woman and her search for true love through three marriages has gained popularity in recent years, with Oprah Winfrey recently producing a made-for-TV movie about it.


Many students have heard about this book, but few have actually read it. This novel, which many have said caused the Civil War, is an eye-opening look at slavery in its darkest days.


Earl G. Graves, publisher of Black Enterprise magazine, shares his tips on how to succeed. Recommended for all business majors.
16. Think and Grow Rich by Napoleon Hill.
As college students, we all wish we had more money, if not now, then in the future. This book emphasizes the principle that our thoughts and beliefs are either what keep us from being successful, or whether they are the things that bring us to success.

17. How to Win Friends and Influence People by Dale Carnegie.
This book was written in the 1930s, but is still as influential as it was when it was written. This book is basically a guide to common sense. Treat people with kindness and you’ll go far. But every now and then, some of us need a reminder. Pick this up if you want to learn how to win people to your way of thinking.

This book examines the millionaire’s life and gives us advice on how to achieve it.

Kitwana is a former editor at the Source and wrote this book to analyze the impact of hip-hop on African-Americans born between 1965 and 1984, which includes a lot of the college students today. Kitwana said in an interview, “This generation stands on the success of the civil rights movement. We don’t have to fight for the right to vote, for the right to be able to go to college. We can take that foundation and build on it. Hip-hop as an economic force and as a cultural movement has given us foot soldiers. They exist already. This infrastructure gives us unprecedented power.”

20. What’s Love Got To Do With It? Understanding and Healing the Rift between Black men and women by Donna Franklin.
On this campus, it seems like we just can’t get it right. I’m talking about the relationship between black men and women. I’m always hearing from my friends, “He’s no good” or “She plays too much.” This book will help understand why we act the way we do and how to fix the problem.

While this isn’t a typical “black” themed book, it doesn’t affect us as black people. Black people are more likely to be obese and everyone knows fast food is a likely culprit. This book exposes the truth of fast food restaurants and will make you think twice before ordering that cheeseburger and fries.
Congresswoman
Stephanie Tubbs Jones
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are lived and acted out," Dean Moore also said back then there was no confusion about the expectations of becoming Greek or what was expected for a member to carry out once he/she was Greek. Others agree with Dean Moore regarding the process being a main reason for difference.

In general, the pledge process leads to a bond that is often stated, but lately the connection between Greek brothers and sisters is rarely being shown. Although a bond is created within a particular organization, there is still an overall connection that exists throughout the Greek family due to the fact that all members shared a struggle, a humility period and the overcoming of such obstacles. However, now people are more concerned about 'testing' or doubting others' experiences rather than carrying out the purpose their founders set forth for members. Who pledged harder than who, when the truth of the matter is no one is being pledged the same way they were before "underground pledging" or there would not be an overall lack of knowledge, pride, humbleness, respect and responsibility.

and trials that develop a stronger individual and a better shaped and prepared leader are necessary to create quality membership and the capability of living up to principles.

Despite what some may believe, being a Black Greek carries on long after a person has left the college campus. It is a lifetime commitment and life altering experience. There becomes a change to the overall character, and as a result, a person gains a better sense of his/herself, capabilities of living and dealing with differences amongst people; a sense of brotherhood or sisterhood is instilled. You're taught perseverance, determination and given a huge networking opportunity. Also, it raises your sense of consciousness, as well as all those who view you as a leader and/or a role model.

Black Greeks were founded to unify and help the Black community by utilizing education and a support system. While some non-members at Kent believe Black Greeks here are doing their part, many of us who are Greek and are in touch with the principles and purpose of Greek life know that the vision is not being carried out. The common goal that once joined together ten organizations has turned into individual pride and unbelievable misrepresentation.

In my opinion, on a national level and the local level here at Kent State there has been a clear sense of digression between Black Greeks then and Black Greeks now, but there are steps that can be taken to revive the worth of the organizations that were once vital to the survival of our people.

Maria Webster, member of Zeta Phi Beta Sorority, Inc. and Justin Priest of Omega Psi Phi Fraternity, Inc. both agree that unification is an important step. Priest also feels, "Initiative needs to be taken and Greeks need to step up and be leaders." According to Dean Moore, "Each organization needs to go back to living up to their principles in thought, word and deed, otherwise it is just lip service."

This is not the early 1990s, but there is a cause to fight for. Blacks are still not equal. If we take the time to open our eyes we can see the injustices we face everyday we live in this world. More importantly, it is essential to the healthy success and empowerment of the Black community to help undo and overcome the effects of the injustices that have been inflicted upon African Americans for so long. It was a responsibility that was taken on by all the founders of Black Greek organizations.

Therefore, it is imperative that Black Greeks regain focus and fulfill the vision of our founders. If this is incapable of being done then we need not step up to the challenge. It is the pride and progress of our future that is at stake.
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